THINK
DIGITAL

Digital Strategy
2021-23

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Introduction

The purpose of the Dudley College Digital Strategy is to outline our commitment to continually developing the delivery of outstanding education for our learners, enhancing and streamlining our business processes to support business continuity, and ensuring that our staff and learners are equipped to thrive and succeed in the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Dudley College of Technology recognises the role that digital skills have as an enabler and catalyst for change. To achieve our potential, we plan to develop an environment which ensures that digital skills are at the core of all that we do and is underpinned by the fundamental principles of digital inclusion and accessibility for all.
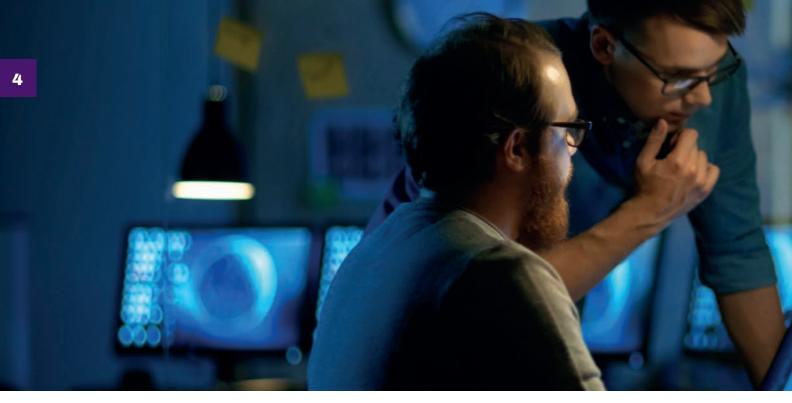
We will ensure that all digital content is accessible for all. We will support disabled people who may access content in a different way that is suitable for their needs, empowering learners with special educational needs, enriching their learning experience and preparing them for independent living and the world of work.

As the college progresses on its digital journey, we will need to expand and develop our digital approaches in order to keep abreast of current and emerging technologies both in industry and for teaching and learning. This will require targeted investment and effective management of resources to deliver our strategic aims. We will ensure that the College continues to adapt and innovate, and that no learner or member of staff is left behind by the dramatic shift in our use of technology, brought about by the global pandemic.

This plan supports the aim of the college to promote high expectations and aspirations of success for all staff and learners. The key principles of digital inclusion and accessibility are embedded in the plan through the commitment to the effective use of technology, and we aim to involve key stakeholders at all levels of the organisation to develop their digital capabilities and to help shape our digital future.

This strategy supports the overarching strategic aims and plan for the college and reflects work carried out across the sector as identified in Elevating the UK Further Education and Skills Sectors (JISC, 2020) and aligns with the key principles set out in the West Midlands Digital Roadmap (WMDR) 2021.

Leadership, governance and culture

Our Aims & Objectives:

To establish a digital first culture and provide digital leadership across the organisation, by:

- Further transforming and elevating digital performance and outcomes at all levels.

- Securing an inherent culture of diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion enabled by digital tools, services and processes.

- Proactively supporting the wellbeing of all staff and learners.

What we will do:

- Leaders will proactively support digital adoption and optimisation, thereby promoting digital innovation across the organisation.

- As a college, we will recognise and articulate the potential of digital, transforming the learner journey and ensuring that this is implemented and supported through teaching, learning and assessment.

- We will utilise the potential of digital, transforming the business operations of the organisation, ensuring that this is clearly articulated and communicated effectively.

- By harnessing the potential of digital technologies, we will transform staff experiences, ensuring that these become embedded through processes, staff policies and procedures.

- We will align our continued investment in information technology infrastructure with our curriculum development plan, enabling innovative and forward-thinking curriculum planning across our whole estate.

- Sufficient time and resources will be provided to support the development of digital capabilities of staff and learners and we will celebrate these achievements.

- We will use digital applications to support both staff and learners with their wellbeing.

- We will ensure data is shared effectively across the organisation and with stakeholders.

- We will engage with external stakeholders to share best practice and ensure we are working together to support local communities.

Innovative teaching and learning

Our Aims & Objectives:

To embed the use of digital technologies to provide an innovative approach to teaching and learning through:

- Innovative use of technology in teaching, learning and assessment which engages, motivates and inspires learners.

- Harnessing the global power of technology to equip learners with the digital skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for higher studies and the world of work in an ever-changing digital world.

What we will do:

- We will implement a digital induction to ensure that new staff are competent in using digital technology in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

- The development of a digital CPD platform will improve digital awareness and capabilities, encouraging staff to try new technologies and approaches to teaching.

- We will ensure that all learners have access to leading-edge digital delivery which enhances their employability and life skills and improves progression opportunities.

- Innovative technologies such as AI, AR, VR and gamification will be used to enhance teaching and learning and the learner experience.

- High standards of delivery will be promoted through the effective application of digital pedagogy in all settings including face to face, online, hybrid, distance and pre-recorded teaching sessions.

- Teaching triangles will continue to evolve and will drive digital pedagogy with the use of technology as a key focus, with staff being encouraged to be digitally innovative and share good practice.

- Accessibility and digital inclusion will be prioritised for all learners through the appropriate use of digital technologies and learning content that is inclusive and accessible to all.

Curriculum development

Our Aims & Objectives:

To ensure we offer a relevant and responsive curriculum that prepares learners for work in the post-Covid digital workplace by:

- Expanding our curriculum offer through innovative use of technology to widen participation.

- Working side-by-side with employers, to ensure that we will equip learners with the industry specific digital skills, knowledge and behaviours for an ever-changing digital world.

- Offering a flexible approach to providing opportunities for blended and online provision.

What we will do:

- We will be responsive to lessons learned during the pandemic by exploring opportunities to:

    o Expand the curriculum offer by offering new online courses.

    o Embed virtual/blended learning into course delivery to provide a flexible approach to teaching and learning.

- We will ensure that curriculum teams support learners with relevant digital skills and application through blended delivery and gather learner feedback to evaluate and develop this provision.

- All departments will identify their own key priorities for supporting digital innovation and increasing the use of digital technology over the next three years.

- We will provide opportunities for staff to regularly engage with the latest industrial updating, particularly in the preparation and delivery of T Levels, thereby ensuring that staff are appropriately skilled.

- Digital literacy will be improved through Adult and Community Learning provision, funded through the Adult Education Budget.

- We will boost technical education through the provision of digital apprenticeships, promoting the Apprenticeship Levy in the digital sector, and supporting curriculum development.

- We will ensure all apprentices have access to on-line formative and summative assessment, including instant constructive feedback and virtual observations, while summative and end-point assessments will incorporate the use of technology.

- We will establish a Digital Advisory Panel made up of key stakeholders, in order to raise the profile and credibility of our offer and to ensure that the supply of digital skills meets demand.

- The creation of a Digital Innovation Group will drive and celebrate the use of innovative and transformational technology in teaching and learning. This will inform planning and investment in our use of digital applications and physical resources, thereby ensuring that they are innovative and sustainable.

Developing staff digital capabilities

Our Aims & Objectives:

To ensure all staff are confident and competent in the effective use of digital technology to enable business continuity, efficiency and productivity by:

• Providing staff with the tools and support to continually develop the digital skills that will support them in their role.

• Ensuring all staff are aware of digital accessibility and the associated responsibilities in the workplace.

• Ensuring all staff are conscious of their responsibilities in digital security and safeguarding.

What we will do:

• We will assess digital skills during the recruitment of new staff through the application and interview process to inform individual training needs.

• We will introduce new staff to appropriate technology tools as part of the induction process.

• Staff digital capabilities will be incorporated within the staff annual performance review process so that all staff are engaged in developing their digital skills.

• We will utilise a staff and departmental self-assessment (digital insights) to inform staff development needs.

• We will empower staff to take responsibility for updating their own digital skills through engagement with the CPD platform and applying skills in the workplace.

• All staff will complete training in accessibility at a level appropriate to their role thereby promoting awareness of their responsibilities to digital accessibility.

• All staff will complete their MIE badge and will be supported in achieving further Microsoft accreditation through the completion of MS badges, MOS, MIE, MIEE, MIET and MCE status.

• We will ensure all staff are provided with relevant and current training in digital security and safeguarding.

Developing learner digital capabilities

Our Aims & Objectives:

To equip learners with the essential digital skills to enable them to:

- o Be prepared for the digital workplace

- o Exercise digital citizenship

- o Develop digital and personal resilience

- To provide a digital credentials programme for every learner, providing them with the digital skills they need to succeed in their studies and to prosper in a changing world, regardless of level or sector.

- To make effective use of technology for inclusive practice and thereby support the wellbeing of learners.

- To achieve high levels of learner satisfaction for IT services and wider digital learning resources.

What we will do:

- All learners will be offered an ongoing programme of digital skills development, from induction to completion of their studies, enabling everyone to develop appropriate and industry relevant digital capabilities.

- Opportunities for micro certification will enhance digital skills and employment prospects, with learner feedback used to continually improve and enhance the provision.

- Digital technology will be used to promote and support the mental health and well-being of learners.

- Issues of digital poverty will be addressed through provision of digital devices and appropriate support to meet individual needs.

- We will provide opportunities for learners to become 'Digital Leaders' to support digital innovation and gain employability skills.

- All learners will be taught the basics of data ethics and cyber security.

- We will develop our use of accessible technologies to better prepare learners with SEND for adult life and work.

- We will engage with and offer support to parents/carers to enable them to support learners with remote learning.

Digital Infrastructure

Our Aims & Objectives:

To provide a secure and resilient digital infrastructure plan, which is adaptive and responsive to business and curriculum change by:

- Enabling curriculum areas to be innovative in their use of technology.

- Improving and augmenting our existing digital and physical infrastructure to ensure we are capable of delivering a powerful and pervasive digital experience across our campus and beyond.

- Driving efficiencies in our business processes through streamlining, ensuring compatibility and integration of systems and improving the flow of data.

What we will do:

- We will create a robust procurement process to effectively manage resources that meet the needs of curriculum delivery and business processes, and conduct regular audits to monitor the utilisation of current licensed software.

- We will provide reliable network connectivity that ensures staff and learners have the capacity to access the resources they need securely from any location, from any device, upgrading internet connections as required to improve the online experience for all users.

- We will continuously evaluate and invest in IT security to ensure we remain protected against the latest threats and to secure our IT systems against cyber-attacks.

- Our digital content will be developed to meet the expectations of our stakeholders, enhancing accessibility, and improving the customer experience.

- We will ensure access to hybrid physical and virtual spaces is driven by learner need and curriculum innovation, supporting immersion and simulation experiences including virtual and augmented reality.

- We will increase our investment in digital devices to support teaching, including iPads, USB cameras and digital tablets, ensuring all learners have access to an affordable device and connection.

- A centralised Innovation Hub will be created as a space for demonstration and training and a repository for innovative digital resources.

- We will create opportunities for staff to contribute to driving improvements, thereby increasing efficiencies in working processes and systems across the organisation.

- Digital solutions will be provided to enhance both the learner journey and customer experience, streamlining processes, and moving to an individual user account-based approach.

- We will ensure that IT Services are sufficiently resourced to maintain digital platforms and provide first class technical support to all staff to support effective working practices.

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