



# **The Role of 'Place' in Collaborations Between HEIs and the Arts and Cultural Sector**

**November 2021**

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction

The National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) was established in 2020 to champion and support knowledge exchange and wider collaborations between the arts and cultural sector and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), with a particular focus on evidencing and showcasing the social, cultural, environmental as well as the economic impacts of such activities.

‘Placemaking and levelling out’ has been one of the four core themes guiding NCACE’s work since our inception. We recognise the importance of geography in people’s lives - whether this involves physical boundaries or an affective sense of place and identity in relation to a specific area. We have also seen the rise of rich collaborations between arts organisations and universities, who are partnering to create work which touches upon a host of place-based and place-focused themes. This includes the development of work which attends to our lived experiences of a place. It also can create changes to the built environments and public spaces in which we dwell, as well as the development of local cultural ecosystems. Such collaborative works serve to nurture creative practices within a locale and this survey has given so much supporting evidence about the nature of these fruitful collaborations right across the country.

This report has been developed to share the place-focused findings of NCACE’s **Collaborating with Higher Education Institutions** survey, which was co-designed and hosted by Arts Professional magazine. The survey was launched on March 1st 2021, running for three weeks until March 21st 2021 following dissemination via Arts Professional, NCACE and TCCE networks. In total, 546 individuals completed the survey. The aim was to provide a space for the arts and cultural sector to share their first-hand experiences of collaborative activities with HEIs, with a particular focus on the value these partnerships brought to the organisation and/or the practitioner’s wider creative practice.

This report was designed to give a deeper understanding of the formation, nature and successes of place-based and place-focused collaborations between universities and practitioners/organisations from the arts and cultural sector. The “place-based” dimension of collaborations refers to the geographical location of the collaboration partners, and the extent to which they are located in relatively close proximity; the “place-focused” dimension of collaborations refers to the extent to which the objectives of the collaborations involve creating positive impacts on a specific place.

30% of collaborations involved a HEI in the same region as the respondent, and 78% of most impactful collaborations occurred with a HEI in the same region.

Additionally, 64.75% of respondents to the survey had cited that their collaborations aligned with a Place and/or Placemaking theme (one of the four core NCACE themes), making this the most cited thematic choice and highlighting how both place-based and place-focused dimensions feature prominently in our data. This rich evidence supports our decision to undertake further analysis on the topic. In the remainder of the report, we will share key insights drawn from the analysis of the data collected through the survey.

## Findings in Brief

Focusing on the “place-based” dimension of collaborations, we analysed the role that place plays in the *formation, nature and success of collaborations* between HEIs and the arts and cultural sector. The following findings were drawn:

**Geographical distribution of collaborations with HEIs:** Collaborations appear to be geographically widespread across the country. Of the 767 collaborations mentioned, 231 (30%) were with HEIs in the same region of the UK<sup>1</sup> and 494 (64%) were with HEIs in another UK region. Respondents in the North of England had the highest share of collaborations with HEIs in the same region.

**Size of organisations and geographical proximity with HEIs:** The larger organisations (medium organisations with more than 50 employees or large organisations with more than 250 employees) have, on average, a greater share of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region. This is possibly due to larger organisations having the resources to purposefully establish relationships with universities that are geographically close, whereas smaller organisations and individuals are more mobile in seeking opportunities for collaborations wherever they occur. However, micro organisations report a significantly higher likelihood of having their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region.

**Regional features of most impactful collaborations with HEIs:** When asked about their most impactful collaboration, 239 respondents reported the location of

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report we refer to UK NUTS1 regions - [Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics Administrative Geographies](https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat) (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat>). Level 1 - Government Office Regions

the HEI with which this had taken place. Of these, 78.5% (113) had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI within the same UK region. This ranged from 67% in the East of England to 100% in the North East of England (100%). Having a greater number of HEIs in the same region does not increase the likelihood of practitioners having the most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region, suggesting that arts and culture professionals seek specific HEIs to collaborate with rather than being influenced solely by local availability.

**Correlations between HEI location and collaboration initiation / management / funding:** Respondents are more likely to initiate collaborations directly with HEIs in the same regions, perhaps as geographical proximity facilitates the development of direct contacts and networks. Furthermore, respondents have a more active production role in collaborations with HEIs in the same region. Local authority, university and Arts Council England funding is more frequent for collaborations with HEIs in the same region, whereas networks and other grants are more likely to be used to initiate collaborations across regions of the UK.

**Content of most impactful collaborations with HEIs:** Organisations that have had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region were significantly more likely to use university resources / expertise to develop their work. Collaborations with HEIs in a different UK region are more likely to involve teaching and mentorship.

**The features of HEIs with which arts and cultural sector professionals collaborate:** The HEIs mentioned more often as collaboration partners by respondents are mainly traditional research-intensive universities with a generalised knowledge base. A smaller number are specialist HE institutions covering arts, music and theatre/drama disciplines. The main exceptions in this group are Birmingham City University (20 mentions) and the University of East London (8 mentions), which are mid-sized universities with more of a teaching focus.

Turning to the “place-focused” dimension of collaborations, we analysed qualitative information on the *content and nature of collaborations* between the arts and cultural sector and HEIs to draw out some of the social, economic, cultural and policy implications of place-focused collaborations:

**Social implications of place-focused collaborations:** The most reported styles of collaboration were those with an explicit focus on developing social impact/value

within a specific place (e.g., street, neighbourhood, town, city, region), with a particular emphasis utilising the academic partners/resources available to undertake co-produced projects alongside local communities.

**Interactions with local students:** It was common for respondents to cite their involvement with local teaching, modules and examinations as their collaborative activity with a HEI, largely at an undergraduate level. Local students were seen as the beneficiaries of this process and received tailored expertise and cultural skills building from the cultural practitioner/organisation - with some explicitly hoping that this work would encourage students to remain in the locale and become part of the cultural ecosystem following graduation.

**Cultural implications of place-focused collaborations:** Other respondents reported their role in delivering cultural skills development activities alongside academics, helping to develop the capacity of their cultural sector and/or other local communities and in turn aiming to strengthen the existing cultural ecosystem within a place.

**Economic implications of place-focused collaborations:** It was less likely for respondents to provide information on the economic implications of their place-focused collaborations. Those economic impacts that were cited were largely associated with specific pools of financial support delivered within a place (e.g., a place-based investment provided by local authorities, central government or arm's length bodies).

**Physical sites and spaces:** A number of collaborators discussed their involvement with the design and development of physical sites and spaces such as regeneration masterplans, cultural quarters, public artworks or the construction of specific cultural centres.

**Policy and place-based agendas:** Other collaborators cited their role as advisors, administrators or delivery partners within cross-sector collaborations (i.e. HEIs, local authorities, business communities) associated with the delivery of a site-specific cultural policy. This included involvement in boards, consortiums and place-based partnerships within a collaborative policy landscape.

**Place-focused research and evaluation:** Finally, some collaborations were formed to co-produce research or to co-evaluate an activity/programme, alongside academic partners. This highlighted how HEI staff utilised the critical expertise of practitioners / organisations - most frequently in regard to creative/artistic research methods within HEIs. This had sometimes led to academic outputs such as



journal articles, conference papers and lectures, all of which were authored or delivered by cultural practitioners.

## Recommendations

We hope that the findings summarised above will be helpful in guiding future research and policy on the theme of place-based and place-focused collaborations between HEIs and the arts and culture sector. The following recommendations have been formed arising from our findings from the survey.

### *For the Arts and Culture Sector*

- The most impactful collaborations often take place within the same region - the arts and cultural sector could connect with local HEIs to explore possibilities (particularly Knowledge Exchange representatives/departments where available)
- Practitioners and organisations could make direct contact with local academics, as well as engage with local councils and other public bodies, in order to establish relationships with HEIs
- Practitioners and organisations may find it helpful to include information on their websites about how they work with HEIs and/or what skills, expertise and knowledge that their particular practice/organisation could offer to a possible HEI partner
- It may be useful to engage with professional and other relevant networks in order to establish relationships with HEIs, particularly in different regions

### *For HEIs*

- HEIs may advertise and promote their resources to non-academic sectors in order to communicate their specialisation, which could help attract possible collaborations
- It may be useful to develop a greater awareness of existing collaborations with the arts and cultural sector, both locally and in regards to specific expertise. This information could be used to leverage existing collaborations and develop further projects
- Universities could enhance connections with relevant cultural sector organisations, particularly smaller organisations that may not have the resources or connections to initiate partnerships
- HEIs at all scales could invest into further funding opportunities to connect universities, policy makers and the arts and cultural sector, leading to

productive and innovative partnerships (e.g., explore avenues for providing seed funding for collaborations)

*For Policy Makers*

- Policy makers may consider targeted schemes or other ways to involve smaller arts and cultural sector organisations in projects with HEIs, particularly at a local level
- Local authorities could interact further with their surrounding HEIs - particularly Knowledge Exchange representatives/departments if available - and the cultural sector to strengthen relationships and networks for possible impactful collaborations
- Policy makers at all scales could explore avenues for investment into further funding opportunities to connect universities, policy makers and the arts and cultural sector, leading to productive and innovative partnerships (e.g., explore avenues for providing seed funding for collaborations)

## 2. About NCACE

NCACE is led by The Culture Capital Exchange (<https://www.theculturecapitalexchange.co.uk/areas-of-work/ncace/>) and funded by Research England (<https://www.ukri.org/news/national-centre-to-fulfil-sectors-knowledge-exchange-potential/>). Its key purpose and mission is to facilitate and support capacity for Knowledge Exchange (KE) between Higher Education and the arts and cultural sector across the UK, with a particular focus on evidencing and showcasing the social, cultural, environmental, as well as economic, impacts of such activities. Aligning with developments in Higher Education (including the Knowledge Exchange Framework<sup>2</sup> – KEF - and the Knowledge Exchange Concordat<sup>3</sup>), the arts and cultural sector (including Arts Council England's new 10-year plan 'Let's Create'<sup>4</sup>) and across the wider policy landscape, NCACE was successful in its application for Research England funding and began as a four-year initiative in 2020.

NCACE works across the following four key areas to help realise, communicate and evidence the potential of Knowledge Exchange with the arts and culture sector. The centre's activities are open to all HEIs and to those working in the arts and cultural sector. The following is a short synopsis of each area of activity.



### Brokerage, Collaboration Support and Networking

NCACE is concerned with creating positive ecologies and environments in which to foster excellent Knowledge Exchange and collaboration between Higher Education and the arts and cultural sector and to support ambition around the wider potential and impacts for such work. In order to support this, we create many opportunities to bring people together. We host regular Getting Involved events, as well as events

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<sup>2</sup> [Knowledge exchange framework \(https://re.ukri.org/knowledge-exchange/knowledge-exchange-framework/\)](https://re.ukri.org/knowledge-exchange/knowledge-exchange-framework/) | Research England

<sup>3</sup> [Knowledge Exchange Concordat \(https://www.keconcordat.ac.uk/about/\)](https://www.keconcordat.ac.uk/about/)

<sup>4</sup> [Let's Create | Arts Council England \(https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate\)](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate)

hosted by our regional partners to encourage more locally driven conversation and collaboration. We also host an annual Ideas Pool designed to support a number of mini-collaborations as well as an annual event designed to showcase and discuss models of good practice in cultural knowledge exchange.

### **Skills and Capacity Development**

NCACE provides space and network capacity to support and develop KE staff, academics with a keen interest in developing social impacts, as well as arts/culture sector workers who wish to develop partnerships with universities. We do this in a variety of ways, from leadership focussed workshops, jointly developed with our colleagues at the Clore Leadership Foundation as well as our Knowledge Impacts Network (KIN) which creates space to bring people together around issues connected to capacity to undertake collaboration.

### **Evidence Building and Impact Development**

Addressing the need for more and better evidence and analysis about the extent, nature, histories, drivers and broader impact of Knowledge Exchange and collaborations more widely between HE and the arts/cultural sectors runs to the heart of the entire NCACE endeavour. Our Evidence Hub is the entity through which this work is conducted and it comprises various interrelated strands. As well as conducting primary research, we also collate literature and other materials relating to cultural knowledge exchange. This work forms our online Evidence Repository. online Evidence Cafes as a space to discuss policy and evidence developments within the field, as well as annual workshops, the first of which was 'Collaborations in Placemaking'. Another key dimension of our work is in creating a brand-new body of knowledge based on sectoral interviews, case studies and blogs.

### **Showcasing and Communications**

Through our media and social media platforms and brands, NCACE seeks to showcase models of good practice in KE with the arts and cultural sectors from universities across the country. Furthermore, our work here supports the promotion of all NCACE events and activities, ensuring that we widely communicate our work both to Higher Education, the arts and cultural sectors and beyond into the wider policy sphere.

## 3. Introduction to the Report

### 3.1. The growing strategic relevance of place and placemaking

This report presents and discusses the results of a survey aimed at professionals working in the arts and cultural sector, designed and implemented by NCACE in partnership with Arts Professional. The ‘Collaborations with Higher Education’ survey ran in March 2021 and received 546 responses. It was designed to collect information about respondents’ collaborations with HEIs (with more specific details about this survey presented in Section 3).

Alongside our report on the overall findings from the ‘Collaborations With Higher Education’ survey, we wanted to focus some of our analysis specifically on the theme of place. Place and Placemaking is one of the four key themes underpinning the work of NCACE and within the survey, 64.75% of respondents that collaborated with HEIs reported that their collaboration connected with this theme - making this the most reported thematic choice. Furthermore, the arts play a central role in shaping the nature and identities of where we live and importantly, *how* we live there. Furthermore, universities are very powerful civic, social and economic agents in the towns, cities and other areas across the country<sup>5</sup>.

Place-based investments have increased over the last decade, as both central and local governments aim to retain talent and investment in their local areas. These wider shifts in policy have contributed to increasing the strategic relevance of issues of place-based regeneration and placemaking for many different stakeholders – from local authorities, funding bodies, universities or organisations - who are all attempting to access and utilise public funds for place-focused activities in a variety of ways.

Placemaking initiatives have become a commonly applied strategy for regeneration. They are often associated with attempts to alleviate socio-economic inequalities within a specific locale or region. Examples of these place-based funds have arisen across various funding bodies, including but not limited to the following:

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<sup>5</sup> [Arts and academic collaborations in placemaking](https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/arts-and-academic-collaborations-placemaking) (<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/arts-and-academic-collaborations-placemaking>), Arts Professional (July 2021)

- Arts Council England’s Creative People and Places<sup>6</sup> programme
- UKRI’s Strength in Places Fund<sup>7</sup>
- DCMS UK City of Culture<sup>8</sup> Competition
- DCMS Cultural Development Fund<sup>9</sup>

More recent iterations are putting focus on different spatial arenas beyond cities, such as the MHCLG Towns Fund<sup>10</sup>. There is often an emphasis on cross-sector stakeholders leading such projects, highlighting the importance of further understanding the connections between HEIs and the arts and culture sector.

### 3.2. Issues we are aiming to address with this report

Therefore, this further analysis of the NCACE-Arts Professional survey results sets out to foster a deeper understanding of the role of ‘place’ in collaborations between HEIs and the arts and cultural sector. We intend this both in terms of:

- the “place-based” dimension of collaborations: what role does place play in the formation, nature and success of these collaborations, and
- the “place-focused” dimension of collaborations: the social, economic, cultural and policy implications of collaborations that focus on place and placemaking as one of their key objectives.

This report aims to address these topics by exploring two key research questions and their respective sub-questions, as detailed below:

(i) The “place-based” dimension of collaborations: *what role does place play in collaborations between HEIs and the arts and cultural sector?*

This first question will consider:

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<sup>6</sup> Creative People and Places | Arts Council England (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/guidance-and-resources/creative-people-and-places>)

<sup>7</sup> Strength in Places Fund – UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/our-work/our-main-funds/strength-in-places-fund/>)

<sup>8</sup> UK City of Culture 2025 | DCMS (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-city-of-culture-2025-expression-of-interest-guidance-for-bidders>)

<sup>9</sup> Cultural Development Fund: Round Two | Arts Council England (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/cultural-development-fund-round-two>)

<sup>10</sup> Towns Fund (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/towns-fund>) | MHCLG

- Locational differences between the choices of collaborators and non-collaborators within the arts and cultural sector, including reasons for collaborating;
- The geographical distribution of collaborations, such as which universities are the most reported within a collaborative context and locational trends within this;
- Further insight into the types of universities that the arts and cultural sector have collaborated with, and the location of these HEIs (e.g., are these based locally, regionally or further afield?)

(ii) The “place-focused” dimension of collaborations: *what are the social, economic, cultural and policy implications of place-focused collaborations?*

This second question will consider:

- Placemaking as a key objective of collaborations and how this aligns with various aspects of the collaboration, including geographical location and impact;
- Further insight into the nature and content of place-focused collaborations and the impact that these have had.

## 4. Data and methodology

By generating primary research on cultural knowledge exchange, NCACE hopes to further generate a comprehensive picture of the nature and drivers of KE with the arts and cultural sector while actively showcasing the benefits of collaborations to a wider audience. This research aims to raise the profile of the social, cultural, environmental and economic impact of collaborations. Overall, this wider research will demonstrate the value and impact of KE and raise its status within the academy, the arts and cultural sector and beyond.

It was upon this foundation that we saw the need to create this survey. Our early secondary research had identified gaps in the evidence base. This led to discussions around how we at NCACE could provide a platform for insights from within the arts and cultural sector, and therefore, the survey was designed in a partnership between NCACE (Evelyn Wilson, Dr. Federica Rossi, Emily Hopkins) and Arts Professional (Liz Hill). Arts Professional<sup>11</sup> is a major news and information service for arts practitioners, organisations and institutions across the UK, covering specialist news stories and investigating what is going on in the sector. Survey design and dissemination was undertaken between January and March 2021.

This survey was launched on March 1st 2021, running for three weeks until March 21st 2021. It was promoted through the following channels:

- the Arts Professional subscriber base (over 46,000 people)
- the Arts Professional, NCACE and TCCE networks, including mailing lists and social media
- NCACE regional partners, as well as relevant networks within the wider cultural sector.

In total, 546 individuals from the arts and cultural sector completed the survey.

The survey aimed to discover how and why these arts and cultural sector professionals developed collaborative projects with HEIs. It was also concerned with gaining an understanding of the first-hand experiences of cultural KE partnerships from the perspective of practitioners/organisations, with ample opportunities to provide supporting narratives about the value of their experience.

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<sup>11</sup> [About Us \(https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/about-us\)](https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/about-us), Arts Professional



For those practitioners/organisations which had entered into a collaboration with a HEI, the survey asked respondents to provide more detailed information about one specific example: the collaboration that they considered to be their most significant or impactful experience of working with a HEI. This included information on:

- The content and nature of the collaboration
- How and with whom this collaboration was initiated
- The aspects of the collaborative process that did or did not work well
- The role of the cultural practitioner/organisation within the collaboration
- How the collaboration had been funded
- How the collaborative experience had been evaluated and by whom

For those who had no experience of collaborating with a HEI, a series of alternative questions aimed at understanding the factors that had stopped them from collaborating and to assess the motivations of pursuing future collaborations.

The survey included a total of 26 questions with a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. For some responses, we saw it to be beneficial to offer a number of closed-ended, single-answer multiple choice questions in order to gather structured, quantitative data. For other responses, we wanted to offer open-ended questions to capture qualitative data and in-depth narratives about elements of the collaborations which were more subjective and personal. The survey was predicted to take around ten to fifteen minutes to complete, but the length of responses to the open-ended questions may have increased the time taken for some respondents.

Following the gathering of the results, members of the NCACE team undertook further qualitative and quantitative analysis of the survey data. The HEIs reported in the survey data were organised in relation to their NUTS1 region, in order to gain further locational insight into the geography of the collaborations. This process also included the thematic analysis of the open text questions, to extract information about the nature of the collaborations and to align this with the data on the location of the partnerships.

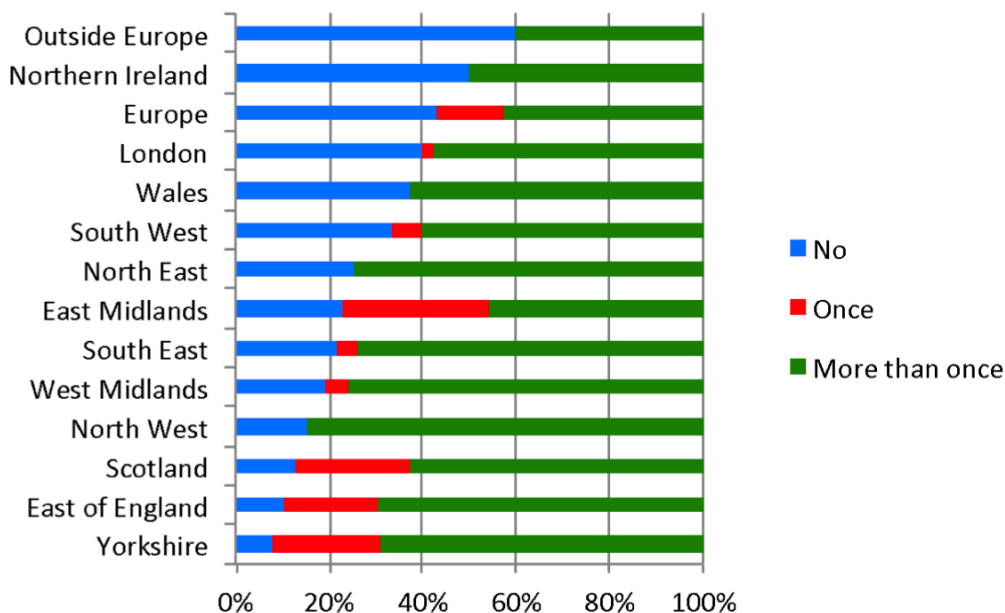
# 5. Evidence on the role of ‘place’ in the formation, nature and success of collaborations between HEIs and the arts and cultural sector

## 5.1. The location of respondents

This survey was largely focused on UK-based organisations and collaborations. Of the 546 respondents, 230 respondents provided information on the geographic location of their organisation (though only 139 respondents provided the name of their organisation).

Almost a third of the respondents reported that the main geographical base of their organisation/artistic practice was in London (31.74%). The second most reported location was the South-East of England (10%), and the third was the West Midlands (9.13%). The least reported location was Northern Ireland, with 0.87% of respondents based there.

Figure 1. Collaborators and non-collaborators by geographical location<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup> The survey included options for locations outside of England, including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and ‘Other’, where some respondents provided information on collaborations with European and other international universities.

Figure 1 above shows the share of respondents that reported having collaborated with a HEI, distinguishing between: no collaborations, at least one collaboration, or more than one collaboration. The shares of UK-based respondents that had at least one collaboration with a HEI were in Northern Ireland (50%), London (60%), Wales (63%) and the South-West of England (67%). However the distribution of collaborators across geographical locations is not statistically significant from the distribution of non-collaborators.

Considering the 67 respondents that did not collaborate with a HEI (but had considered doing so), the main reason for not collaborating reported by respondents in most regions was “Wouldn’t know how to go about it”. The regions where the majority of respondents did *not* tick “Wouldn’t know how to go about it” (East of England, East Midlands) saw a prevalence of “Lack of time and staff” as the main reason for not collaborating. In some regions (East of England, Yorkshire) a high share of participants ticked “Approached an individual / university but they didn’t get back to me”. However, differences between regions for each type of reason are not statistically significant.

There was also a small group of respondents (12) who did not collaborate with a HEI and did not consider doing so. For those few respondents, the main reason for not considering a collaboration with a HEI was the lack of awareness of opportunity for doing so, followed by the issue that it would be a distraction from their main mission. The differences across locations are not statistically significant, which is unsurprising given these small numbers.

## **5.2. The location of HEIs that collaborate with the arts and cultural sector**

Of the 546 respondents to the survey, 460 declared that they had collaborated with at least one HEI. Respondents were asked to name all the HEIs that they had collaborated with. Responses to this question allowed us to gather some information about the geographical locations of the HEIs that arts and cultural sector professionals collaborated with, focusing on their entire portfolio of collaborations.

263 respondents named at least one HEI with which they collaborated. On average, these 263 respondents mentioned 2.9 HEIs each. Overall, 246 different HEIs were mentioned (767 mentions in total). Of these 246 different HEIs, 125 were mentioned only once and the remaining 121 were mentioned more than once. The HEIs

mentioned include 41 institutions outside the UK, most of which were mentioned only once.

The HEIs that were mentioned most frequently were: Birmingham City University (mentioned 20 times), University of Birmingham (16), University of Leeds (16), University of the Arts London (15), UCL (15), King's College London (12), Manchester Metropolitan University (12), Newcastle University (12), University of Cambridge (11), University of Manchester (11), Goldsmiths University of London (10), Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (10). This [layered map \(https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1PrNc4lBa-UieFTGq98Qt7htKFs\\_vgVO&usp=sharing\)](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1PrNc4lBa-UieFTGq98Qt7htKFs_vgVO&usp=sharing) shows all the HEIs that were mentioned at least twice and their location. This can also be found in a table in Appendix A.

As a way to summarise the general traits of the HEIs cited in our survey, we referred to the clusters used in the Knowledge Exchange Framework 2021 exercise<sup>13</sup> to group universities with similar characteristics (this exercise only applies to HEIs in England). This way, we find that the HEIs that were mentioned more often are mainly traditional research intensive universities with a generalised knowledge base – in fact, the first 20 HEIs that have been mentioned most often belong mainly to Knowledge Exchange Framework cluster V (*very large, very high research intensive and broad-discipline universities undertaking significant amounts of excellent research*) and cluster E (*large universities with broad discipline portfolio across both STEM and non-STEM generating excellent research across all disciplines*).

A few are arts specialists (*specialist institutions covering arts, music and drama*). The main exceptions to this group are Birmingham City University, which was mentioned 20 times, and the University of East London, which was mentioned 8 times - both of which are in KEF cluster J (*mid-sized universities with more of a teaching focus, although research is still in evidence*).

Of the 460 respondents who declared that they had collaborated with at least one HEI, 239 indicated the name of the HEI with which they have had the most impactful collaboration. Moreover, out of these 239 respondents, 144 also provided information about their own location. Therefore, for these 144 respondents, we

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<sup>13</sup> KEF2021 Clusters. More information can be found here:

<https://re.ukri.org/documents/2020/knowledge-exchange-framework-clustering-and-narrative-templates/>

were able to establish whether their most impactful collaboration occurred with a HEI in the same UK region (NUTS1) or not.

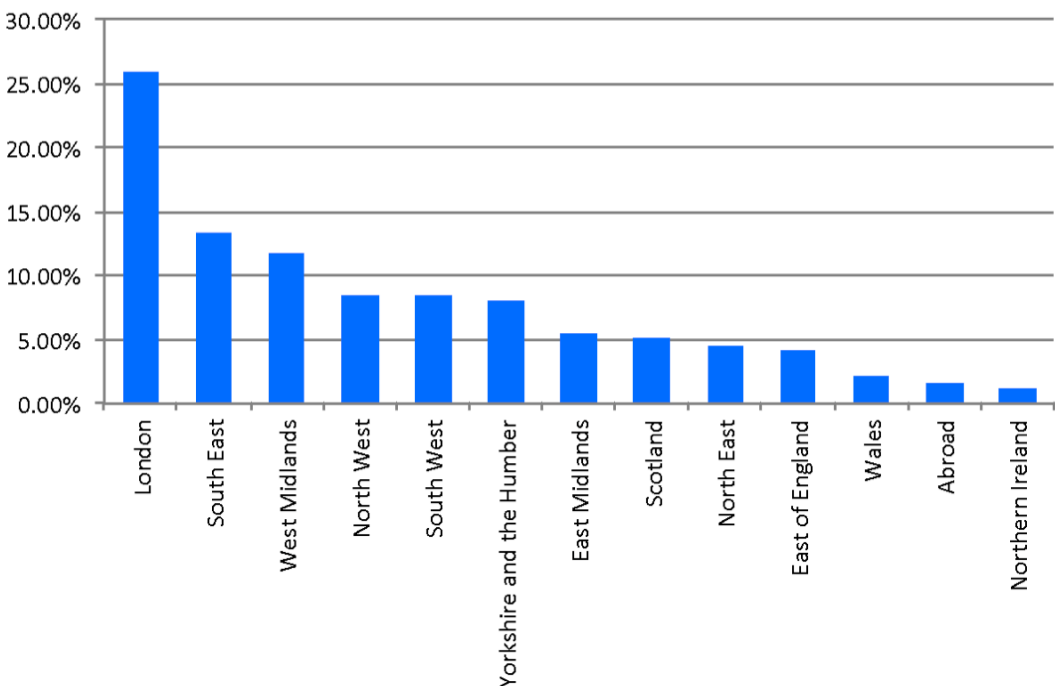
Figure 2 reports the distribution of the HEIs with which the 239 respondents had the most impactful collaborations, ordered by region.

An additional layered map

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1EOlzXWXg\\_n2XOUXpkKQ\\_r8O879C1GSXZ&ll=45.880252348754894%2C-26.867588650000016&z=4](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1EOlzXWXg_n2XOUXpkKQ_r8O879C1GSXZ&ll=45.880252348754894%2C-26.867588650000016&z=4) map [https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1EOlzXWXg\\_n2XOUXpkKQ\\_r8O879C1GSXZ&ll=45.880252348754894%2C-26.867588650000016&z=4](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1EOlzXWXg_n2XOUXpkKQ_r8O879C1GSXZ&ll=45.880252348754894%2C-26.867588650000016&z=4) was

created to show how collaborations were most likely to be located in urban areas, reflecting on the non-rural location of the vast majority of HEIs. Looking at the geographical spread of the collaborations reported across the country, there is an apparent lack of collaborations being reported in the East of England. The majority of collaborations with smaller, specialist universities also took place in London, where many specialist arts HEIs are based. The top 10 most cited HEIs with which respondents had the **most impactful relationship** were: Birmingham City University (8); Newcastle University (6); University of Worcester, University of Leeds, Middlesex University, University College London, Winchester University and Liverpool John Moores University (5); Trinity Laban and Queen Mary, University of London (4).

Figure 2. Distribution of most impactful collaborations by region of HEI



### 5.3. HEI Characteristics

We now dig a little deeper into the characteristics of the HEIs that arts and cultural sector professionals collaborate with by considering the HEIs with which they had their most impactful collaborations.

We find that the presence of a greater number of HEIs within the same NUTS1 region (e.g., North East of England) does not increase the likelihood of a cultural practitioner/organisation having their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region. In fact, the average number of HEIs in the region of those who have the most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region is 23, and the average number of HEIs in the region of those who have the most impactful collaboration with a HEI in a different region is 21. Furthermore, this small difference is not statistically significant (p-value 0.44). This suggests that arts and culture professionals seem to seek specific HEIs with which to collaborate rather than being influenced by local availability of HEIs.

This is further supported by the analysis of the KEF2021 clusters regarding the HEIs with which arts and cultural sector professionals had their most impactful collaborations. Table 1 reports the distributions of universities across the KEF clusters, for arts and cultural sector professionals who had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in a different UK region (second column from the left) and in the same UK region (third column from the left).

The share of HEIs in the ARTS cluster is significantly higher for those who have their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in a different region, suggesting that those professionals have sought those specialised arts providers irrespective of their location. The correlation between the share of HEIs in the ARTS cluster and having the most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region is also significantly negative.

The only other significant patterns are that the share of HEIs in KEF cluster M is higher for those who have their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in a different region. Cluster M includes smaller universities, often with a teaching focus, with academic activity across disciplines, particularly in other health domains and non-STEM. These universities also appear to be quite specialised and they seem to have been sought out irrespective of their location. In contrast, the share of HEIs in KEF cluster J is higher for those who have their most impactful

collaboration with a HEI in the same region. Cluster J includes mid-sized universities with more of a teaching focus (although research is still in evidence), and academic activity across STEM and non-STEM disciplines, so they are less specialised providers than those in Cluster M.

**Table 1. KEF clusters of most impactful HEIs in same and in different UK regions<sup>14</sup>**

	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in different UK region	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in same UK region	p-value
KEF_ARTS	6.90%	0.88%	0.045**
KEF_E	24.14%	28.32%	0.66
KEF_J	3.45%	16.81%	0.0657*
KEF_M	13.79%	3.54%	0.0328**
KEF_NA	27.59%	22.12%	0.54
KEF_STEM	0.00%	0.88%	0.61
KEF_V	17.24%	20.35%	0.71
KEF_X	6.90%	7.08%	0.97
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

## 5.4. Differences between organizations that collaborate within regions and those that collaborate across regions

Of the 767 different collaborations mentioned, 231 (30%) were with universities in the same region of the UK, 494 (64%) were with universities in another UK region, and 42 (6%) were with universities abroad.

Table 2 below shows that the regions where respondents have the greatest shares of collaborations with HEIs in the same region are in the North of England – North East of England, North West of England and Yorkshire and the Humber – followed by London and the South West of England.

<sup>14</sup> Percentages highlighted in bold font indicate the results that are statistically significant

**Table 2. Share of collaborations with HEIs in different locations by region of respondent's organisation**

	% collaborations with HEIs in same UK region	% collaborations with HEIs in another UK region	% collaborations with HEIs abroad
North West	75.22%	22.52%	2.26%
Yorkshire	65.24%	34.76%	0.00%
North East	64.63%	35.37%	0.00%
London	64.51%	27.38%	8.11%
South West	63.64%	36.36%	0.00%
Wales	58.67%	41.33%	0.00%
South East	58.17%	41.83%	0.00%
Northern Ireland	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
East Midlands	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%
East of England	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Europe	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%
Scotland	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
West Midlands	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Sample average	49.23%	46.47%	4.30%

We consider whether certain organizational characteristics of the respondents (e.g., size, sector, prior experience of collaborating with HEIs) and of the collaboration itself (e.g., number of themes, mode of initiation, funding) are associated with different geographical profiles of their collaborations with HEIs (namely, with greater or smaller shares of collaborations with HEIs in the same region and with HEIs in other regions).

For respondents in some sectors, such as Dance, Film, Visual Arts, Museums and Across Multiple Sectors, on average more than 50% of the collaborations were with HEIs in the same region. However, these average shares are not significantly different across sectors. The only significant pattern is that the average shares of collaborations with HEIs abroad were higher for respondents in the film and media sector, in 'across multiple art forms' sector, and in 'other' sectors.

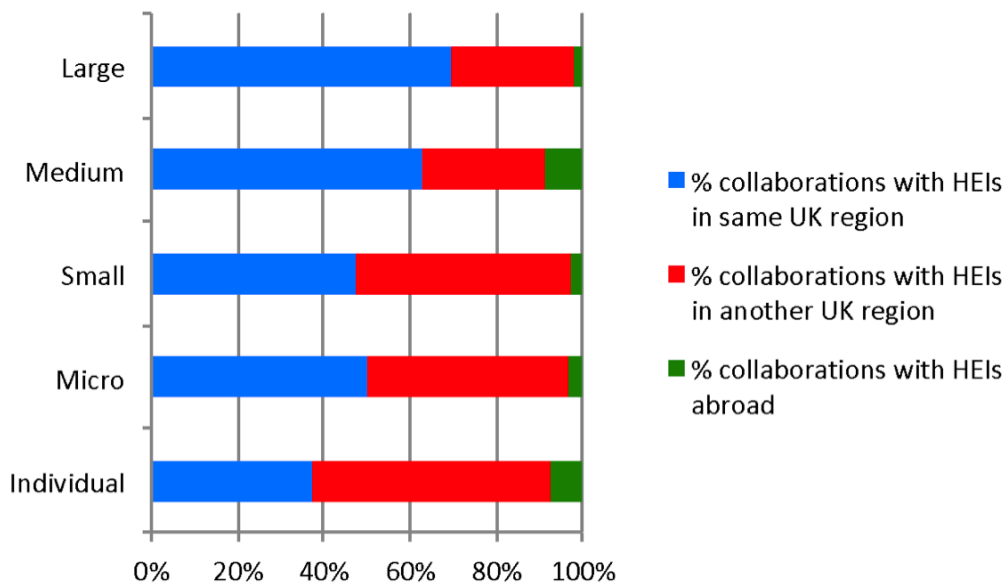
Instead, we find the following significant patterns in relation to the average shares of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region, in another UK region, or abroad, according to the respondent's size (Figure 3):



- (i) the share of collaborations with HEIs in same UK region is higher for medium (between 50 and 249 employees) and large (more than 250 employees) organisations
- (ii) the share of collaborations with HEIs in other UK regions is higher for individual, micro (between 2 and 9 employees) and small (between 10 and 50 employees) organisations.

It seems that, somewhat counterintuitively, larger organisations have, on average, a greater share of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region than smaller organisations and individuals. This suggests that individuals and smaller organisations are more mobile in their efforts to find suitable HEI partners. Larger organisations seem to be better able to maintain local networks, perhaps because they are better resourced or because of their perceived status within these local networks.

**Figure 3. Shares of collaborations with HEIs in different locations by size of respondent's organisation**



The average shares of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region, in another UK region, or abroad, according to the respondent's experience with HEIs (number of prior collaborations) are shown in Table 3. We do not find any significant differences in the average shares of collaborations with HEIs in the same or different UK regions, or abroad, according to the respondent's experience with HEIs.

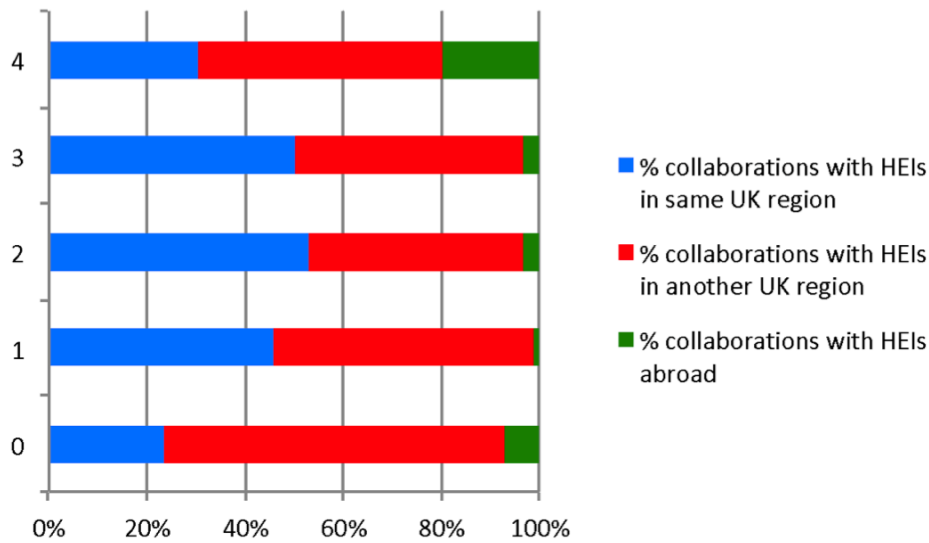
**Table 3. Share of collaborations with HEIs in different locations, by collaboration experience of respondent**

Number of HEIs the respondent collaborated with	% collaborations with HEIs in same UK region	% collaborations with HEIs in another UK region	% collaborations with HEIs abroad
One	32.50%	63.33%	4.17%
Between two and four	26.52%	67.80%	5.68%
More than five	34.30%	62.13%	3.57%

In relation to the number of themes of the collaboration (where respondents were asked to indicate whether the collaboration involved any of the following themes: Place and placemaking; Health and wellbeing; Technology for good; Environment and climate crisis) Figure 4 shows that the share of collaborations with HEIs in the same region is higher for collaborations that have 2 or 3 different themes; and that the share of collaborations with HEIs in another region is higher for collaborations that were unthemed or had only one theme.

Hence, respondents that have collaborations with more themes have, on average, a greater share of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region than respondents whose collaborations have fewer themes. This might suggest that more localised collaborations can handle more complex objectives, or tend to support a wider number of interconnected thematics. This aligns with our finding, reported in Table 9 (p.23), that collaborations with HEIs in the same region tend to involve a greater variety of types of contents.

**Figure 4. Share of collaborations with HEIs in different locations, by number of themes of the collaborations**



Finally, we computed some correlations between the share of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region, in another UK region, or abroad, and several variables capturing respectively:

- (i) how the collaboration was initiated;
- (ii) what role the respondent played in the collaboration;
- (iii) how the collaboration was funded.

In relation to the initiation of the collaboration:

- The share of collaborations with HEIs in the same region is significantly positively correlated with the respondent initiating the collaboration, and significantly negatively correlated with the respondent relying on a network to initiate the collaboration;
- The share of collaborations with HEIs in another region is significantly positively correlated with the respondent relying on a network or on a grant to initiate the collaboration;
- The share of collaborations with HEIs abroad is significantly negatively correlated with the respondent initiating the collaboration.

Hence, networks and grants are more likely to be used to initiate collaborations with HEIs in other regions, respondents are more likely to initiate collaborations directly with HEIs in the same regions (and less likely to do so with HEIs abroad).

In relation to the role played in the collaboration:

- The share of collaborations with HEIs in the same region is significantly positively correlated with the respondent having a production role;
- The share of collaborations with HEIs abroad is significantly negatively correlated with the respondent having a production role, using HEI resources and using HEI space.

Hence, respondents have a more active production role in collaborations with HEIs in the same region. Large distances (collaborations with HEIs abroad) make it difficult to use the HEI's resources and spaces.

In relation to the funding of the collaboration:

- The share of collaborations with HEIs in the same region is significantly positively correlated with Arts Council England funding, university funding and local authority funding;
- The share of collaborations with HEIs in another region is significantly negatively correlated with university funding and local authority funding;
- The share of collaborations with HEIs abroad is significantly positively correlated with other research council funding and significantly negatively correlated with arts council funding.

Hence, local authority, university and Arts Council funding is more frequent for collaborations with HEIs in the same region, and less frequent for collaborations in another region and abroad. Collaborations with HEIs abroad are more likely to have other research council funding.

Next, we focus on the organisational differences (size, sector) between respondents that had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region and those that had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in a different UK NUTS1 region. We also consider whether the most impactful collaborations that took place with a HEIs in the same region differ from those most impactful collaborations that took place with a HEIs in a different region, in relation to the role played by the respondent in the collaboration and to the content of the collaboration.

We find that 78.5% of the 239 respondents who provided the location of their most impactful collaboration (113) had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region. Table 4 shows the share of respondents that had the most impactful

collaboration with a HEI in the same region, according to the region where the respondent's organisation is based. While the shares of respondents that have their most impactful collaboration with a local HEI are high across the board, the regions with the highest shares are the North East of England, Northern Ireland<sup>15</sup>, and Scotland (100%) while Wales and the East of England are the regions with the lowest shares (60% and 67% respectively).

**Table 4. Share of respondents with their most impactful collaboration with HEI in same region, by region where the respondent's organisation is based**

Location of respondent's organisation	% most impactful collaboration with HEI in same region
East Midlands	71.43%
East of England	66.67%
London	76.92%
North East	100.00%
North West	81.25%
Northern Ireland	100.00%
Scotland	100.00%
South East	73.33%
South West	77.78%
Wales	60.00%
West Midlands	86.67%
Yorkshire and the Humber	76.92%
Abroad	60.00%

We then tested whether there are any systematic differences between respondents that had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region, and those respondents that had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in a different region. Table 5 reports the distribution by size of organisation according to whether they had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same UK region or not.

In terms of size, we find that the distribution of organisations that have their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region includes a significantly greater share of micro-organisations. So, while we find that larger organisations tend to have on average a greater share of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK regions, it is micro-organisations that report a significantly higher likelihood to have their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region.

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<sup>15</sup> It must be taken into account that Northern Ireland has only two universities and two university colleges, which may influence the high share of impactful collaborations within the same region

**Table 5. Distribution of respondents by size, according to whether their most impactful collaboration was with a HEI in the same UK region or in a different UK region**

Size	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in same UK region	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in different UK region
Individual	15.18%	21.43%
Micro *	46.43%	32.14%
Small	20.54%	28.57%
Medium	7.14%	3.57%
Large	10.71%	14.29%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table 6 reports the role of the respondents in the collaboration, according to whether they had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region or not. The column totals are greater than 100% since each respondent could tick more than one role in the collaboration. We find that respondents that had their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region were significantly more likely to use university resources / expertise to develop their work. Instead, we don't find any significant differences in terms of how the collaboration was funded, how it was initiated, and of the themes of the collaboration.

**Table 6. Share of respondents according to the location of their most impactful collaboration, by role in the collaboration**

	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in same UK region	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in different UK region
Providing data/information for an HEI-led research project	29.20%	25.81%
Co-design and production/delivery of an arts/creative project	66.37%	61.29%
Teaching or leading workshops with students and/or university staff	54.87%	45.16%
Leading the project	51.33%	41.94%

Using university resources / expertise to develop your work *	54.87%	35.48%
University using your space/resources (e.g to showcase work)	33.63%	32.26%

Thanks to a question which asked respondents to provide a qualitative description of the content of the most impactful collaboration, we are able to analyse whether there are any differences in the content of collaborations with regional HEIs and in the content of collaborations with more distant HEIs.

Table 7 lists the contents of the collaborations distinguishing between collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region, and collaborations with HEIs in a different UK region. It is evident that collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region include a broader range of different contents than collaborations with HEIs in a different UK region. In the table, contents in italics are common to both local and non-local collaborations whereas the others are specific to either local or non-local collaborations.

**Table 7. Content of most impactful collaboration with a HEIs in same and in different UK regions**

	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in same UK region	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in different UK region
Research Positions/Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Co-hosting conferences</li> <li>● Co-authoring publications</li> <li>● Co-researching with PGRs/ECRs</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contributions towards lecture series</li> <li>● Collaborative artist talks</li> <li>● Research programme with HEIs and local schools</li> <li>● Evaluation expertise sought from HEI staff</li> <li>● Artist/company-in-residence programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Translating scientific research into creative outputs (e.g., seeking arts organisations to help communicate research)</li> </ul>
Teaching and Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Workshops for UG students</li> <li>● Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC)</li> <li>● Masterclasses taught by cultural practitioners</li> <li>● Work placements for students (UG/PG)</li> <li>● Mentoring UG and PG students</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist course provision</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lectureships (permanent, part-time or visiting) for cultural practitioners</li> <li>Cultural Education Partnerships</li> <li>Graduate internships within the arts/cultural sector</li> <li>Hosting graduate shows</li> <li>Examining student work</li> <li>Careers sessions and industry insight for HE students</li> <li>Module development with HEI staff</li> <li>Summer school facilitation for students</li> <li>Doctoral training partnerships</li> <li>Equality and diversity training/education programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Careers sessions and industry insight for HE students</li> <li>Hosting pitch sessions for HE students</li> </ul>
Creative Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement with HEI Festivals/Showcases</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exhibitions supported by HEIs</li> <li>Collaborative public performances</li> <li>Freelancer position within HEI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curatorial role for HEIs</li> <li>Translating scientific research into creative outputs</li> </ul>
Spaces/Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural venue used to host HEI exhibitions/shows/live recordings</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HEI venue used to host exhibitions/shows</li> <li>Provision of HEI studio space for cultural practitioners OR provision of studio space for HEI staff</li> <li>NPO physically based within HEI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative capital development projects</li> </ul>
Cultural Production Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and community engagement support facilitated by HEIs</li> <li>HEIs helping to produce audio descriptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships for creative event programming</li> </ul>



Financial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-writing funding applications</li> <li>• HEI as funding provider for venues/creative projects</li> <li>• HEI providing subsidised venues/accommodation</li> <li>• Joint fundraising bids</li> <li>• HEI supplying support in kind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEI financially supporting public engagement activities</li> <li>• HEI staff advising on business model development</li> </ul>
Network and Brokerage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brokering relationships with local stakeholders</li> <li>• Involvement in local cultural networks</li> <li>• HEIs playing advocacy role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional networking opportunities</li> </ul>
Relationship Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEI as board member/ trustee/ governor</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration/ cultural strategy partnerships</li> <li>• Long-term strategic partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU development</li> </ul>
Capacity and Skills Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support for creative productions at HEIs</li> <li>• Career development and skills building for artists via HEIs</li> </ul>	

Finally, if we aggregate the contents into the main categories on the left-hand column of Table 8, and we analyse differences in contents between collaborations with local HEIs and collaborations with non-local HEIs we find that:

- Collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region are significantly more likely to involve relationships development;
- Collaborations with HEIs in a different UK region are (almost) significantly more likely to involve teaching and mentorship.

**Table 8. Content of most impactful collaboration with a HEIs in same and in different UK regions**

	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in same UK region	Most impactful collaboration with HEI in different UK region	p-value
Teaching and Mentorship	40.95%	56.25%	0.129+

Relationship Development	14.29%	3.13%	0.086*
Research Positions/Outputs	40.95%	31.25%	0.3274
Capacity and Skills Building	5.71%	3.13%	0.5637
Creative Outputs	13.33%	9.38%	0.5555
Financial Support	7.62%	3.13%	0.3727
Spaces/Places	3.81%	3.13%	0.8578

## 6. Evidence on the Content and Nature of ‘Place-Focused’ Collaborations

The following section of analysis provides qualitative, textural information on the nature of place-focused collaborations between the higher education and arts and cultural sectors. Survey data has been thematically analysed to draw out key topics, activities and interests from the information provided by respondents on the collaborative activities in which they were involved. Some of these activities spoke to place-based and site-specific activities within a particular geographical area, whereas others were linked to placemaking practices or strategies of a more formal nature. These activities relate to the following categories, which will be discussed in turn below:

- Social Impact/Value
- Interactions with Local Students
- Cultural Impact/Value
- Economic Impact/Value
- Placemaking: Physical Sites and Landscape
- Placemaking: Policy and Place-Based Agendas
- Research and Evaluation

This list is organised to reflect the most frequently discussed collaboration themes, which will be discussed first at the top of the list, and those which were reported less frequently, which will be discussed towards the end of the list. In order to respect the confidentiality of respondents, this section summarises broader themes extracted from the survey data rather than using specific project details or organisation/HEI/place names.

### 6.1. Social Impact/Value

Projects with an intention to create social impact and value within a specific place (e.g., region, city, neighbourhood) were the most reported type of collaboration. For some, the social impacts resulted from skills building programmes delivered to local communities and developed in conjunction with academics. However, respondents were more likely to highlight the ways in which their collaborative activities had improved understanding of or increased the involvement with artistic practices for local people, using creative work to cover topics such as community legacies or new uses for public space. Overall, collaborations which involved the design and creation of community generated artworks were largely discussed as positive and impactful

ways to articulate broader social messages within a place and as a useful way to engage the public with cultural and HEI partners.

This type of place-based collaborative activity was often aligned with HEI partners who had a shared interest in socially engaged arts practices and community participation projects, usually within a specific geographical site. Examples of these activities include in-person workshops and co-produced exhibitions celebrating key moments of cultural heritage at a local scale - such as projects to celebrate the arrival of Windrush communities to an area or to commemorate local World War histories.

Other examples reported cultural partners utilising digital technologies alongside academics to elevate local voices, including the creation of online community archives to store the stories of local people. There were multiple examples which detailed the facilitation of residency programmes for individuals from the local community rather than for artists, bridging residents with the arts and cultural sector and university resources in situ. Two respondents also discussed how their collaborations were developed specifically to teach ethical participation and decolonisation practices with local participants, highlighting a focus on place-based social justice.

## **6.2. Interactions with Local Students**

Another thematic focus of the collaborative activities which was reported frequently was creating cultural impact or value within a place. The majority of collaborations relating to this theme discussed how respondents were involved with sharing their cultural and artistic expertise within a HEI setting. This largely involved cultural practitioners or organisations taking on temporary teaching or advisory positions. Undergraduate students were the most cited as being the beneficiaries of such activities (although a small number of respondents discussed working HEI partners to deliver programmes to local primary and/or secondary schools or postgraduate students). The drivers of such collaborations were often cited as upskilling students and providing them with the experience and networks necessary for them to become part of local cultural ecosystems following their graduation.

Respondents shared various ways in which local students received support through activities facilitated by artists and cultural professionals with HEI support, including:

- Lectures and/or workshops delivered as part of a specific teaching module within a HEI
- Seminars on skills building and working in the cultural sector delivered by cultural practitioners
- Professional development training days or internships for students, hosted by cultural practitioners
- Pitching and design brief opportunities for students, facilitated by cultural sector partners
- Opportunities to be involved with place-based cultural programme development alongside cultural sector partners
- Practice-based PhD studentships with dual academic and cultural supervision

### 6.3. Cultural Impact/Value

Aside from teaching and advisory roles with students, a smaller number of respondents reported how their collaborative activities were focused on involving academics with projects that aimed to generate cultural impact within the local creative sector. These examples included cultural and academic partners co-developing skills building workshops or courses for local organisations and businesses. Some respondents spoke of their role as cultural partners who acted as intermediaries for academics who were working in their cultural sector. Examples of collaborative projects of this nature included capacity building event programmes for local cultural networks, and co-designed research aiming to increase an awareness of the lives, working practices and employment of professional artists in specific places.

### 6.4. Economic Impact/Value

Fewer respondents provided details on collaborations with an economic nature in relation to place, but a very small number of examples were included in the responses. The majority of these limited examples involved a focus on providing business and financial skills sessions for creative start-ups and microbusinesses alongside experts from HEIs. One respondent spoke how working in partnership with an academic had allowed their organisation to reconfigure their business model to focus on being more financially sustainable in the future.

A smaller number of respondents spoke about their involvement with specific funding pools which had been provided to fuel a particular cultural programme/strategy/project alongside HEI partners. This financial support was largely drawn from local or central government, but some respondents discussed

how their associated HEI had primarily acted as a financial partner and provided monetary support for a project within a collaboration. More detailed information on the scale of this funding can be found in the NCACE report, *‘Collaborating with Higher Education Institutions: Findings from NCACE Survey with Arts Professional’*.

Additionally, a handful of the reported collaborations were developed to further understand the economic impact of existing or emerging cultural activity within a place. One respondent detailed their role within a collaboration which sought to co-create a mutually beneficial mapping of the local cultural sector within a rural location, in order to provide further understanding on the ways in which multiple stakeholders might support the rural creative economy in their future activity. Others provided consultation and advice on evaluation projects in collaboration with academics, specifically focusing on the economic landscape for working artists within a specific region or in relation to a specific large-scale investment project taking place in a particular site, such as cultural district development.

## 6.5. Physical Sites and Landscape

Whether in the context of mapping or development, the places and spaces of the local cultural ecology were often discussed in the context of collaborative activity. Multiple respondents from within the arts and cultural sector noted how they had focused on physical spaces and tangible sites through their partnerships. Estate teams from within HEIs and local authority planning departments were frequently cited as partners within these collaborations, which were often based around wider regeneration agendas or masterplans.

For some, their place-based partnerships had led to the co-designing of repurposed spaces in collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, HEIs, arm’s length bodies). Unused or overlooked sites were transformed into visitor destinations, creative workspaces or heritage sites - oftentimes, these were also the collaborations more likely to receive higher amounts of financial investment. Other respondents were involved through advisory roles in relation to creative cluster developments at a local or regional scale, playing a role in the co-development of civic and cultural institutions (e.g., theatres, galleries), university campus expansions and cultural quarters/districts. On occasion, this also included the co-design of workspaces to house creative labour practices in a specific place, including studios and co-working sites.

Other collaborations focused on aesthetics, to improve and beautify the landscape for local residents and visitors. This included the development of programmes of public artwork, such as sculpture trails and in-situ performances at a specific place. Oftentimes, this included site specific artwork which had drawn inspiration from the surrounding area and/or local stories. Some collaborations were established to facilitate specific urban aesthetic projects, produced as part of a formal strategy or informally as part of activities with local community groups, with examples including the (co-)production of street art pieces, yarn bombing, and murals. Two projects also discussed how recent socio-political movements and events, such as Black Lives Matter, had motivated their collaborations to undertake a review of public artworks, such as statues, and led to partners reassessing the purpose of existing pieces and how they connected to place.

## 6.6. Policy and Place-Based Agendas

A number of collaborations were aligned with place-based policies and agendas, including the broader governance aspects of the master plans and cultural strategies already discussed. Some respondents reported that their collaborations had emerged in response to specific local/regional/central government policies. This involved practitioners and organisations partnering with HEIs to provide cultural expertise and consultations in order to bid for particular titles or funding applications, such as the European Capital of Culture competition and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Towns Fund.

Some of the collaborative roles discussed by the arts and cultural practitioners within this context included their involvement with co-writing Memorandums of Understanding and contracts, hands-on roles related to delivering cultural programmes and pilot projects, and aiding the reconfiguration of governance structures in preparation for specific plans (e.g., more representation of cultural practitioners and HEI representatives within decision making).

Other respondents stated that their collaborative activities were more aligned with the provision of support systems for such policies or strategies, with a number of practitioners discussing how they had taken a role within consortiums, committees, boards and partnerships with other cross-sector stakeholders. Sometimes, this involved a partnership approach between various stakeholders from the arts and cultural sector, HEIs, and other relevant stakeholders (including local authority officials, Business Improvement District representatives and national organisations/bodies) in order to tackle a specific local issue, including the rural creative economy or the creative digital skills gap. There were few respondents providing details on their involvement with international partnerships or agendas, suggesting that a strong sense of localism was more apparent in the place-based

collaborations reported in this survey.

## 6.7. Place-based Research and Evaluation

Finally, the fewest number of respondents reported how they were primarily involved in research and evaluation collaborations with a focus on place, either using their own artistic and cultural practices as research methods or working to understand more about the application of academic research practices in the field. Sometimes, respondents applied their expertise to creative-led research methods, or assisted the undertaking of innovative research on the development of new metrics and measurements for understanding topics such as relationships with place or the impact of cultural activity.

These research collaborations were largely interested in understanding local communities and cultural participation within a specific neighbourhood, town or city. One example included researching the ways in which local authorities could increase the involvement of residents in local urban development planning, using theatre methods alongside academics to engage with the community in new and creative ways. Another involved a respondent working with an academic to understand more about the role of digital networks within their local cultural sector. Other topics included the role of creativity in the rural economy and further understanding public perceptions of place. A small number of respondents also cited that their involvement with research intensive collaborations had led to them producing academic outputs, such as conference presentations on cultural heritage or co-writing evidence on community generated art.



## 7. Concluding Remarks

### Findings in Brief

This report has provided a further analysis of the NCACE-Arts Professional survey responses to aid a deeper understanding of the role of ‘place’ in collaborations between HEIs and the arts and cultural sector. Building on the plentiful and varied ways in which place-based and place-focused knowledge exchange collaborations are continuing to emerge across the country, we analysed the rich data collected from our survey with cultural practitioners to attend to the lived experiences and geographical evidence of such work.

We answered two core questions:

- (i) what role does place play in the formation, nature and success of these collaborations?
- (ii) what are the social, economic, cultural and policy implications of collaborations that focus on place and placemaking?

Firstly, focusing on the “place-based” dimension of collaborations, we analysed the role that place plays in the *formation, nature and success of collaborations* between HEIs and the arts and cultural sector. Collaborations appeared to be geographically widespread across the country, with 30% taking place with HEIs within the same region and 64% taking place with HEIs in another region. Respondents in the North of England had the highest share of collaborations with HEIs in the same region.

Medium organisations with more than 50 employees and large organisations with more than 250 employees had, on average, a greater share of collaborations with HEIs in the same UK region. This may be because larger organisations have more resources to purposefully establish relationships with universities which are geographically proximate. However, micro-organisations had a significantly higher likelihood of having their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region.

It was also found that having a greater number of HEIs within the same region does not increase the likelihood of practitioners having their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region, suggesting that arts and culture professionals seek specific HEIs to collaborate with rather than being influenced solely by local availability. Respondents reported that they were more likely to initiate direct collaborations with HEIs within the same region, perhaps as

geographical closeness allowed further interaction with various contacts and networks. Organisations with their most impactful collaboration with a HEI in the same region were also significantly more likely to use university resources / expertise to develop their work. Collaborations with HEIs in a different UK region more often involved teaching and mentorship roles.

The HEIs mentioned more often as collaboration partners by respondents are mainly traditional research intensive universities with a generalised knowledge base. A smaller number are specialist HE institutions covering arts, music and theatre/drama disciplines. The main exceptions in this group are Birmingham City University (20 mentions) and the University of East London (8 mentions), which are mid-sized universities with more of a teaching focus.

Secondly, looking at the “place-focused” dimension of collaborations, we analysed qualitative information on the *content and nature of collaborations* between the arts and cultural sector and HEIs to draw out some of the social, economic, cultural and policy implications of place-focused collaborations. This drew from the rich and detailed examples provided as responses within the survey. We found that work with a social focus and/or impact was the most reported style of collaboration - for example, with an explicit focus on developing social impact/value within a specific place and a particular emphasis on utilising the academic partners/resources to undertake co-produced projects alongside local communities.

The second most common response was collaborations which involved teaching, modules and examinations within a HEI, largely at an undergraduate level. Local students were cited as the beneficiaries, receiving tailored expertise and cultural skills training from cultural practitioners/organisations - with some explicitly hoping that this work would encourage students to remain in the locale and become part of the cultural ecosystem following graduation. Other collaborations were focused around delivering cultural skills development activities, with academics helping to develop programmes to develop the capacity of their cultural sector and/or other local communities and in turn aiming to strengthen the existing cultural ecosystem within a place.

It was less likely for respondents to provide information on the economic impacts of their place-focused collaborations. These were mostly associated with specific pools of financial support delivered within a place (e.g., a place-based investment provided by local authorities, central government or arms-length bodies). Furthermore, a small number of collaborators discussed their involvement with the design and development of physical sites and spaces such as regeneration masterplans, cultural quarters, public artworks or the construction of specific cultural centres. It was less

frequent but still apparent for collaborators to cite their role as advisors, administrators or delivery partners within cross-sector collaborations (i.e. HEIs, local authorities, business communities) associated with the delivery of a site-specific cultural policy. This included boards, consortiums and place-based partnerships within a collaborative policy landscape.

Finally, the smallest number of respondents stated that their collaborations were formed to co-produce research or to co-evaluate an activity/programme, alongside academic partners. HEI staff utilised the critical expertise of practitioners / organisations - most frequently in regard to creative/artistic research methods within HEIs. This had sometimes led to academic outputs such as journal articles, conference papers and lectures, all of which were authored or delivered by cultural practitioners.

## **Final Reflections**

Altogether, the place-based and place-focused findings from our NCACE-Arts Professional survey indicate that geography has played - and will continue to play - a critical role in shaping knowledge exchange collaborations between universities and the arts and culture sector. Geographies of collaborations impact knowledge exchange across the country: through the ways in which geographical proximity influences the strength of connections between academics and practitioners, or the ability for collaborative partners to access the resources and expertise that are used to fuel such work. Place shapes the lived experiences of the collaborative partners. Furthermore, the notion of sense of place itself can be affected by collaborations.

Supporting place-based and place-focused collaborations through locally sensitive approaches is imperative when developing future knowledge exchange support and policy. At NCACE, we will continue to both generate and seek evidence around the relationships between place, geography and collaborations - starting with this report and our first policy workshop, *Collaborations in Placemaking: Shining a Light on the Contribution of Higher Education and Cultural Partnerships*, which was held in June 2021. As was also drawn from this report, the cross-sector workshop reiterated the need for a continued focus on generating evidence about the importance of embedded, proactive collaborations.

Whether large or small scale, these place-focused and place-based collaborations highlight the need to recognise the role that both universities and arts organisations play as anchors within their wider cultural ecosystems, playing key roles as connectors, intermediaries and producers of knowledge. Further research could look at how engaging a wide variety of collaborators within such activity can ensure that a diversity of values shapes such work. At NCACE, we will also continue to look

at the ways in which place-based and place-focused investment continues to shape partnerships between universities and the arts and culture sector, especially in response to the announcement of various funding avenues aligned with the national, regional and local levelling up agendas within and across the UK.

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NCACE

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## 8. Appendix

### Appendix A. HEIs that were mentioned by at least two respondents

Name of HEI	N. times mentioned	Region	KEF cluster
Birmingham City University	20	West Midlands	J
University of Birmingham	16	West Midlands	V
University of Leeds	16	Yorkshire and the Humber	V
UCL	15	London	V
University of the Arts London	15	London	ARTS
King's College London	12	London	V
Manchester Metropolitan University	12	North West	E
Newcastle University	12	North East	V
University of Cambridge	11	East of England	V
University of Manchester	11	North West	V
Goldsmiths University of London	10	London	E
Trinity Laban Conservatoire	10	London	ARTS
Coventry University	9	West Midlands	E
De Montfort University	9	East Midlands	E
Liverpool John Moores University	9	North West	E
Middlesex University London	9	London	E
R. Central School of Speech & Drama	9	London	ARTS
University of Kent	9	South East	X
Kingston University	8	London	E
University of East London	8	London	J
University of Leicester	8	East Midlands	X
University of Lincoln	8	Yorkshire and the Humber	E
University of the West of England	8	South West	E
University of Warwick	8	West Midlands	V
University of Westminster	8	London	E
Anglia Ruskin University	7	East of England	E
Bath Spa University	7	South West	M
Edge Hill University	7	North West	M
Lancaster University	7	North West	X
Queen Mary, University of London	7	London	V
Sheffield Hallam University	7	Yorkshire and the Humber	E
University of Brighton	7	South East	E
University of Salford	7	North West	E
University of Winchester	7	South East	M
University of Worcester	7	West Midlands	J
Canterbury Christ Church University	6	South East	J
Northumbria University	6	North East	E
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire	6	West Midlands	No KEF
Royal Holloway, UoL	6	South East	X
The University of Sheffield	6	Yorkshire and the Humber	V
University of Central Lancashire	6	North West	E
University of Chichester	6	South East	M
University of Hull	6	Yorkshire and the Humber	X
University of Oxford	6	South East	V
University of Surrey	6	South East	X
University of Wolverhampton	6	West Midlands	J

University of York	6	Yorkshire and the Humber	M
Guildhall School of Music & Drama	5	London	ARTS
London South Bank University	5	London	J
R. Welsh College of Music & Drama	5	Wales	No KEF
University of East Anglia	5	East of England	X
University of Liverpool	5	North West	V
University of Sussex	5	South East	X
University of the West of Scotland	5	Scotland	No KEF
City, University of London	4	London	E
Edinburgh Napier University	4	Scotland	No KEF
Falmouth University	4	South West	M
Imperial College London	4	London	V
Leeds Beckett University	4	Yorkshire and the Humber	J
Liverpool Hope University	4	North West	M
Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts	4	North West	No KEF
London Contemporary Dance School	4	London	No KEF
Mountview	4	London	No KEF
Open University	4	South East	E
Rose Bruford College	4	South East	No KEF
Royal Academy of Music	4	London	No KEF
Royal College of Music	4	London	ARTS
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	4	Scotland	No KEF
The University of Edinburgh	4	Scotland	No KEF
University of Bath	4	South West	X
University of Derby	4	East Midlands	J
University of Exeter	4	South West	X
University of Huddersfield	4	Yorkshire and the Humber	E
University of Portsmouth	4	South East	E
University of Roehampton	4	London	J
Bournemouth University	3	South West	E
Durham University	3	NE	X
Leeds Conservatoire	3	Yorkshire and the Humber	No KEF
London Metropolitan University	3	London	J
Nottingham Trent University	3	East Midlands	E
Royal Northern College of Music	3	North West	ARTS
University for the Creative Arts	3	South East	No KEF
University of Bedfordshire	3	East of England	E
University of Bradford	3	Yorkshire and the Humber	E
University of Chester	3	North West	J
University of Cumbria	3	North West	M
University of Glasgow	3	Scotland	No KEF
University of Hertfordshire	3	East of England	E
University of Nottingham	3	East Midlands	V
University of Reading	3	South East	X
University of Southampton	3	South East	V
University of Sunderland	3	North East	J
University of Bristol	3	South West	V
Arts University Bournemouth	2	South West	ARTS
Aston University	2	West Midlands	E
Bishop Grosseteste University College	2	Yorkshire and the Humber	M
Blackburn University College	2	North West	No KEF
Cardiff University	2	Wales	No KEF
Glasgow School of Art	2	Scotland	No KEF
HEI in The Netherlands	2	Abroad	No KEF
Hereford College of Arts	2	Wales	No KEF
Leeds Trinity University	2	Yorkshire and the Humber	M

London School of Economics	2	London	X
National University of Ireland	2	Abroad	No KEF
Newman University	2	West Midlands	M
Norwich University of the Arts	2	East of England	ARTS
Queen's University Belfast	2	Northern Ireland	No KEF
Ravensbourne University London	2	London	No KEF
Royal Academy of Dramatic Art	2	London	ARTS
Royal College of Art	2	London	ARTS
Srishti Manipal Institute of Art	2	Abroad	No KEF
University of Strathclyde	2	Scotland	No KEF
Teesside University	2	North East	J
The Urdang Academy	2	London	No KEF
Ulster University	2	Northern Ireland	No KEF
University of Dundee	2	Scotland	No KEF
University of Essex	2	Abroad	No KEF
University of Plymouth	2	South West	E
University of Suffolk	2	Abroad	No KEF
York St John University	2	Yorkshire and the Humber	M

