

Creative Skills Toolkit:
A guide for Trailblazer Groups
and Route Panels

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1 Introduction

Creative thinking is present in all areas of life. It can be defined by perseverance, experimentation, critical thinking, and collaboration. This applies across all employment sectors where creativity is an essential work quality.

The Creative Skills Toolkit is an aid for employers. It aims to set out core knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) that define creativity at work. It also allows employers to pick out creativity and apply it in a wider range of occupations and sectors.

Following on from the recommendations from the [Durham Commission on Creativity in Education](#) and Arts Council England's research into defining creativity, it was found that many occupations rely on creative skills being present. This is the case even when an occupation doesn't appear to be naturally creative. The KSBs in this toolkit allow any industry or occupation to define a creative worker. The toolkit is also intended to help develop occupational standards. This includes apprenticeships, T Levels and other technical qualifications. Research¹ suggests that these creative skills are essential to developing productive creative workers.

This Creative Skills Toolkit has been developed for IFATE by Arts Council England with support from Creative & Cultural Skills and ScreenSkills. IFATE's Creative and Design Route Panel supports the use of this toolkit to challenge and inform a wider understanding of creativity in occupations across all sectors.

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¹ The IfATE in partnership with Arts Council England (ACE) analysed the presence of creative competencies, as defined by ACE as part of the Durham Commission, across all occupational standards approved for delivery. This was followed by direct interviews with a sample of Trailblazer Chairs based in different industrial sectors.

2 Creative characteristics

Many employer groups agree that creative skills are key. It is also found that those employees who have creative capabilities progress quicker. Employers expect employees to be creative and not limited by what they know. Instead, being creative in the way they use and apply their knowledge and skills.

The Durham Commission defines Creativity as the capacity to imagine, conceive, express or make something that was not there before. It's the process by which knowledge, intuition and skills apply. It means to imagine, express or make something new and individual in its context.

Creativity describes a unique mix of common transferable skills with creative capabilities.

The following creative capabilities exist in apprenticeships across a wide range of sectors:

- critical thinking and problem solving
- collaboration
- innovation – experimentation – agility - visualisation
- analytical
- acceptance of failure (in a controlled way)
- communication
- design thinking/system thinking
- creative leadership
- marketing and project work
- entrepreneurial

This toolkit builds on this research. It sets out some KSB's that are relevant to each creative competency.

We endorse the use of this toolkit by employer groups in developing products. We hope employer groups will consider these creative capabilities and KSBs. IFATE's route panels can also use this toolkit when approving occupational standards. It will help to promote creative knowledge and skills across other sectors. It will also help to support creative skills in the next generation of employees.

3 Example KSBs

These example KSBs have been identified by employer group leads in existing approved occupational standards and have been endorsed by Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills and ScreenSkills as being creative in their nature or requiring a skillset equal to a creative skillset. These examples can be developed further and contextualised to ensure creative coverage in new or revised occupational standards.

Critical thinking and problem solving:

- understand and suitably apply a range of solutions and formats for the design, procurement, creation, building, operation, storage, validation, dissemination, inter-operability and merging of information
- identify, document, review and design (*insert text here*) that define a set of activities that will accomplish specific organisational goals and provides a systematic approach to improving those processes
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing solutions/performing specialist tasks at a professional level
- how to use appropriate diagnostic and decision-making skills to assess, plan, deliver and evaluate, communicate findings, influence change and promote best practice

Collaboration:

- work effectively with colleagues, other trades, clients, suppliers and the public
- sensitive to the needs of others. Creates and maintains positive, professional, trusting and ethical working relationships with their team and the wider range of internal, external and connected stakeholders
- act resourcefully and professionally, show vision and commitment to the industry and employer and work collaboratively across multiple disciplines
- establish and maintain effective relationships with clients, internal and external stakeholders and colleagues at all levels
- develop own leadership style and professional values that contributes to creating strong, positive and high performing teams

Innovation – Experimentation – Agility – Visualisation:

- create and implement innovative strategies to support the development of new products, processes and services that align with the company's business strategy, and develop and communicate relevant business proposals to support these
- maintain a focus on the end result and be flexible while adopting a lean and agile approach
- maintain an open mind, be inquisitive and apply learning to take advantage of innovation and new methods of working
- flexible to changing working environment and demands, resilient under pressure
- evaluate the effective implementation and management of technology enabled business processes such as digital distribution of content and adjust approaches based on findings

Analytical:

- how to design and implement project management and asset management systems incorporating specification of requirement, definition of process, configuration and approach
- reflect and evaluate own work and its impact on the organisation to plan for improved performance
- the value of evidence in practice and how to critically appraise research, apply relevant theory and research to your work and how to identify areas for further investigation
- how to identify priorities and manage time and resources effectively

Acceptance of failure (in a controlled way):

- effectively use a range of solutions and formats for the creation, dissemination, storage, validation and merging of information, ensuring secure access and effective integration
- analysing results against targets or projected outcomes and incorporating the learning in personal and professional development plans

Communication:

- present ideas, analysis and content and make recommendations
- a range of oral and written communication techniques, including negotiation and influencing both with internal and external stakeholders
- prepare and deliver timely, accurate and clear written and verbal reports
- specialism(s) relevant to the organisation, for example: languages, palaeography, coding, advanced information governance, working with a specific audience (e.g. children/young people)
- develop and deliver presentations which resonate with senior stakeholders, both business and technical
- develop/manage outreach strategies to engage, develop and maintain internal and external audiences and communities such as open days, social media use or accessible exhibitions to ensure accessibility for as wide an audience as possible.
- communicate in a safe, effective, compassionate, and respectful way

Design thinking/system thinking:

- research ideas and information for the project being created
- establish processes and accurately analyse, audit, verify and validate data/information as being accurate, appropriate, attributable, authentic and relevant according to protocols
- create content and present information about services and/or (*insert text here*) for relevant internal or external audiences
- evaluate and make recommendations around work processes, quality improvement and future resource planning
- design and develop strategies and plans focused on creative technologies to achieve improved productivity, functionality and end user experience in an area of creative specialism
- the strategic importance of using creative technologies to determine a business's ability to compete effectively including technology road-mapping concepts and methods and how to apply them

- the principles of business transformation and how organisations integrate different management functions in the context of creative change
- how to act as a change agent and provide leadership through quality improvement, service development and successful implementation of projects and/or plans
- how to systematically evaluate quality and ensure you use the findings to improve product/outcomes

Creative Leadership:

- the ability to provide an infrastructure for collaboration, collective endeavour, including coaching, feedback sessions, ongoing support, and the celebration of team achievements and completed milestones
- the role of leadership in contemporary creative based organisations
- utilise storytelling, demonstrations, and imagery regularly to sell the vision to the team so that they don't lose focus or interest

Marketing and Project Work:

- understanding of the project lifecycle: the design brief or specification. Factors that aid project success: customer and client liaison, team working, budget management, project mapping (production scheduling) and problem solving
- applying creativity to use and publish text, images, and video/animated content digitally
- write persuasive text to meet a marketing communications objective, using common copywriting techniques such as adapting writing style to ensure it is appropriate to different channels in-line with organisational brand guidelines
- interrogate a creative brief and find advertising potential within it, asking questions to clarify understanding
- manage stakeholders, taking account of their levels of influence and particular interests. Manage conflicts and negotiations. Communicate to a variety of different audiences. Contribute to negotiations relating to project objectives
- promote the wider public good in all actions, acting in a morally, legally and socially appropriate manner. Promote and model the highest standards of professional integrity, ethics, trust and continued development

Entrepreneurial:

- contributing new and innovative ideas for improving products and procedures
- displaying initiative readily, independently and responsibly



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