

Strategic Enabler Framework - Digital Capabilities



Policy and Procedure	Strategic Enabler Framework - Digital Capabilities
Date Reviewed	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2030

The Board of Management (or any person/group with delegated authority from the Board) reserves the right to amend this document at any time should the need arise following consultation with employee representatives.

Digital Enabling Framework

Supporting the delivery of the College Strategy 2030 and its associated sub-strategies

Digital Enabler – Purpose and Scope

Digital is a core strategic enabler that underpins the delivery of the College Strategy 2030 and its supporting sub-strategies. The Digital Enabling Framework defines the capabilities the College must develop and sustain to enable high-quality learning and teaching, an inclusive student experience, an engaged and supported workforce, resilient infrastructure, financial sustainability and effective external engagement.

The framework is intentionally cross-cutting. It does not represent a standalone delivery strategy or a list of projects; instead, it provides a shared digital capability foundation that all sub-strategies can draw upon to deliver their objectives in a coherent, consistent and future-focused way.

The Digital Enabling Framework has been informed by sector good practice, including Jisc's Framework for Digital Transformation in Higher Education, and reflects its emphasis on people-centred, capability-based and strategically aligned digital transformation.

How the Digital Enabler Is Intended to Be Used

The Digital Enabling Framework is designed to be used as a reference and alignment tool across strategy development, decision-making and delivery planning. It provides a common digital language, supports prioritisation and investment decisions, and ensures digital activity is strategically aligned and coordinated.

The framework is not time-bound and is intended to remain stable over the Strategy 2030 period, with delivery evolving through supporting strategies, operational plans and prioritised roadmaps.

Relationship to Supporting Strategies and Delivery Plans

Each supporting sub-strategy identifies the digital enablers critical to its delivery. These enablers are reused across strategies, reflecting Digital's role as a shared organisational capability. Delivery is progressed through supporting strategies, operational plans, digital roadmaps, and annual planning and budget processes.

Performance, KPIs and Accountability

The Digital Enabling Framework does not contain standalone KPIs. Performance measures relating to digital-enabled outcomes are owned and reported through the relevant supporting sub-strategies and operational plans. Digital enables outcomes but does not own them; accountability for performance sits with the strategies and services responsible for delivery.

Governance, Risk and Assurance

The framework operates within the College's established governance and planning arrangements. Digital capability development is overseen through existing governance structures, with assurance provided through risk management, audit and compliance processes. Digital activity will be undertaken in a secure, resilient and responsible manner, including the ethical and appropriate use of data and AI.

Review and Evolution

The Digital Enabling Framework will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with the College Strategy 2030, sector expectations and emerging risks and opportunities. Changes will focus on maintaining relevance of capabilities rather than short-term delivery priorities.

Digital Enablers – Strategic Pillars

DX Pillar 1: Digital Learning & Curriculum Modernisation

Strategic Intent

Enabling high-quality, inclusive and future-focused learning and teaching through consistent and effective use of digital technologies. It supports the development of common digital learning standards, reusable curriculum content and staff digital capability, ensuring that digital approaches enhance pedagogy, assessment and learner engagement. The pillar also enables the responsible use of emerging technologies, including AI, to support personalised learning and learner success.

2030 Commitments

- 1.1** Establish a College-wide digital learning standard covering VLE use, digital assessment, learning technologies and accessibility
- 1.2** Develop a reusable digital curriculum content bank to support consistency and efficiency
- 1.3** Build staff digital capability and confidence through structured development (e.g. Digital / AI Academy)
- 1.4** Introduce AI-enabled learning assistants and personalised learning pathways

DX Pillar 2: Data, Analytics and Insight

Strategic Intent

Enables the College to make evidence-based decisions at all levels by improving the quality, integration and use of data. It supports the development of trusted, joined-up analytics across learning, student support, workforce and finance, enabling insight, forecasting and early intervention. By strengthening data capability, this pillar underpins continuous improvement, accountability and informed strategic planning, including insight for partners and external stakeholders.

2030 Commitments

- 2.1** Develop integrated, AI-ready dashboards and reporting for learning, student support, HR and finance
- 2.2** Use predictive analytics to support student retention, attainment and early intervention
- 2.3** Improve data integration across MIS, HR, Finance and curriculum systems
- 2.4** Enable evidence-based decision-making at operational, tactical and strategic levels, including insight for external partners

DX Pillar 3: Digital Infrastructure, Cyber Resilience and Sustainability

Strategic Intent

Ensures the College has secure, resilient and sustainable digital infrastructure capable of supporting current and future needs. It focuses on cloud-first platforms, cyber security, business continuity and modern device management to provide reliable access to digital services. The pillar also contributes to sustainability objectives by reducing reliance on physical infrastructure, optimising resource use and supporting efficient, digitally enabled ways of working.

2030 Commitments

- 3.1** Modernise digital infrastructure to be cloud-first, resilient and highly available (Azure, Microsoft 365)
- 3.2** Strengthen cyber security, operational resilience and incident readiness
- 3.3** Modernise device and endpoint management (Intune, Autopilot)
- 3.4** Support sustainability objectives through efficient infrastructure design, reduced on-premise footprint and optimised use of digital services

DX Pillar 4: Automation, Business Process Re-Engineering & Digital Ways of Working

Strategic Intent

Enables organisational efficiency and workforce sustainability by redesigning and automating key processes. It focuses on reducing manual workload, simplifying high-impact processes and embedding digital and AI-enabled workflows to improve consistency, speed and user experience. The pillar also supports cultural change by enabling new digital ways of working and strengthening leadership capability to adopt and sustain transformation.

2030 Commitments

- 4.1** Implement low-code platforms and automated workflows to reduce manual workload
- 4.2** Redesign high-impact processes for simplicity, efficiency and user experience
- 4.3** Embed AI within workflows to create intelligent, end-to-end processes
- 4.4** Support cultural change through digital ways of working, leadership capability and workforce transformation

DX Pillar 5: Digital Experience, Engagement and Inclusion

Strategic Intent

Focuses on creating a coherent, accessible and user-centred digital experience for students, staff and partners. It supports joined-up digital services, self-service and digitally enhanced engagement across on-campus and remote contexts. By prioritising accessibility, inclusion and ease of use, the pillar strengthens belonging, engagement and the College's reputation as an open, responsive and digitally confident organisation.

2030 Commitments

- 5.1** Create a unified, user-centred digital experience for students, staff and partners
- 5.2** Provide one-stop-shop digital services and AI agents for on-demand support
- 5.3** Strengthen digital inclusion, accessibility and sense of belonging
- 5.4** Enhance on-campus and remote engagement through digitally enabled experiences

Mapping Enabling Pillars to Sub-Strategies

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy – Digital Enablement

Digital enables the delivery of a consistent, inclusive and future focused learning and teaching offer by modernising curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment. Common digital learning standards, reusable digital content and AI enabled learning support underpin high quality delivery across all modes of learning. Data and analytics further enable evidenced curriculum planning, early intervention and continuous improvement aligned to learner outcomes and employer needs.

Supporting digital enablers:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1

Student Experience Strategy – Digital Enablement

Digital underpins a coherent and joined up student experience by simplifying learner journeys and providing accessible, user centred digital services. Integrated data and predictive analytics enable earlier support and personalised interventions, while automation and AI enabled workflows improve responsiveness, consistency and timeliness of services. Together, these capabilities strengthen engagement, inclusion, belonging and retention, ensuring students experience the College as a single, connected organisation.

Supporting digital enablers:

2.1, 2.2, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

People & Culture Strategy – Digital Enablement

Digital enables the People & Culture Strategy by supporting new ways of working, reducing unnecessary manual workload and strengthening digital confidence and leadership capability. Automation, process redesign and AI-enabled workflows release staff capacity for higher-value activity, while modern digital tools support flexible, collaborative and data-informed working practices. These capabilities contribute to workforce sustainability, wellbeing and continuous improvement.

Supporting digital enablers:

1.3, 2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Infrastructure Strategy – Digital Enablement

Digital enables resilient, sustainable and future-ready infrastructure through cloud-first design, strong cyber resilience and modern device management. Reliable digital platforms underpin teaching, learning and operations while supporting business continuity and security. Digital also contributes to sustainability objectives by reducing reliance on physical infrastructure, optimising resource use and enabling more efficient, digitally enabled ways of working.

Supporting digital enablers:

3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1

Finance & Growth Strategy – Digital Enablement

Digital supports financial sustainability and growth by improving efficiency, scalability and organisational insight. Automation, AI-enabled workflows and streamlined processes reduce operational overheads and improve productivity, while integrated data and analytics enable stronger financial planning, forecasting and performance management. These capabilities support the College's ability to respond flexibly to demand, scale provision efficiently and demonstrate value and impact.

Supporting digital enablers:

2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

External Engagement Strategy – Digital Enablement

Digital enables stronger external engagement by supporting effective collaboration, insight sharing and digital-first interaction with employers, partners and communities. Data and analytics provide skills intelligence and evidence of impact, while digital platforms and experiences enable responsive engagement and partnership working. A coherent digital experience strengthens the College's reputation as an accessible, innovative and trusted regional partner.

Supporting digital enablers:

1.1, 2.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4

Strategic Risks & Dependencies

Delivery of the Digital Enabling Framework is dependent on a range of internal and external factors. Identifying these risks and dependencies supports realistic planning, prioritisation and governance, and ensures that digital capability development remains aligned to the delivery of the College Strategy 2030.

Organisational Capacity and Workforce Capability

The successful delivery of digital capability is dependent on the availability, capability and sustainability of the workforce across academic, professional and technical roles. Competing operational pressures, recruitment challenges and skills scarcity in digital, data and cyber domains may constrain pace or scale of progress.

Mitigation is achieved through:

- Embedding digital capability within People & Culture Strategy commitments
- Prioritising digital leadership and workforce development
- Integrating digital responsibilities within existing roles and governance structures

Financial and Investment Constraints

Digital capability development relies on sustained and prioritised investment in platforms, infrastructure, skills and change activity. Wider financial pressures, constrained public funding settlements and competing investment demands may limit the College's ability to progress all digital ambitions simultaneously.

As a strategic enabler, Digital does not mandate specific investments; instead, it informs prioritisation and decision-making through:

- Alignment with supporting strategies and annual planning cycles
- Integration of digital dependencies into capital, revenue and procurement considerations
- Phased and value-led delivery through prioritised roadmaps

Legacy Systems and Technical Debt

Existing systems, historical integrations and technical debt may limit the speed with which digital capability can be modernised or rationalised. Fragmentation across systems can create dependency risk, reduce agility and increase operational complexity.

This risk is managed through:

- Incremental modernisation rather than large-scale replacement
- Architecture and data integration principles embedded within digital decision-making
- Use of automation and platform integration to reduce manual workarounds over time

Data Quality, Governance and Trust

Effective use of data, analytics and AI is dependent on consistent data quality, clear ownership and strong governance. Inconsistent data standards or limited confidence in insight can reduce adoption and undermine evidence-based decision-making.

Mitigation includes:

- Strengthening data governance and stewardship
- Aligning analytics development with user needs and decision-making processes
- Embedding ethical and responsible use of data and AI within governance arrangements

Cyber Security, Resilience and External Threat Environment

The College operates within an increasingly complex cyber risk environment. Threat evolution, dependency on cloud platforms and interconnected digital services increase exposure to operational and reputational risk.

Digital capability development is therefore dependent on:

- Ongoing investment in cyber resilience and security controls
- Alignment with national and sector security guidance
- Integration of cyber risk within business continuity and incident response planning

This risk is owned through existing governance and assurance structures, rather than within this framework alone.

Change Adoption and Cultural Readiness

Digital transformation requires sustained behavioural and cultural change. Resistance to change, inconsistent adoption or lack of confidence in digital tools can limit the benefits realised from digital capability investment.

This dependency is addressed through:

- Embedding digital change within service and strategy ownership
- Supporting staff and learners through capability development rather than enforcement
- Ensuring digital solutions are user-centred, inclusive and value-driven

External Dependency and Market Volatility

The College is dependent on external platforms, suppliers and sector-wide digital ecosystems. Changes in supplier roadmaps, licensing models, regulation or market stability can introduce delivery risk.

Mitigation includes:

- Avoiding over-reliance on single solutions where possible
- Maintaining active supplier and sector engagement
- Aligning digital approaches with widely adopted standards and platforms