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Chair CHEAD Foreword Creative Graduates Creative Futures

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CHEAD has a strong reputation for its work in promoting UK art and design, and in activity which examines contemporary issues affecting the HE curriculum and its implementation. In this way, CHEAD has established itself as the leading voice of HE art and design and sets its mission and policy as a direct result of the wide interests of its membership. HE governance and policy is one driver and thus CHEAD positions itself to support, influence, direct and lobby for art and design HE. The CHEAD membership is as diverse as the sector it works in. The focus on relevance to each individual institutional mission is essential in the work that we do and, with this in mind, our strategy is to work with others in the creative sector and support other stakeholders in education. CHEAD commissions extensive research into key issues affecting the HE art and design sector, which informs the wider policy debate. Recent projects focused on widening participation, entrepreneurship and employability and institutions' strategic planning. It was therefore with great pleasure that we agreed to be a key partner in the *Creative Graduates Creative Futures* research project.

Creative Graduates Creative Futures is at the core of our current and future strategic plans. The results will provide much needed intelligence about the contribution our graduates make to the UK economy and wider society – the skills and abilities they bring to all situations. This will allow CHEAD to strengthen links with public bodies and industry in order further to improve student progression from universities to employment. It will offer CHEAD and its members important evidence for curriculum planning, employment support, industry engagement and the employment prospects for their students.

Possibly more importantly, following a time of relative stability, *Creative Graduates Creative Futures* will offer a platform from which to reflect on the changed economic circumstances we find ourselves in, to ensure our sector is able to implement and react to fast moving change. Flexibility, adaptability, collaboration and a willingness to look at different models of student experience in relation to employment preparation will be essential for CHEAD's strategic direction. Emerging career patterns will no doubt be tested to the extreme in the coming years, and will need to be seen in the context of responsiveness to other policy drivers for economic change and challenge, and their impact on the creative sector.

This, therefore, is a timely study as CHEAD sets out its priorities for the next few years, and will focus on a clear articulation to all stakeholders and a collective voice to government regarding the increasingly important value of a creative education. UK art and design higher education is uniquely positioned to bring together a range of opportunities to form new relationships for the development of creativity and innovation that supports a return to economic stability. We are very grateful to have been able to contribute to the project, as it could not have come at a more crucial moment.