

# **Digital Education and Assessment Strategy**

This Digital Education and Assessment Strategy provides the overarching principles to reinforce and enhance the use of digital practices across our teaching and learning. This strategy provides the key principles in designing and implementing digital teaching and assessment, building on the progress made in recent years and learning from the response to the Coronavirus pandemic. It is an addition to the University’s Inclusive Assessment Policy and the overarching Education Strategy.

**Environments**

In partnership with our learning communities, we will create accessible, inclusive, and engaging digital learning environments to deliver deeper learning opportunities.

**We will do this by:**

* Developing our virtual learning environments to support innovative pedagogical approaches.
* Exploring, piloting and making available new technologies to support innovative digital teaching.
* Designing our digital learning environments in partnership with our learning communities to ensure an excellent student and staff experience.
* Providing staff and students with access to a range of tools for teaching, learning, communication and collaboration.
* Providing access to a wide range of digital resources, including open resources, to support teaching and learning including material available through the University Library.

**Teaching**
In partnership with our learning communities we will advocate practices and provide appropriate platforms that support online learning and digitally enhanced teaching that is anchored to our on-campus provision.

**We will do this by:**

* Supporting the use of the ABC curriculum development framework to support adoption of digital practices and ensure that design for blended learning can be systematically embedded into formal programme and module planning and review.
* Involving students in the design of digital teaching, learning and assessment and by providing them with regular opportunities to provide feedback.
* Providing teaching platforms that are accessible for all and can provide authentic learning opportunities.
* Making all our digital teaching, learning and assessment practices accessible and inclusive to all.
* Working with partner organisations to develop and deliver innovative online programmes.

Communities of learning

At the heart of our Educational Strategy is an emphasis on collaboration both within the institution and across the wider sector. This will be reinforced within the digital space. Using innovative technologies and platforms, we will provide a space for staff and students to learn, develop and collaborate.

**We will do this by:**

* Establishing a strong community of practice to share effective digital teaching and learning practices, including student engagement and assessment strategies.
* Providing channels for promoting the student voice as an integral part of teaching and learning.
* Working closely with local and national networks and bodies, such as the Digital Technologies Network and JISC, to share effective practice and learn from others.
* Employing inclusive design and collaboration to build a sense of belonging, complemented with tailored support for individual students.
* Ensuring effective practices are in place to ensure we support staff and student’s wellbeing and mental health.

Development

To ensure both staff and students feel supported with the developing world of digital teaching and learning, we will provide a strong support network. Covering aspects of both pedagogical and technological development, we will ensure a high quality, consistent student learning experience across our offering.

**We will do this by:**

* Putting the development of digital capabilities at the heart of personal staff and student development using the JISC digital capabilities framework and specific learning development opportunities.
* Developing a network of digital champions including both staff and students to help promote digital practices and develop wider uptake.
* Providing support, informed by academic practice, to enable both staff and students to develop their own digital skills.
* Supporting all members of the academic community to understand implications around accessible resource design and be aware of core principles of inclusive, universal design.
* Developing a suite of open and/or online courses/materials delivered external to the university.
* Working closely with technology providers to explore innovations and developments.

Assessment

Our aim is for the University to adopt a “Digital First” approach to assessment. The university will move from paper-based to digital modalities for all stages of the assessment process – preparation and dissemination of assessment information and materials; completion and submission of assessment tasks; marking (and collation of marks); moderation and external examining; provision of results and feedback. Digital assessment is not just for online assessment, but will be routinely used for campus-based assessment too.

The objectives are for a fair, appropriate and inclusive assessment approach, with academic integrity and practice core to this digital approach. Assessment design will be based upon people and pedagogy. The people aspect considers the needs of students and staff in enabling and engaging with digital assessments, ensuring skills and resources. The pedagogy aspect is to ensure that the digital assessment supports pedagogically led assessment, not that the technology determines the assessment.

**We will do this by:**

* Enabling effective work and processes for all, including professional support staff, academic staff, students and external examiners.
* Providing access to digital platforms and suitable resources to enable digital assessment that is inclusive, rigorous and authentic.
* Developing the assessment literacy of staff and students to ensure a shared understanding of the different forms and applications of assessment, including formative, diagnostic and summative.
* Ensuring guidance and support in developing inclusive assessments, and allowing for suitable alternatives where necessary are available and are aligned with the University’s inclusive assessment policy.
* Providing suitable formative and diagnostic assessment opportunities for all students.
* Developing campus approaches to demonstrating and assessing competencies, with digital platforms as the standard.
* Collaborating with external examiners to ensure that standards are maintained, and that digital assessments are recognised as good practice for assessment with full oversight and review.