



Art:Design:Media  
Subject Centre

**skillfast-uk**  
The Sector Skills Council  
for fashion and textiles



## **Learning on Placement: An investigation of work placement opportunities within the designer-maker community**

Research commissioned by the Art Design Media Subject Centre – Higher Education Academy (ADM-HEA) & Skillfast-UK – Sector Skills Council for Fashion and Textiles.

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## 1. Executive summary

### Context of the Research

This report presents the findings of a national enquiry into work placement opportunities available to HE students within the UK fashion, textiles and accessories designer-maker community. The research aimed to identify the relationships that currently exist between the fashion, textiles and accessories HE student, tutor, design programmes and designer-maker business, as seen from the perspective of the designer-maker. The data collected during the project raises important issues around skills training, learning experiences and entrepreneurship. This report also provides advice and recommendations for stakeholders working in these specialist subject areas.

### Findings

The project findings represent online survey evidence, face-to-face interviews and focus group qualitative accounts of student work placements within the designer-maker studio.

The survey evidence presents the designer-makers personal experience of arranging student work placements; methods of contact; project planning and practical issues that impact upon the designer-maker business.

In addition, the findings show the specialist nature of work placement practices within this unique designer-maker community and highlights how work placements provide an excellent bridge between education and professional practice. The project findings also provide a detailed picture of how designer-maker work placements influence graduate entrepreneurship and in the long-term foster small business development.

### Conclusions and recommendations

These relate to the following key areas:

Designer-makers experiences of setting up in business and how student work placements factor within their business strategy. Recognising the time and cost implications of student enquiries and work placement planning on the designer-maker business; the designer-makers personal and business skills gap; the designer-maker business year and making timetable.

Student and course communication with designer-makers: improving initial contact and encouraging long-term relationships. One area of concern is student conduct, in light of portable and new digital technologies, and their understanding of what is good professional/ studio practice. The findings from this project suggest the need for a statement of responsibility to be provided for all art and design students prior to their arranging designer-maker work placements.

Specialist skills training provided by the designer-maker: recognising the potential for vocational learning within the thriving designer-maker community (small to

medium-sized enterprises – SMEs), and in doing so helping universities grow links with a thriving employment sector.

## 2. Introduction to the research context

### Context

The research project was jointly funded by Skillfast-UK, the Sector Skills Councils for Fashion and Textiles and the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Art, Design and Media. This project entitled *Learning on Placement: An investigation of work placement opportunities within the designer-maker community* represents a review of work placement practices and employer engagement within the UK fashion and textiles sector. The project aimed to raise awareness of HE student work placement practices within fashion, textiles and accessories designer-maker businesses in the UK.

The project aimed to identify and evaluate the impact of work placements on this community of designer-makers. In response to the evident shift in HE students seeking work placement opportunities within the fashion, textiles and accessories designer-maker community the project aims were to:

- Develop a profile of the textiles, fashion and accessories focused designer-makers currently working in the UK
- Understand the relationships that exist between the designer-maker and students, courses and universities, as seen from the perspective of the designer-maker
- Assess the ways in which HE students approach the designer-maker
- Investigate the full effects of student work placements on the designer-maker business and evaluate the strategies they have developed to accommodate work placements within their businesses

The project rationale was based on the widely acknowledged decline in student work placement opportunities within the traditional UK fashion and textiles industry. This is particularly true of large scale UK apparel, footwear and textiles companies. Textiles students in HE are less likely to find work-based learning experiences in firms with 250+ employees as large firms move towards out-sourcing overseas and employing cheaper UK labour rather than offering short-term student placements.

Faced with fewer work placement opportunities within larger UK textile, apparel and accessories companies, HE art and design students have been imaginative in creating their own opportunities. Students – rather than tutors – identified and capitalised on the potential for vocational learning within the thriving designer-maker community (small to medium-sized enterprises – SMEs), and in doing so have helped universities grow links with a thriving employment sector.

Work placements are now regarded by prospective art and design students as an intrinsic 'work real' experience and key to finding graduate employment. Any opportunity to engage with professional designer-makers is seen as extremely beneficial in a number of ways. Designer-makers are closely involved in all

aspects of running a business, from making to costing, portfolio development, small scale manufacturing, licensing, retail, financing and marketing. Such first-hand experiences give students insights into creative enterprise and business acumen, which complement their HE-trained creative skills set.

Designer-makers clearly encourage work related learning experiences, as it reflects their making philosophy and business principles, supports their making needs and builds links with the next generation of designers and makers. However, HE students in order to successfully engage with designer-makers need to consider their methods of contact and communication skills.

The designer-maker is often inundated by requests for work placement opportunities or design briefs and projects. To what extent this affects the running of their business and how this could be better managed became a major focus of the research. Another major theme raised by respondents was the importance of attracting students with business, IT skills and CAD experience. The designer-maker values the exchange of knowledge and the prospect of updating their own skills set.

Overall, the evidence shows the value of designer-maker focused work placements for students, courses and universities; it was also apparent that recent graduate entrepreneurs with experience of a designer-maker work placement are better prepared for working in industry.

### **3. Research methods**

The research was conducted between October 2007 and May 2008. The project was organised into four phases, with a range of research methods used to assess the impact of placements on the SMEs. In the first phase, research began with an online investigation of current makers and their companies. The creation of an extensive designer-maker database supported the development of online and paper questionnaires. The interviewees consisted of the network of contacts at a number of universities and colleges in the UK, through internet searches, and word of mouth in textiles and fashion communities. This led to the second phase and a review of current work placement practices conducted through an online survey. Approximately 75 companies on the database were contacted by letter and 25 by e-mail. Electronic responses came directly to the researcher; with a good response rate of 22. The online survey results produced the basis for the third phase and interviews with design makers, face-to-face. Phase four involved focus group work with designer-maker collectives.

The designer-maker is part of an extensive network of small businesses that follow a complex timetable of making, developing new ranges for trade shows and other selling events across the UK. Their studio and working situations are varied and sometimes are in their own home, shared studios, offices and collective spaces. Over 100 designer-maker companies were contacted by e-mail and telephone for the interview stage of the project. Consequently 21 in-depth interviews were co-ordinated around trade shows, open studio events, family activities and making. On average these interviews were between 90 to 240 minutes in length. The interviews were digitally recorded rather than filmed, a preference of the designer-makers, and provided valuable insights into the demands and advantages of running a design business.

Many of the designer-makers contacted preferred to discuss work placements in confidence. These additional meetings were also held at trade shows, during studio visits or at conferences. The issues raised by these designer-makers reflected the responses from the online and paper questionnaires and the recorded face-to-face interviews.

Designer-makers spoke freely about their business experiences and were equally enthusiastic when describing their dealings with students. The designer-makers generosity in discussing their own placement experiences when a student was particularly welcomed. They considered this first hand experience of work placements to have shaped their current business placement planning.

Designer-maker collectives such as Cockpit Arts and Hidden Art Cornwall were also instrumental in providing an overview of trends in making and enterprise. Designer-makers based outside of London made greater use of these organisations and were often approached by the collectives with student work placement enquiries. During the project's final phase I held a focus group with 11 designer-makers at Cockpit Arts in London (Holborn Workshops) which completed the gathering of qualitative data. This material has subsequently been edited for an archive in line with best research practice.

The data from interviews and the online survey also touched on the limited availability of small business funding, UK and international manufacturing and identified the importance of personal relationships with tutors and art and design programmes. Towards the end of the interview phase a consensus of opinion regarding good work placement practices and skills learning was formed within this field, emphasising the need for further examination of the skills and making opportunities available to HE students across the professional community.

In profile, the survey and interview subjects were:

- Sole trader designer-makers
- Designer-maker with part-time employee
- Sole trader designer-makers with out workers
- Sole traders with seasonal freelancers
- Two person partnerships
- 5-10 person studios (employees and freelancers)
- SMEs, 10+ employees or freelancers
- Collectives operating as a single business
- Family companies making bespoke fashion and textile products

Those interviewed described their businesses as being either:

- In development, 6 months into establishment
- Recent, set up within a year
- A new business, 2-5 years old
- Established, operating for 5 years or more
- Trading for 15-20 years
- Trading for 20 years (or more) as a recognised brand

The designer-maker's area of designing/making encompassed:

- Fashion designing and making (bespoke)

- Fashion and accessories designing
- Textiles making: woven, knitting, printing (digital and by hand), embroidery
- Combined fashion and textiles making: knit, embroidery and print
- Combined textiles and interior product designing
- Combined fashion, textiles and accessories (lifestyle product)
- Textiles sample or swatch designing
- Textile Art making
- Surface designing, including footwear and interior materials

The areas of practice also touched upon: jewellery; millinery; ceramics; glass; illustration; book design; interior product; gift; architectural services; spatial design and environmental design, all approached from the perspective of fashion and textiles design. This reflects the convergence and diversification of practices in the creative industries today.

#### 4. Findings from designer-maker interviews

##### Education, skills training and work placements

Of the fashion and textiles designer-makers contacted, most have tended to be degree qualified, many studied at MA level and come from a strong making background, through a design or humanities subject.<sup>1</sup> In 80% of cases their introduction to making began in early childhood, continuing through adolescence, at which point the hobbyist became a designer-maker creating new clothing, fabrics or accessories. Of the designer-makers interviewed 95 % disclosed their first contact with materials was in collaboration with a parent or other family member. These family makers had themselves been taught by a parent employed in the fashion and textiles industries. The skill level of these family makers was consistently described as being specialist and highly accomplished.

A minority of designer-makers interviewed as part of this study who were unable to study fashion, textiles or related subject at college or university, identified this formative introduction to making as the basis for their move into a designer-maker career. They described how part-time study, evening classes and short courses, had supported their making and business ambitions and allowed them to update their skills knowledge. Contact with other designer-makers and retail outlets also allowed for skills swap and short work placements.<sup>2</sup>

Designer-makers who experienced a traditional art and design route from A-Levels through to FE identified their Arts Foundation Course as the point at which their tutors first encouraged them to develop their private hobby into a serious undertaking. It was often their first experience of design being promoted as a subject with tangible career prospects and employment opportunities. Experience of work placement opportunities for the designer-makers during their FE studies was inconsistent; although many secured part-time employment in high street stores or independent retailers involved in fashion, textiles and accessories.

The majority of the designer-makers questioned recounted their first experience of work placements as undergraduate students. These placements frequently

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<sup>1</sup> Within the study group, approximately 1% of designer-makers have no formal training or degree; 2% of designer-makers have a degree in a humanities subject but no qualification in making or designing; Moreover 60% of makers questioned had sought additional training to learn new techniques for making; 70% of designer-makers questioned had a postgraduate qualification.

<sup>2</sup> Skills swaps between makers are usually made on an ad hoc basis but prove to be beneficial to both parties.

occurred within a commercial design studio or with a UK manufacturer, although in some instances international placements were undertaken and were integral in the designer-makers choice of a first degree programme. The opportunity to interact in a professional design environment during their early studies still influences their attitudes towards the value of student work placements. The relationships they established with designers and makers while on placement were, on the whole, positive and in some instances resulted in their first employment within the fashion, textiles and accessories industry after graduation.<sup>3</sup>

Designer-makers unable to access work placements during their own studies, because of funding difficulties, age restriction, or time constraints, regretted the limited experience of the fashion or textiles industries and the context they would have created early in their careers. It was this lack of industry contact that inspired many interviewees to apply for postgraduate study.

Designer-makers have a wealth of industry experience to pass onto students, as many have stepped out of a fashion and textiles design career often in direct response to poor employment and environmental practices within the industry.

Upon graduation from their first degree designer-makers moved to:

- unpaid placements within the fashion industry
- employment within textiles design studios (as a result of a student work placement during the period of study)
- freelance employment with a design studio organised by a tutor or from a contact made at a graduate show such as New Designers, London Fashion Week or other graduate show
- paid employment as a junior designer with a large scale fashion house or textiles company/ manufacturer
- part-time employment with a lone fashion or textiles designer
- working abroad for charities and organisations in textile and non-textile product development, business set up, marketing or promotion
- masters programmes in menswear, womenswear, fashion knitwear, printed textiles, tapestry, interior textiles and accessories/ product designing

International work placements with companies based in Europe, South America, India and China were common experiences for the Master level or postgraduate qualified designer-maker. This contact with international companies and manufacturers resulted in their working with technologies and equipment unavailable within their university or college. Usually lasting between one to three months, these in-depth placements allowed the designer-maker to work on new product ranges in exchange for practical making experience and technical training.

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<sup>3</sup> Designer-makers describe their own placement as the model they follow, with considerable time and effort put into a student visit if their own experience had been poor.

The designer-makers who had access to long-term placements during their MA studies said they provided an opportunity to:

- establish close working relationships with international manufacturers
- have practical experience of complex manufacturing systems
- employ their design knowledge in the prototyping of new products
- form important links with suppliers and other manufacturers
- understand the fashion, textiles and accessories manufacturing supply chain
- build relationships with in house designers and technicians
- understand ethical design and making issues

The design, manufacturing and technical knowledge gained while on international work placements, especially those associated with embroidery, printing and weaving companies in India and China was extensive. The value of the work placement was measured by the designer-maker in their subsequent postgraduate employment. The majority of designer-makers interviewed spoke of their preference for manufacturing fashion and textiles products in the UK using family run or small scale manufacturers. In many cases the designer-maker had been on a work placement with these companies during their MA studies and a mutually profitable design relationship had ensued. However, faced with a recent rise in materials costs many UK designer-makers have since chosen to return to their international contacts for bespoke production and small product runs.<sup>4</sup>

The point at which the MA or postgraduate qualified designer-maker elected to set up in business differed considerably from the degree qualified maker; the latter tending to work within the fashion or textiles industry for a considerable period of time before setting up on their own. The knowledge and contacts gained from previous work placements, their current design and manufacturing network and that of their design peers gave the postgraduate designer the confidence to establish a way of working that was more personal and reflective of their individual skills and making talents.

### Setting up in business

At the point of set up the fashion, textiles and accessories designer-maker usually worked alone, created an individual business identity but worked from home or another residential based space. Within a year the designer-maker business had usually moved to a larger space either within a new home or to a location within proximity to other design practitioners who were prepared to share operating and infrastructure costs. Of the fashion and textiles designer-makers visited many were working alongside jewellers, artists, illustrators, architects, traditional crafts people, product designers or those involved in media and the creative industries.<sup>5</sup>

As part of this move to a communal studio, shared space or larger office many designer-makers joined design collectives, usually more than one at the same time. Organisations such as **Craft Central**, **Cockpit Arts**, **Hidden Art**, **Hidden Art Cornwall**, **The Hive**, **Nottingham**, were identified for their positive business advice, accountancy support, marketing ideas, assistance in locating studio spaces, accessing small business development loans, grant application advice,

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<sup>4</sup> Products are then labelled 'designed in the UK' rather than made in the UK.

<sup>5</sup> Frequently in the same spaces and studios.

retail/ trade show support, exhibitions, business planning and their extensive network of like minded designers.<sup>6</sup>

Setting up grant and loan schemes such as those operated by **The Princes Trust**, **The Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust**, **The Crafts Council**, **Scottish Arts Council**, and **The Arts Council**, have aided very few designer-makers despite all of those interviewed having applied for a grant at some point during the early years of business set up. Many of the financial schemes currently in operation have strict age codes and do not take into account 'new' designer-makers who have often been involved in the fashion and textiles industry for up to 30 years prior to their career change and do not fit the accepted entrepreneur profile.<sup>7</sup>

Other national and regional groups and centres, often working in association with universities and local authorities are attempting to fill this funding gap, for instance **The Textile Centre of Excellence & The Textile & Fashion Design Incubator, Huddersfield**,<sup>8</sup> **Objective One**,<sup>9</sup> and **NESTA**,<sup>10</sup> provide much needed assistance to all designer-makers considering setting up in business, especially in areas of high unemployment and a shrinking manufacturing base where high quality making was once prevalent. The support provided by local authorities is usually long-term, up to ten years, and connects the designer-maker to regional support networks, business facilities and educational establishments including schools, city academies and FE colleges.

Designer-makers are on the whole business proactive and readily prepared to assist all who ask for advice. There was a keen sense of altruism amongst all the designers interviewed, towards other designers and students. Once established with a strong client base and a recognisable product brand, the designer as business and making mentor imparted local and specialist advice that other agencies did not yet cover by advising on materials contacts; pricing guidelines; prototyping companies; international manufacturing; marketing and web design companies. Local authorities that promote lone makers via their regional business mentoring schemes have recognised the wealth of knowledge and experience of these designer-makers and actively promote their work within galleries and authority owned spaces.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the interviewees had secured financial support for set up through personal bank loans, friends and family investment, or in a very few cases with the assistance of a wealthy backer or agent (kindly referred to as a 'design angel').<sup>12</sup> The point at which the designer-maker decided to set up in business

6 <http://www.craftcentral.org.uk>; <http://www.cockpitarts.com>; <http://www.hiddenart.co.uk/>  
<http://www.hiddenartcornwall.co.uk/>

7 Primarily seen as a recent graduate.

8 <http://www.textilehouse.co.uk/Design-Incubator.asp>

9 The Objective One Business Task Force's vision is to 'Make Cornwall the place to do business in the 21st Century' and its aim is to 'establish Cornwall as a model for sustainable prosperity by creating foundations that support innovation and best practice'. The projects in the Business Support investment cluster provide support, advice and investment for mainly, but not exclusively, small and medium sized businesses. This cluster also includes a number of funds that provide tailored services to individual small and medium businesses to assist them with development and growth. Small and medium sized businesses are essential to the development of the economy of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly located at [www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/01-projects-sector/all\\_projects\\_business.htm](http://www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/01-projects-sector/all_projects_business.htm)

10 <http://www.nesta.org.uk>

11 Mentoring of artists and designers working within other design fields is also common and enjoyed by the fashion, textiles and accessories designer.

12 A 'design angel' is the term used by designer-makers for a financial and business backer who makes a long-term commitment to the maker's company development.

was specific to each individual designer's circumstances. Designers who had stepped out of a fashion and textiles industry based career, to have children or to travel, had returned to designing in quite a small way, frequently working alongside another designer-maker; reconnecting with contacts within industry and working directly with retailers and PR and marketing firms.

Designer-makers who entered into the fashion and textiles industry after their first degree also regarded the move to being a business entrepreneur as a way to counteract their disillusionment with the fashion and textiles industry. They highlighted the poor treatment of designers, lack of employment ethics, environmental concerns, low pay, exploitation of foreign workers and general high turn over of staff as key reasons for leaving companies. In some cases the lack of acknowledgement of their design skills and an unchanging role within a fashion business kick started their move to an own design label start up.

### **The Designer-maker in business**

The designer-maker makes a huge effort to work with UK manufacturers and suppliers wherever possible. This is often at some cost to the designer-maker as many UK manufacturers are unprepared to produce small production runs. Designer-makers who have established a solid working relationship with a UK manufacturing company during an extended work placement tended to be better able to manufacture some of their products in the UK; in some instances designer-makers were supported by these UK companies during initial business set up, a time at which the cost of materials and manufacturing was otherwise prohibitive. In return, the designer-maker was able to offer an exchange of ideas and skills, often working to update manufacturers design collections.

The generosity of UK manufacturers was highlighted by many designer-makers within the study. However, as the designer-maker business evolved this relationship gradually ended, usually within three to four years. High material costs and expensive production runs were cited as primary reasons for ending contact. The designer-maker, when no longer able to work with UK manufacturers contacted companies in Spain, Turkey, India and China. Their commitment to discovering sympathetic manufacturers in these countries, who were prepared to supply high quality products and work closely on ideas development requires them to travel to these manufacturing regions on a regular basis.

At year five of the business the majority of designers-makers spoke of the need for a fresh input of capital to buy time out from the business to locate new suppliers, manufacturers, update their established design collections and to try out new trade shows or selling venues. The lack of funding streams for established designer-makers was discussed at every interview. Many designer-makers were frustrated by the time needed to hunt for even small amounts of funding. Access to new skills training at this five-year point would have made some considerable difference to the success of the business. Designer-makers highlighted the limited availability of specialist business advice at this key stage, and apart from three interviewees, few had located a business advisor with knowledge of art, design or the crafts in their local area.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Craft Central and Cockpit Arts recognise this issue and are committed to advising and assisting their members through workshops and trade shows.

Recent and established designer-makers often supplement their income with a part-time job to cover living costs, materials, studio costs and direct marketing. This affects their ability to offer work placements in a block or during slow times of year when a student may benefit more from working with the designer-maker on personal projects relating to their coursework. Not until the designer-maker business has reached a point of success, measured in terms of a healthy client base, steady turn over, repeat orders from retailers/ stores and product/ gift outlets, were student work placements introduced and part-time work outside of the business reduced.

Part-time teaching is a popular occupation for the designer-maker as it stimulates their own researching and making skills. Teaching is also regarded as a 'way to give something back' to a course but more importantly they hope to inspire a new generation of designer-makers. The benefits of working in a college or university environment allowed the designer-maker access to new technologies; assisted in their locating new funding and meeting prospective work placement students that they felt comfortable inviting into their studio or workshop area.

All makers interviewed discussed their employment strategies for the business. In many cases established designer-makers preferred their employees, often numbering between 5 and 10 individuals, to work part-time in the business studio. Studio working was favoured prior to key deadlines or during commission work. In newly established businesses some designer-makers had opted to share the costs of a full-time employee with another maker. This business associate was also more likely to share students on work placements. The shared employee approach worked best when the designer-makers worked on dissimilar products and had individual trade show and production timetables. This paid employee, usually a graduate designer, assisted both parties in a breadth of making activities and was also rewarded with materials supply and equipment access. They regarded their dual employer experience as a form of business apprenticeship and vital training prior to beginning their own start up.<sup>14</sup>

The marketing and promotion of the designer-maker label also takes considerable planning. Providing information packs and regular product updates for stylists, journalists and magazine editors removed the designer from the business on average one day a week and more prior to a trade show or selling event. When questioned only 50% of respondents used work placement students to assist in the packaging of products and company promotion. Most designer-makers preferred students to work on simple making and finishing. Designer-makers said they welcomed students being part of their trade show and assisting at other retail events. The opportunity to work with a designer-maker at selling or promotional event was seen as being invaluable work based learning and was usually offered to students that the designer has worked with previously on a studio placement.

## 5. Student contact and work placements

Almost all respondents felt responsible as alumni. Many presented themselves as having strong ties to their former university or college. As a consequence they were most likely to make time to follow up enquiries from students at their former institution. Nearly all respondents said they valued their ability to provide work placements to student designers and the institution that helped them on their way.

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<sup>14</sup> The most successful example was where a knitted textiles designer and a jeweller employed a graduate maker sharing the costs of their full-time contract. The graduate then had access to two different workshop areas.

Many designer-makers receive a high volume of enquiries regarding work placements, in one instance a designer-maker was approached by 150 students in one month. Designer-makers rarely have to approach institutions for appropriate placement opportunities. According to those interviewed contact via e-mail is now their preferred method of first approach; telephone contact is also favoured as this indicates how the student may perform while on placement.

The designer-maker tends to receive most of their work placement enquires randomly from students in the UK, Europe and the USA, by e-mail or by letter. The quantity of e-mails that are received at any one time can reflect a specific time of year, a work placement term or recommendations from other students on their design programme. The designer-maker's business activity often generates the increase in contact. For example a new marketing campaign, magazine coverage of new products, or attendance at an exhibition or trade show such as Pulse, Origin, 100% Design, London Fashion Week, or ICFF (New York). Whereupon the volume of student work placement enquiries increases exponentially.

It would appear that students view the designer-maker placement as an opportunity to visit a large city, especially London; to learn specialist skills or making techniques; to acquire business experience; to engage their passion for making; to attempt to network with a breadth of makers. The well-informed and enterprising student understands that once they have successfully worked with one designer-maker they are able to secure a second or third placement, either by working within the designer-makers peer group or moving within a design collective or multiple workshop units such as those offered by Craft Central or Cockpit Arts.<sup>15</sup> The primary designer-maker is then asked for a reference for the second, third, fourth placement by the student.

All designer-makers were sincere in their discussion of work placement students and delighted in talking about the few who had a rather naive understanding of who was in charge. Designer-makers tell of the shock when students realise that they follow a complex design, making, promotion and business calendar that is ruled by shows, exhibitions, commissions and other major selling and promotional events. However, the busiest times for the designer-maker, when placements can really make a difference to their business is often when the student is away on the summer vacation.<sup>16</sup>

All the interviewees commented upon the inconsistent approach of students when making first contact. The work placement process is clearly a frustrating process for many designer-makers; some students send friendly, informal e-mails that include text message abbreviations, use no surnames and are poorly written. Others follow a standardised layout as if following a business studies exercise. Occasionally, a highly finished and carefully designed CV (on a CD) showing images of design work, drawing and ideas for making during the work placement is carefully packed and posted with a special hand made gift enclosed for the designer. A response to these students is usually guaranteed. A recent change in the posted CV is the use of an e-portfolio or online CV that the student has created at myspace.com or openfolio.com. The student sends a link and password to the designer-maker by e-mail in the hope that an interview can be arranged to show a physical portfolio of work. The majority of designer-makers

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.craftcentral.org.uk> and <http://www.cockpitarts.com>

<sup>16</sup> Cockpit Arts Focus Group meeting 27/05/2008.

conduct all their business dealings via a laptop and this immediate method of looking at the student work seemed to fit their way of working.

An online survey respondent noted:

Most approaches to do a work placement don't progress beyond initial emails, as I'm put off by 'text-speak', incredible informality and the lack of understanding for my business. If an applicant can't be bothered to actually read all the information on my website, or recognise that a level of professionalism is necessary when writing letters or emails, then I find it very difficult to justify the time it takes to reply to them asking them to send me a CV and proper covering letter. Interestingly, every time I have had to do that (and I am always polite!) I never hear from them again!<sup>17</sup>

The designer-makers first impression of the student always influences their decision to reply, although on the whole prefer students to contact them directly rather going through a university work placement co-ordinator. A survey respondent commented:

I quite like that those students who do get in touch have done so on their own initiative. I often get quite a few emailing but then when I ask for a CV and images of their work, they never reply - thus screening out the ones that aren't really that interested.<sup>18</sup>

The design student's academic programme does not marry well with the designer-maker's business timetable. Periods of intensive manufacturing leading up to Christmas (textile makers), or important trade shows/ catwalk shows (such as London Fashion Week) tend to occur during term time when students who are enrolled on a three year degree programme are unable to assist with critical making and promotional business activities. Those students on a four year sandwich course are much more likely to secure longer placements with designer-makers.<sup>19</sup>

Students who have worked well on placement are often asked to return to work for one day a week over the course of a year or throughout the remainder of their studies, but always with the approval of the course programme and university. This is slowly becoming a popular choice for both the designer and student as both benefit from the experience. Furthermore, the designer-maker has time to accumulate suitable work for the student, prioritise their own making and plan more effectively for the student's arrival. The student is then able to develop a long-term relationship with the designer-maker and understand the businesses making and cycle over a whole design year.

## 6. Online survey and interview findings

When asked what they valued most in a work placement student, the designer-makers interviewed as part of a focus group at Cockpit Arts in Holborn London, responded 'a friendly, good natured and happy student' who was comfortable

<sup>17</sup> Learning on Placement: Online survey 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Learning on Placement: Online survey 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Although rarely for a whole year, without a trial period.

working within a small studio environment and prepared to learn, arrive on time and behave in a professional manner.

All of the face-to-face interviewees preferred students to visit them prior to the work placement usually with a portfolio of recent work. This initial meeting with the student allows the designer-maker to assess their suitability for the design studio. For example, a group of milliners spoke of jewellery students who had begun contacting them for work placements. These students were highly valued because of their ability to construct 3D pieces using delicate precious materials and were trusted with complex making and commission work. Moreover, because the designer-maker does not always accommodate students from a similar making background to their own they interview to ensure design compatibility and relevance of the placement.

Designer-makers do not expect to see a breadth of skills ability within the student portfolio. Interviewees noted first year students were sometimes better prepared for work placements than second years or graduates. Three designer-makers also spoke of their involvement with 15 and 16 year old school students, who they described as being the best design workers they had yet to meet. Once connected with a school they consistently accepted GCSE pupils, usually for one day a week over a 6 month period. These students were eager to do well and worked closely with the designer in a variety of tasks within the business.<sup>20</sup>

The following placement models have each been used by at least three designer-makers within the study:

- One to two weeks<sup>21</sup>
- One day a week for four weeks
- A month<sup>22</sup>
- “Just at our busiest times”
- “As and when needed with various projects”
- One year

The majority of work placements provided by designer-makers last for one to two weeks. An informal interview was also used for students that approached the designer-maker for a very different type of work placement. Of the studios and companies visited during this project, approximately 45% had students on work placement in the studio during the interview. Moreover, 50% of these work placement students were from a business or marketing course, had no making experience other than as a hobbyist, were often international students, were bilingual and did not expect any payment or travel expenses.

They assisted the designer-maker by:

- updating their client databases
- completing trade show applications
- website design or uploading new collection images and information
- designing new promotional material
- completing product orders and answering client enquires
- updating the designer-makers blogs
- writing new product descriptors,

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<sup>20</sup> This was with both Grammar school pupils and students from inner city Academies.

<sup>21</sup> Most popular.

<sup>22</sup> Second most popular.

- diary planning and filing
- developing business projections
- answering the phone
- responding to e-mails (many from design students asking for work placements)
- applying labels, fastenings, and trimmings to products

The level of involvement these students had with the business was significant. Once the business student had worked for one designer-maker they were often recommended to another. The skills level of these business students was very high. They were frequently given longer placements than design students and remained in touch with the designer-maker for some considerable time after the placement.

One day, student placements were also discussed by interviewees. These are a working interview and are arranged by the student or the student's tutor to discuss the designer-maker's history, current making and business/ design ethos. Students often show a portfolio of work while discussing ideas for design projects and approaching design competitions. A follow up interview is often arranged and the completed project work discussed.

### **On placement feedback**

A wide range of qualitative data, mainly quotes, is shown in this section. The following questions were asked directly to designer-makers during one to one interviews and as part of the online survey.

When designer-makers were asked what they considered to be the ideal work placement preparation for their business the breadth of response mirrored the diverse approach to work placement planning. All respondents to the online survey had developed a different idea, highlighting the difficulty that students and courses face when contacting this group of makers.

Respondents' answers to this question included a "chat on the phone", "Someone who is bright and has a history of creativity" and "...other work experience and a visit before the placement starts." Some designer-makers stipulate personal contact to discuss the possibility of a placement, for example one respondent said "Interview is essential and seeing their work before making any decisions".

For one designer-maker the recommendation of the course was first required followed by a meeting: "The only preparation can be a suitable student sent by the uni for a busy studio and information from me to the student, preferably through a meeting to advise what is required."<sup>23</sup>

An evaluation of the student's skills ability was also required in some instances:

Find out what skills the student has, what they are hoping for in the placement. Planning as wider range of tasks as possible. Reminding myself what I would have liked to have done or learnt when I did placements.

Online survey respondent

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<sup>23</sup> Online survey respondent

I expect the student to be aware of my business (i.e. read through my website) and have a basic understanding of what exactly I do. I expect them to know how to behave professionally and be prepared to learn and undertake studio jobs that may not be the most exciting thing in the world, but are still integral to running a business.

Online survey respondent

The student's awareness of the company and the nature of the making was also important to respondents:

Just being aware of what we do, what's in the range, etc

Online survey respondent

Other interviewees expected a student to have visited a trade show or seen their work at an exhibition or other venue before contacting them. All designer-makers expected students to have some understanding of the nature of their design range or their target market. The making and educational background of the student often influenced the designer-makers placement planning. In some cases designer-makers had implemented pre-placement projects for students, which the student continued while on placement. Other designer-maker did not expect any form of special planning and merely encouraged the student to turn up and work hard.

When asked what constituted a good work placement experience designer-makers spoke passionately about the learning opportunities they could offer to students. They were aware of the importance of providing an introduction to business life and were keen to ensure students understood the commitment needed to set up as a designer-maker. Respondents also stated a good placement experience was:

one where both parties learn something new and where new ideas arise

someone who can work by themselves to complete the task once shown

..balance of activities and experiences - shadowing and actively doing both making and business-type activities; working a little on own initiative; getting a taste for how the workshop runs

commitment, punctuality and enthusiasm

Work hard, on time, enthusiastic

where they are actively involved with what I do. I normally have students working with me over design week, when it is very busy, so worthwhile for both sides

where the student has been a help rather than a hindrance. I am a sole trader and am very time-pressurised, which I expect the student to recognise. I also

like to see that the student is learning and enjoying the opportunity. I expect to see that the student actually wants to do the placement and isn't just doing it to fulfil a course requirement

watching how a business is run whilst doing small jobs e.g. ironing on labels. Being able to be included or trusted to do larger jobs, such as knitting up products or printing. Also the student to be enthusiastic, reliable and trustworthy

taking part in a variety of activities, getting an understanding of working for yourself. If possible learning new skills. Working to deadlines and generally getting involved. Leaving with a greater understanding of what is involved and the workings of a small design business.

#### Quotes from online survey respondents

The designer-makers' view of what constituted a poor work placement experience was equally telling. Interviewees first described their own student work placement experiences. Online survey replies included "being used as a dogsbody!" and "doing the same task for two weeks, feeling that your just free labour. Not being included in any day to day tasks. Leaving with nothing more than you came with", illustrating the concerns that many designer-makers have about supporting work placements within their businesses.

In one case a designer-maker commented when "...it is more trouble than it is worth, as the placement can not be too time consuming or it is detrimental to the smooth running of the studio. The student needs to be keen and willing" or "When I can't think of what they can do and neither can they." Designer-makers were also put-off by students who were "constantly asking how to do something." Survey respondents also raised the issue of unprofessional behaviour- students who "can't come on time", were a "difficult student", or "lazy, lacking initiative" and "when the student is overly demanding, unrealistic or unprofessional but I pick up on this at early stages of correspondence and then don't go forward to offer a placement."

When questioned about **how students benefit from a work placement within their company** designer-makers tended to focus on skills development and the business knowledge the student gained during their time in the studio. Comments included "a knowledge of the business", and "...see what it like working/running a small business", "Getting an insight into how we do things, pressures and priorities day-to-day, plus specific insight into our methods of making."

One designer-maker wrote:

I am very conscious that as I am unable to pay a wage for work experience students (I just cover travel and lunch), I must give as much 'in kind' payment as possible. I am very open in talking about my business and my education/career path, and will spend a lot of time giving advice and support to that student. I have an extensive textiles library and I make that available to borrow. If there are any forthcoming trade shows that I might have free tickets or pv tickets for, then I will pass one on. Overall, I hope to give the student a very realistic impression of my business, alongside relevant experience to help them build their CV

Online survey respondent

Perhaps the opportunity to be involved in the business aspects of the designer-maker company is reflected in the steady rise of student work placement enquiries. The designer-maker obviously enjoys the business mentoring aspect of student work placements:

I hope the few that have, will see that textiles is a broad area and there are plenty of different avenues to follow. I share a large studio with 3 other textile businesses, so they get to see other practices as well as mine

Online survey respondent

The following quotes are from online survey respondents who also answered the question of what a student gains from a work placement experience within their designer-maker studio:

Real life experience, ups and downs of working, new techniques, meeting people

They find out about what is expected in a real studio environment and it is usually quite a shock

They get hands on experience of exhibiting at a trade show, meeting contacts etc, and I can give them insight and advice into the relationship between design and business

They learn how to work to deadlines with responsibility

They see how a small design business is run and they can in turn evaluate whether this is for them on completion of their degree

To see how a business is run. A good lesson in real life outside of college

Usually gain useful tips on techniques and work methods

Quotes from online survey respondents

### **Business impact**

The designer-maker works hard to ensure all student work placements are successful and students enjoy their visit. They put considerable time and effort into developing a work plan, often to the detriment of their own designing. In many instances the designer-maker helps arrange accommodation, travel and some fun events. These designer-makers are regularly contacted by students from Europe and the USA. In some cases they are even asked to pay for the student's accommodation and flights.

Group work placements where up to six students are working at any one time can have a calming effect on the designer-maker and students feel less exposed. It affords students an opportunity to meet student peers from other courses and cities around the UK and encourages a making dialogue.

The following quotes were from respondents to the online survey. Designer-makers when questioned about the impact of (single or group) work placements on their business were mostly positive and replied:

Helpful

I haven't taken on that many students as my work has been quite specialist at times. But overall it has been helpful at busy times filling orders and working with someone else.

More work done

No major impact but it has been helpful when getting ready for shows

So far, I have only had one work placement student work with me, as she was excellent. She was invited to return during her summer break as a result. Basically she worked as a studio assistant and was a huge help at a busy time of the year and I enjoyed having her input

None really apart from finding good people to employ in the future. We tend to give more than receive

A useful pool of future employees

Other designer-makers thought work placements inspired their time management and studio organisation.

I've found that having a student come means that I have to find activities for them to do. Often these are things that have been put on one side because I don't have the time to devote to them day-to-day (e.g. developing styling accessories; researching new suppliers) - so the placement has given me the impetus to organise these activities and brief the student - which means the job gets done!

Quotes from online survey respondents

This was also reflected in the answers given to the question of what the designer-maker had done differently within the company since they began offering work placements. Designer-makers stated:

It has enabled me to delegate!

..increase my patience

e-mail replies

Arrange my work schedule to accommodate their experiences

The following quotes provide some insight into possible disadvantages for the designer-maker business, if work placements were to continue. Respondents to the online survey stated:

As long as I continue to filter out the unprofessional applications, then I only see it as a positive thing!

Depends on the student and quality of their work, personality, etc.

Having to spend precious time creating a stimulating environment, making sure there is enough for a student to do as well as organising small jobs and taking time out to train up a person

I just have to make sure that I don't arrange too many - I have a maximum of 1 week and they need to be at least a month apart. It requires a lot of effort on my part to supervise a student, which can mean I don't get as much done myself as usual!

If they aren't suitable they can be disruptive

No, but one accepts students with care

Risk of designs being copied and confidentiality being compromised

Space is always the over riding factor, I have quite a small area and it's just not always practical to have someone on placement even if I'd like to

Designer-makers accept they need to filter out many student applications for work placements. However, the more students they meet, the easier this becomes. Students often pass on their work placement contacts to their peer group. Designer-makers discussed these students and described the 'stream' of applications from a specific pathway/ course at a specific institution. They were impressed by students acting as referees for these applicants and found they needed to spend less time briefing the new student as this was done for them by their previous work placement student.<sup>24</sup>

## 7. Conclusion & recommendations

It is clear that the designer-maker focused work placement is of great value to fashion, textiles and accessories students. Designer-makers are on the whole keen to continue providing open access to their business and design studios. However, there were a number of key issues that have emerged from this research that require some further investigation.

### Student professionalism

Designer-makers raised their concerns about a minority of students who arrived on placement with a negative attitude or presented poor behaviour. This has resulted in a reduction of work placement opportunities for the associated course and reflected badly on the university. Student time-keeping and unprofessional behaviour were also mentioned by many designer-makers. A particularly difficult situation for the designer-maker is the use of a mobile phone in the studio; text messaging to friends and fellow students throughout the day was considered to be extremely distracting. The introduction of mobile phones with cameras and video recording facilities was discussed with some apprehension.

Students who are poorly advised or have unrealistic expectations about a placement, either because they do not understand the designer-maker business, the type of work they will be asked to complete, are required to work intensively, be self directed and motivated, urgently need some form of guidance for working with this specialist group of makers. This could be delivered online or as a hand

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<sup>24</sup> Designer-makers preferred to have only three or four of these students before stopping the process.

out at trade shows and events where students often first notice a designer-maker. Designer-makers would welcome some materials or information to hand out to students when they are approached at their design stands.

Some students arrived at the work placement expecting to follow the same timetable as their undergraduate programme and saw no need to follow the designer-maker's instruction. Late starts, long lunch breaks and early finishing were all mentioned as difficult issues for the designer-maker to address. In a few cases students did not return to complete the final days of a placement. This left the designer-maker in a difficult situation, unsure of who to contact or what procedures to follow. No designer-maker should be asked to accommodate a student if they have a recognised history of poor conduct or unpredictable behaviour.

The answer to these issues was suggested by a number of interviewees. They agreed a statement of responsibility could assist the designer-maker in implementing a series of working rules and agreements which if broken would result in a quick termination of the placement. Moreover, when students arrived on placement without the knowledge of their tutors or university, the designer-maker would be able to act if students exhibited poor decision-making. Most designer-makers did not want to complete an in-depth placement report for the course or university, but would return a signed statement confirming the successful completion of the work placement and were happy to consider the statement of responsibility as a means of formal communication.

Additionally a standardised agreement covering the production of work and Intellectual Property created during the work placement defining the rights of both the designer-maker and the student could be added to this statement of responsibility. Designer-makers who have prototyped new materials and ways of working would be prepared to offer more opportunities to students if this was developed specifically for their businesses.

### **Student travel and accommodation.**

The travel and accommodation costs involved for students when they attempt a work placement far from home or their term time address can be prohibitive, especially if the work placement is in the South East or London. Designer-makers attempt to make up for this by providing food, accommodation, some travel money and materials. This can be difficult when the business is located in the designer-maker's own home.

Students who are unable to afford a work placement with this group of designer-makers urgently require some funding assistance as they are missing out on an exciting life changing experience. Most designer-makers are unable to pay the work placement student a wage or stipend during their visit. The designer-maker feel guilty when asking a student to have to pay out to work hard on tasks that may improve their business turn over. Designer-makers would prefer students be provided with funds for travel during a work placement scheme. They would be willing to complete an application form if the student would then be guaranteed funding.

### **Client lists and supplier details**

There is an increase in the number of students who arrive on a work placement expecting to be provided with a list of the designer-maker's suppliers and client base. The designer-maker may have taken years to develop a contacts book and build up a committed client base. Although designer-makers are incredibly generous in their studio, with materials and with their time, this lack of understanding on the part of the student is beginning to negatively affect the designer's impression of some UK design courses.

The designer-maker has resolved this issue by agreeing to visit a course rather than accept students for a work placement. They can then explain the nature of their business and set some guidelines for students in the form of contact advice, dates, work placement times and most importantly describe the do's and don'ts of a work placement. This visit by the designer-maker is usually unpaid with no funding provided for travel costs.

### **New Technologies and CAD skills development.**

The shift towards CAD within many fashion, textiles and accessories programmes has meant students with knowledge of Photoshop 7 and other designing packages are increasingly preferred by some designer-makers. Digital fabric printing is also becoming more prevalent within textiles design studios. Some designer-makers who want to learn or update their CAD skills but are unable to afford courses because of time restrictions or cost are beginning to recognise these work placement students as a useful way to bring in new CAD knowledge to their businesses.

This change in manufacturing and production could be an opportunity for FE and HE institutions to develop reciprocal arrangements whereby designer-makers could be taught new skills and students be provided with a broader range of work placement opportunities. In both cases the work placement student benefits as they can practice their CAD designing and receive specific technical making instruction.

### **Web profile: internet selling and commissions**

Locating website designers who allow the designer-maker full control over content and product image is difficult. Belonging to a co-operative that promotes itself online is one way to ensure complete brand control. Having a web presence alongside a group of exhibitors, for instance Origin 2007, design-nation 2007, or 100% 2007, which stays online for a number of years, is an accepted compromise, although designer-makers have to be prepared to conform to a standardised web layout.

The growth in online sales, although relatively small in comparison to those generated at shows, within galleries or through retail, is something designer-makers recognise as an important part of their future business plans, especially when looking at overseas market development and commission work. There is noticeable increase in the creation of stylish websites which intentionally highlight the difference between the hobbyist craft maker or textile artist and the business focused SME designer.

The appearance and ease of use of the website is seen to reflect the quality of the product and possibly even the making skill of the designer. The designer-maker also has to create an identity that ensures their product range appears to be uniquely different. Students across the UK and Europe are making use of these designer-makers' websites/ pages to organise their own work placements, with or without the knowledge of their programme tutors, using the linked designer-makers **contact me** or **info@** e-mail. All designer-makers have had to create a second e-mail address through which they complete the majority of their business, an address that is never revealed to tutors or students.

On average designer-makers receive up to 30 e-mails a month requesting work placement opportunities. To counter any further increase they have created a special work placement link on their websites which takes the student away from their business e-mail. They look at these applications when they have time or need a student to work in the business. Students therefore have to be flexible in their ability to meet the designer-makers making needs and schedule.

### **Locating external funding: skills development (CPD) or exhibition/ show work.**

Finding time to continue professional training or for skills refreshing is also a concern for designer-makers. Working on exhibition pieces, developing new product lines or incorporating new processes into design collections often requires time that designer-makers find difficult to schedule. Perhaps associations such as the British Council, the Crafts Council or other arts and making organisations could provide development loans or grants for 'thinking time' or design and market research. Many designer-makers try to form close links with FE and HE fashion and textile courses, either through paid teaching or as artists/ designers in residence, to develop their skills set and take time out of the business. This is often seen as a necessary distraction from future business development.

The repeated use of a single student within the business is also become more popular with designer-makers. This group of students are called upon during holiday times to aid in the making of exhibition pieces or work on commissions. Undergraduate fashion and textiles students begin working for designer-makers in their first summer break, between level 1 (4) and Level 2 (5) of their studies. These placements are mostly paid as the student has to forego earning money during long holiday breaks.

The benefit to the designer is a consistency in the work, with a student who understands the level of making required for the business. The benefits to the student include a greater understanding of the industry; an introduction to business; accounting; building supplier relationships; developing customer relationships; concluding in graduate employment with the designer-maker either temporarily or on a longer term basis. Many students moving through to MA studies carry on working with these same designer-makers.

### **Materials and machinery costs Health and Safety issues**

This group of designer-makers are exceptional in that they make a conscious effort to work with anyone who approaches them in an open and sincere manner. They often go far beyond what is expected of them as an employer and see their

connection to students and design programmes as a long-term investment that will ultimately benefit their business in the future.

The effort required on the part of the designer-maker to assist students when they are working in the studio has yet to be addressed by universities. Furthermore, the cost implications of supplying materials and repairing equipment that the student may inadvertently damage needs some urgent consideration.

Designer-makers use their common sense when asking students to work with machinery. However, designer-makers were concerned that students were not aware of health and safety issues and insurance when they arrived on placement, or that machinery would be inaccessible because of potential repair costs.

Recognition for the designer-maker's material expenditure, either through a small materials stipend or other payment could be considered by the course or university. Insurance liability and health and safety information should be included within a statement of responsibility.

### **Skills development and training.**

Greater recognition for the skills training and resources these designer-makers provide is needed from government. Designer-makers complement college and university programme activities by teaching lost or little known skills and preserve making skills within the UK. Additionally they are innovators of new products and design cutting edge materials. They export their work around the world and work incredibly hard to promote their business while dealing with all the issues that occupy the small business entrepreneur.

University or college based work placements may be an additional way to connect designer-makers and courses with local businesses. Business services could also be supplied by local universities or colleges accessing their student base and facilities. New and established designer-makers require assistance with web design, marketing and promotion, grants application support and access to otherwise prohibitively priced equipment, facilities or additional space at periods of intense making or when working on commissions.

Overall, the findings from the designer-makers perspective indicates satisfaction with student work placements as they currently stand. Designer-makers prefer to design and deliver their own working plan and prefer limited interference from programmes and universities.

## 8. Appendices

### Learning on Placement survey

Please note that once you have clicked on the CONTINUE button your answers are submitted and you can not return to review or amend that page.

#### Introduction

1. How long has your business been in existence?

- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-15 years
- over 15 years

2. Apart from the owner(s) how many people does the business employ?

- 0
- 1-4
- 5-10
- 11-20
- more than 20

3. Do you employ freelance designer makers?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes

4. Do you consider work placement students to be important to your business?

- Yes
- No

5. Are your work placements available to all degree level students?

- Always
- Never

Sometimes

6. Have you had BA graduates or MA level students on work placement?

- BA graduates  
 MA  
 Both

7. Have you ever offered permanent or freelance employment to a student who previously visited you on work placement?

Yes  No

### Placements

8. How many degree level students apply for work placements in any one year?

- 0  
 1-4  
 5-10  
 11-20  
 more than 20

9. How many placements do you arrange each year?

- 1-4  
 5-10  
 11-20  
 more than 20

10. How do students usually contact you for work placements?

- Letter  
 e-mail  
 Telephone  
 Through a mutual contact  
 Other (please specify):

11. Do you prefer prospective work placement students to send you a CV or reference letter from their tutor?

- CV
- Reference
- Both
- Neither
- Other (please specify):

12. Do you have a preferred length of time for each work placement?

- 1-2 weeks
- 1 month
- 3 months
- Other (please specify):

13. Do you prepare students for their work placement with you before they arrive?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify):

14. Do you expect students to have researched your business before they arrive?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify):

#### Contact with Universities

15. Do University representatives ever contact you about arranging student work placements?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

16. Have you ever approached a University to offer work placement opportunities?

- Yes
- No

17. Do you prefer to arrange a student work placement through a University or College work placement officer?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes

18. Or, do you prefer to arrange work placements with a specific tutor and course that you know?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes

19. Would you prefer a university and the students' lecturer to match a particular student to your company?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes

20. Is it usual for a University to provide guidelines or advice about the work placement or the student?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes
- Other (please specify):

21. Do you complete a report evaluating the students achievements upon completion of the work placement?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes

### The impact of work placements on your business

This final part of the survey will help us to understand the work placement experience more from your perspective. We greatly appreciate the time taken to complete this section. Please note that these questions are all optional, however, we value any feedback that you can provide.

22. Have all your work placement students worked well in your studio?

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes
- Other (please specify):

23. What do you consider to be a good student work placement experience?

24. What do you consider to be a poor student work placement experience?

25. What do you consider to be ideal work placement preparation for your business?

26. What impact have work placement students had on your business, if any?

27. What have you learnt or do you do differently within your company since you began student work placements?

28. In what way do you think students participating in work placements in your company benefit from the experience?

29. Can you see any disadvantages to your business if you were to continue with student work placements?

30. Would you be interested in joining a national work placement scheme which would enable you to register your requirements and through which students could apply for work placements?

A national work placement scheme may help you to manage work placement applications, it may also allow you to find work placement students with specific skills and allow you to set specific dates for students to contact you.



### **Interview consent and data processing statement**

If you consent to being interviewed and to any data gathered being processed as outlined below, please print and sign your name, and date the form, in the spaces provided.

### **Background Information**

- This project is being conducted by Dr Andie Robertson, a researcher at the Buckinghamshire New University. It is funded by ADM-HEA/Skillfast-UK and Buckinghamshire New University.
- All data will be treated as personal under the *1998 Data Protection Act*, and will be stored securely and destroyed after a two year period.
- Interviews will be recorded by the primary researcher and stored on disc.
- A copy of your interview recording will be provided, free of charge, on request.
- Data collected may be processed manually and with the aid of computer software.
- Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

### **Consent Issues**

Please answer each statement concerning the collection and use of the research data. (Please delete accordingly)

1. I have read/listened and understood the information given regarding the project

**Yes / No**

2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

**Yes / No**

3. I have had my questions answered satisfactorily.

**Yes / No**

4. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation.

**Yes / No**

5. I agree to the interview being audiotaped and to its contents being used for research purposes.

**Yes / No**

6. I agree to being identified in this interview and in any subsequent publications or use.

**Yes / No**

7. I do not agree to being identified in this interview and in any subsequent publications or use. Where used my name must be removed and my comments made unattributable.

**Yes / No**

8. I agree to my recording (in line with conditions outlined above) being archived and used by other bona fide researchers.

**Yes / No**

9. I would like to have a copy of my recording.

**Yes / No**

10. I would like my name acknowledged in the report and on the project web site (without linking it to content or quotation)

**Yes / No**

11. I have read and understood the information sheet.

**Yes / No**

12. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

**Yes / No**

13. Please indicate, by ticking ONE of the boxes below, whether you are willing to be identified, and whether we may quote your words directly, in reports and publications arising from this research.

- I may be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and ADM-HEA/Skillfast-uk, and in publications.
- I may not be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and the ADM-HEA/Skillfast-uk, nor in any publications. My words may be quoted provided that they are anonymised.
- I may not be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and ADM-HEA/Skillfast-uk, nor in any publications. My words may not be quoted.

Please print your name

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Signature

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Date

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Contact Details for postage of the CD recording.

Please be aware we will send this information by recorded delivery which will require your signature upon delivery.