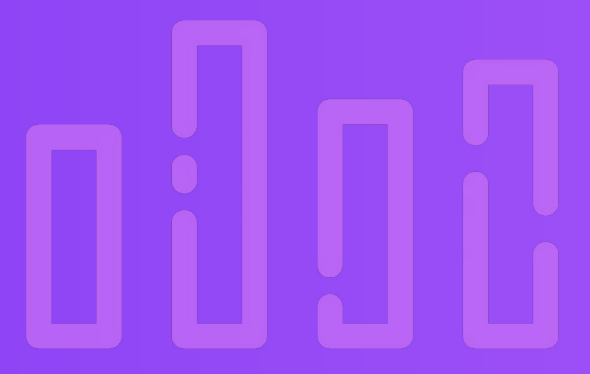


Career Outcomes

with Creativity and AI
in Higher Education and
Adobe Creative Campuses



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Executive Summary



In today's rapidly evolving job market, where change is being driven by generative AI adoption across industries, employers seek not only candidates with degrees but also individuals with essential skills such as creative agility, AI fluency, and the ability to convey complex ideas across various media.

Lifelong learners and creative problem-solvers who can adapt and thrive in this fast-paced environment are well-positioned to succeed. Unfortunately, many graduates lack these essential skills or struggle to present their capabilities effectively to employers.

As scrutiny increases on the value of higher education, institutions must innovate to address workforce demands or risk leaving students unprepared. This impacts student outcomes, institutional reputations, and future enrollment.

This report explores the journey of higher education students and early-career alumni transitioning into career pathways and its impact on their early careers.

The research organization Edelman drew insights from higher education students worldwide, including those at Adobe Creative Campus institutions. The report highlights how access to creative and AI tools can enhance student success.

Empowered by Adobe's industry-standard creative and multimedia tools, students gain confidence and clarity regarding their career paths, leading to better job opportunities. When these tools are available across all majors, significant improvements in digital literacy, academic engagement, and employability occur.

This report provides critical insights and strategies for academic leaders to drive change and prepare the next generation for purposeful careers.



Key Takeaways

1

85%

of current students using Adobe tools say the tools help them develop essential creative thinking skills; **84%** say the tools have improved their self-expression and communication skills.

These skills go beyond technical proficiency. Students are building the confidence to communicate ideas, solve problems, and express their perspectives in ways that strengthen both academic performance and long-term employability. For many students, this is the first time they've seen their academic work connect so directly to career-ready skills, making creativity a catalyst for confidence and purpose.

2

3

4

5

6

Key Takeaways

1

2

86%

of Adobe Creative Campus students feel prepared by their schools in AI literacy, compared to **74%** of students who use Adobe tools on non- Creative Campuses, and just **63%** of students who have no access to Adobe tools.

The data show that broad exposure matters, but intentional, campus-wide integration makes the most significant difference. Adobe Creative Campuses are not only providing students with access to tools, but they're also equipping them with the confidence and fluency to thrive in an AI-enabled workplace. By embedding Adobe tools across disciplines, these institutions set a new standard for equity in digital readiness, ensuring that every graduate can adapt and lead in a changing economy.

3

4

5

6

Key Takeaways

1

2

3

93%

of early-career professionals who used Adobe tools in their degree programs said they highlighted those skills in their successful job interviews, and **81%** of current students using Adobe tools intend to do the same when applying for internships and jobs.

Creative tools have become powerful career assets. In interviews, students use projects they've created with Adobe tools as tangible examples to prove their skills and problem-solving abilities, shifting the conversation from what they studied to what they can do. This not only builds confidence but also helps employers see immediate value in hiring candidates who are ready to contribute on day one.

4

5

6

Key Takeaways

1

2

3

4

72%

of early-career alumni who learned to use Adobe tools on campus secured full-time jobs within six months of graduation; the figure rises to **79%** among Creative Campus graduates.

Graduates with Adobe skills are entering the workforce with stronger momentum. This advantage stems from both skill and visibility as employers recognize Adobe skills and credentials as proof of industry readiness. By accelerating time-to-hire, Adobe Creative Campuses are proving that creative fluency isn't just an academic strength—it's a competitive differentiator in launching careers.

5

6

Key Takeaways

1

2

3

4

5

4.3x

increase in LinkedIn hires among those with creative skills.

From 2021 to 2024, LinkedIn saw a 4.3x increase in hires of employees who list creative skills, reflecting a sharp rise in employer demand for visual storytelling, content creation, and creative problem-solving. Students with creative and AI capabilities, especially those skilled in tools like Adobe Express and Creative Cloud, are gaining significant visibility on professional platforms and standing out in high-growth roles.

6

Key Takeaways

1

2

3

4

5

6

83%

of early-career professionals who used Adobe tools as students say they use those creative skills at least monthly at their jobs, compared to just **70%** of those who didn't use Adobe tools in college.

Graduates consistently recognize the lasting value of creative skill-building. Those who used Adobe tools to develop skills like collaboration, problem-solving, and creative communication during their degree programs share that these are not just nice-to-haves—they're recurring demands in their workplaces.

Methodology Summary

Primary Source: Edelman 2025 Student Engagement and Perception Research

This study, commissioned by Adobe, examines the impact of access to creative tools (i.e., Adobe Express, Firefly, and Creative Cloud) on student engagement, purpose, identity, and perception of institutional support.

Online survey: 20-minute quantitative survey conducted June 17–July 15, 2025, across ten global markets (i.e., US, UK, Australia, India, Germany, France, Japan, Italy, Norway, and Sweden).

- > Higher ed students (n=1,900): Age 18+, enrolled in 2- or 4-year or graduate level college programs
- > Early-career professionals (n=900): Graduated from a 4-year college in the last 2–3 years, employed with 2–3 years of experience

Qualitative focus groups: 45-minute sessions conducted July 14–17, 2025.

- > US (n=7) and UK (n=7) full-time undergraduates, all Adobe users; half held a certified Adobe credential or badge

LinkedIn data: Supplemental skills and hiring insights sourced in partnership with LinkedIn, analyzing global job postings and applicant profiles (2020–2024).



What's Ahead: A 360-degree Look at Career Transformation

This report unfolds in five chapters that trace the arc of student transformation through the lens of creative and AI skill-building.

Chapter 2 sets the stage with a look at the global hiring landscape, revealing why creativity, AI fluency, and visual communication are no longer optional—they're essential.

Chapter 3 delves into the student experience, examining how initial access to Adobe tools can transform mindsets, foster confidence, and open up new pathways to self-expression and discovery.

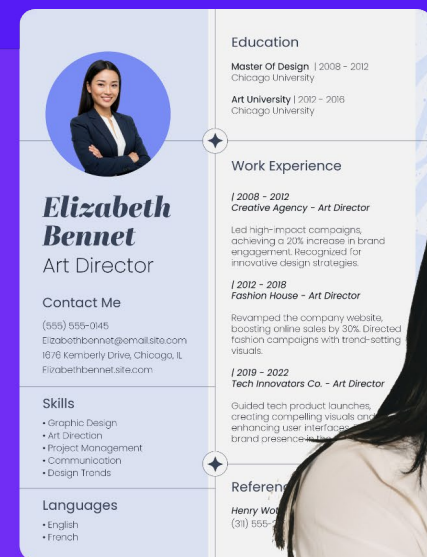
Chapters 4 and 5 follow students as they begin to apply these skills, creating standout portfolios, navigating interviews, and ultimately landing and thriving in competitive careers.

Finally, **Chapter 6** zooms out to the institutional level, where the most forward-thinking campuses are embedding Adobe tools across disciplines and seeing measurable gains in retention, equity, and post-graduate success.

Whether you're a campus CIO, provost, head of student success, or faculty member, this report shows that preparing students for the future of work means scaling access to creative and AI skill-building across your entire institution.



Global Employer Demand for Graduates with Creative and AI Skills



Across industries, creativity and AI fluency are moving from optional to essential.

The World Economic Forum now ranks creative thinking among the top five skills employers expect to prioritize by 2025, alongside analytical and technological abilities.¹ This demand isn't limited to traditionally creative fields. Sectors including healthcare, education, finance, and telecommunications are all seeking graduates who can generate ideas, solve problems visually, and adapt to new tools like generative AI.

For higher education leaders, the takeaway is clear: Preparing students for today's job market requires more than technical knowledge. It calls for a curriculum that builds creative and digital confidence across disciplines. This chapter draws on global workforce insights from sources such as LinkedIn, McKinsey, and the World Economic Forum.

These insights demonstrate how creativity, communication, and AI literacy are becoming core expectations—and why institutions that prioritize these skills are giving their graduates a clear advantage.



A **2024 LinkedIn Global Talent Trends** report revealed a 4.3x increase in hires listing creative skills between 2021 and 2024, underscoring that creative capability is no longer limited to design departments.²



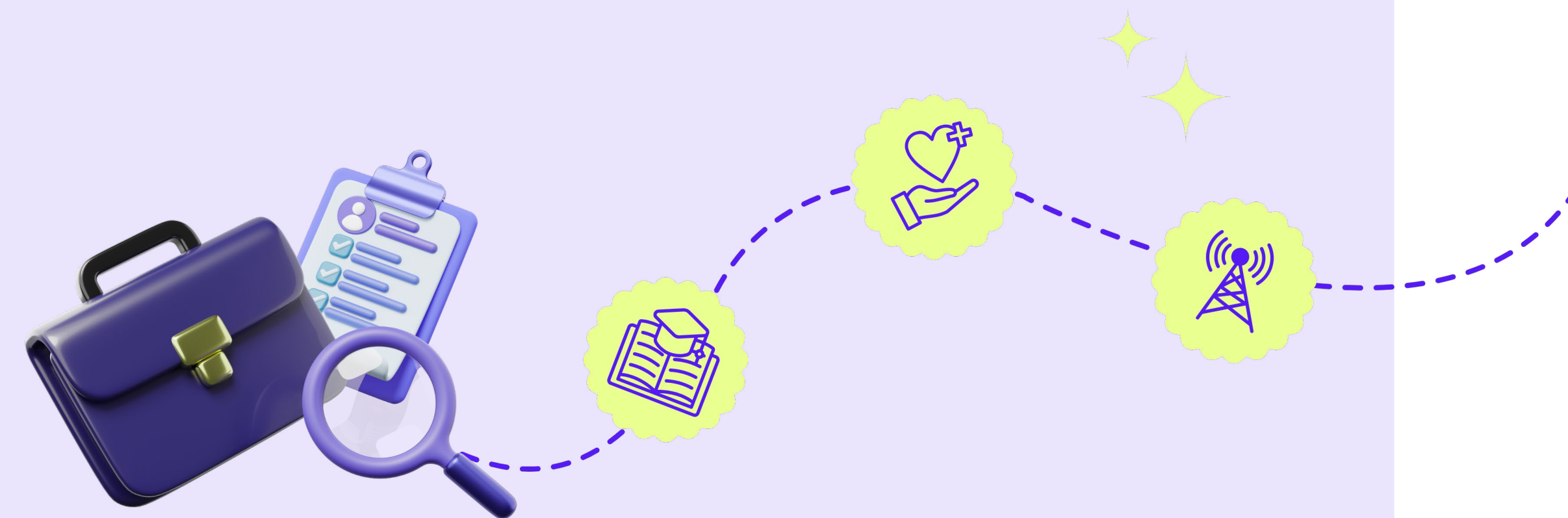
70% of global employers now use generative AI to enhance creativity and innovation, not just to automate processes or gain efficiencies. These insights make it clear that creativity and AI fluency are now strategic workforce imperatives.



76% of global companies using generative AI report significant time savings, allowing teams to refocus on higher-value, human-centric work such as collaboration, ideation, and storytelling.



Creative thinking and **AI skills** are in high demand across education and training (79%), healthcare (76%), and telecommunications (75%), according to the World Economic Forum.¹ Simultaneously, AI and big data literacy are surging in diverse fields, from professional services (98%) to healthcare (92%).



Creativity and AI Fluency as Core Workforce Skills

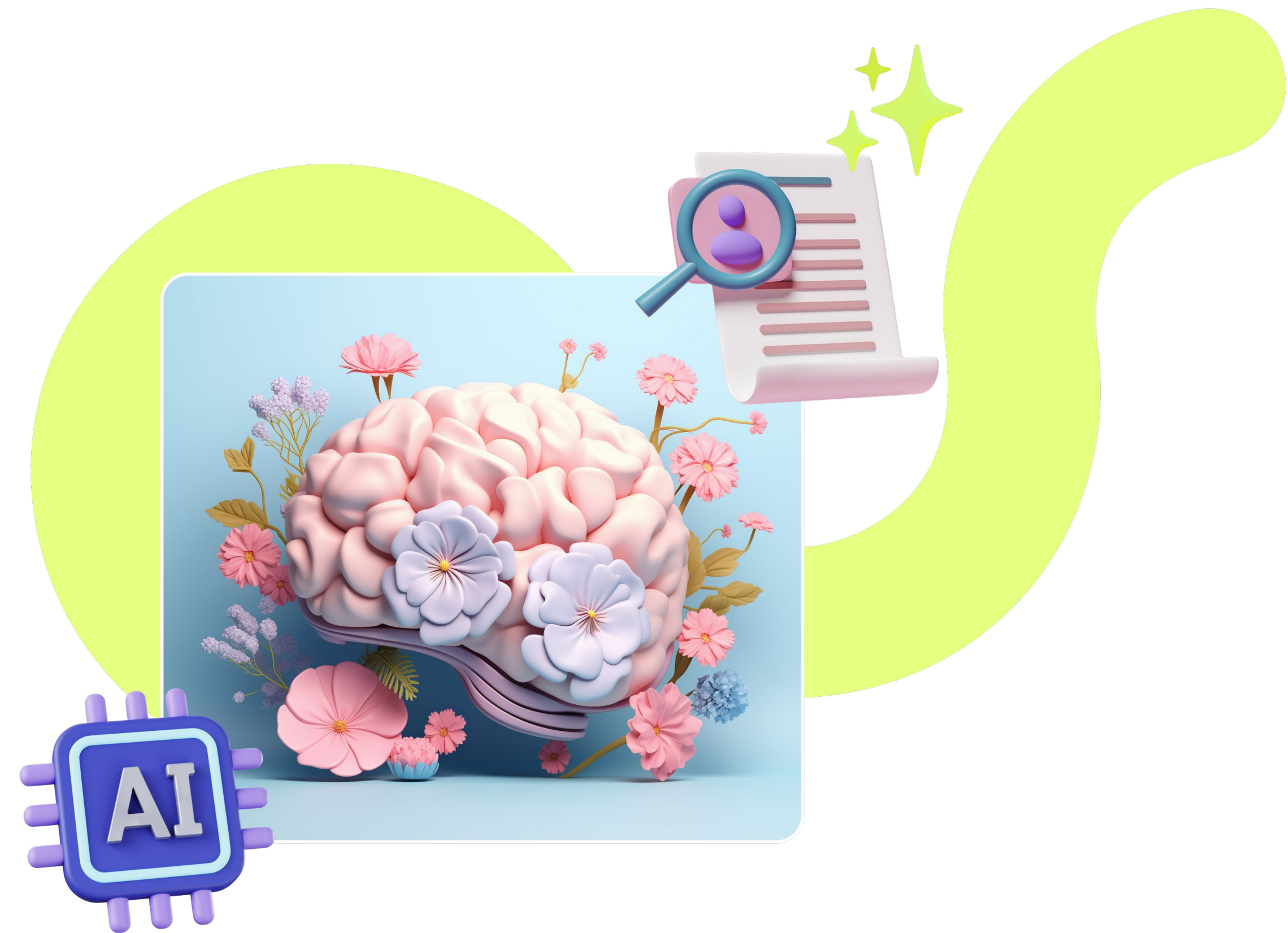
Creative thinking and AI fluency are rapidly becoming core job skills across industries. The World Economic Forum projects a 66% rise in demand for creative thinking by 2030, placing it among the top five skills employers seek.¹

LinkedIn data reinforces this shift: Creative and communication skills appear in nearly half of all high-growth job postings, and communication now ranks as the most in-demand skill overall.³ This reflects a broader recognition that creativity is no longer limited to specific fields but is critical across various sectors, including healthcare, finance, technology, and education.

Rather than replacing human creativity, AI is amplifying it. McKinsey estimates that generative AI will boost content production and design efficiency by 20–40%, making creative fluency essential for those who want to lead this transformation.⁴

Today's top employers are looking for candidates who can develop content, design compelling presentations, communicate visually, and work creatively with AI tools in new and exciting ways to transform the status quo of their teams.

For higher education leaders, the message is clear: Creativity has become fundamental infrastructure. Institutions that teach students to wield these tools with fluency and purpose will be the ones preparing them to lead in a future defined by both technology and imagination.



Demand for Creative and AI Skills Across Industries

Creativity is no longer confined to design studios or marketing departments. Across nearly every sector, employers are prioritizing creative and AI fluency as essential capabilities rather than add-ons.

According to the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report (2025), creative thinking ranks among the top five core skills needed by 2025, and its value is rising across industries traditionally seen as technical, regulated, or conservative.¹

Industries are adapting, and the definition of career readiness is shifting. Skills once seen as nice-to-haves are now non-negotiable for impact, leadership, and innovation.

For higher education institutions, this means that preparing students to think creatively and work fluently with AI is no longer reserved for the arts but is mission-critical across every major.

In-demand creativity and AI fluency skills across industries

Insights from the 2025 World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report:

79% of employers in education and training cite creative thinking as essential for curriculum design, digital learning, and student engagement strategies.

76% of healthcare hiring leaders prioritize creative and communication skills to support collaboration, patient education, and care innovation.

75% of telecommunications and technology companies value creative problem-solving for agile development, cross-functional teamwork, and product storytelling.

98% of professional services companies report growing demand for AI and big data skills, often paired with design thinking and content creation expertise.

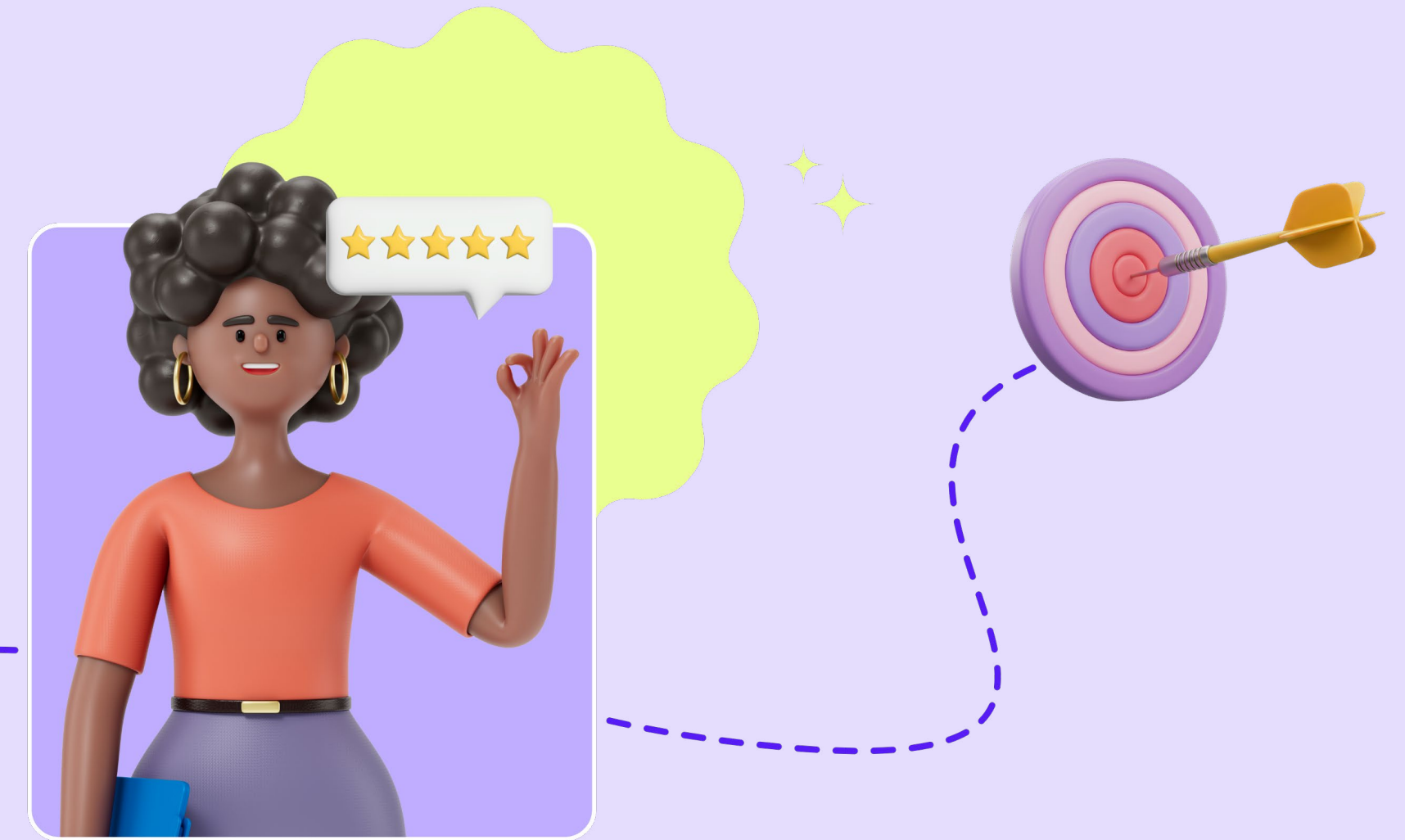


Adobe Creative Campus Spotlight: Auburn University

Auburn University, the first Adobe Creative Campus in Alabama, continues to achieve rising retention and graduation rates, making it one of the top public universities in the US. The university's success can be partially attributed to its focus on academics and student experiences, including career-focused programming designed to ensure that students succeed both in and out of the classroom.

For instance, Auburn is using Adobe Express to help students in non-creative majors develop real-world communication skills through visually engaging, project-based learning.

Dr. Makeela J. Wells knows the importance of connecting classwork to real-world opportunities. Dr. Wells, who first taught classes while working toward her Ph.D., quickly realized that traditional assignments focused on exams and papers didn't always align with what employers needed in the workforce.



“ When students ask for a recommendation letter, it is much better if I can talk about specific skills they've demonstrated in class, not just the grade on their last exam.

Now, when I assign projects, I always start by defining their purpose, such as improving research or critical-thinking skills. Those skills can map to any student's career goals, no matter their primary field of study.”

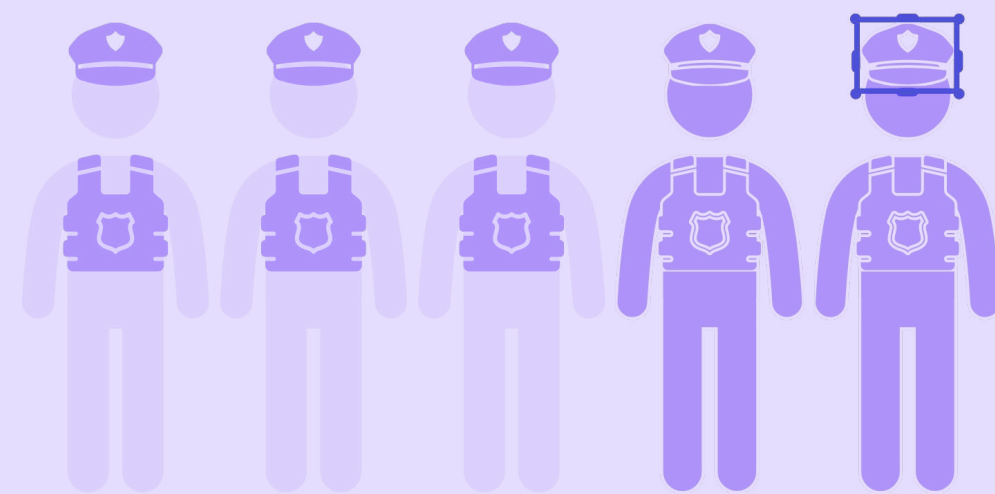
— Dr. Makeela J. Wells, Auburn University Assistant Professor of Sociology

In Dr. Wells' Police and Society course, students replaced traditional essays with infographic assignments that were published on Auburn's public-facing Digital Wall. The project encouraged students to distill complex social issues into clear, visual narratives.

By collaborating in teams and customizing templates in Adobe Express, students gained hands-on experience with tools that mirror workplace expectations for design, storytelling, and critical thinking. The project not only fostered creative expression but also expanded public dialogue around policing—demonstrating how Adobe's creative technology can enrich both academic learning and civic engagement.

“Once students learn how to design a custom infographic panel, they can easily apply those skills to design anything with Adobe Express, from social media posts to presentations to digital signage. This project improves digital literacy skills that benefit students while they're at Auburn and in their future careers.”

— Dr. Chelsy Hooper, Auburn University Instructional Technology Coordinator



Conclusion

Creative and AI fluency are no longer the domain of a select few. They're fast becoming baseline expectations for graduates entering today's job market.

In 2025 and beyond, creativity, communication, and content creation sit squarely alongside digital literacy, data analysis, and leadership on every employer's wish list. From healthcare to business to public service, job postings now routinely cite tools like Adobe Creative Cloud and Adobe Express not as bonuses, but as essentials.

For colleges and universities, this shift presents a powerful opportunity. Institutions that embed creative and AI tools across disciplines are not only equipping students for today's job market but are also strengthening their own competitive edge.

By positioning themselves as hubs of innovation and career readiness, these campuses become more attractive to prospective students, more visible to employers, and better aligned with the evolving demands of the workforce. Leading in this space is now a statement about institutional relevance and student success.



Creative and AI Skills Integrated Across Campus Expand Students' Career Pathways

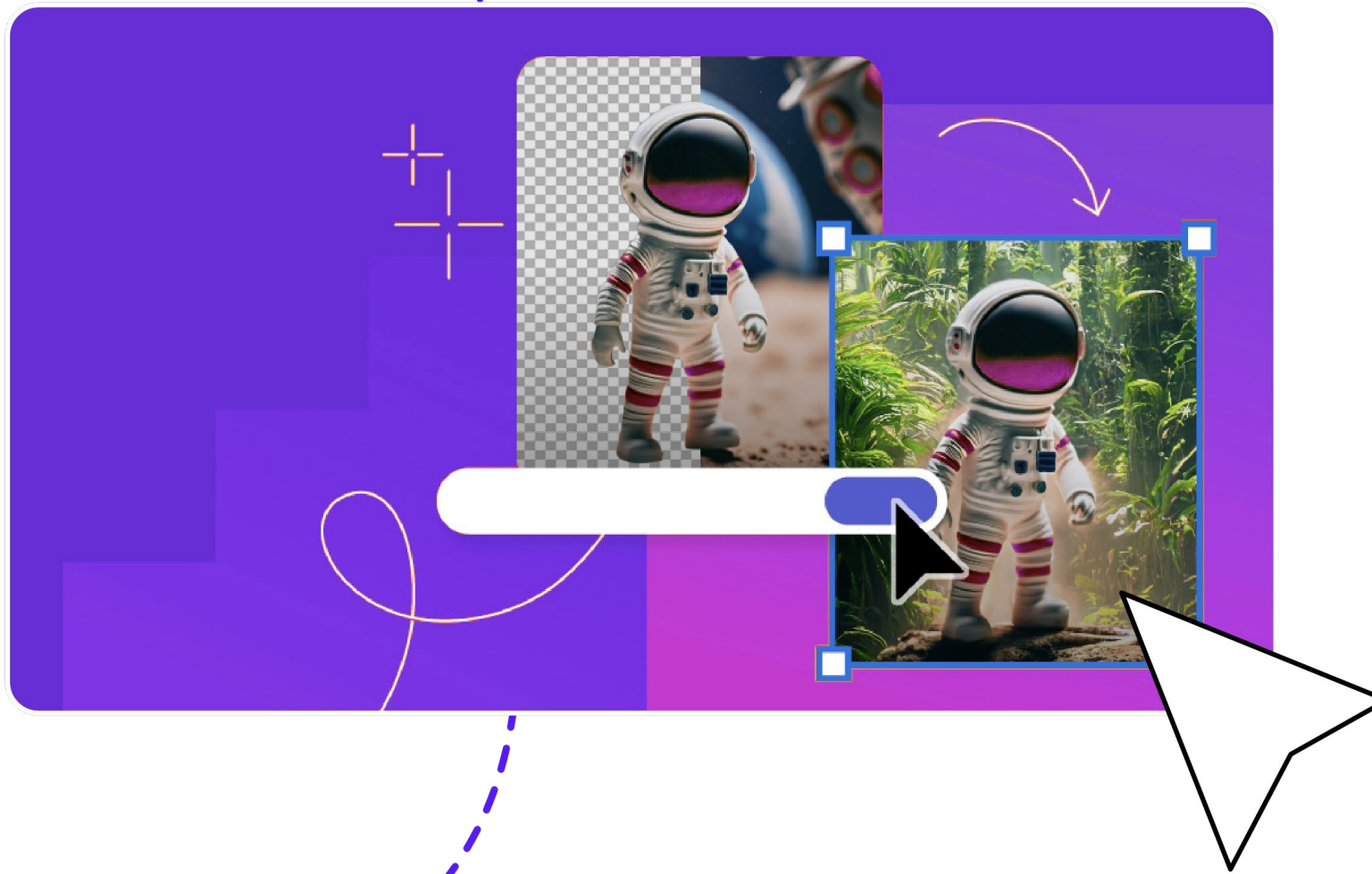
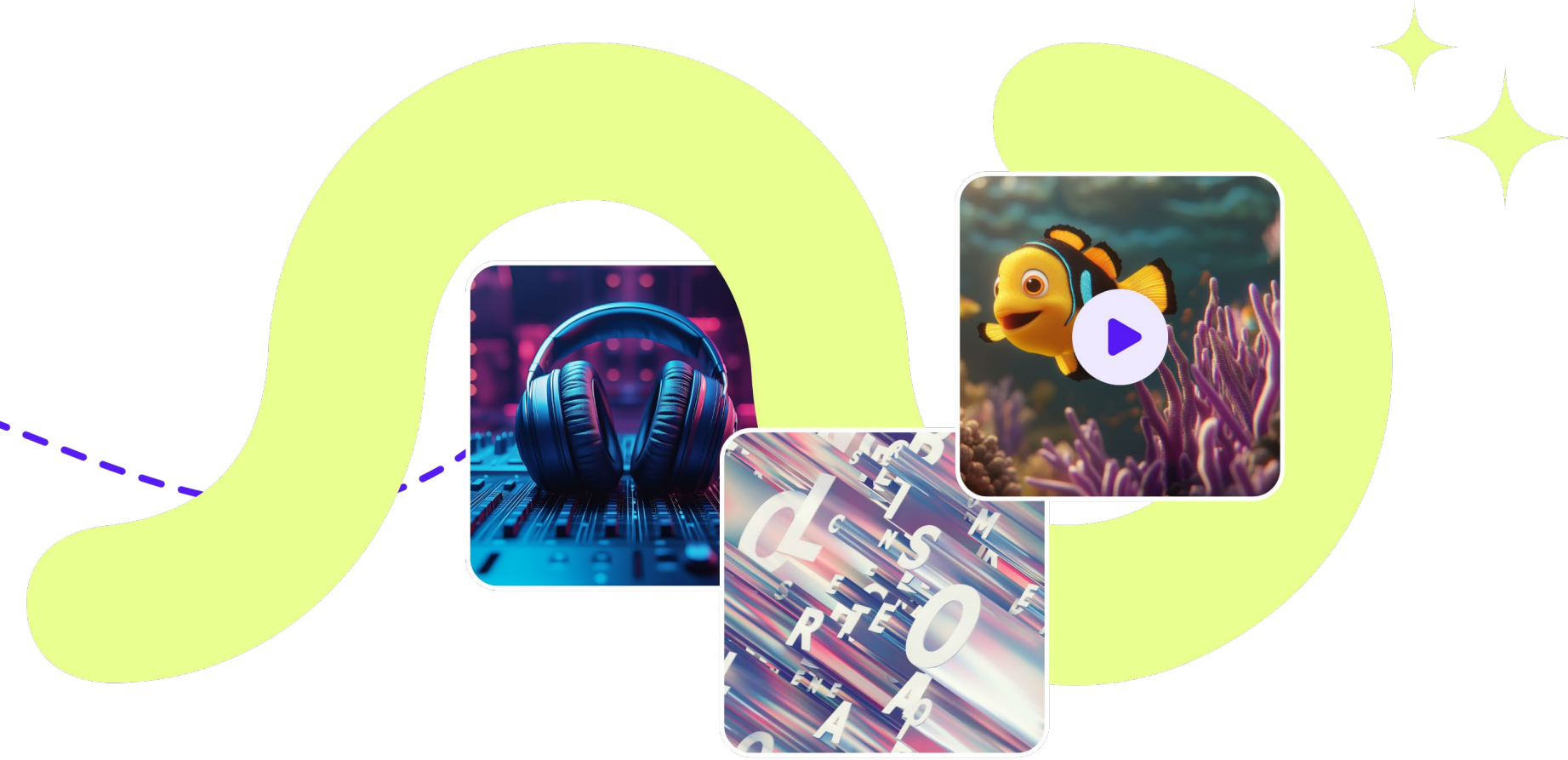


Students often discover career-shaping skills not through a set plan, but through a first experience with tools like Adobe Express, Firefly, or Creative Cloud—often in a general education class or early course outside their major.

These early encounters can shape how students perceive themselves and their potential, offering them new ways to express ideas, explore interests, and connect coursework to real-world possibilities.

Survey data and student reflections show that even a single experience with creative tools can spark lasting change. Students report increased confidence, stronger communication skills, and, in many cases, a clearer sense of direction for their academic and career paths.

When creative and AI tools are integrated into foundational courses, institutions help students see their education not just as preparation, but also as a platform for discovering new futures.



“ I was a graphic design digital media major, but then I took the Adobe Creative Skills micro-credential courses and I saw just the scale that AI could produce. And I changed to a communications major because I feel like it’s kind of more general. It showed me the power of what AI can do, so I went broader with my major.”

— Maryam, US student, Communications major

84% of current students and **96%** of early-career professionals who used Adobe Express said it helped them better communicate their ideas in class, a skill that extends into leadership and collaboration.

- › **The Creative Campus advantage:** 88% of Creative Campus students report that Adobe Express has improved their classroom communication, compared to 79% at non- Creative Campuses.

89% of current students and **98%** of early-career professionals say that Adobe's creative AI tools helped them express themselves more creatively, which builds confidence and creative fluency

- › **The Creative Campus advantage:** 90% of Creative Campus students say that Adobe's creative AI tools improved their self-expression, compared to 88% of non- Creative Campus students.

84% of Adobe users who changed majors say the shift was inspired by creative or AI tools like Adobe's, showing how early exposure can spark meaningful academic pivots.

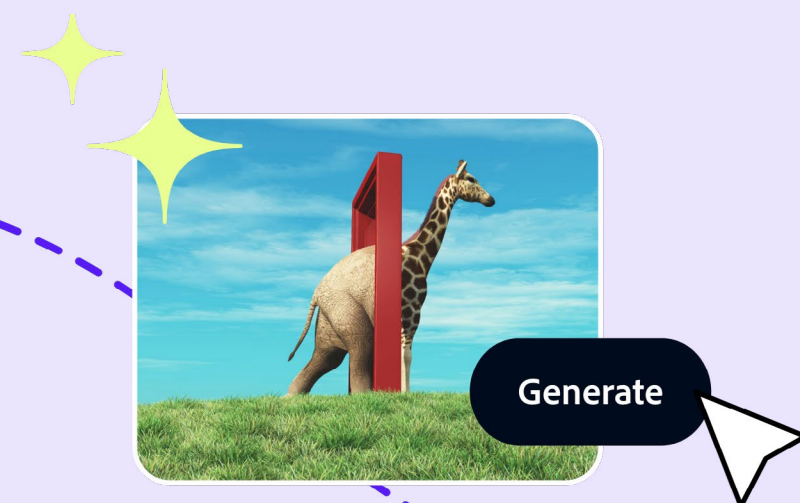
- › **The Creative Campus advantage:** Among early-career professionals, 89% of Creative Campus alumni and 84% of non- Creative Campus alumni who changed majors say the same.

80% of current students recognize that future jobs will value experience with multimedia and creative AI tools like Adobe's.

- › **The Creative Campus advantage:** Awareness is even higher among Creative Campus students (86%) compared to non- Creative Campus students (76%) and students who never used Adobe tools (45%).

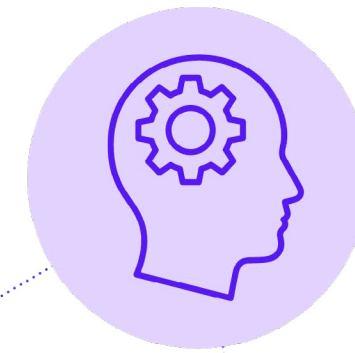
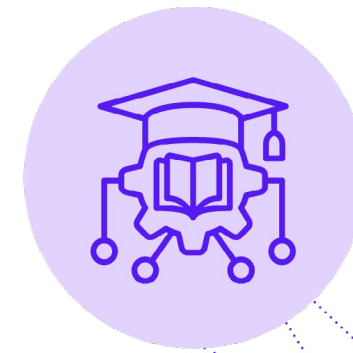
88% of early-career professionals say that the jobs they applied to valued Adobe multimedia skills.

- › **The Creative Campus advantage:** Recognition is strongest among Creative Campus alumni (95%) versus non- Creative Campus peers (84%).



Global Spotlights

Recent graduates who acquired Adobe skills on their campuses in **Germany** (91%), **France** (91%), **Australia** (91%), **Italy** (90%), and **Japan** (89%) report that AI literacy is important for their current jobs, which is higher than the global average of 86%.

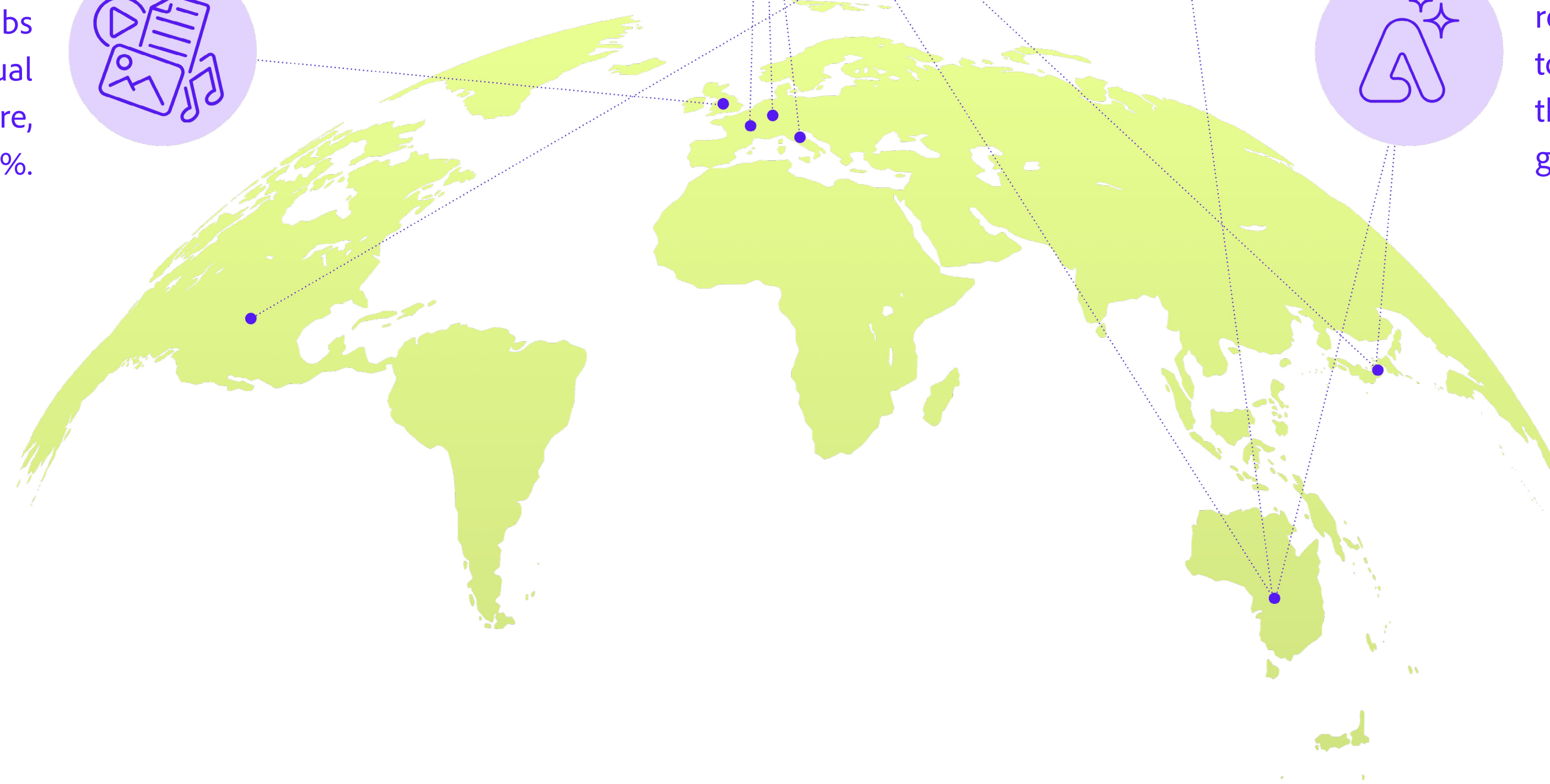


97% of **Australian** students and 96% of **US** students who use Adobe say that critical thinking skills are important in succeeding at their jobs, significantly above the global total of 91%.

90% of **UK** students or recent grads recognize that future jobs will value multimedia and visual communication skills more, compared to the global total of 83%.



In **Japan** and **Australia**, 95% of recent graduates say that multimedia tools like Adobe's are essential to their jobs, which is higher than the global average of 86%.



Where Students First Encounter Creative Tools

For many students, the journey with creative tools doesn't begin in a design course, but rather in less expected places: elective classes, clubs, and personal hobbies.




In fact, 69% of first- and second-year students currently enrolled who use Adobe tools report encountering them early in their college experience, often in courses not explicitly labeled creative.

These early touchpoints are less about mastering technique and more about unlocking possibilities, giving students the chance to express their ideas in a visually persuasive essay, a multimedia lab report, or a business pitch.

Adobe tools often surface outside students' primary fields of study. Nearly a quarter of students and recent grads who learned Adobe skills report using tools like Adobe Express (27%), Photoshop (28%), or InDesign (27%) in courses outside their major.

FIGURE 3.1

Top student uses of Adobe tools on campus

	 Adobe Express	 Adobe Photoshop	 Adobe Creative Cloud All Apps
Classes for my field of study	#1	#2	#1
Personal hobby	#3	#1	#2
To prepare for a future career	#2	#3	#3
A side hustle or side gig	#4	#4	#4
Elective classes	#5	#5	#5
Internships	#7	#6	#8
Student club or extracurricular	#6	#6	#6
Student job	#7	#6	#7

“

In my degree, there are a lot of people who want to get into marketing. Although I don't want to, [creative tools] make me feel like I've got the same skill sets and I'm on the same level as [my peers].

Because I've developed those skills, I feel like Adobe has been accessible enough for me that I'm able to catch up with [other students] more quickly than I otherwise would have been able to.”

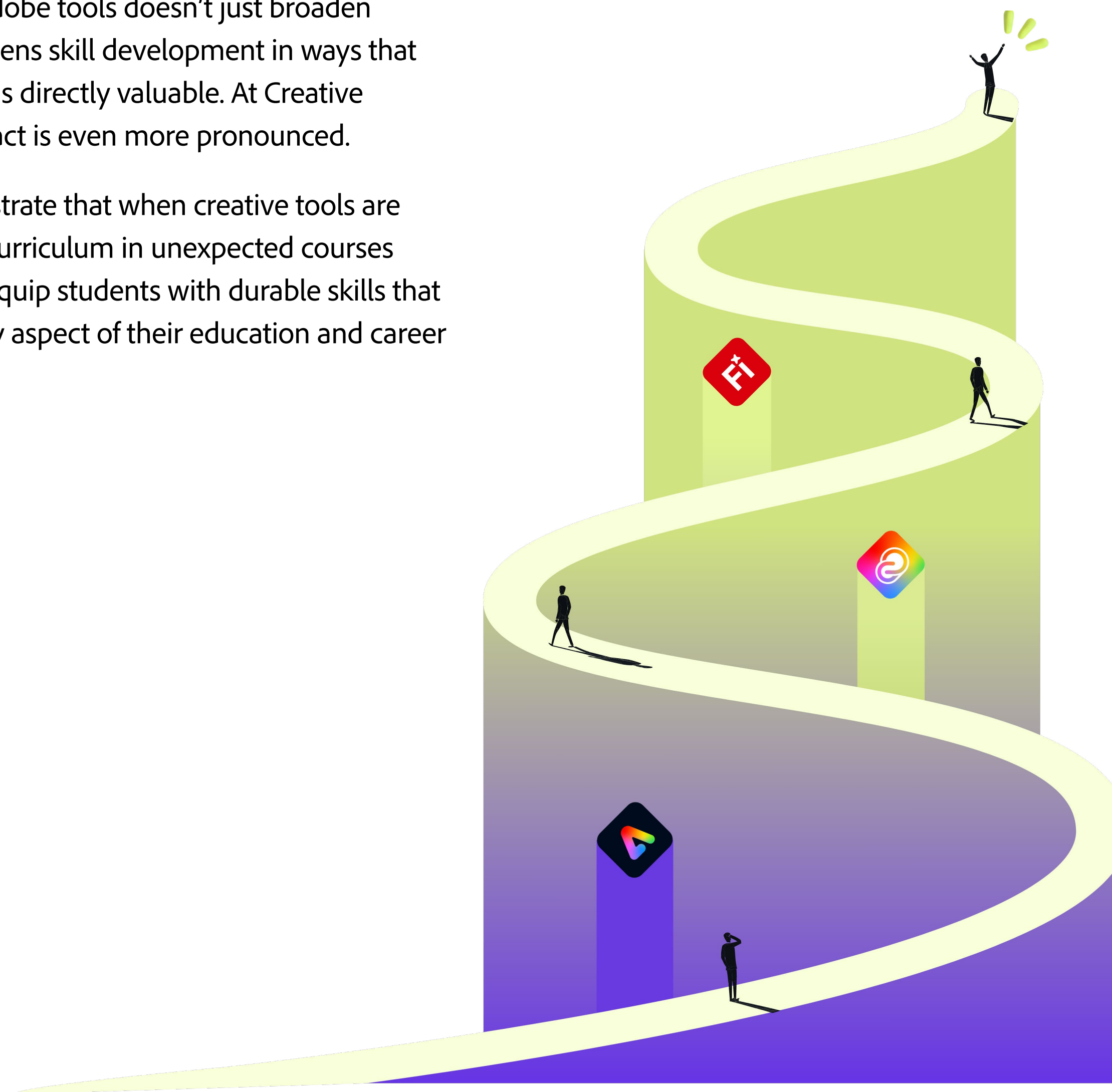
— Sara, UK student, Management major

At Adobe Creative Campus institutions, that exposure is even more widespread and intentional. Students and recent graduates from Creative Campuses who used Adobe tools were significantly more likely to feel that their school helped develop the following skills well:

- > Multimedia and visual communication
85% Creative Campus vs. **69%** non- Creative Campus
- > Creative thinking
88% Creative Campus vs. **77%** non- Creative Campus
- > Collaboration and teamwork
88% Creative Campus vs. **79%** non- Creative Campus

Early exposure to Adobe tools doesn't just broaden access—it also deepens skill development in ways that students recognize as directly valuable. At Creative Campuses, this impact is even more pronounced.

These gains demonstrate that when creative tools are integrated into the curriculum in unexpected courses and contexts, they equip students with durable skills that carry over into every aspect of their education and career readiness.



Confidence and Purpose as Career Catalysts

Before students build a portfolio, they must first develop confidence in their core strengths: their skills, creative instincts, and ability to make a positive impact in future job opportunities. The shift in confidence often begins quietly: designing a compelling presentation slide, leading a group brainstorm, or remixing an idea with a fresh visual.

For many students, the opportunity to create something new is the first time they begin to see themselves not just as learners, but as innovative communicators.

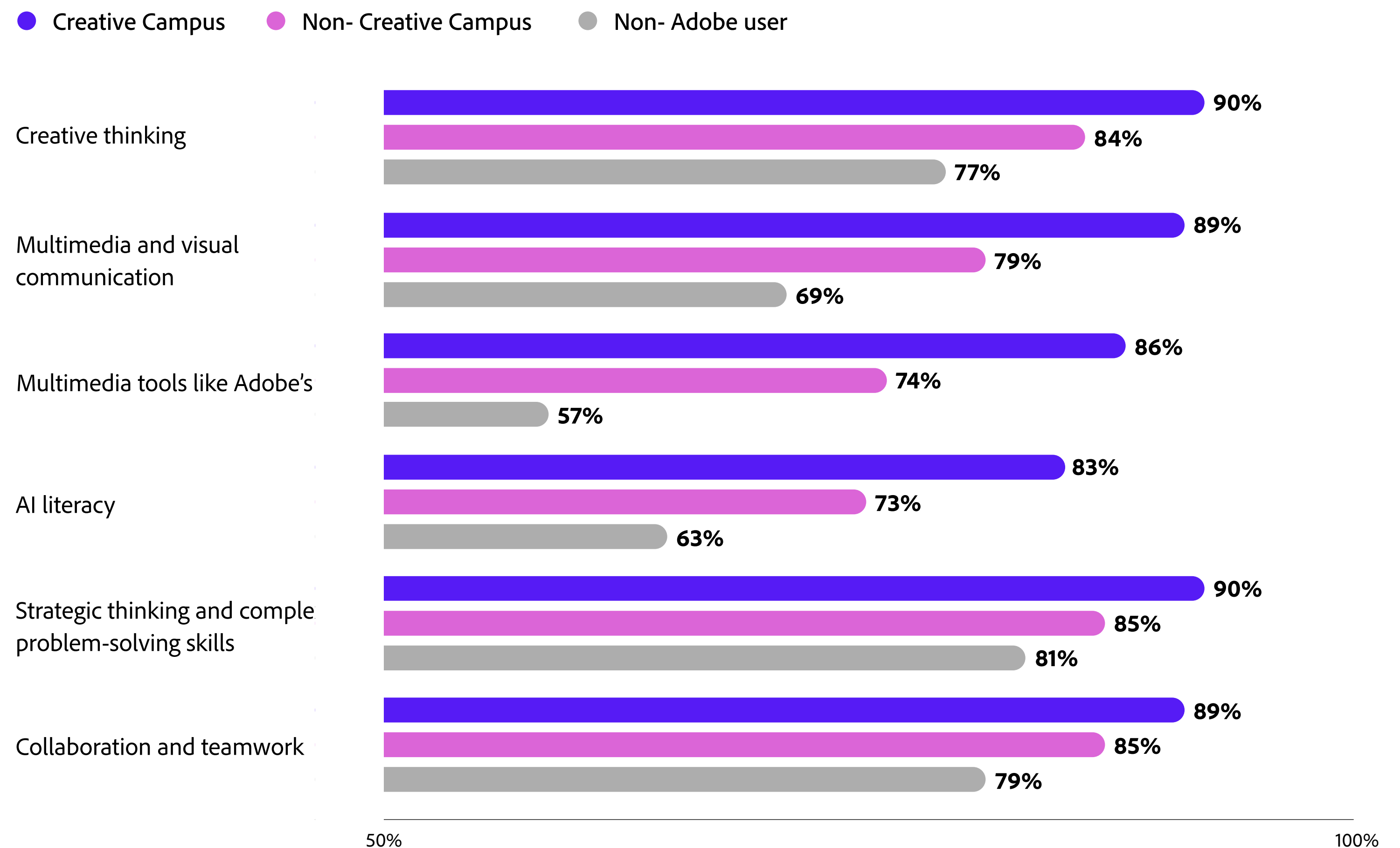
In fact, 88% of students on Adobe Creative Campuses report that Adobe Express helped them communicate their ideas more effectively in class, compared to 79% of students on non- Creative Campuses.

This confidence in communication is matched by confidence in creativity: 90% of students and 98% of recent grads from Creative Campuses report that Adobe Express helped them communicate their ideas more effectively in class.

FIGURE 3.2

Creative Campuses help students build future-ready skills

How well, if at all, does your college or university help you develop the following skills?



Base of students and recent grads: total Creative Campus n=985, total non- Creative Campus n=1815, total non- Adobe users n=501

In terms of teamwork, **93%** of students who use Adobe tools said they felt their campus helped them develop collaboration and teamwork skills, compared to **83%** of students who don't use Adobe tools.

Confidence doesn't just change how students show up in class, but it can also reshape what they want to do next. Once students begin to see themselves as capable of creative expression, they start to imagine new paths forward. Some shift majors. Others pick up minors or revise their career goals entirely. Across disciplines, Adobe tools often spark that change.

Among the **39%** of current students who changed their major or program and learned Adobe tools, **79%** reported that creative or AI tools, such as those from Adobe, influenced the change. That number jumps to **89%** for students who changed their major at Adobe Creative Campuses.



“ Learning how to edit and learning how to use Adobe has inspired me to get into learning [them more]. Maybe even as a side hobby, if I can improve on it. Maybe turn into a side hustle.”

— Adbullahi, UK student, Journalism major

Adobe Creative Campus Spotlight: University of Texas at San Antonio

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) is a longstanding Adobe Creative Campus partner that continually finds innovative approaches to drive student outcomes. One of the ways UTSA is helping students stand out in the job market is by encouraging them to earn Adobe micro-credentials, which indicate that they've mastered in-demand skills such as designing compelling presentations or using generative AI to develop business pitches.

Unlike typical Adobe certification courses, which demonstrate expertise in an Adobe app after weeks of study and hands-on experience, micro-credentials focus on specific creative tasks, such as editing a short video, designing a presentation, or creating an image with generative AI. They take just a few hours to complete and are entirely self-paced, making it easy for even the busiest students to fit lessons into their schedules.



“Micro-credentials empower students to explore a variety of career paths, deepen their learning beyond their major, and gain valuable skills that enrich their college experience and future opportunities.”

— Claudia Arcolin, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Experiences, UTSA

Through Adobe micro-credentials, UTSA students can learn a dozen essential digital and creative skills, such as creating eye-catching social media marketing content. Each course culminates with a practical assignment, promoting experiential learning. Upon completion, students earn a digital certificate and badge that they can include on their resume and LinkedIn profile as a record of their skills.

Adobe skills micro-credentials are also integrated in classes that reach students across majors and departments, such as the Academic Introduction & Strategies (AIS) courses required for all first-year students or Honors classes aimed at members of the Honor College, an optional invitation-only program open to the most highly motivated and successful students from any field of study.

During the Professional Development module in the Honors 101 class, students complete either the Job Application Essentials or Product Pitch with Generative AI micro-credential, learning skills that will help them start their careers. Meanwhile, in the Skill Development module, students learn to enhance their communication skills with either a Presentation Design or Storytelling Through Short-Form Video micro-credential.

“ In Honors, we have utilized Adobe software to help students demonstrate digital literacy through highlighting their learned skills and creative works. Micro-credentials are a perfect way to help students learn specific skills that align with their professional goals, and teach them how to speak about those skills in meaningful ways.”

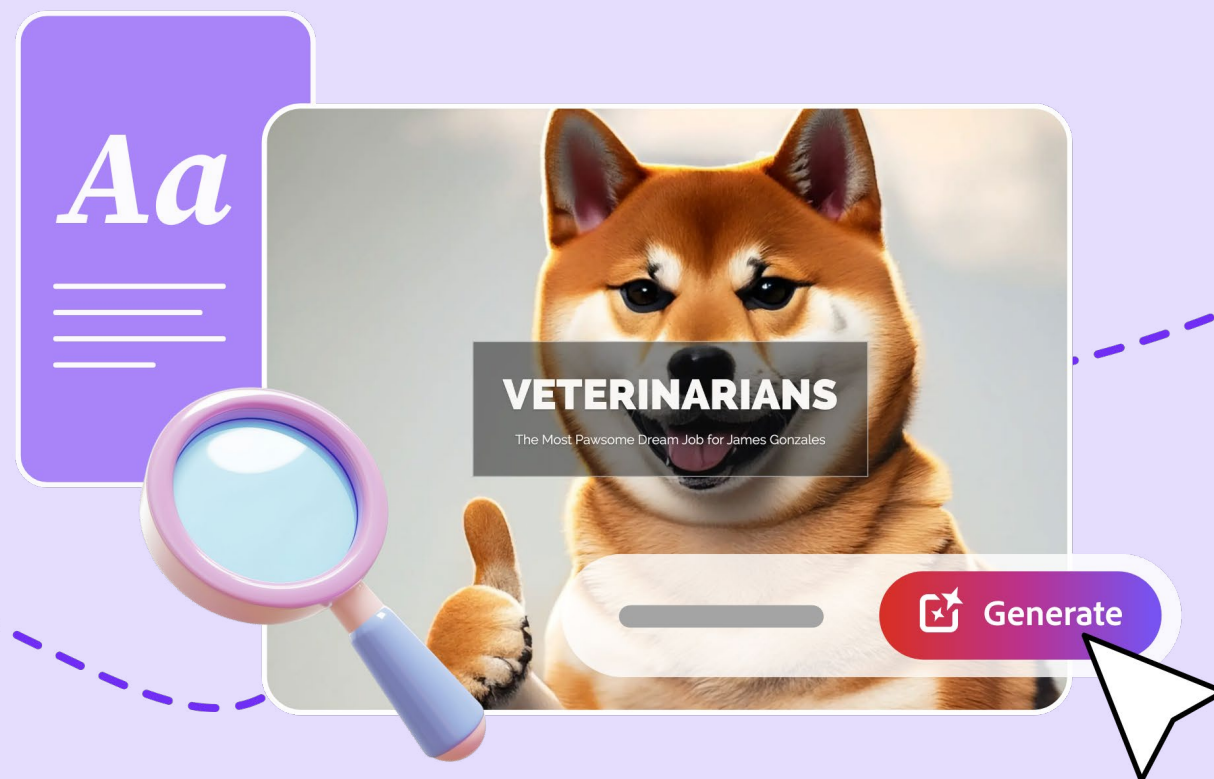
— Alegra Lozano, Director of Counseling and Assistant Professor of Practice at the Honors College, UTSA



In addition, professor Cindy Roberts champions Adobe software and micro-credentials to help students understand how mathematical concepts appear in the real world. As part of Calculus for Biosciences, a class designed for students interested in fields such as medicine and biology, Roberts teaches students to create a mini-website by linking Adobe Express pages that illustrate potential applications of calculus in their chosen fields.

Students complete the Presentation Design micro-credential before diving into their projects, which equips them with the requisite skills to convey mathematical concepts in clear and compelling ways—and which allows Roberts to focus on other topics.

Biology student Alessia Valdes added Adobe Stock images, graphs, and Bitmojis to illustrate the use of differential equations in calculating the rate of administering antibiotics for a theoretical patient. Music education student James Gonzales used animal-themed images alongside equations that describe the growth of an imaginary veterinary hospital over time.



“ Technology changes fast, and no one knows what students will be expected to do in their careers. Micro-credentials give students the confidence that they can continue to learn new skills and contribute to their workplaces in the future.”

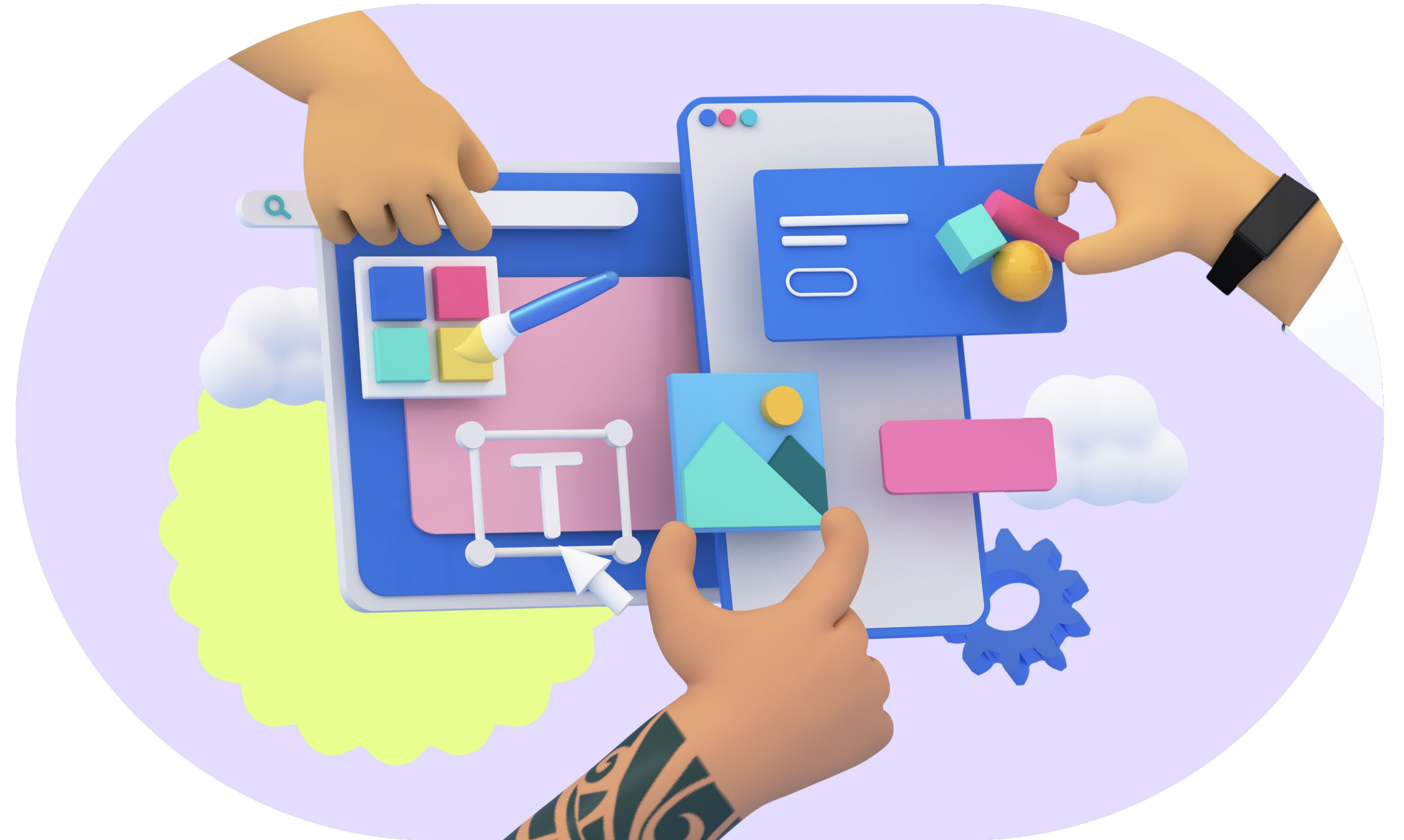
— Cindy Roberts, Assistant Professor of Practice for Mathematics, UTSA

Conclusion

The introduction of creative and AI tools in general education courses or entry-level major requirements can significantly transform students' self-perception.

These initial experiences, whether they involve creating a multimedia slide or visualizing data, empower students to transition from passive learners to active creators, fostering confidence in their creativity and communication skills.

For academic leaders, this presents a crucial opportunity to enhance curriculum infrastructure. By integrating tools like Adobe's across various disciplines, institutions can cultivate pathways that promote student agency and satisfaction, ultimately shaping students' abilities to navigate their academic and career journeys.



Students Use Adobe Creative and AI Skills to Stand Out to Employers

Students don't just learn Adobe tools; they learn how to demonstrate essential skills and abilities.

As their coursework evolves into polished portfolios, multimedia resumes, and industry-recognized micro-credentials, their creative and AI skills become visible indicators that translate beyond the classroom. They enter internship and job interviews with clear, confident narratives that align directly with employer expectations.

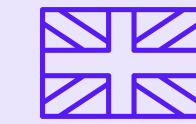
This chapter explores the transition from skill-building to skill-showcasing. We examine how students package their classroom achievements, extracurricular activities, and side projects into valuable career assets; how micro-credentials and LinkedIn profiles enhance students' visibility to recruiters; and how Adobe-powered projects become central to students' interview presentations.

The outcome is a new form of career readiness, where creativity, communication, and AI fluency enable graduates to stand out earlier, get hired more quickly, and make meaningful contributions to teams from day one.



91% of early-career professionals who used Adobe Express or Creative Cloud on their campuses highlighted those skills on their resumes.
› **The Creative Campus advantage:** 85% of students at Creative Campuses plan to highlight these skills, compared to 77% at non-Creative Campuses.

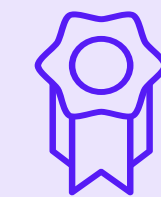
94% of early-career professionals discussed Adobe tools and creative skills in job interviews to help them land their jobs.
› **The Creative Campus advantage:** 88% of students at Creative Campuses plan to highlight their Adobe skills in interviews, compared to 75% at non-Creative Campuses.



UK students are the most likely to say that they plan to mention Adobe skills in job interviews, with **89%** stating this, compared to **81%** of the global total.



Adobe skills are listed in job applications across all majors, with students from **Business (85%)**, **STEM (84%)**, **Arts & Humanities (80%)**, and **Social Sciences (74%)** planning to cite their fluency in Adobe tools or creative and multimedia skills on their resumes.



72% of current students and **87%** of early-career professionals believe micro-credentials are key to landing the next job offer.



“ I was told by professors and our career advisors that [Adobe] tools are being used in the industry.”

— Katharyn, US student, Strategic Communications & Journalism major

Portfolios, Projects, and Professional Branding

Adobe Express and Creative Cloud allow students to go beyond formatting resumes. They enable students to craft dynamic portfolios and application materials that showcase who they are and where they're going.

From multimedia resumes and project websites to pitch decks and video intros, Adobe tools empower students across disciplines to transform their academic, personal, and extracurricular work into career-ready assets and professional branding. And for many, it's the first time their skills feel visible and validated.



“

I feel like employers care a lot about experience. I think in the job market now, a degree is not enough. They want to know you're confident in what you're doing.”

— Hamzah, UK student, Design major

80%

of students and **93%** of early-career alumni agree that creative tools like Adobe's helped them connect their extracurricular involvement to future career goals or passions.

85%

of students and **92%** of early-career alumni agree that creative tools like Adobe's helped them build skills and experience for their resumes or portfolios.

Personal Branding Beyond Grades

For students entering the job market, personal branding takes shape in every corner of their lives. In our survey, 78% of students who use Adobe tools reported using them for hobbies, 78% for side hustles, and 66% for extracurricular activities.

And employers want to learn about a candidate's grit, creativity, adaptability, and passions beyond their academic interests. From designing social content for student organizations to producing visuals for freelance gigs, students (especially those on Creative Campuses) are gaining real-world experience beyond the classroom and transforming those moments into polished, employer-ready stories.

These creative outputs form a living portfolio of identity, initiative, and impact. Students aren't just saying, "I did it"—they're showing how they did it, why, and that they're ready to do more.



“ I think [creative tools] can not only be used for school, but also for business. I use them for my YouTube channel and it's really helpful...

I use [creative tools] to give me SEO title tags, sometimes a script, ideas of what I can do, or tell me what's trending.”

— Aila, US student, Religious Studies major

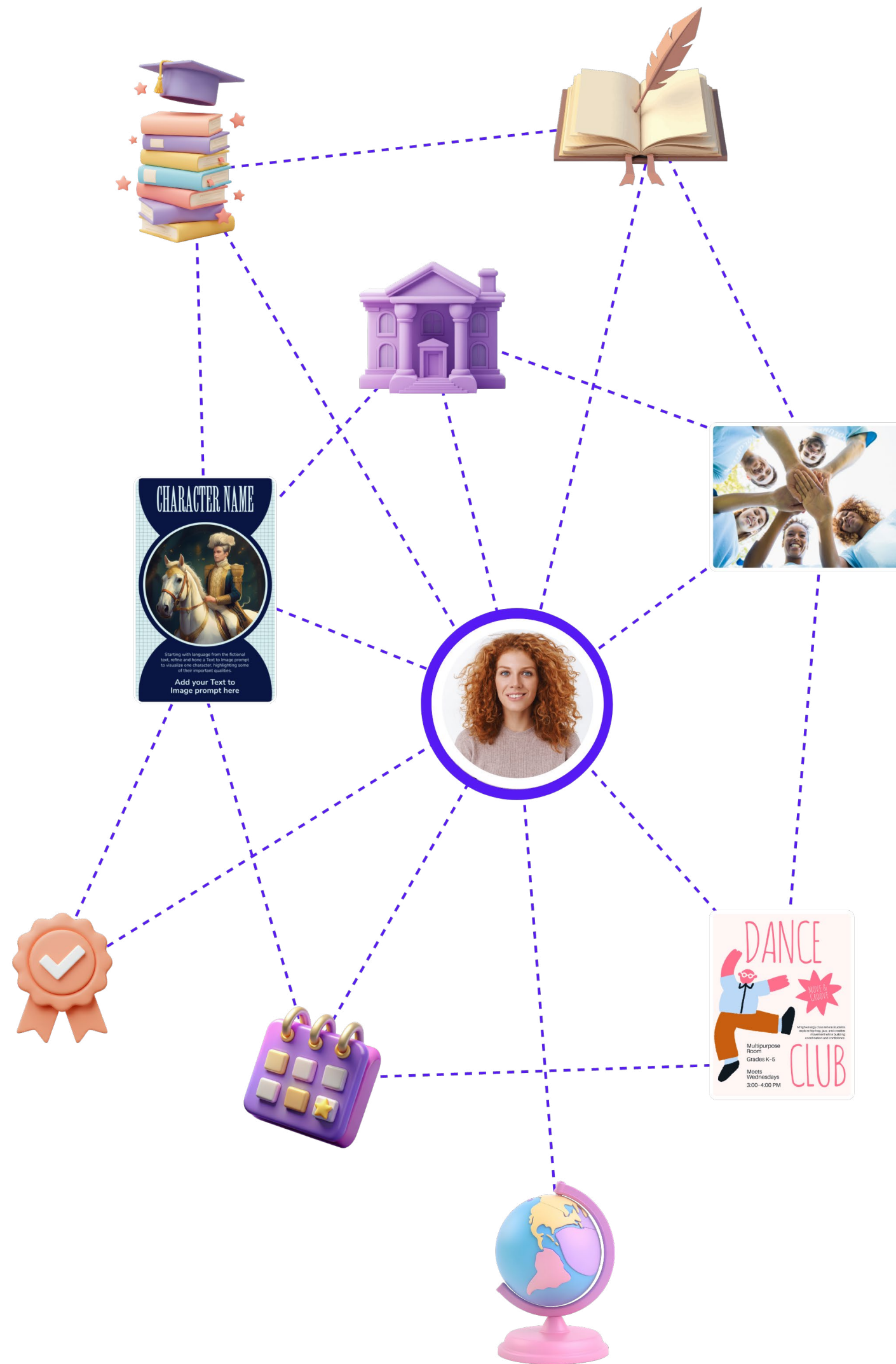
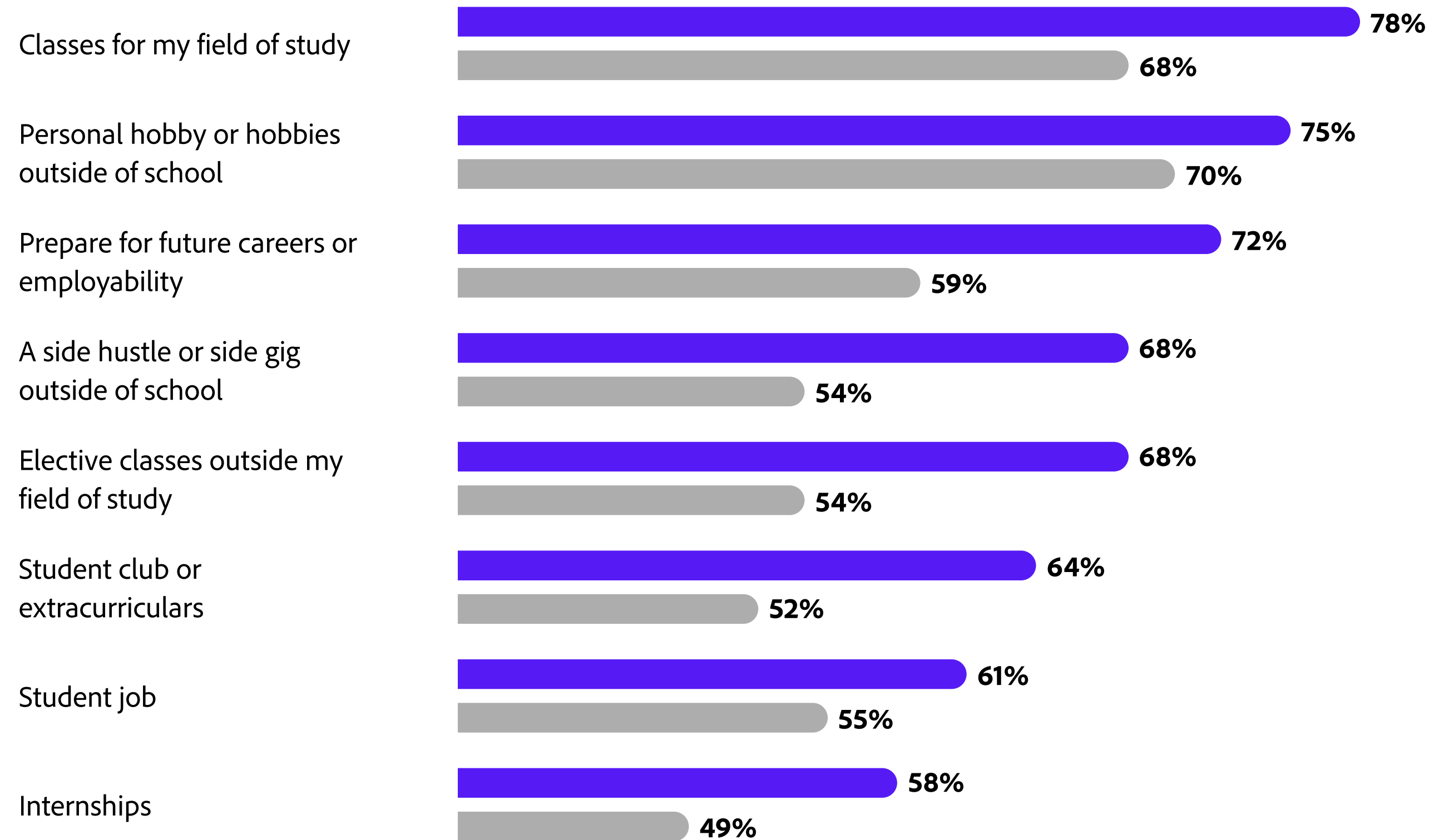


FIGURE 4.1

Top student uses of Adobe skills: coursework, clubs, and careers

● Creative Campus ● Non- Creative Campus



50%

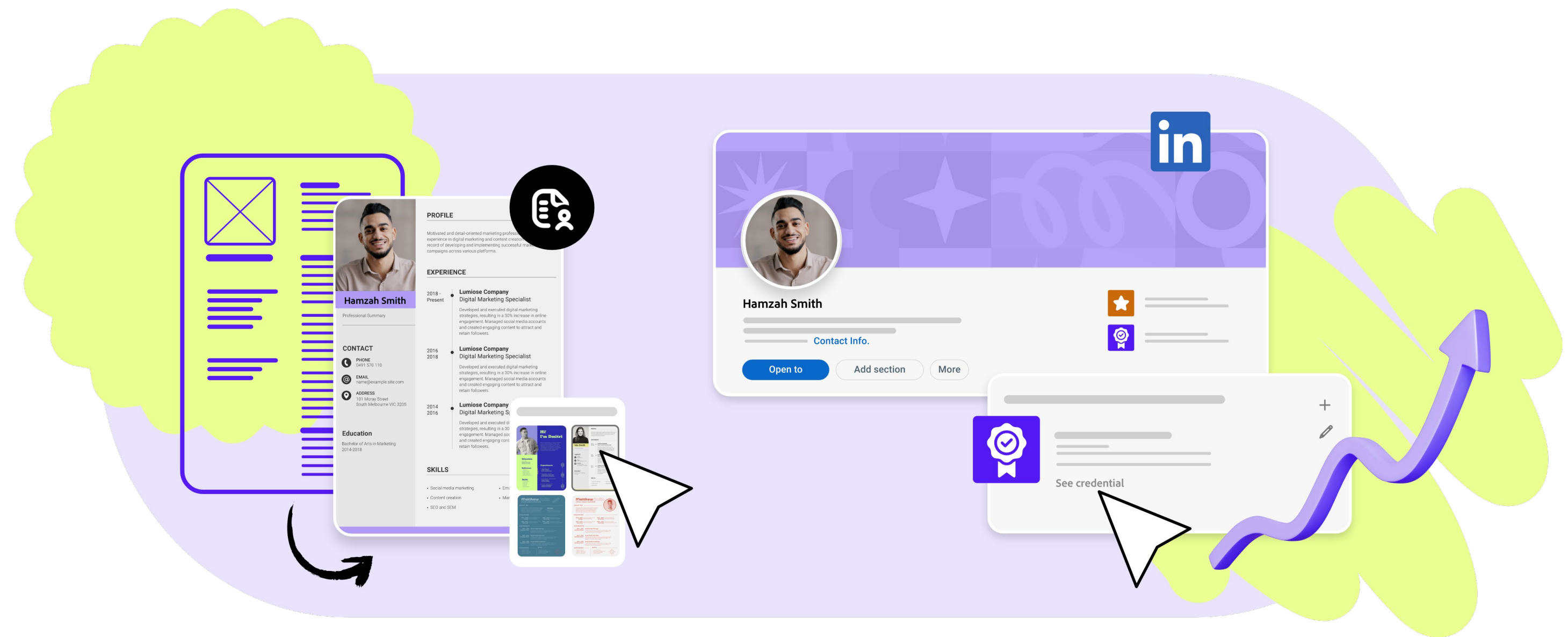
100%

Resumes, LinkedIn, and Successful Interviews

Today's students and early-career professionals are at the forefront of the conversation about creative skills. A striking 91% of early-career professionals and 80% of college students report highlighting Adobe tools or creative and multimedia skills in their resumes, signaling that these capabilities are increasingly central to their personal brands and professional identities.

Whether or not they attended an Adobe Creative Campus, Adobe Express or Creative Cloud users have highlighted or planned to highlight these skills on their resumes. Students are also showcasing formal Adobe skills credentials as part of their job search strategy.

Nearly 69% of students with Adobe skills credentials have already listed them on their resumes, and 49% of Creative Campus students and 44% of non-Creative Campus students say they've showcased Adobe skills credentials publicly on LinkedIn. Students view these tools as career assets, and they're using them to signal readiness, fluency, and a strong sense of self in a rapidly evolving job market.



“ I just [want] managerial skills or transferable skills that will help me do well in a company.”

— Hamzah, UK Student, Design major

Early-career professionals say these choices pay off. Many report that showcasing Adobe experience helped them secure interviews, while students point to increased recruiter engagement when their portfolios, visuals, and certifications are front and center.

Students using Adobe Express, Firefly, and Creative Cloud also report improved interview performance and increased self-confidence, enabling them to discuss concrete projects and experiences. This shift allows students to lead conversations in interviews rather than merely responding to questions.

“

I just want to show the software I use, and since it's industry-standard software, things like Photoshop, it's just good to show I don't need training in those things. I'll be competent and I can just get working quicker, which is what they'll be looking for.”

— Hamzah, UK student, Design major

Students from Adobe Creative Campuses are significantly more likely to discuss Adobe skills in an interview. Of early-career professionals who used Adobe tools on their Creative Campuses, 96% said they discussed Adobe tools and creative skills in job interviews, compared to 91% of those who attended non- Creative Campuses.

“ If you can use it properly, it can give you a big competitive advantage in a room of people who are not very creative or they don't know how to navigate that AI landscape yet.”

— Lisa, US student, Legal Studies & Psychology major



Adobe Creative Campus Spotlight: The University of Utah

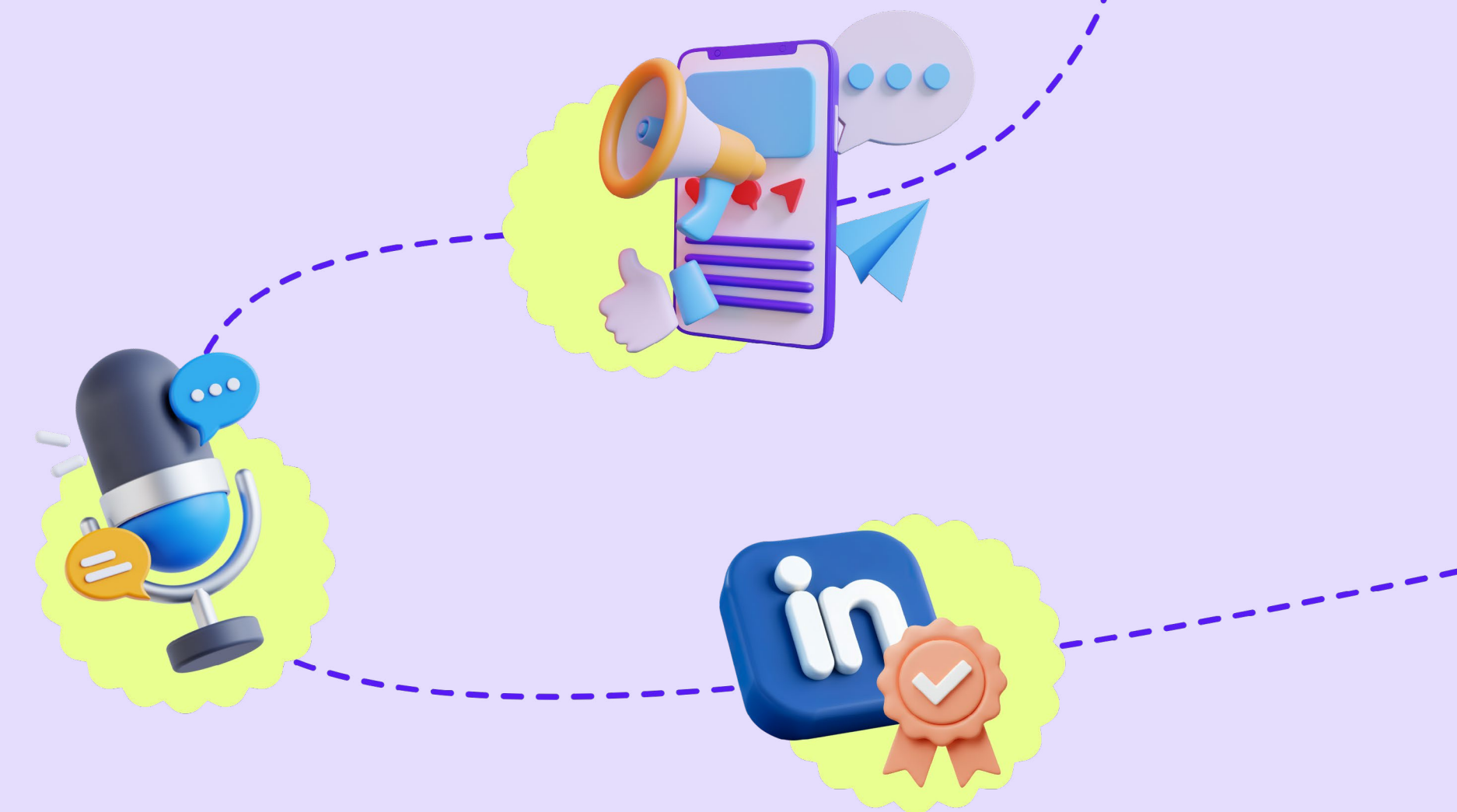
The University of Utah has been an Adobe Creative Campus for several years as part of its effort to prepare students for their careers. Recently, the university started encouraging students to earn Adobe micro-credentials to learn essential digital and creative skills and showcase their knowledge to prospective employers.

While Adobe has long offered Adobe Certified Professional certification exams to help users demonstrate expertise in Adobe apps and industry skills, Adobe micro-credentials are shorter, self-paced, and focus on specific tasks, such as creating social media content or producing podcasts, all with the assistance of Adobe's safe and responsible generative AI.

The self-paced courses take just a few hours, making it easy for students to fit classes into their busy schedules. Upon completion, students receive a digital certificate and a badge that they can display on LinkedIn as proof of their skills and expertise. More than 1,000 micro-credentials were awarded at the university in the first couple years after their introduction.

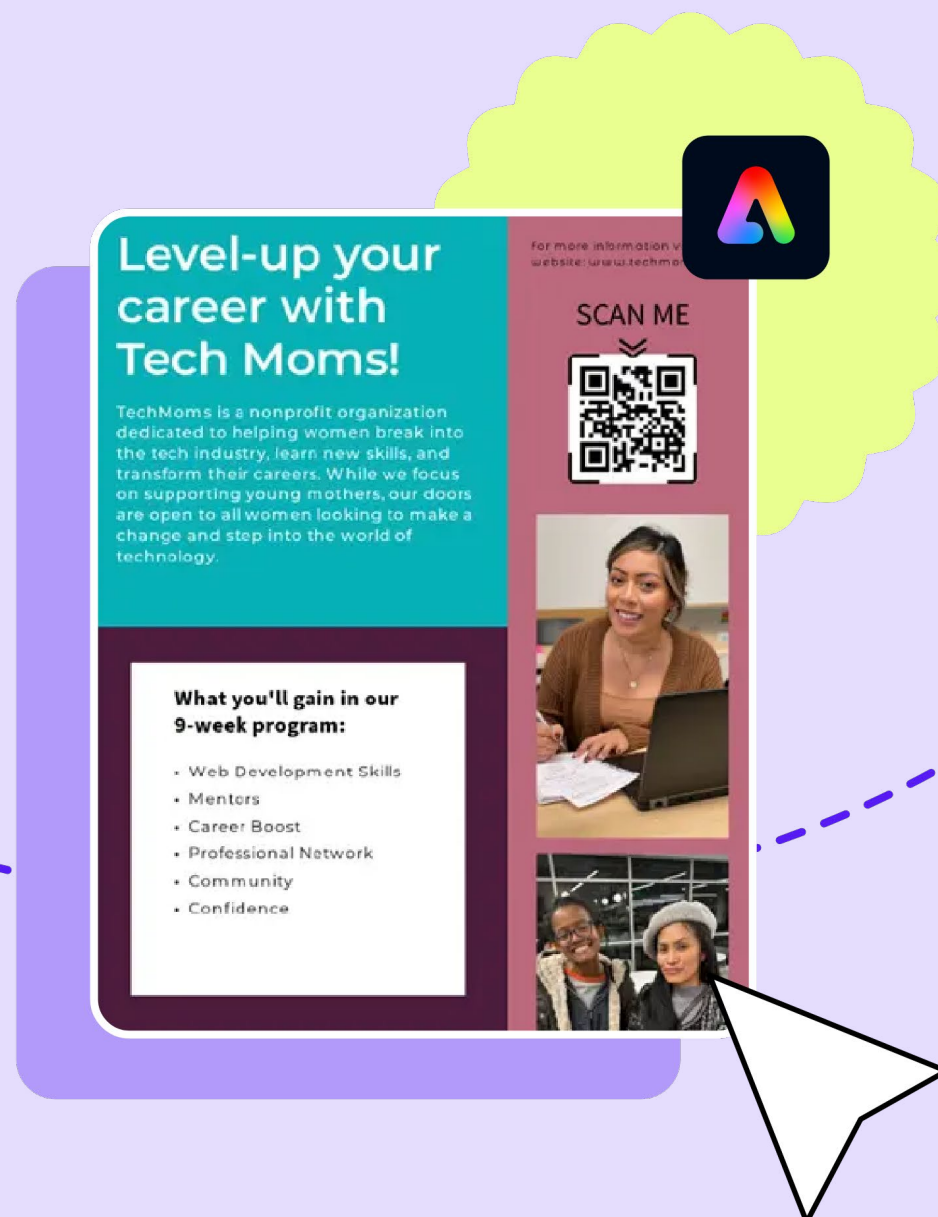
“Adobe micro-credentials are a very curated, low-stakes introduction to skills that our students need. It gives students a framework to understand the language of design and apply skills towards more effective communications in their internships or jobs.”

— Holly Johnson, Associate Director of Learning Experience Innovation & Outreach,
University of Utah



For the past several years, the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business has hosted the Social Impact Challenge. Students team up to create websites, social media posts, and other digital storytelling elements to help address challenges faced by real-world nonprofit organizations. "It's not just a way for students to show off their ideas and skills," said Chong Oh, professor at the Department of Operations and Information Systems. "It also has a meaningful impact on the community."

This year, participants were required to earn at least one micro-credential before developing their project using Adobe Express. In total, participants completed 73 micro-credentials, equipping them with the skills to create a strategic marketing campaign for Tech-Moms, a Utah-based nonprofit empowering working mothers to gain the technical skills they need to advance their careers and enter technical fields. With micro-credentials under their belts, teams mastered Adobe Express quickly and could spend more time refining their ideas.



“ Tech-Moms was very impressed by the quality of the presentations from our student competitors. Micro-credentials are a great way to introduce students to Adobe Express and build confidence in their digital storytelling skills.”

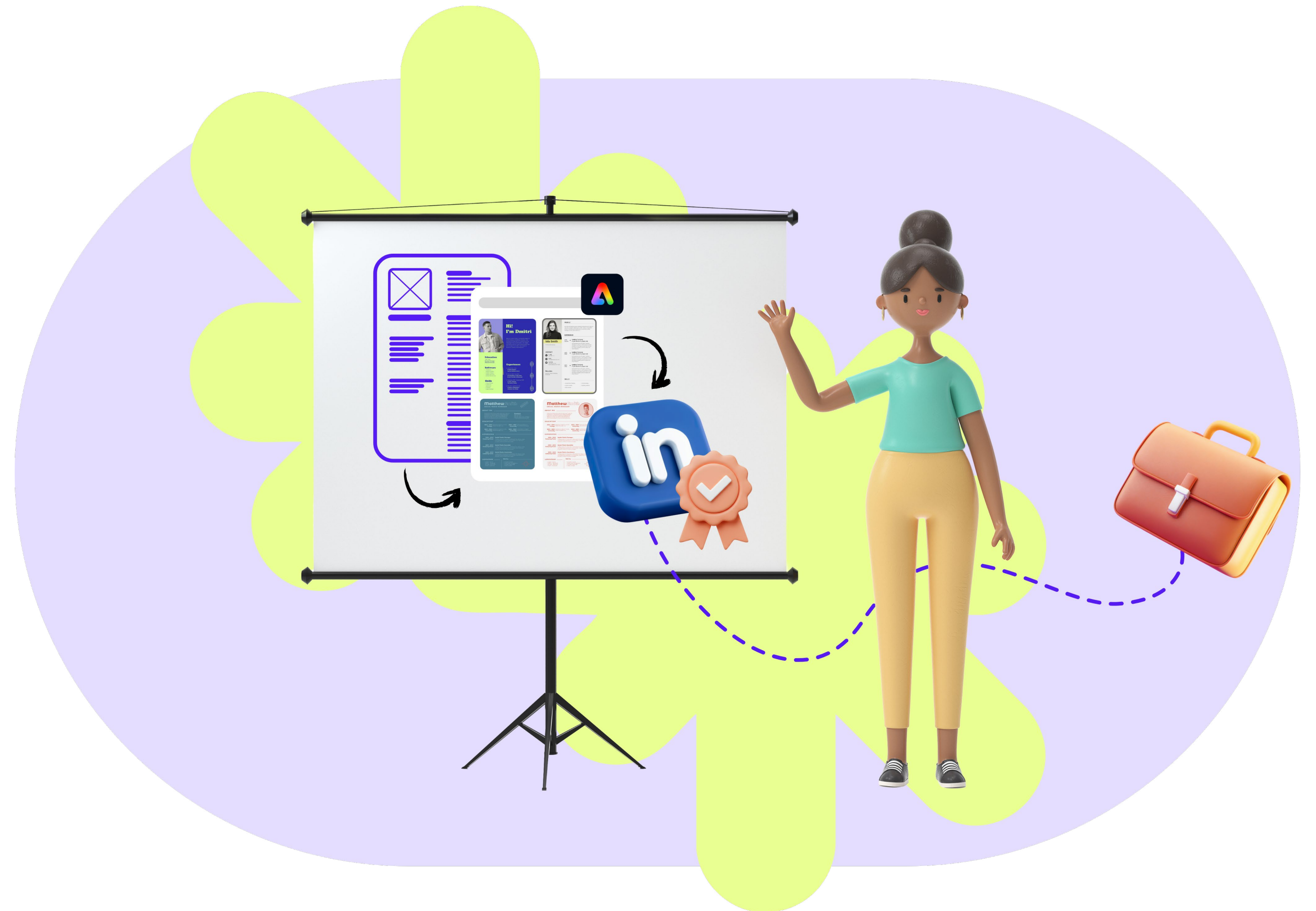
— Tamar Castillo, Learning Experience Manager, the University of Utah

Conclusion

Career preparation begins in the classroom, well before graduation. When students use Adobe tools for their assignments, they're not only learning course content but also creating valuable career assets. From polished resumes to personalized portfolios and AI-assisted LinkedIn profiles, platforms like Adobe Express and Firefly enable students to stand out in a competitive job market.

Students at Creative Campuses are more likely to showcase their Adobe projects and certifications, which makes their skills and potential more visible to recruiters. Equally important, they gain the confidence to share their stories clearly, creatively, and credibly.

This sense of ownership over their personal brands is crucial for navigating today's workplace. For colleges and universities, this means redefining career readiness to include creative fluency and digital storytelling—skills that are essential to success.



Students with Adobe Skills Get Hired Faster—and Creative Campuses Lead the Way



Launching a career is one of the most critical moments in a student's journey, and the data shows that graduates with Adobe skills are entering the workforce with a measurable head start.

By combining creative fluency, AI literacy, and the ability to showcase their work with confidence, these students are landing jobs faster than their peers—sometimes by months—at a time when early momentum can make all the difference.

This chapter examines how Adobe tools enhance early-career success, from reducing time-to-hire to increasing salaries, promotions, and long-term career satisfaction.

The evidence is clear: When institutions integrate Adobe tools across disciplines, they go beyond helping students complete coursework and equip them with the skills, credentials, and confidence to stand out, secure roles quickly, and advance once hired.

 KEY TAKEAWAYS



72% of early-career alumni (and **79%** of Creative Campus graduates) who used Adobe tools on campus secured full-time jobs within six months of graduation.

- › Adobe tools are linked to faster job placement. Students from Creative Campuses benefit from integrated access and support, turning creative tools into career accelerators.



In departments like Business, Communication, and Design, Adobe Creative Campus graduates got their first job offers **~15%** faster than students who used Adobe tools on non- Creative Campuses.

- › Creative Campus business majors got their first job offers 3.4 months after graduating, 15% faster than students who learned Adobe tools on non- Creative Campuses.
- › Creative Campus communications and design majors got their first job offers 3.7 months after graduating, 14% faster than students who learned Adobe tools on non- Creative Campuses.



41% of early-career professionals agree that the Adobe skills micro-credentials they earned on campus helped them command higher salaries, and **37%** say their micro-credentials or certifications directly contributed to their promotions.



Time-to-hire and Job Placement Advantage

In today's competitive job market, skills matter. And students with Adobe skills are prepared to kick-start their careers quickly.

Among graduates with Adobe skills, **80%** secured full-time employment within six months of graduation, indicating a strong trend that employers are increasingly recognizing the value of creative and AI fluency.

This edge is even more pronounced on Adobe Creative Campuses, where Adobe tools are integrated across the curriculum and in departments such as Business, Communication, and Design. Adobe Creative Campus graduates received their first job offers **~15%** faster than students who used Adobe tools on non-Creative Campuses.

“

I listed Adobe and AI tools on my resume because they set me apart from someone who would need to go through a lot of training to get up to speed on these tools. It helps make you a competitive candidate.”

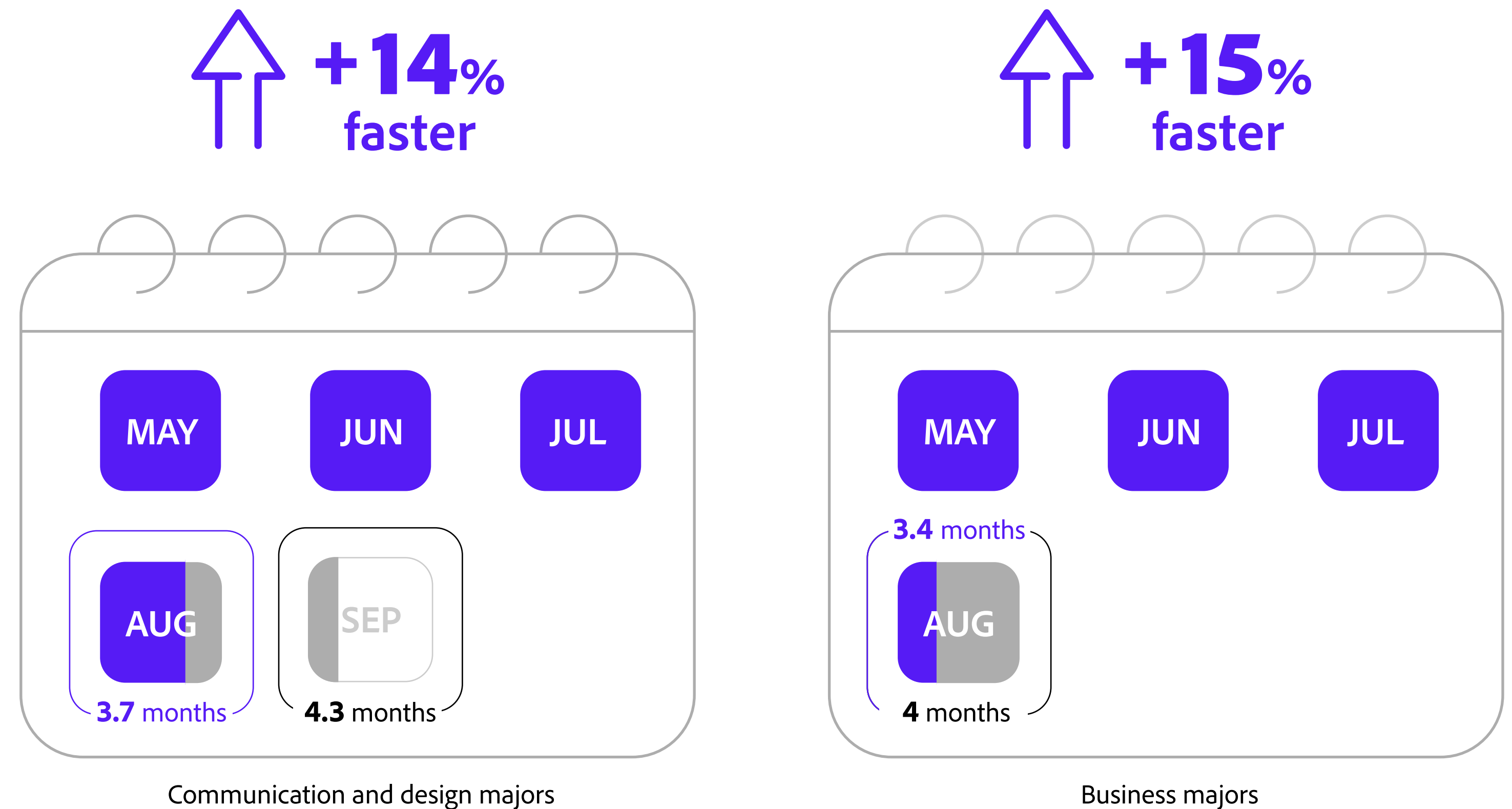
— Katharyn, US student, Strategic Communications & Journalism major

FIGURE 5.1

Creative Campus grads land jobs faster

Number of months after graduation students start full-time employment

● Creative Campus ● Non-Creative Campus



Salary, Promotion, and Early Advancement Advantage

While starting pay can vary widely by industry, students who learn Adobe tools and gain Adobe micro-credentials are more likely to perceive real financial value from their additional credentials.⁵ In fact, **41%** of early-career professionals report that earning Adobe credentials has helped lead to higher salaries. Additionally, students and professionals alike overwhelmingly agree that creative and AI certifications are worth more in the marketplace: **74%** of students and **84%** of early-career professionals see individuals with these credentials as deserving greater compensation than their peers without them.

These perceptions lead to real outcomes. Early-career professionals across industries who have Adobe credentials are significantly more likely to be promoted, with **58%** reporting that they've received a promotion since starting their current role, compared to **37%** of their peers without Adobe credentials. This signals that these tools don't just open doors; they also accelerate trust and mobility within organizations.

Adobe Creative Campus graduates are seeing these advantages compound. These students are more likely to have received a promotion faster than peers from non-Creative Campus institutions. In fact, **53%** of Creative Campus alumni reported receiving a promotion since starting their current job, compared to **47%** of non-Creative Campus graduates who also learned Adobe skills on their campuses. The trend is clear: Institutions that invest in creative fluency and AI literacy produce graduates who advance more rapidly early in their careers.

Adobe skills don't just get students in the door; they also help them find roles that feel meaningful, aligned, and sustainable. Among early-career professionals who used Adobe tools during their academic studies, the vast majority report a strong alignment between their work and their academic experience. In fact, **78%** say they use soft skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and leadership at least monthly—a clear indicator that these graduates are equipped to contribute meaningfully, not just perform tasks.

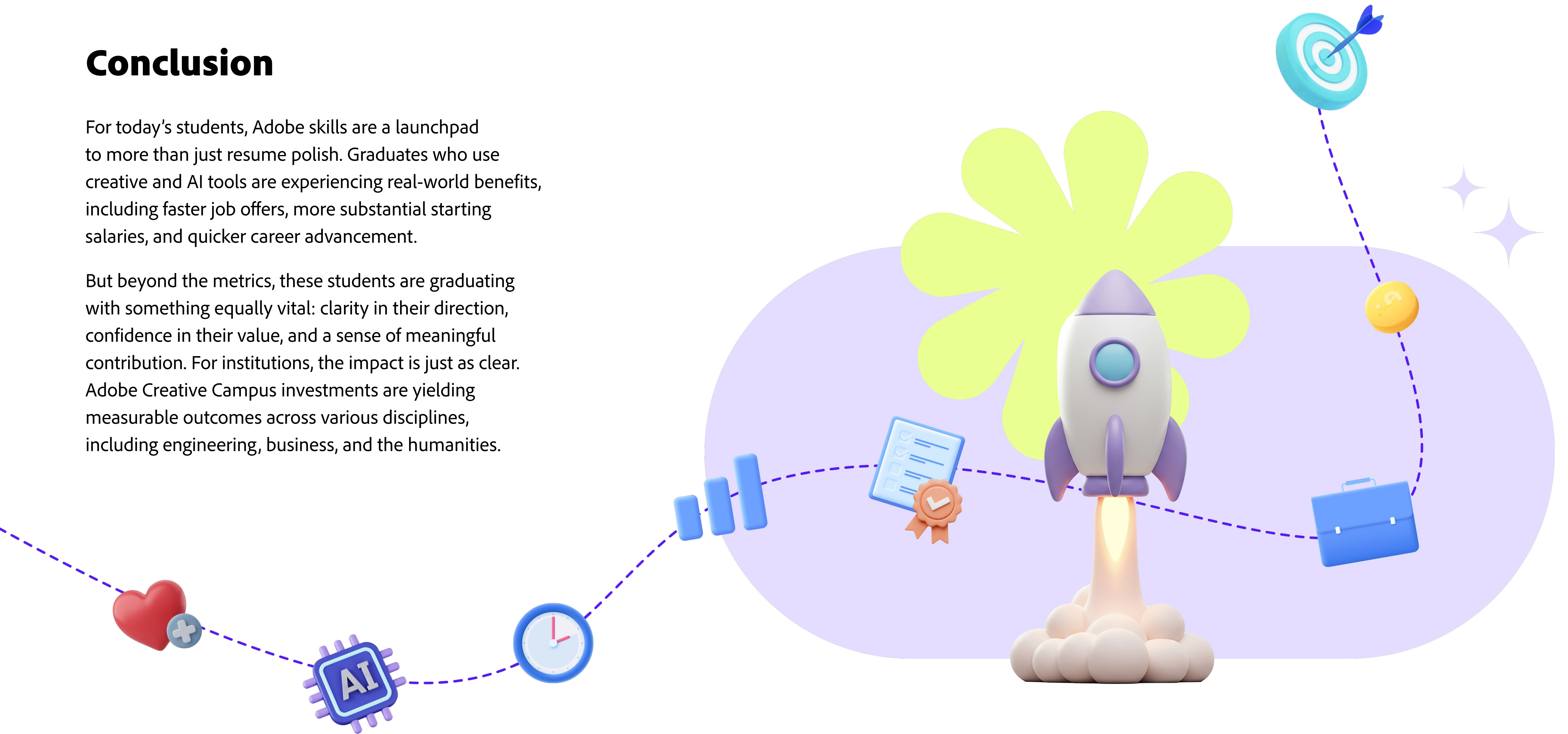
“My university has really been pushing for students to be proficient in the Adobe suite and other creative tools if you're in any type of communications-related majors, so I feel very prepared in being able to navigate industry-standard technology.”

— Katharyn, US student, Strategic Communications & Journalism major

Conclusion

For today's students, Adobe skills are a launchpad to more than just resume polish. Graduates who use creative and AI tools are experiencing real-world benefits, including faster job offers, more substantial starting salaries, and quicker career advancement.

But beyond the metrics, these students are graduating with something equally vital: clarity in their direction, confidence in their value, and a sense of meaningful contribution. For institutions, the impact is just as clear. Adobe Creative Campus investments are yielding measurable outcomes across various disciplines, including engineering, business, and the humanities.



Key Takeaways for Campus Leaders



Higher education is at a critical juncture.

Institutions are being challenged to demonstrate not only academic excellence but also clear outcomes in student confidence, skill fluency, and early-career success. This report has highlighted a recurring theme: When campuses invest in creative and AI tools and integrate them across various programs and touchpoints, they unlock measurable improvements in student performance, career readiness, and institutional effectiveness. Creativity is no longer limited to a few majors; it has become a fundamental component of success.

Creative Campus institutions are already reaping the benefits. Students at these schools report increased engagement, faster hiring times, and greater confidence in their skills. This final chapter synthesizes these findings into a strategic roadmap for senior leaders. It illustrates why Creative Campuses consistently outperform their peers, provides a practical playbook for integrating academics and technology, and concludes with a bold, future-focused call to action. As AI continues to transform the landscape of work and learning, creative fluency is emerging as one of the most critical differentiators for colleges and universities.

Playbook for Campus Leaders: Five Pillars for Action

To address the needs of a changing workforce and re-engage students from diverse disciplines, institutional leaders must go beyond just programs and platforms. They must focus on fostering a culture of creative confidence. The following five pillars summarize the key insights from this report into a bold, actionable framework for enhancing creativity, AI fluency, and student impact throughout your institution.

Pillar 1: Prioritize creative and AI skills as career essentials.

- › Creative fluency and AI readiness are no longer electives—they're the new core competencies employers expect.
- › Make creativity and digital fluency integral to your institution's career readiness framework, alongside data literacy and effective communication.
- › Align curriculum, IT, and student success strategies to reflect the demand for visual storytelling, generative AI tools, and prompt-based problem-solving.

Pillar 2: Introduce Adobe tools early and across all majors.

- › Early exposure to creative tools is a catalyst for confidence, engagement, and academic discovery.
- › Embed Adobe Express and Firefly into first-year experiences, general education, and gateway courses to democratize access.
- › Empower faculty across disciplines to assign visual, multimedia, and generative AI-driven projects—even outside traditionally creative fields.



Pillar 3: Help students showcase skills with confidence.

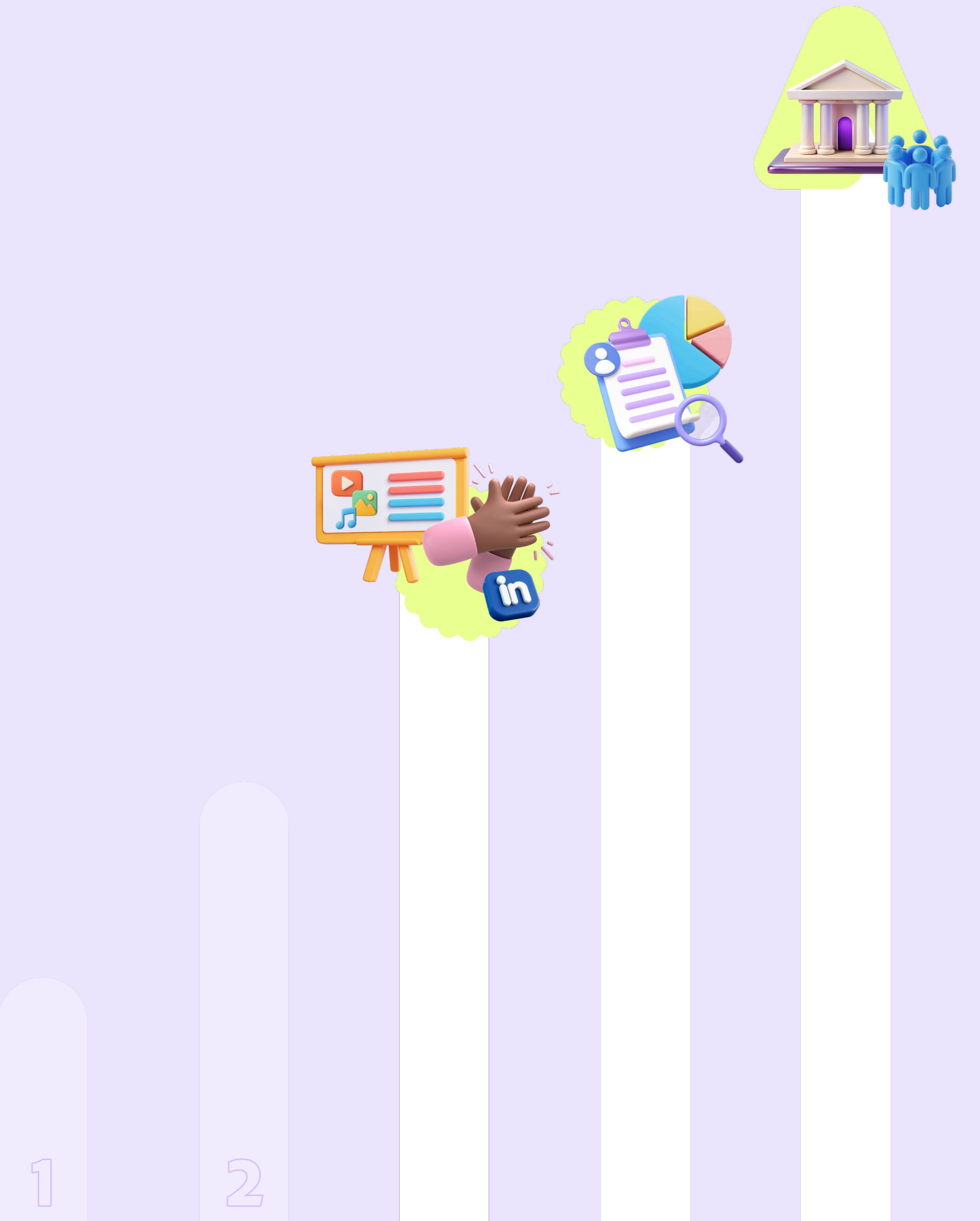
- › Skill development is only half the equation. Students also need to know how to articulate and present what they've built.
- › Provide training in digital portfolios, multimedia resumes, and LinkedIn branding, ensuring that students can translate work into visibility.
- › Integrate modules or workshops that teach students how to present creative outputs in interviews and job applications.

Pillar 4: Track student outcomes and tell students' stories.

- › Measuring and amplifying student impact strengthens institutional strategy and brand.
- › Use tools like graduate surveys or interviews with alumni to track outcomes related to Adobe tools, such as digital fluency, creative thinking, and responsible AI literacy in employment, confidence, and engagement.
- › Feature successful students in recruitment, strategic communications, and accreditation reporting to show the tangible return on creative investment.

Pillar 5: Go all in with the Adobe Creative Campus model.

- › The institutions with the most momentum are those that commit fully to creative equity and infrastructure.
- › License Adobe tools for all students, faculty, and staff to ensure seamless access and campus-wide integration.
- › Join the Adobe Creative Campus network to share best practices, co-develop innovative models, and position your institution at the forefront of digital creativity.



Innovative Academic Leaders Drive the Future

The future of education and work is already taking shape. Skills such as creativity, communication, and AI fluency are no longer future requirements; they're now essential for career readiness.

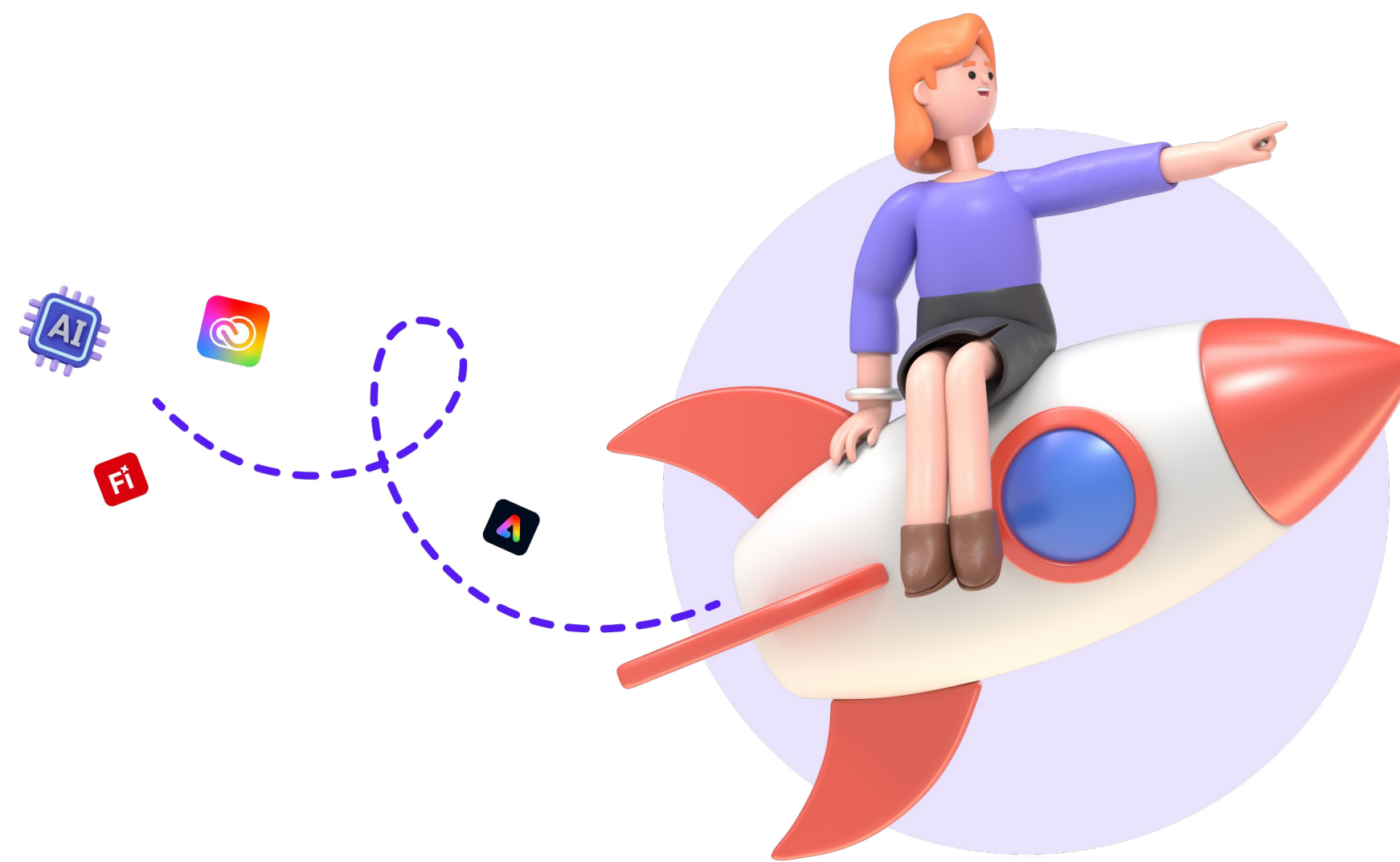
In this era of rapid transformation, institutions that empower students to develop these capabilities will stand out. The campuses that take bold actions today will transform into launching pads for career success, preparing graduates to shape the future.

With decades of investment in higher education and initiatives like the Adobe Creative Campus program, Adobe has established itself as a trusted partner for student-centered and outcomes-driven support. From classroom projects to career portfolios, and from AI-driven design to personal storytelling, Adobe's tools, curricula, professional development, and student community programs enable every student to articulate their voice, build their brand, and navigate their future.

Institutions that prioritize creativity and AI as foundational aspects of career readiness are setting students up not only for their first jobs but also for a lifetime of

adaptability and impact. Leaders of Creative Campuses are witnessing the results, including improved student outcomes, increased engagement, and a cohesive approach to academic innovation. When the curriculum, technology, and strategies for student success are aligned, the entire campus thrives.

Investing in campus-wide access is not merely about acquiring tools. It's about transformation and equipping every student to express who they are, what they know, and where they intend to go. The infrastructure for creativity is already in place. What's now needed is bold, institution-wide action.



Appendix

International Highlights

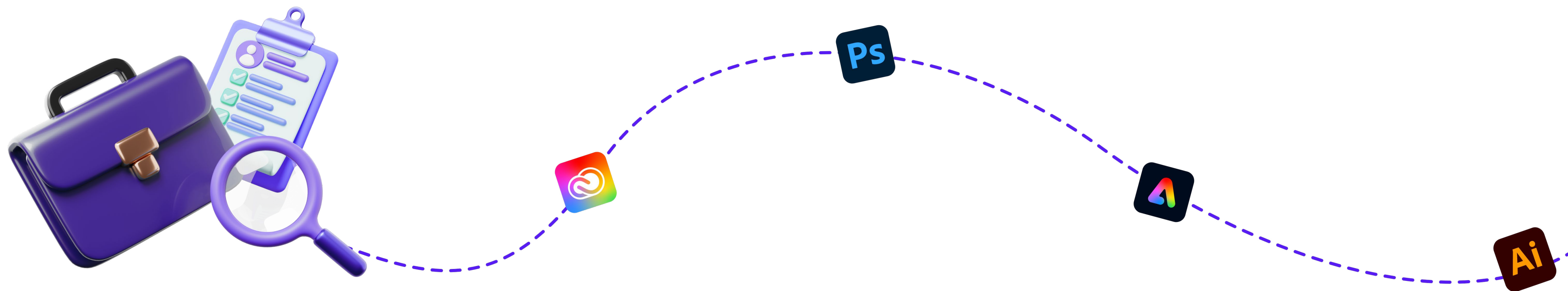


US

- > US students who use Adobe tools are most likely to include credentials, certifications, and badges in various submissions to potential employers: 78% plan to include certifications in their resumes, and 59% said the same of their portfolios, outnumbering the global total by as much as 15 points (65% and 44%, respectively).
- > US students who use Adobe tools are the most motivated globally to earn professional or academic credentials beyond their degrees due to personal improvement and interest: 63% said they were motivated to earn certificates, badges, or micro-credentials because they wanted to improve or prove their creative skills (vs. 51% globally) and 57% said they did so because they were personally interested, while less than a majority of global students who use Adobe tools noted the same (47%).

Europe

- > European students who use Adobe tools are the most likely to believe that creative AI skills are becoming increasingly important in hiring decisions: 56%, compared to 44% of students in the US and Asia-Pacific, agreed that AI skills combined with professional tools like Adobe's are becoming more important in hiring decisions.
- > Students who use Adobe tools in Europe are more likely than students who use the tools in the US to agree that their organizations prioritize creative AI credentials: 87% agree that professional credentials, certifications, and badges make it easier for candidates to showcase creative AI skills, compared to 81% of all US students. This, however, aligns with the global total of 87%.
- > European students who use Adobe tools, particularly in France, Germany, and Italy, are more likely to say that AI literacy is essential to their current jobs: 88% (vs. 86% globally) said they agreed that AI literacy is important to their current job. (91% of German and French and 90% of Italian students said the same.)



Asia-Pacific

- › Asia-Pacific professionals felt the strongest that familiarity with Adobe tools made them feel more confident: 97% of early-career professionals felt their familiarity with professional tools like Adobe's made them feel more confident in finding their first job out of college, compared to 83% of US professionals and 94% of the global total.
- › Asia-Pacific students who use Adobe tools were most likely to say they were motivated by job/internship requirements to earn credentials: 47% said they were motivated to earn professional/academic credentials other than their degree because of job or internship requirements, compared to 35% of the global total.
- › Asia-Pacific students who use Adobe tools are most likely to have earned AI credentials through Adobe, with 90% (compared to 83% of global students) stating that the credential they received from Adobe included AI features or AI literacy.
- › Asia-Pacific students who use Adobe tools, more than those in other regions, agree on the importance of professional credentials: 93% agree that professional credentials make it easier for candidates to showcase their creative AI skills, and 90% believe the credentials serve as indicators of highly qualified individuals. This compares to 87% and 85% of the global total, respectively.



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