

North West HEI Activity: Digital and Creative Industries

The North West region has key strengths in the digital and creative industries. A robust industry sector is supported by significant capabilities across all areas of activity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including research, teaching and knowledge transfer. These cover both the technological and creative needs of the sector from ICT, informatics, digital media, and new and convergent technologies to digital animation, art, music and design.

The North West's universities¹ offer over 2300 courses in the digital and creative industries ranging from Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to full foundation, bachelors and postgraduate degrees. The EPSRC funded Doctoral Training Centre in the Digital Economy at Lancaster University will also bring 50 postgraduate research students to the area over the next 5 years.

An increasing amount of training provision is developed in partnership with employers. The new Liverpool John Moores Skillset Media Academy² will offer a wide portfolio of courses, from BTEC courses in media production and digital animation through to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in broadcast technology and engineering, screenwriting, digital games and interactive media. Liverpool Hope University, in partnership with the national centre for Graduate Entrepreneurship, has also developed employer led courses including postgraduate CPD in Business and Enterprise in the Creative and Performing Arts. **The University of Bolton has worked with employers via the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media, Skillset, to develop business and management courses for the music and creative industries.**

The North West Higher Level Skills Pathfinder (NW HLSP) has also funded the development of six new HEI courses for work based learners in the digital and creative industries. These are summarised in the table below.

| Institution | Qualification | Industry Partners |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| UCLan | Postgraduate CPD Digital tools for journalism | Sky News, Haymarket Publications, Trinity Mirror, Times Online, BBC, ITV Granada, Johnston Press. |
| Liverpool John Moores University | Postgraduate CPD Creative & Cultural Management and Leadership | Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Everyman Playhouse, Mando Group, Non Conform Design Ltd, Morris Hargreves McIntyre, Tate Liverpool, Bluecoat, FACT, Liverpool Biennial and the Liverpool Culture Company. |
| Liverpool John Moores University | Postgraduate CPD New Media Production | Evolution Studios, Onteca, Lime Pictures, Conker Media, Telco Games. |
| University of Manchester | Postgraduate CPD Training for North West museum staff | 6 members of the North West Museum Hub. |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | CPD Fashion & Textiles | Matalan, Littlewoods, Hilly, Reebok, Kirsty Doyle, JJB Sports, Henri Loyd, M&S, Next Bhs & George at Asda. |
| University of Salford | CPD Television Production Management | Libra TV, Scarlett TV, LA Productions, ITV, BBC, Lime Pictures. |

The region has research that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour in Art and Design, Dance, Drama and Performing Arts, Communications, Cultural and Media Studies, History of Art, Architecture and Design and Music. It hosts many research centres and institutes dedicated to research and knowledge transfer in the digital and creative industries. These include:

¹ University of Bolton, University of Central Lancashire, University of Chester, University of Cumbria, Edge Hill University, Lancaster University, The University of Liverpool, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool John Moores University, The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, The Open University in the North West, University of Salford, Royal Northern College of Music.

² One of 17 across the UK.

| Institution | Centre | Subject |
|--|--|--|
| UCLAN | Sandbox, The Centre for Digital and Creative Industries | Prototyping, creative development, application design and build, interaction design, user testing. |
| University of Cumbria | Centre for Research and Enterprise into e-learning for the Creative Arts | Development of expertise and enterprise in the research, practice and delivery of e-learning. |
| Lancaster University | Infolab21 | Information and communication technologies. |
| University of Bolton | Institute for Educational Cybernetics | Innovative software, emerging learning technologies and related technological and pedagogical matters. |
| University of Bolton | The Interdisciplinary Emotioneering Research Group | Research into the emotion-based interfaces between humans and machines or materials including the emotional response to digital gaming. |
| University of Chester | North West Media Centre | Sound recording, radio and television studios, digitally based post-production facilities journalism and web production suites. |
| LJMU | International Centre for Digital Content | Impact of digital technology on society and business. |
| University of Manchester | NOVARS Research Centre for Electro-acoustic Composition, Performance and Sound-Art | Sound spatialisation, machine musicianship and interactivity & technology sound-art. |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | Manchester Institute for Research in Art & Design (MIRIAD) | Art and media arts, craft and design, drama, dance and performing arts, fashion business and technology and visual culture. |
| University of Liverpool | Advanced Internet Methods and Emergent Systems (AIMES) | Grid and distributed networked services, performance and manufacturing optimisation, E-procurement, 3D Rendering and RFID. |
| University of Salford | The Digital Cluster | Digital gaming, second life, consensual landscapes & scenarios, combating eDiscrimination. |
| University of Liverpool, LJMU, Liverpool Hope University | Northwest Culture Observatory | Dissemination of research relating to the cultural and creative industries. Brokerage of relationships between users and producers of cultural research. |
| Liverpool Hope University Liverpool John Moores University, University of Liverpool | Culture Campus Liverpool | Partnership of Liverpool HEIs and arts/cultural organisations promoting cross-sector collaboration in research, student experience & CPD. |

The region's HEIs are fully engaged with the developments at MediaCity. The 200 acre development at Salford Quays will create a media hub with 10,000 jobs and support 1,150 creative businesses, the largest cluster outside London and the South East. In the short to medium term HEIs will engage through the BBC Education and Community Partnerships and the Create and Connect network. Longer term, the University of Salford will invest over £200m in MediaCity related developments. In addition, it is leading a large collaborative funding bid to the EPSRC involving the BBC, Lancaster University, Goldsmiths College, Cambridge University and MIT with the support of NWDA and other regional agencies. This aims to provide a framework for innovation and research in MediaCity UK.

The HE sector also makes a significant contribution to the digital infrastructure of the region. This is crucial not only to digital and creative industries but also to other high growth, technology intensive sectors. Net North West is a regional network which provides academic and research institutions across the region with high speed internet access (via connections to the national JANET network), and allows them to share large amounts of complex data with each other at great speeds. The Lancaster University led CANLMAN network also provides a high performance Metropolitan Area Network to educational establishments in the North West (predominantly Lancashire and Cumbria).

For more information on the digital and creative capabilities of the North West's HEIs please contact the NWUA secretariat on satkinson@nwua.ac.uk or 0161 234 8895.