iST

The Professional Register For Creative Technologists

Background

Creative technical professionals play a vital role in our society, and it has become increasingly clear that there is a need to provide this cohort of the technical workforce with a framework via which their skills and expertise can be recognised and validated. There are already in existence professional registers for the science, engineering and IT communities and they provide ways in which the technical personnel employed in those sectors can get their expertise recognised widely. These registers have been in place for many years. Examples of such registers are Chartered Scientist (CSci), Registered Scientist (RSci) and Registered Science Technician (RSciTech), these registers being held by the Science Council). In addition, there are also engineering and IT registers held by the Engineering Council: Chartered Engineer (CEng), Engineering Technician (EngTech) and Information and Communication Technology Technician (ICTTech). Presently there is no framework available that can provide similar recognition for the creative industries technical/specialist workforce.

Professional registration provides a benchmark through which the public, employers and their clients can have confidence and trust that registered personnel have met internationally recognised professional standards. The Institute of Science & Technology (IST) is The Professional Body for the Technical Workforce, and it has long since recognised the benefits to both employers and employees of professional registration and has been working towards the development and introduction of a bespoke framework which would be suitable for the creative industries for some time. It is the IST's aim to give professionals within the

Background continued

creative technologies the same opportunity to have their much valued expertise recognised, both nationally and internationally.

A project to establish a registration framework for creative technical specialists started prior to the recent pandemic, but because of the restrictions imposed by the global phenomena, much of the work was put on hold for a period of approx. 18 months. Since emerging from those restrictions work has restarted and discussions have been held with the Arts Council and Creative UK (formerly previously known as Creative England and the Creative Industries Federation) in order to determine how best to move the project forward.

Following a series of meetings between the IST, The Arts Council, Creative UK and Creative & Cultural Skills, it was agreed that the best way forward would be to explore this further by piloting a registration scheme with a single sector, which currently employs a sizeable cohort of creative professionals, that sector being Higher Education. The reasons for the choice of that sector included:

- the volume of technical personnel in the sector
- their broad range of skills, knowledge & expertise
- their familiarity with professional accreditation in other disciplines

The project will be driven forward initially by Creative UK and the IST, in collaboration with experts from other related organisations acting in an advisory capacity.

The Framework

The Framework will provide a vehicle via which creative technical professionals can demonstrate that they can:
- Apply their knowledge in a professional setting
- Work with others and take personal responsibility for themselves and those impacted by their work
- Demonstrate that they are committed to professional development and personal integrity

Creative UK and the IST will set the professional standards by which creative technical professionals will be assessed and will also define the mechanism used to assess individuals against those standards. Registration based on these standards should enable better recognition of the value of technical roles to the industry, to the sector and to the country. Registrants will be recognised for their commitment to creativity and should inspire the next generation of creative technology professionals.

The basis of the standards will be similar to that used for the existing registration frameworks in science, engineering and IT, so that there will be consistency across the workforce, irrespective of sector and discipline. This should ensure that creative technical professionals will be acknowledged as being of a similar professional standing to those that are currently registered within other disciplines, and that they play as key a role as their science, engineering and IT counterparts.

The Framework Standards

It is envisaged that initially the register being developed and rolled out, the Registered Creative Industries & Technologies Practitioner (RPCIT), would be the one available to the largest cohort of HE personnel ie. the mid-career professionals [equivalent to the Science Council's Registered Scientist (RSci) status].

Subsequently the registers would be extended to provide for early career personnel, Registered Creative Industries & Technologies Technician (RTCiT) and more senior personnel, Advanced Creative Industries & Technologies Practitioner (APCiT). The titles for the awards have yet to be agreed and the terms used above are examples only.

The basis for the framework would be a set of 5 standard competency areas against which individuals would be assessed, these competency areas being applied at all award levels, but with the detailed requirements varying according to the level being assessed.

The 5 standard areas would be:
- Subject knowledge and associated skills
- Competency and responsibility
- Communications and teamwork
- Professional skills/standards application
- Personal and practical development

These standards can be modified to better suit the creative technologies community, if required. It is thought that if/when other workforce groups are reviewed for suitability of the registers the requirements against the above standards may have to vary. This will be the subject for further discussion.

The Framework Standards

The following provides an example of the standards that could form the basis of the creative professionals registers at the RPCiT level. These requirements are for example only and a more detailed list of competencies is available in a separate document.

It is expected that the detail of the standards will be part of the discussions to follow the setup of the HE pilot project, once expertise is brought in from individuals with experience of the HE creative workforce.

	Registered Creative Industries & Technologies Practitioner RPCiT
A SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE & SKILL	• Demonstrates competency in working in multiple media and/or applying multiple techniques within a project. • Has an appreciation of the history and development of the creative techniques used in their facilities.
B COMPETENCY & RESPONSIBILITY	• Works with minimal supervision. • Follows and instructs on safe working practices, such as risk assessments and approved techniques.
C COMMUNICATION & TEAMWORK	• Demonstrates effective communication, interpersonal and behavioural skills. • Has a proven track record of working successfully with colleagues in a wide variety of roles (such as students, apprentices, technicians, designers and academics).
D PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	• Advises on appropriate practices and proposes innovative solutions to problems and issues. • Makes suggestions for improvements to practice and policy.
E PERSONAL & PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT	• Attends mandatory training courses required to fulfil and enhance role. • Identifies, with support, areas of development to focus on which will enhance self and department.

The Pilot Process

It is envisaged that the IST and Creative UK will establish a steering group to consider the following:

- The timescale for the project work
- Resource implications
- Establishment and management of the initial register
- The framework and standards requirements
- Assessment processes (including assessor requirements)
- Awards and certification (including award titles)
- Routes to registration
- Monitoring and QA issues
- Promotion and marketing

The Steering Group will comprise personnel from both the IST and Creative Uk and specialist personnel from the creative sector, HE, other professional organisations associated with the technical community and/or professional standards and accreditation. The Steering Group will decide on the composition of working groups which will need to be established to focus on each of the key tasks, these working groups reporting back on a regular basis.

The establishment of the creative technologies professional registers should be of great benefit to both individuals, their employers and the wider creative community. It should validate the expertise of a highly skilled and knowledge workforce, and provide them with the recognition and status they deserve.

Institute of Science & Technology (IST)/Creative UK

The Professional Status that the Creative Technologies Deserve

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