

Press release: Major new research investment set to provide boost for UK's Creative Industries

Creative Industries Clusters in Bristol, Leeds, London, York, Cardiff, Belfast, Dundee and Edinburgh will bring together creative hubs with researchers and businesses to boost their world-leading status.

Aardman, Burberry, Sony and the British Fashion Company are some of the brands involved in the Programme. Developing the Clusters is a key deliverable in the Industrial Strategy's Creative Industries Sector Deal.

Some of the UK's best performing and world-renowned creative businesses are to come together with researchers and organisations to explore new ways of enhancing their sectors. They aim to increase the use of digital technologies to improve audience experience in the screen and performance industries, and shorten production times in the design industry.

Led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council within UKRI, the £80 million programme comprises nine creative clusters across the UK and a new Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta in partnership with 13 universities. The programme will bring together world-class research talent with companies and organisations, including household names such as Aardman, Burberry and Sony, in a first-of-its kind research and development investment.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The creative industries are a fantastic British success story creating millions of jobs and business opportunities across the country. The sector currently contributes £92 billion a year to our economy and through our modern Industrial Strategy we are investing further to enable the sector to keep on growing and bringing the benefits to all corners of the United Kingdom.

This investment, through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and industry, offers support to the UK's globally important creative industries, which are already worth over £92 billion to the UK economy and export an estimated £46 billion in goods and services each year. The aim is to create jobs and drive the creation of companies, products and experiences that can be marketed around the world.

Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright said:

Britain's creative industries are an economic and cultural powerhouse and the Creative Clusters will ensure they continue to thrive in different regions across the country.

These partnerships between business, academia and industry will encourage the use of future technology to develop new products and experiences, and boost employment opportunities across the breadth of the UK.

Professor Andrew Thompson, Executive Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, said:

Combining world-class arts and humanities researchers with our globally renowned creative industries will underpin growth in this vibrant and rapidly expanding sector within the UK economy.

These pioneering partnerships between industry and universities are providing a huge vote of confidence for a sector that is vital to the future prosperity of the UK.

A new Policy and Evidence Centre has also been established that will address gaps in the evidence base on the national economic strength of the UK's creative industries. Led by global innovation foundation Nesta, it will develop independent evidence that will inform decision-making across the creative industries and underpin future policy decisions.

Hasan Bakhshi, Director, Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, said:

The UK's creative industries have had a stellar growth performance in recent years, but to navigate the economic uncertainties ahead they will need rigorous evidence. This is where the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre will step in, producing research and formulating policies to support the sector's future growth.

Notes to Editors:

Each of the nine clusters emerged from an open, rigorous and peer-reviewed selection process that began a year ago. They bring together a range of educational and commercial partners to tackle unique R&D challenges identified by a specific area of industry.

The nine clusters are:

- Bristol and Bath Cluster (B+B)XR+D – Creating jobs, companies and products in the Bristol and Bath region's screen and performance industries by helping them adapt to emerging technologies. Led by: the University of the West of England with other institutions and commercial partners including Watershed, Aardman Animations, Audible, the BBC, and the RSC.

- Clwstwr Creadigol – Transforming the screen and broadcast industries in the Cardiff region of South Wales by helping them innovate and compete. Led by: Cardiff University with other institutions and commercial partners including BBC Cymru, S4C, Boom Cymru, ITV Cymru Wales and Sony UK Technology Centre.
- InGAME – Delivering new products, start-ups and training opportunities in the video game sector, and intensifying growth, diversification and cultural engagement. Led by: Abertay University in Dundee with other institutions and commercial partners including DC Thomson and Co, Sony, deltaDNA, Scottish Enterprise, Microsoft, TIGA, Creative Scotland and Dundee City Council.
- Creative Informatics – Seeking to put businesses and creative entrepreneurs in the driving seat of data-driven innovation in Edinburgh’s lively design and advertising sector. Led by: University of Edinburgh with other institutions and commercial partners including Creative Edinburgh, Festivals Edinburgh, The List, the BBC, National Museums Scotland, The Fruitmarket Gallery and Royal Bank of Scotland.
- Future Fashion Factory – Transforming the fashion industry’s capacity for creative innovation and reducing lead times and waste by embracing digital technologies in the design process. Led by: University of Leeds with other institutions and commercial partners including the Royal College of Arts, Burberry, Wools of New Zealand, Wooltex UK and the British Fashion Council.
- StoryFutures – Driving innovation in creative, immersive storytelling; connecting businesses, creating jobs and developing next-generation talent as the sector seeks to harness data-driven personalisation, smart devices and AI to reach audiences in new and complex ways. Led by: Royal Holloway with other institutions and commercial partners including the BBC, HTC Vive, nDreams, Plexus, Punchdrunk, Sky UK, Pinewood Group, BFI, Endemol Shine, Heathrow Airport, and the National Film and Television School.
- The Business of Fashion, Textiles and Technology Collaborative R&D – Partnership Delivering sustainable growth for the business of fashion, textiles and technology through innovation and adaptation. Led by: University of the Arts London with other institutions and commercial partners including ASOS, Clarks, British Fashion Council, London Legacy Development Corporation, Centre for Fashion Enterprise and the V&A.
- Future Screens NI – Growing the creative industries in Northern Ireland, particularly the extant animation and games clusters, by developing new hardware and software solutions. Led by: Ulster University with other institutions and commercial partners including: Northern Ireland Screen,

the BBC, RTE, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Catalyst Inc., Causeway Enterprise Agency, Belfast City Council and Digital Catapult.

- Creative Media Labs – Establishing the screen industries of Yorkshire and the Humber as a centre of excellence in immersive and interactive storytelling. Led by: University of York with other institutions and commercial partners including Screen Yorkshire, New Moon Studios, BT, Sony, BFI, Duck Soup, Warp Films, Game Republic and the BBC.

The Industrial Strategy sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It sets out how the UK Government is building a Britain fit for the future – how it will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which is part of UK Research and Innovation, funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: archaeology, area studies, the creative and performing arts, design, digital content, heritage, history, languages, philosophy and much more. This financial year we will spend approximately £98 million on research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides economic, social and cultural benefits to the UK, but contributes to the culture and welfare of societies around the globe.