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Screen Industries Growth Network

SKILLS SHORTAGES AND GAPS

Skills and training in the Yorkshire and Humber screen industries

Key points from the University of York report on skills shortages, gaps and training needs in the screen industries in Yorkshire and the Humber.

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What's the report about?

The report examines **skills levels** and **training challenges** in the screen industries in Yorkshire and the Humber.

It defines '**screen industries**' as:

- film
- television
- animation
- visual effects (VFX), and
- video games

The screen industries belong to the wider **creative and cultural industries (CCIs)**.

The report **analyses existing knowledge** and also draws on **interviews with eleven industry representatives**. It notes that less information is available on skills mismatches in animation, VFX or video games than on those in the film and television industries.
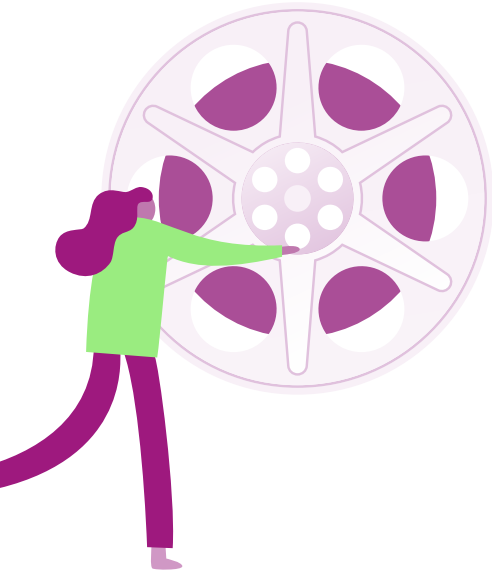
Context and new insights

In the 12 months prior to the August 2019 ScreenSkills report:

- **41%** of screen industry employers based in **Yorkshire and the Humber** experienced **recruitment difficulties**
- **38%** reported **skills gaps** in their workforce

And the 2021 ScreenSkills report summarises **national challenges**:

- **46%** of employers considered recruitment difficulties a **moderate** problem, **36%** a **severe** problem
- **60%** felt that the **pandemic** had exacerbated recruitment difficulties
- **skill gaps** were reported as follows:
  - organisational skills (53%)
  - teamwork (50%)
  - resilience (47%)
  - COVID-19 safety measures (45%)
  - interpersonal skills (53%)

Challenges in measuring which skills are needed in the creative industries:

1. It's difficult to understand the skills needs of specific industries, especially the screen industries, using official statistics. This is because published reports often use **different data sources, methods and terminology**, which makes them hard to compare.

2. The CCIs, including the screen industries, are developing rapidly. They continually generate new occupational roles and new business models. Plus, skills/roles are often transferred from one industry to another (e.g. animators working on video games). This can cause **delays in updates to codes** such as the Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC) and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

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Diverse

It's important to hear from different voices

3. Research into skills and training needs in the screen industries often focuses on employers, but it's also important to hear from **diverse workers across the industries**, including recent graduates, new entrants, experienced workers and freelancers.

4. Research also needs to account for **industry-specific structures**, and **political, economic and technological changes** that affect skills requirements, training opportunities and working conditions/status (e.g. casualisation, use of freelancers).

Interviewees' insights into skills mismatches in the screen industries in Yorkshire and the Humber:

1. Some of the skills mismatches in the **creative workforce based in Yorkshire** also apply nationwide (e.g. production accounting, C++ programming).

2. Some skills mismatches apply more in **some parts of the region** than others (e.g. differences in staff availability between Hull and Leeds).

3. Skills gaps in the **screen industries in Yorkshire and the Humber** are similar to those in the **national screen industries** workforce. Of these, interviewees highlighted two key areas:

   - **interpersonal/communication and teamwork skills** among workers at different stages of their careers
   - workers' **practical knowledge** of production, organisational processes and business development (e.g. scheduling production, managing cash flow, self-branding)

4. To deliver the required workforce skills, **training** provision must offer the right **level of expertise**. Most training for mid- and senior-level workers is provided in London.

Covid-19

... challenges necessitate the creation of new roles and opportunities

5. The ongoing **COVID-19 pandemic** has created production challenges, necessitating **new roles** such as COVID-19 assistants. Plus, some forms of **practical training** in the television and film industries (e.g. placements) are limited or entirely suspended, and this restricts the skills development of new entrants. However, the pandemic has also created **opportunities**, such as online access to workshops and meetings and the possibility of working from home.

What next / action points?

Interviewees suggested that companies and creative workers in the film, television and video games industries in Yorkshire and the Humber need the following kinds of provision:

1. Reliable **information about vacancies and career pathways**, including for industry entrants (film, television, games)

2. **Management and leadership training** for mid- and senior-level workers, delivered in the region (film, television, games)

3. **Occupation-specific training**, e.g. for directors, writers (film and television)

4. Knowledge of **how to start companies** in the region's screen industries (games)

5. More workshops, mentoring and other forms of guidance on **practical knowledge of production processes** (film, television, games)

6. **New production roles**, such as COVID-19 assistants, to keep production on track in the context of COVID-19 (film, television)

For skills development in the screen industries, both formal learning (e.g. training) and informal learning (via experience and on-the-job training) are vital.
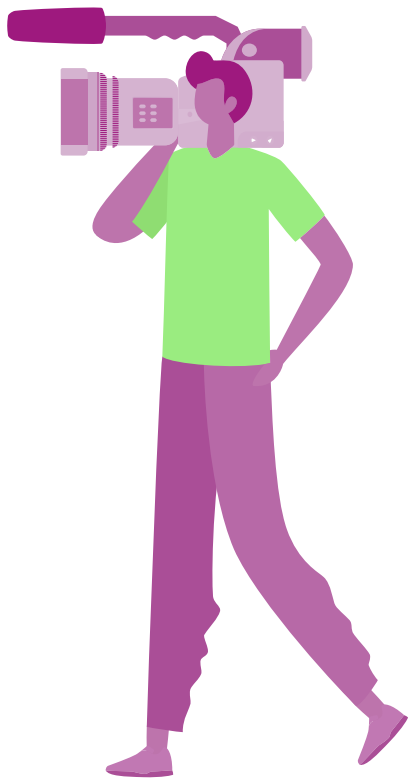
Please also see the full report

- Skills shortages/gaps in UK film (tables 3.1.a, b), television (tables 3.2a, b), animation (tables 3.3a, b, c), VFX (Table 3.4a), video games (Table 3.5a)
- Skills shortages/gaps/training needs identified by interviewees (tables 4.2a, 4.3a, 4.4a)
- Appendix 3: Skills Mismatches in Yorkshire and the Humber

Read the full report: https://screen-network.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Skills-shortages-gaps-and-training-needs-in-the-screen-industries-in-YH-report-January-2021.pdf

Training

... more informal and formal training opportunities, delivered in the region

Inclusive

... organisation of inclusive events for people from the games sector

About the author

Dr Anna Ozimek wrote the report as a research associate within SIGN at the University of York. Her research interests include employment relations in the creative and cultural industries, the political economy of the digital media industries, and video game production. She recently completed a project with Ukie and Women in Games that focused on the organisation of inclusive events in the game industry.

Links / further reading

Other reports about skills and training in the CCIs:

Animation UK (2018). *We Need to Talk about Skills. A Skills Analysis of the UK Animation Industry*: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d3Bv-DjnvJ6frBgtbUHFzezMKsjLyB4C/view

BFI (2017). *Future Film Skills. An Action Plan. Investing in World Class Skills to Ensure Future Success:* https://www2.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/future-film-skills-an-action- plan-2017.pdf

ScreenSkills Assessment 2021. June 2021. https://www.screenskills.com/media/4587/2021-06-08-screenskills-assessment-2021.pdf

Work Foundation (2017). *A Skills Audit of the UK Film and Screen Industries:* https://www.screenskills.com/media/1814/420_a-skills-audit-of-the-uk-film-and-screen-industries.pdf

Work Foundation (2020). *Creative Skills Monitor: Workplace Perspectives: Skill Needs, Mismatches and Development in the Creative Industries:* https://www.pec.ac.uk/assets/publications/PEC-Skills-Monitor-FINAL-July-2020.pdf

Organising Inclusive Informal Events in the Games Industry. January 2022. https://ukie.org.uk/resources/diversity-and-inclusion-in-informal-learning-spaces

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This brief does not represent the views of the University of York as an institution.