

# BRITISH ACADEMY CELEBRATING SKILLS IN THE ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



# WHAT IS THE BRITISH ACADEMY FLAGSHIP SKILLS PROJECT?

Building on the success of its Languages and Quantitative Skills (LQS) Programme, the British Academy is developing a new programme of work on skills. The flagship project of this programme aims to articulate the skills that are inherent to the study of arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS), their value to the individual, and the contribution they do make and could make in future to society as well as those that are important for educators of AHSS students to introduce directly. The Academy hopes to stimulate and facilitate a national debate about the nature and value of these skills, as well as setting the agenda for its own Skills Programme to 2020.

The project will seek to intellectualise what we mean by skills, and look at questions such as what skills should studying AHSS develop? What skills do individuals who have studied AHSS demonstrate? What contribution do individuals with AHSS skills make to society and the economy? What skills do employers want? What skills will be needed in the future?

To date, the Academy's focus has been on addressing areas with marked deficits – languages on the one hand, and quantitative skills on the other hand. As the National Academy for the humanities and the social sciences, the Academy is ideally placed to extend this work to look at skills across the range of its disciplines, as well as those that are common across all the arts, humanities and social sciences.

# WHY NOW?

Despite the uncertain future ahead for the economy and labour market, it is clear that high-skilled jobs will become increasingly critical to the UK's success. Demand is growing for individuals to be equipped with higher level skills which they can deploy in different contexts, whether in a career which may cross many sectors of employment or within a research community which is increasingly interdisciplinary. Universities have a pivotal role to play in helping graduates develop the necessary skills to meet the challenges of a transforming work force and solve the UK productivity puzzle. With increased university fees, parents and students expect even more than before to know what skills they will gain through their degree and how these will benefit them in life beyond higher education.

At the same time, technological development and access to large data sets is changing both how education is done and how we think about it. In an age of rapid and far-reaching social and technological change, the world is increasingly interconnected and complex. Skills are about how we can cope and adapt in a changing world and live and contribute to society individually and collectively.

It is therefore timely that a major piece of work in this area is undertaken.

# WHO STUDIES AHSS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?



Arts, humanities and social science (AHSS) students make up 55% of university students in the UK, totalling around 1.25 million students. They study subjects ranging from fine arts and dance, to modern languages, law and economics.

(source: HESA)

Graduates in these areas are employed across the economy, from financial services to museums, galleries and libraries. 3 years after graduation, 78% of AHSS students were in further study or sustained employment with average earnings of £28,300 per annum.

(source: Department for Education Longitudinal Education Outcomes)



In 2015, cultural organisations and practitioners contributed £27bn to the UK economy. The cultural sector employs around 642,000 people and is growing rapidly.

(source: Department for Culture, Media and Sport)





**71% of UK Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) surveyed in the British Academy's Born Global project agreed that future executives would need language skills.**

(source: British Academy Born Global project)

**4 out of 5 graduates in practice-based art, design, crafts and media subjects surveyed in the Creative Graduates Creative Futures project were in paid work, the majority in creative jobs and achieving their career goals.**

(source: Creative Graduates Creative Futures, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design; University of the Arts London)



**According to a British Council study, over 50% of professional leaders in 30 countries studied humanities or social sciences at university. Among young professional leaders and politicians the proportion is even higher.**

(source: British Council / Ipsos)






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