



The benefits of studying arts, humanities and social sciences

Russell Group Conference

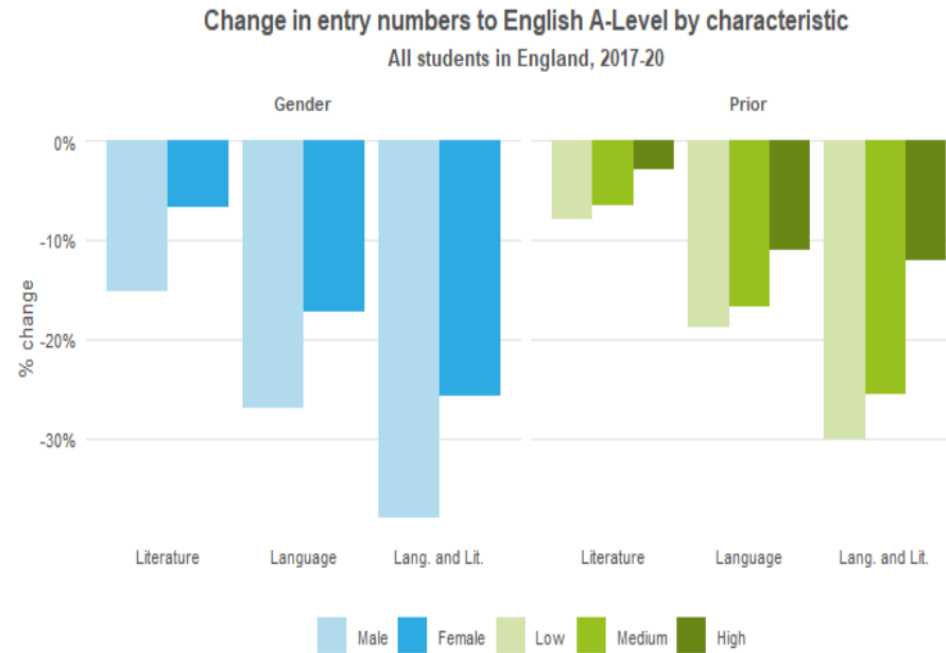
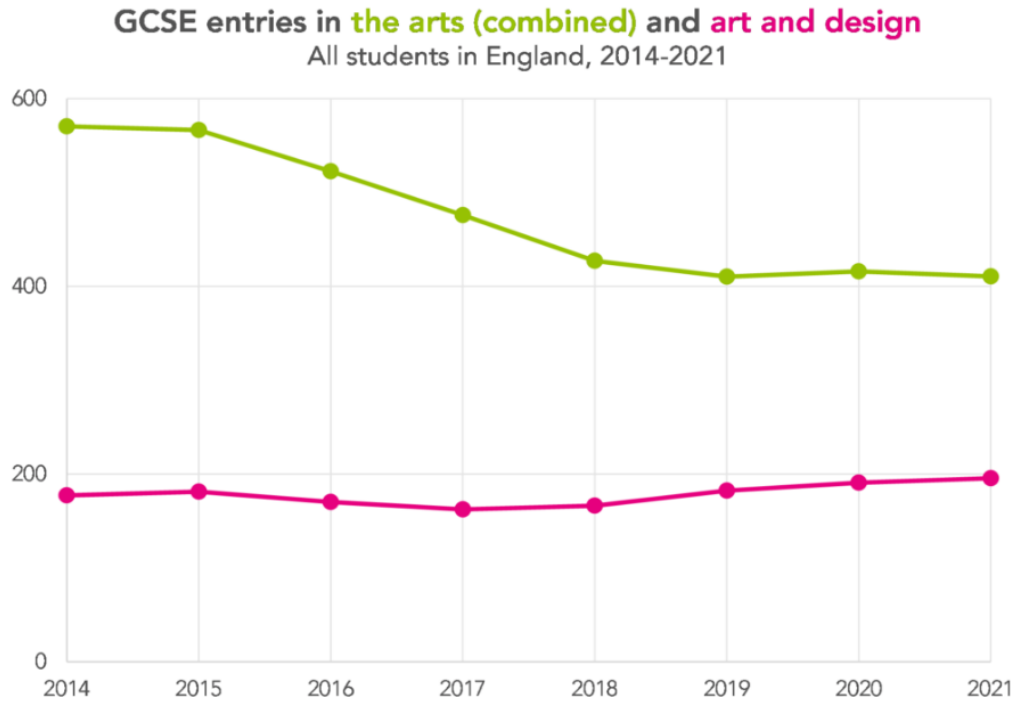
Chiara Amoretti (University of Bristol)
Alice Stonehouse (Queen Mary University)
Brett O'Shaughnessy (Queen Mary University)
9/6/2022



Roundtable activity (10 minutes)

In groups, drawing from your experience and expertise, discuss what you think the barriers are to students going into Arts, Humanities and Social Science (AHSS) study at University and then report back to the room

The 'leaky pipeline' of AHSS education



Data from FFT Education DataLab <[Why aren't students choosing to study English and the arts at A-Level?: Part one - FFT Education Datalab](#)> and <[Why aren't students choosing to study English and the arts at A-Level?: Part two - FFT Education Datalab](#)>

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The English/Math (false?) divide

A few reasons:

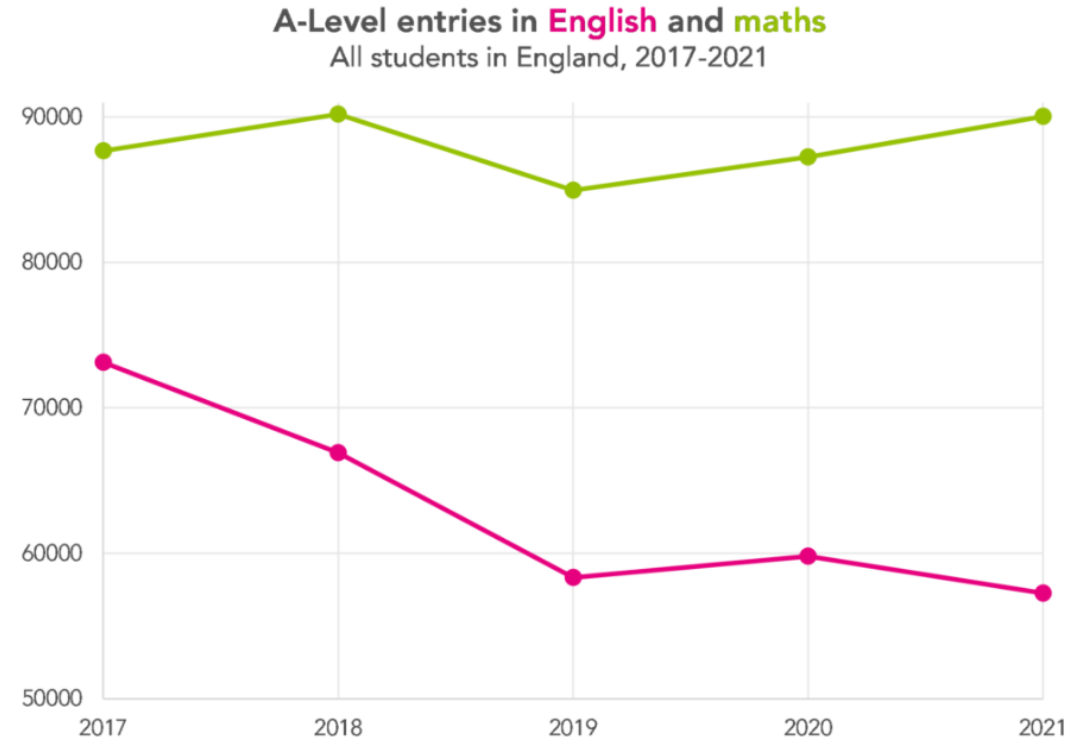
- Perception of arts/social sciences as less career-oriented, less profitable
- Belief that these are 'dead-end courses' (cf Gavin Williamson)
- Perception of AHSS subjects as elitist and only 'for' privileged students
- Declining funding for AHSS tuition in state schools

Sources and further reading:

[A-levels: What subjects are students dropping and why? - BBC News](#)

[Why aren't students choosing to study English and the arts at A-Level?: Part one - FFT Education Datalab](#)

[Williamson: 'dead-end' degrees give students 'nothing but debt' | Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#)

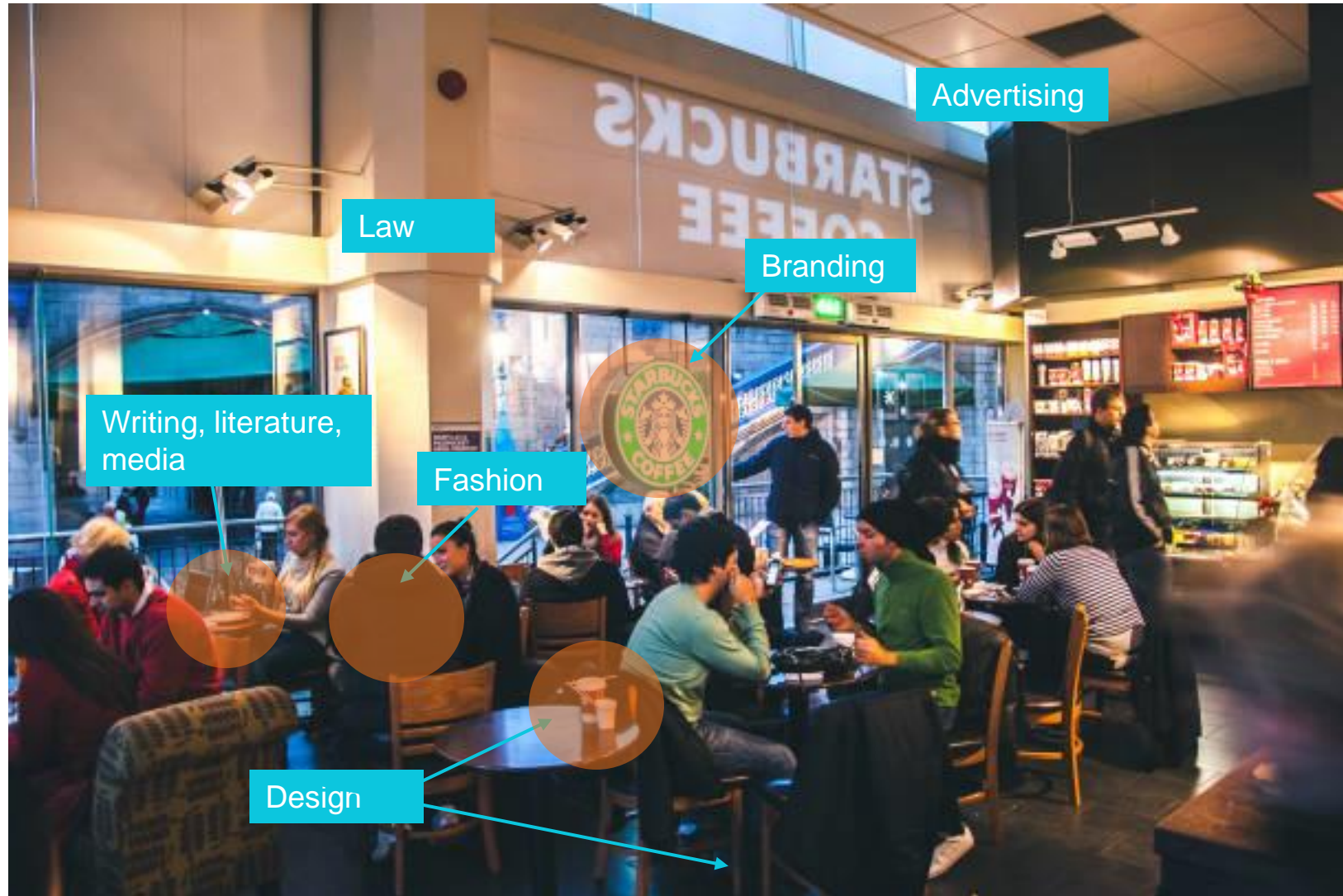


Roundtable activity

Why do AH & SS Matter? (10 minutes)

- In groups, drawing from your experience and expertise, discuss Why you think Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences matter and report back to the room

The Impact of Arts and Humanities is everywhere



Myth busting

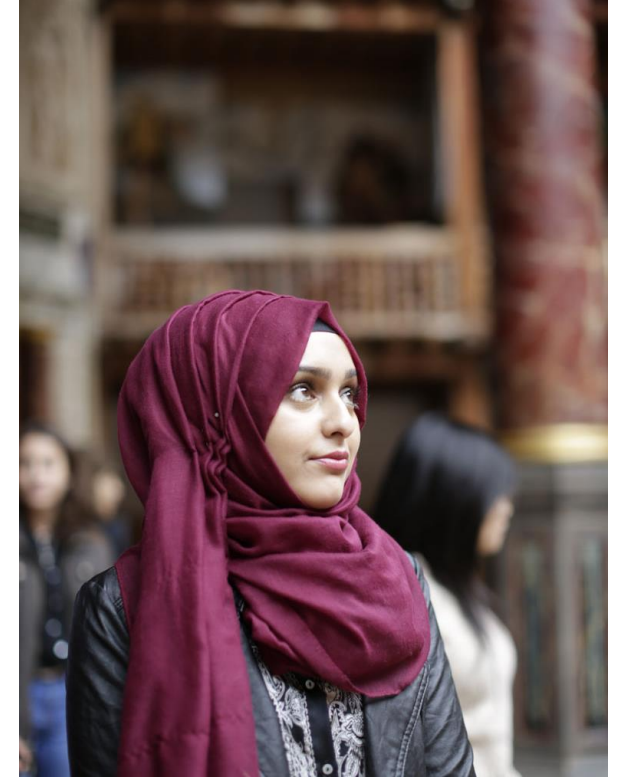
Arts/SSL graduates are some of the most sought-after by employers, and are flexible and adaptable to economic changes

Most employers don't require you to have a specific degree – just to be educated at degree-level

In 2019, DCMS estimated that the creative industries contributed £115.9 billion to the UK, accounting for 5.9% of the UK economy. The money the creative industry brings to the economy has grown by 43.6% between 2010 and 2019

Arts and SSL degrees provide transferrable skills that are in demand in all industries: communication, argument-building, writing and presentation skills, empathy and interpersonal skills

STEM subjects actually feature in AHSS tuition – think medical and digital humanities, for example



Sources and further reading:

[Qualified-for-the-Future-Quantifying-demand-for-arts-humanities-social-science-skills.pdf \(thebritishacademy.ac.uk\)](#)

[In defence of the arts and humanities | Wonkhe](#)

[DCMS Economic Estimates 2019 \(provisional\): Gross Value Added - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Recent Bristol graduates in Modern Languages, for example, have gone on to careers in:

- Publishing
- The Civil Service and Foreign Office
- Journalism
- Media and Creative industries
- Teaching
- Marketing
- Finance
- Consultancy
- Recruitment
- Tourism

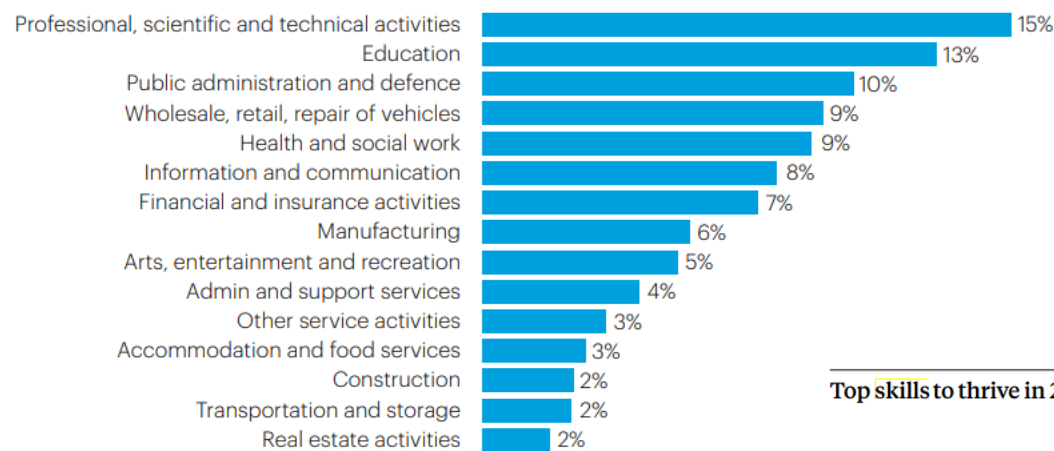
The UoB Careers Service has a tool to explore graduate destinations for each course: [Graduate outcomes | Careers Service | University of Bristol](#)



From the BA report ‘Qualified for the Future: Quantifying demand for arts, humanities and social science skills’ (2020)

5 AHSS graduates choose to work in a wide range of sectors across the economy, including financial services, education, social work, the media and creative industries (section 2.2).²

Main sectors of employment for AHSS graduates, 2017 (% of all AHSS graduates)



Top skills to thrive in 21st century work

- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Accessing and analysing information
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Agility and adaptability
- Curiosity and imagination
- Collaboration and leadership
- Effective oral and written communication

Top 5 skills developed in university by AHSS students

- Becoming an independent learner
- Thinking critically and analytically
- Being innovative and creative
- Working effectively with others
- Writing clearly and effectively

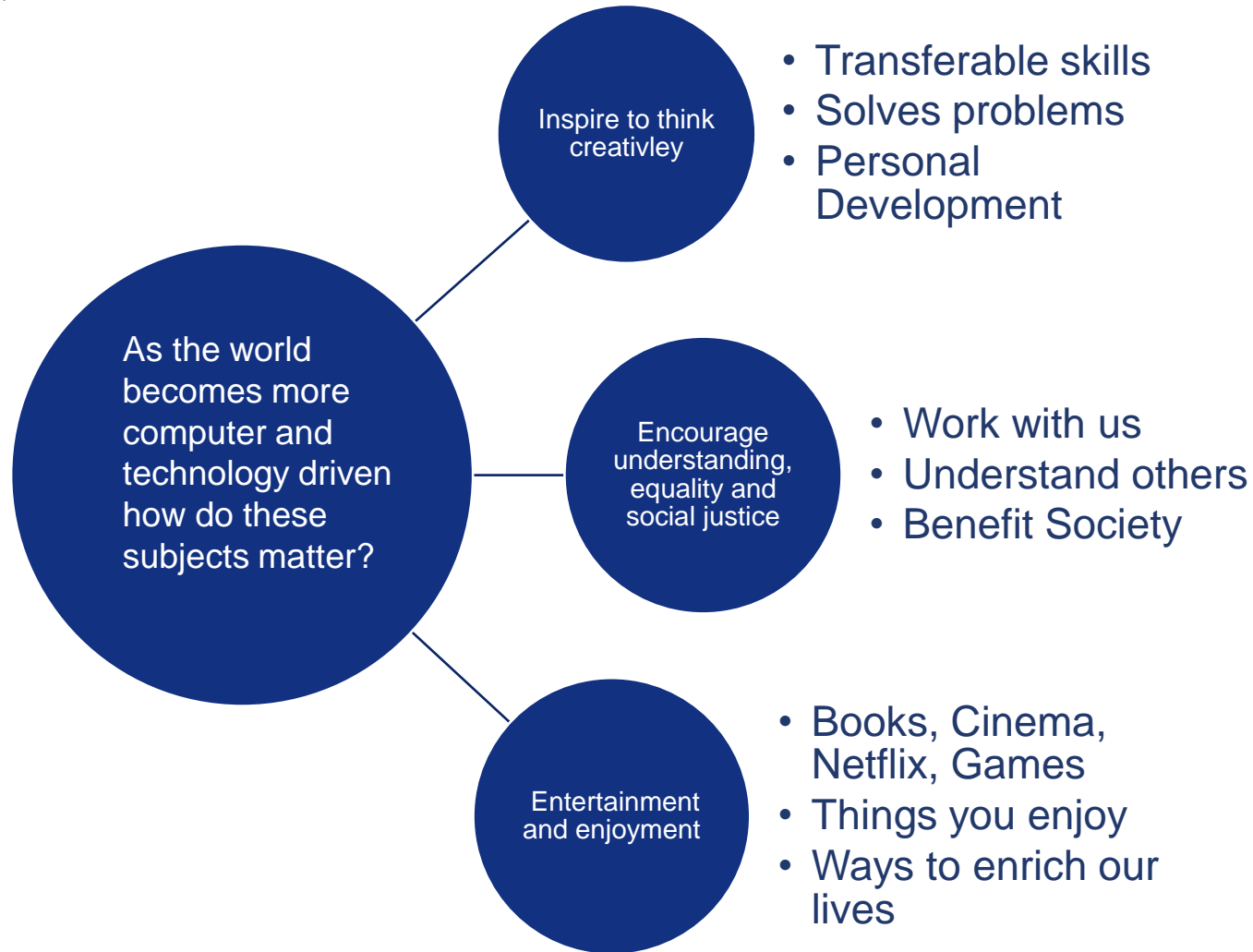
6 AHSS graduates have the skills that employers value now, and skills for the future workplace (section 3.5).²

But the benefits are not just careers-centered...

- Confidence and communication
- Advocacy
- Empathy
- Interdisciplinary
- Creative and analytical thinking
- Interpersonal skills
- Collaboration and teamwork



Why do Art, Humanities and Social Science Matter?



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THANK YOU

