

# Digital Education Annual Report



2024-25

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# Welcome

## We're pleased to introduce the Digital Education Annual Report for 2024/25, celebrating the impact and achievements of colleagues across academic and professional services over the past year.

Together, we've made significant progress in advancing digital innovation for learning at Leeds.

Digital Education is a cornerstone of the Student Education and Experience (SEE) directorate, alongside Student Curriculum and Operations, Student Experience and Support, and Student Success and Educational Engagement.

By strengthening collaboration across these areas, the SEE directorate is driving forward the University's strategic ambitions for Digital Transformation and Student Success, including:

### Enhancing Educational Technology and Innovation

Built on strong foundations and a commitment to continuous improvement, enhancements to the Minerva VLE and the wider digital ecosystem are delivering a more consistent, inclusive learning experience shaped directly by student feedback. At the same time, HELIX's innovative learning spaces are cultivating connections and collaboration, helping to foster a vibrant and engaged academic community.

### Growing Our Online Learning Portfolio

Flexible and scalable online learning remains at the heart of our mission, enhancing virtual environments and advancing inclusive digital pedagogy across everything from short courses to full online degrees. Through close collaboration across Professional Services, we're building the capabilities needed to deliver a seamless, end-to-end online student experience, wherever students learn. This portfolio continues to grow, expanding our reach and deepening our impact.

### Supporting Pedagogy and Curriculum Design

Digital education initiatives champion equitable teaching practices that foster a deep sense of belonging for all students. These priorities underpin the development of an inclusive curriculum, shaping the design and enhancement of learning through collaboration with educators and students in co-creating meaningful educational experiences.

### Enabling Student Success and Opportunity

Digital innovation continues to serve as a powerful enabler across a wide range of projects, helping us connect students and learners with key messages, broaden access and create opportunities for engagement. The latest National Student Survey results highlight the tangible impact of this work, reflecting our commitment to enhancing the student experience in future-focused ways.

### Building Global Partnerships

By sharing expertise with diverse audiences, we're actively supporting vital capacity-building efforts, both globally through the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* programme, and nationally in partnership with KPMG and the Civil Service. These collaborative online learning projects extend our impact beyond institutional boundaries and enable knowledge exchange at scale.

We'd like to extend our congratulations to all staff involved in the achievements celebrated in this report. Your work has helped to put the University on the map, and the impact on students across campus and beyond is profound.

As we look ahead, we're excited to continue our shared journey, ensuring that innovation, inclusivity and excellence remain central to every student's experience.



**Sarah Mulholland**

Deputy Chief Operating Officer,  
Student Education and Experience



**Professor Kenneth McDowall**

Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Student  
Education and Experience

# Digital Education Strategy

## Vision

Our vision is that all our learners engage with accessible and inclusive learning experiences, underpinned by innovative and intentional digital pedagogies and technologies.

## Mission

Our mission is to work collaboratively with all our partners to harness the power of digital education to transform lives, enabled through an evidence-based, solutions-focused, design-led approach.

## Values

### Collaboration

We work together to achieve our goals and ambitions.

### Compassion

We are caring and considerate in our words and actions.

### Inclusivity

We are a community where everyone is welcome and belongs.

### Integrity

We are open and honest in our words and actions.

## Themes

### Community

We are a collaborative community working in partnership with students, staff, stakeholders and the wider sector.

### Culture

We are a team who support each other's wellbeing and empower each other to be proactive and take responsibility for our work.

### Impact

We are experts, adding value, leading innovation, and providing sustainable solutions.

# Inclusive, Flexible, and Future-Focused Education

“It has been an honour to lead Digital Education at Leeds since 2021, and to work with colleagues across the University to improve student education and experience. I am particularly proud of the collaborations and communities of practice that have been built, including a wide range of staff across academic and professional services communities, as well as students and external partners.

In the 15 years I have been at Leeds I have seen digital education move from being an emerging area to be firmly embedded as a core pillar of our Student Education and Experience strategy and woven into the design of our portfolio. This is a testament to the dedication, passion, and shared commitment of colleagues across the University who have embraced the potential of digital technologies to enhance education, and worked in partnership to create digital learning experiences for our students.

Looking ahead, I am confident that Leeds will continue to lead in shaping inclusive, flexible, and future-focused digital education experiences that empower students and staff alike.”



**Megan Kime**

Director of Digital Education (2021-2025)



# Meet the Executive Team



**Andrea Hofmair**  
Head of Business  
Operations



**Chris Thompson**  
Head of Digital Media  
and Innovation



**Farzana Latif**  
Head of Digital  
Education Systems



**Matt Cornock**  
Head of Online  
Learning



**Megan Parsons**  
Head of Partnerships  
and Engagement



**Phil Vincent**  
Head of Digital  
Education  
Enhancement &  
Design

“I’m delighted and honoured to step into the role of Director of Digital Education and Learning Innovation. Over the past three years, working alongside the leaders and teams represented in this report, I’ve seen first-hand the creativity, commitment, and care that go into making the University’s vision for inclusive and accessible learning a reality.

Digital Education at Leeds reflects an intentional, strategic approach to shaping a future-focused student experience. The examples highlighted in this annual report demonstrate our unwavering focus on the learners we serve – those studying on campus or online today, and those we’ve yet to reach. They also showcase the deep relationships we’ve built across our academic community, brought to life through the case studies and stories shared here.

This report affirms our commitment to designing flexible, high-quality digital education that meets learners where they are and helps shape where they go next. As student needs continue to evolve and the higher education landscape shifts, our role in leading thoughtful, scalable, and sustainable digital education – across open, online, campus-based, and professional learning – has never been more important.”



**Dr Margaret Korosec**  
Director of Digital Education and Learning Innovation



# 2024-25 in Numbers

## Fully online degrees and short courses

**7** fully online degree programmes in delivery

**2** new programmes launched

**695** online students from

**101** countries

**196** qualifications awarded

**8** new short online courses published

## Professional learning projects

**25,000** young people across the UK gained digital skills

**70,000** women worldwide supported to grow their small businesses

**200** Senior Civil Servants joined an accredited line management programme

## Multimedia enhanced learning

**77** interactive exercises

**4** livestream events

**85** complex diagrams

**352** accessible PDFs

**1,115** infographics

**603** bespoke illustrations

**169** inclusive icons

**340** educational videos and animations

## Digitally enabled campus

**17,560,493**

Minerva log ins

**21** cross-institutional learning design projects

**9,925** Vevox polls launched

**171** Multimode teaching sessions

**12,130** Padlets created

# Industry Awards

## Anthology Catalyst Awards



Student Experience Award  
Winner: Minerva VLE team

“We’re proud to celebrate the Digital Education Systems Team for their dedication to delivering high-quality learning experiences. Their work is helping shape the future of education and inspiring institutions around the world. I want to personally congratulate you, the team, and University of Leeds on this important recognition and for your leadership, excellence, and partnership in advancing learning.”

**John Johasky**

President of Global Markets, Anthology



## THE Awards 2025

Technological or Digital Innovation  
of the Year  
Shortlisted



“Being shortlisted for the THE Awards recognises the contributions of each and every member of the HELIX community – our multi-talented operations team who guide our users day in, day out, our creative and entrepreneurial students taking risks to experiment and ask ‘what if?’, our academic and professional innovators and practitioners, our supporters and industry partners who give so much. Whoever you are, it’s your willingness to explore, share, and just have a go that is celebrated here.”

**Chris Thompson**

Head of Digital Media and Innovation and HELIX Business Lead

# Academic Awards and Recognition

## Leeds Partnership Awards 2025

### Special Recognition Award

Winner: Digital Education Service

“The Digital Education Service are a wonderful team committed to supporting the University’s online students. They have had to tackle the challenges of delivering online education and have received multiple Partnership Awards nominations across different staff members and aspects of their service including research, innovation, teaching and Equality and Inclusion and wellbeing.”

### Cross Institutional Award Panel



### Professional Services Staff Member of the Year

Winner: Lucy Thacker  
Learning Technologist  
Engineering and Physical Sciences

“It was an honour to be awarded Professional Services Team Member of the Year! Being recognised at the university level for my work as a Learning Technologist in EPS means a lot to me. I am incredibly thankful to all the wonderful colleagues in both the faculty and Digital Education who make my role such a joyful experience.”

**Lucy Thacker**  
Learning Technologist



### Innovation Award

Winner: Freddie Bujko  
Learning Technologist  
Leeds University Business School

“I’m absolutely delighted to receive this award. It means a great deal to know the projects I’ve so enjoyed contributing to have made an impact on learning and teaching practice at Leeds. Exploring the potential of GenAI and podcasting as forms of assessment has been an exciting and rewarding challenge, and I’m thrilled this work has resonated with colleagues and students alike. I’m especially grateful to my team and my DEE colleagues for their support, encouragement and collaboration throughout.”

**Freddie Bujko**  
Learning Technologist

## AdvanceHE Fellowships

Lucy Hamilton – Senior Fellow  
Ed Wilson-Stephens – Senior Fellow  
Sam Ryley – Fellow

“The Senior Fellowship application provided a justification to explore current pedagogic theory and practice. It also helped me to reflect on how my role in the Digital Education Enhancement team fits into this, and how I might develop further. Gaining the AdvanceHE accreditation is great recognition for the support I’ve provided within and beyond the Faculty of Environment.”

**Ed Wilson-Stephens**  
Senior Learning Technologist

## University of Leeds Teaching Awards 2025

**Sustained Excellence Award**  
Winner: Catherine Wilkinson  
Faculty Digital Education Manager

Over the last 18 years, Catherine has been committed to integrating pedagogical and digital expertise to bridge the gap between academic and professional services. She has led numerous strategic initiatives, co-developing institutional frameworks and supporting the integration of innovative digital education solutions.

Catherine has co-led networks focused on teaching practices, learning technology and learning environments. Her current focus is on embedding AI into the curriculum, focusing on training provision for all staff and students.



“Catherine’s leadership, vision and deep-rooted commitment to digital education have shaped so much of the work we do. From embedding digital capabilities into practice, to driving GenAI innovation, co-creating frameworks, and fostering inclusive, collaborative communities of practice. This award is a truly fitting milestone as she approaches her 20-year anniversary at Leeds.”

**Phil Vincent**  
Head of Digital Education Enhancement

# Sustainability in Digital Education

“At the University of Leeds, we are committed to embedding sustainability into everything we do. To us, sustainability means creating value for society by taking responsibility for our economic, cultural, social and environmental impacts. We draw on the diverse expertise of our students, staff and partners to collaborate in finding sustainable solutions to global challenges, and to maintain our position as world-leaders in sustainability.”

University of Leeds Sustainability Service

## Our five-year commitment to sustainability

Over the past year, a team of volunteer ‘sustainability architects’ from across Digital Education have worked with the Sustainability Service to co-design a five-year pledge for Digital Education as part of the University-wide Blueprint scheme.



Launched in September, the 2025-2030 Blueprint sets out the intention to:

- become a team in which everyone understands and engages with what sustainability means and how they can promote positive environmental and social impact,
- lead our community in the adoption of sustainable approaches to digital technologies and utilise our expertise and facilities to promote sustainability through education,
- use the opportunities presented by digital technology to advance sustainability goals whilst working actively to acknowledge, surface, and mitigate the footprint of digital technologies.



## TIME TO MAKE YOUR MARK

Know your impact. Make a plan. Achieve your goals.

Blueprint is your plan for sustainability. It's a chance to work on the environmental and social issues that matter to you and your department. We can all make a difference.

Find out more at [sustainability.leeds.ac.uk/blueprint](https://sustainability.leeds.ac.uk/blueprint)



“This blueprint emphasises a pedagogy-first approach to technology, avoiding tech for tech’s sake, highlighting the importance of ethical and sustainable use and engaging new audiences in these conversations. It outwardly demonstrates Digital Education’s support for the University’s sustainability education commitments set out within our Student Education Strategy and Climate Plan and the Sustainable Curriculum principle within this. Congratulations to the architects – it’s great to see such thoughtful commitment to sustainability in this context.”

**Clare Jackson**

Strategy & Engagement Lead (Sustainable Curriculum), Sustainability Service

# 1. Pedagogy and Curriculum Design



**Digital Education Objective:**  
Grow institutional learning design and curriculum enhancement capacity, and embed digital capabilities, supporting staff and students to engage in an outstanding education through intentional and inclusive use of digital pedagogies and technologies.

# 1.1 Collaborative Curriculum Design

## Design thinking at scale

In recent years, the University has adopted a 'Design Thinking'-led approach to curriculum transformation as part of the Curriculum Redefined initiative. This approach prioritises identifying the root cause of a challenge, and working with those influenced or affected by the challenge to design a solution.

Module leaders and professional services staff across the University have been adopting these principles to address complex educational challenges relating to teaching and assessment.

Over the last year, the University has expanded its capacity to offer curriculum design 'sprints' across Schools and Faculties, whereby colleagues have been guided through a range of design thinking techniques to resolve existing curriculum design challenges or develop new initiatives.

By combining staff expertise with meaningful student involvement, recent sprints have offered fresh perspectives on a wide range of challenges, such as:

- designing assessments,
- improving mechanisms for providing feedback to students,
- surfacing skills development opportunities,
- supporting Academic Personal Tutoring.



## Introducing the Design for Change Playbook

April 2025 saw the launch of the Design for Change Playbook, a step-by-step guide that blends people-centred design principles with tried-and-tested techniques to facilitate authentic collaboration in learning design.

Developed by Faculty Digital Education Manager Sarah Briggs, consultant Iria Lopez, and Design Studies lecturer Dr. John Hammersley, the playbook is intended to support human-centred curriculum design in a Higher Education context.

“This playbook was created to enable teams of staff and students to facilitate playful and productive learning design. We hope it helps people to understand and address challenges that affect learning and teaching, which require multiple perspectives due to their complex and interconnected nature. Ultimately, we aim for these tools to positively impact the student experience and create confident lifelong learners.”

**Sarah Briggs**

Faculty Digital Education Manager

## Hands-on approaches to problem solving

A popular design thinking tool is the LEGO® Serious Play® method, which has had a major impact on curriculum design, team development, and organisational change at Leeds.



### NEW for 2025-26:

The University of Leeds will deliver accredited LSP training courses to university colleagues and management professionals across the Yorkshire region. Ready to join a growing community of accredited LSP facilitators?

Scan the QR code or visit the [LSP website](#) to find out more!



# 1.2 Digitally Enhanced Approaches to Teaching and Assessment

## Learning Technologist expertise

Since September 2023, Learning Technologists (LTs) in the Digital Education Enhancement (DEE) team have been embedded in each faculty to help educators design, deliver, and continuously improve their teaching with a focus on digital pedagogy.

Sitting at the intersection of learning theory and educational practice, LTs offer practical, research-informed guidance on how to enhance learning through inclusive and pedagogically grounded use of digital systems and tools.

Whilst LT's can offer support with technical troubleshooting, their work extends to co-designing modules, building digital capabilities, and contributing to curriculum reform through the University's Curriculum Redefined initiative.



As well as contributing to institutional events such as the annual Student Education Conference and Festival of Learning and Teaching, Learning Technologists have offered a range of training sessions and workshops within faculties over the past year:

- Enhancing Minerva modules for consistent student experience.
- Improving the accessibility of learning resources.
- Designing authentic assessment that meaningfully apply knowledge and skills.
- Building confidence with Gen AI (e.g. prompt crafting, ethical use).
- Creating interactive digital resources for teaching.
- Embedding active learning opportunities and student engagement tools.
- Enabling student-led digital content creation (e.g. podcasting).

“I approached the DEE team when my Dissertation students fed back that they were struggling to navigate through their independent learning resources on Minerva. The Senior Learning Technologist I collaborated with brought a lot of wisdom and expertise to the design process, grounded in lots of experience and knowledge. The resulting changes were transformational, with students feeding back that they felt much more confident when navigating the module area.”

**Andrew Mearman**

Associate Professor (Teaching + Scholarship) Economics

# 1.3 VR in the Curriculum

## From theory to practice

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the past year saw groups of faculty teaching staff getting to grips with potential applications of Virtual Reality (VR) through the “Getting Started with VR in Teaching” workshop series.

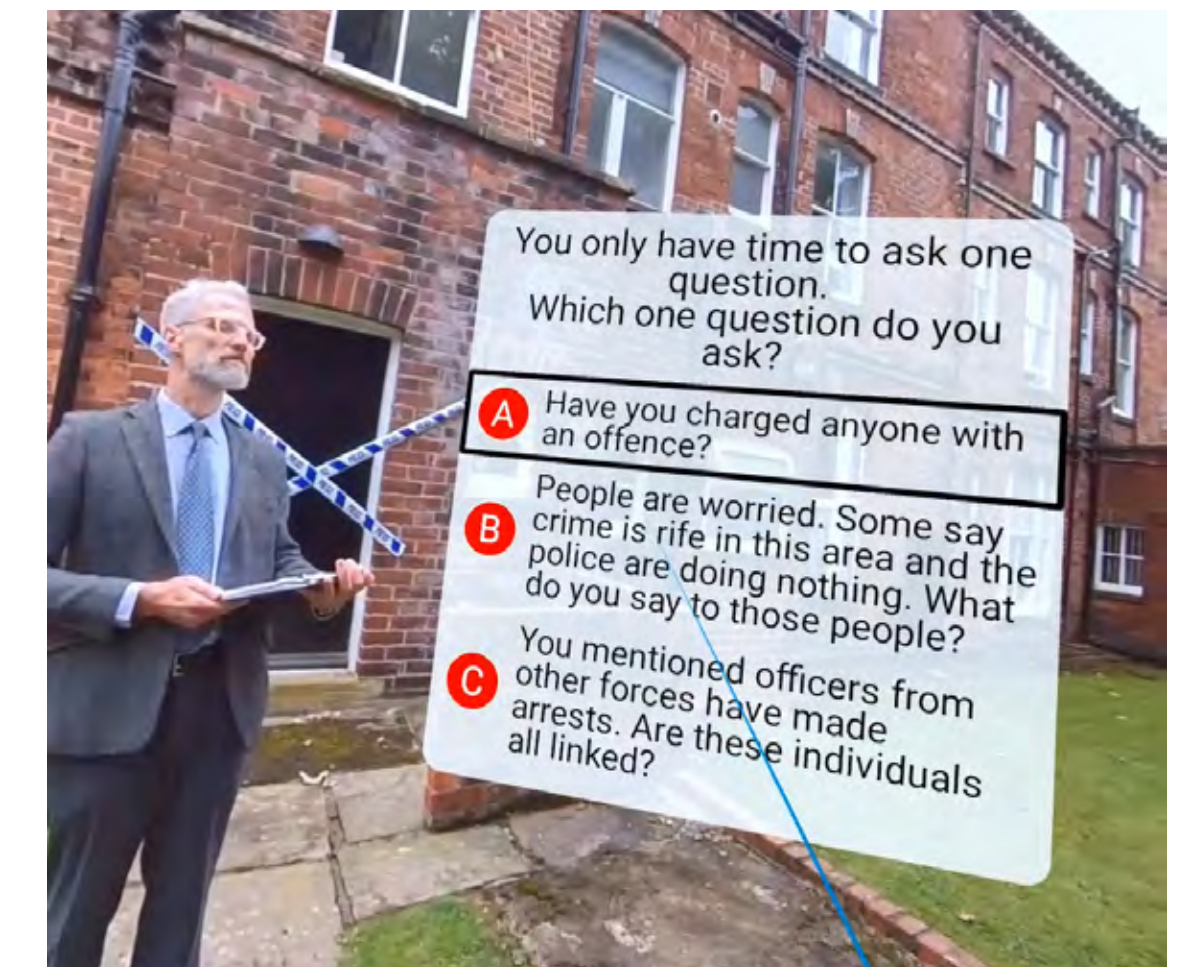
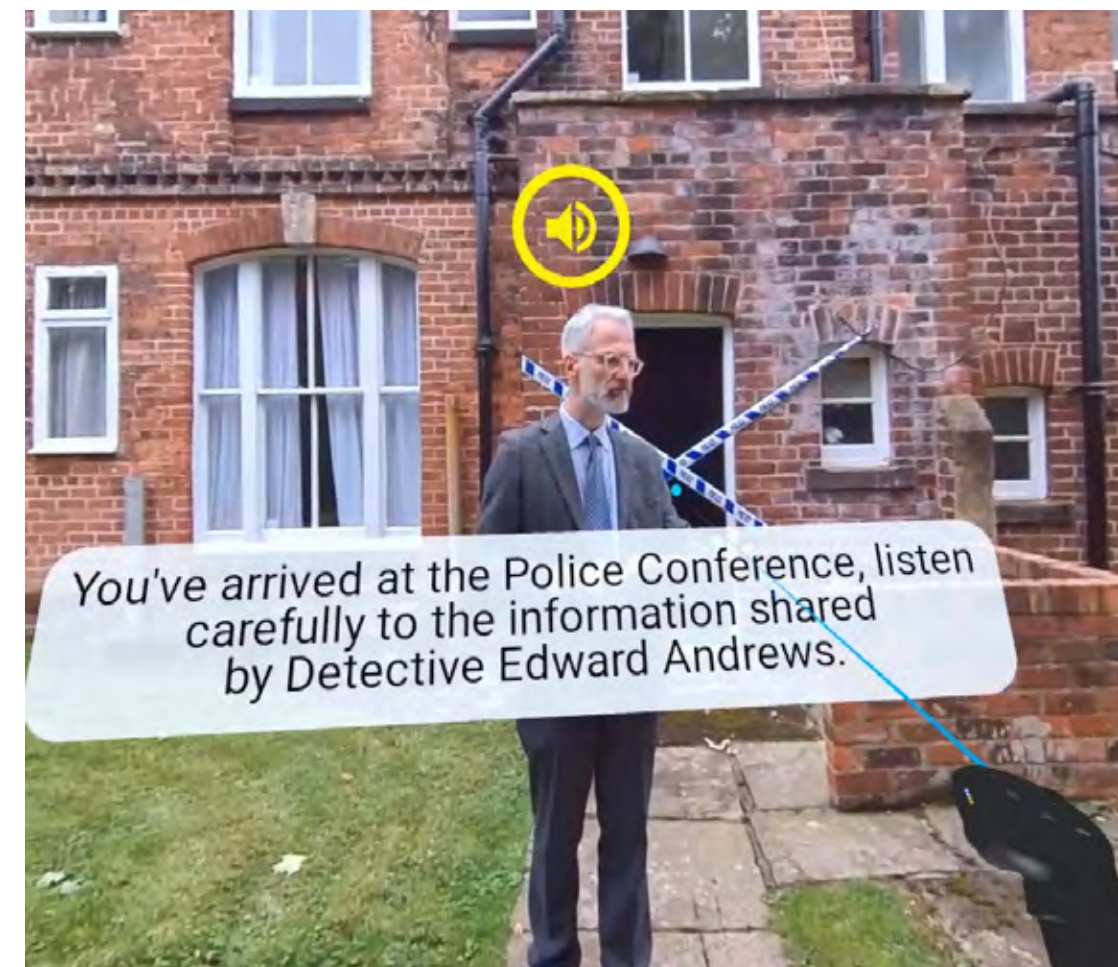
The sessions covered:

- the theory behind VR in education,
- pedagogical principles for immersive learning,
- implementation pathways and practical use cases,
- subject-specific strategies for integrating VR into the curriculum,
- tackling common challenges in VR adoption.

## VR-enhanced modules

Recent VR projects in collaboration with faculty teaching staff and digital education teams have enhanced the curriculum across a range of degree programmes:

- **Media Studies: Virtual Newsroom**  
A ‘live’ immersive newsroom activity allows students to respond to a breaking news story.
- **Food Science: Factory Tour**  
Students can take a virtual field trip to the Arla dairy manufacturing centre, gaining real-world knowledge of the industry.
- **Biotechnology: Virtual Farm Visit**  
XR resources allow students to do virtual tours of laboratories and the University’s pig farm.



## Bodyswaps: developing skills with realistic VR scenarios

The Faculty of Medicine and Health took part in a three-month pilot to trial the award-winning immersive training platform, Bodyswaps. Using AI and VR simulations, Bodyswaps was used to teach a range of soft skills, such as interview skills, teamwork, and conflict management, to enhance employability amongst final year students.



# 1.4 Building Vibrant Communities of Practice

## The Leeds Digital Education Network

Now in its second year, the Digital Education Network (DEN) continues to bring together academic and professional services staff to explore and exchange ideas around approaches to digital education and their practical application at Leeds.

Addressing emerging trends such as AI, digital accessibility, and digital wellbeing, DEN has become an important space for professional development, community building, and cross-functional collaboration.

Alongside the ongoing work of the Digital Education Network, the University continues to develop vibrant communities of practice across campus, bringing staff together to share expertise and explore new tools that support innovative curriculum design.

500  
DEN members  
in 2024-25



## Feedback from the Leeds DEN community

“This was my first time in this network. Really helpful. Look forward to next time.”

AI for all

“Great to know colleagues beyond my immediate team.”

Digital Wellbeing

“Fascinating presentations, thank you!”

Digital Accessibility and Inclusion

“Thank you very much for the opportunity to both listen and contribute.”

Digital Education Research Talks

“Thanks a lot to our guest speakers and colleagues who helped set up this collaboration!”

Co-created AI tools for learning (feat. guest speakers Monash University and the University of Warwick)

“Such a vibrant presentation and discussion from everyone, thanks so much.”

Minerva VLE update (feat. guest speakers from Anthology)

“Really interesting insights into where things are headed in terms of our innovative teaching spaces and experiential learning.”

Digital Accessibility and Inclusion

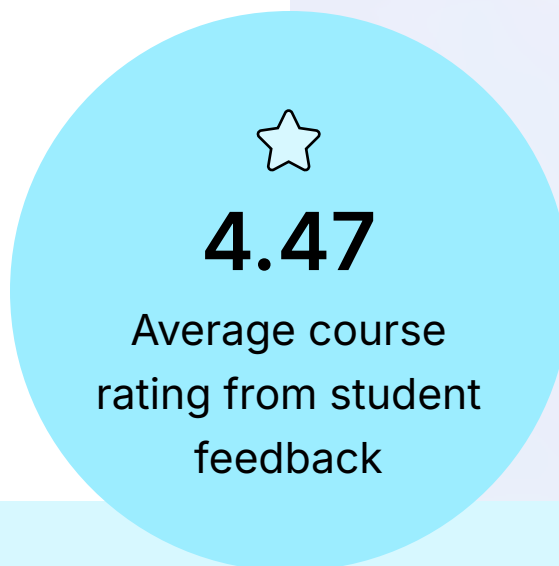
# 1.5 Using GenAI at Leeds

## Mandatory training course for staff and students

Recognising the need to support staff in engaging with the human and cultural issues associated with Generative AI technology, a mandatory online training course has been developed to provide staff and students across the University with a practical introduction to safe, responsible, and ethical use.

Through case studies and clear guidance, the course explores how to integrate GenAI into work and study practices using the University's endorsed tool, Microsoft Copilot.

The resource was developed by the Digital Education Enhancement teams, with contributions from other Digital Education colleagues and professional service teams from across the University.



“The impact of AI on higher education is gigantic. There are so many cross-cutting facets to consider, but if we work together collaboratively, with care, critical thinking, and inclusion as guiding principles, we can navigate the challenges and opportunities to become an institution that has truly embraced the power of AI.”

**Professor Samantha Pugh**

Academic Lead for Artificial Intelligence

## Weekly Adventures in AI

A popular blog series established by Learning Technologist Freddie Bujko has inspired staff to try practical and creative uses for Generative AI (GenAI). With bite-sized activities and accessible explanations of theory, the AI Fridays series aims to build confidence and curiosity “one Friday at a time”.

Since its introduction in summer 2024, the blog has reached over 1,200 users and generated more than 8,000 page views across different channels. Topics range from prompt writing and image generation to research tools, presentation design, and AI-powered study aids.



The series has since inspired spin-off projects that embed GenAI into the curriculum – including a PebblePad workbook that reimagines tasks in line with module learning outcomes.

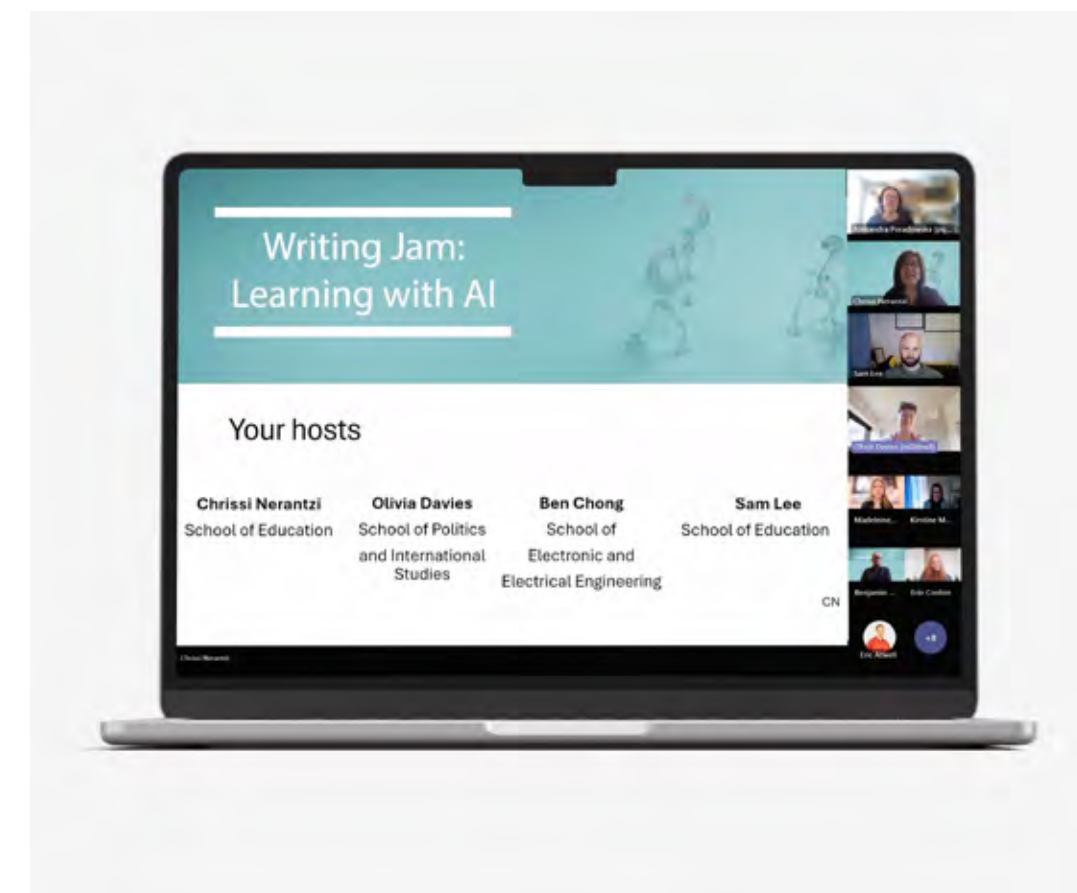
“AI Fridays highlights tools that address real academic needs – covering accessibility, innovation, and assessment. The content directly supports the University’s Digital Capabilities Framework, which promotes the importance of digital skills, whilst being light-hearted and fun!”

**Catherine Wilkinson**

Faculty Digital Education Manager

## Student AI Pressbook

Two of this year’s Ambassadors acted as ‘editors’ of a long-term research project led by Professor Chrissi Nerantzi. Over a period of six months, the ambassadors compiled submissions from students across the University sharing stories of how AI tools had supported their studies.



“I would like to thank Digital Education colleagues and Student Ambassadors for making this collaboration possible. We are delighted that it is leading to an output that will be of value to the wider academic community within and beyond Leeds.”

**Professor Chrissi Nerantzi**

AI Pressbook Project lead



# LEARNING WITH AI

A Student Edited Collection

# 2. Educational Technology and Innovation

## Digital Education Objective:

Provide best in class digital technologies, facilities, and processes to enable a high-quality digital student experience, including exploring the opportunities of new and emerging digital technologies, and iteratively embed this inter-institutional practice.



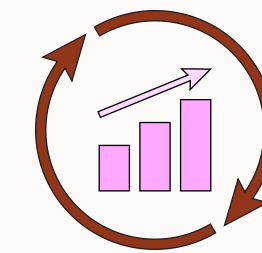
# 2.1 A Dynamic Digital Ecosystem

“Our goal is to create a sector-leading digital ecosystem where all our students can thrive, empowering staff and students to innovate, collaborate, and shape the future of learning together.

At Leeds, we are taking a strategic approach to achieve this, working in collaboration with vendors and in partnership with staff and students to put students at the heart of what we do.”

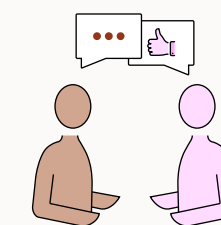
**Farzana Latif**

Head of Digital Education Systems



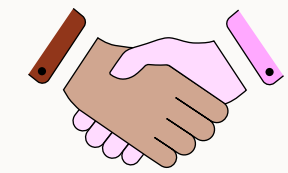
## Strategic ecosystem management

Regular ‘health checks’ and structured reviews are conducted to evaluate existing systems and pilot new technologies that align with pedagogic priorities and the evolving needs of our academic community. Evidence from staff and students, alongside partnerships with vendors, informs decisions to enhance, scale, or retire systems.



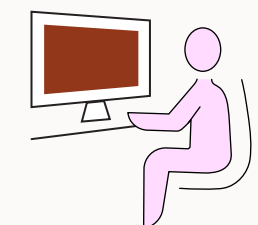
## User engagement

Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, are used to understand how systems are experienced in practice. Insights from staff and students inform system development and guidance, supporting a student-centred, inclusive and accessible digital learning experience.



## Collaborative governance

The digital education ecosystem is shaped through collaboration and cross-functional governance structures, including the Digital Education Systems Working Group. This brings together teaching staff, students, and professional services to provide oversight, ensure strategic alignment, and support informed decision-making.



## Support

Dedicated teams support and maintain the University’s digital education systems on a day-to-day basis, ensuring operational reliability and integrated services. This enables academic staff to focus on teaching and learning while sustaining long-term system performance and alignment with institutional priorities.

## Learning and Reflection

### Minerva

The University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) enables staff to create and manage online teaching areas and communicate with students. It uses Blackboard technology with a wide range of in-built and integrated tools for interactive learning, assessment and grading.



### Athena TDM

A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for non-degree courses run by the University of Leeds which are available to external participants.



### PebblePad

PebblePad is a versatile application, enabling the gathering of learning and development material in one easily accessible place. Tutors can provide scaffolding for students using templates and workbooks or invite students to initiate their own projects.



## Interactivity and Multimedia

### Mediasite

Mediasite is the University's lecture capture and multimedia management system.

Panopto will fully replace Mediasite as the University's Media Enhanced Learning platform by September 2026.



### Labster

Labster is a 3D laboratory training software.

It delivers interactive, virtualised laboratory simulations across STEM and other subject areas to offer an immersive learning experience.



### Vevox

Vevox is an engagement tool that allows presenters to interact with their audience during lectures, meetings, or events. It provides a range of interactive features that enable participants to ask questions, respond to polls, participate in quizzes.



## Assessment and Feedback

### Blackboard Assignment

Blackboard Assignment is the built-in assignment tool available in Minerva. It can be used for individual and group assessments. It has an integration with Turnitin similarity reports.



### Gradescope

Gradescope is a tool offered by Turnitin that provides a way of submitting and marking assessment. It is particularly useful for paper-based assignments which require students to supply answers that cannot be directly entered into a computer or device.



### FeedbackFruits

Piloted for summative assessments during the 2024/25 academic year, FeedbackFruits allows a streamlined process of giving feedback to peers and students.



## A is for Ally...

Ally is an easy-to-use tool that's embedded within Minerva. It provides module accessibility reports so teaching staff can identify and fix digital accessibility issues in their content, such as PDFs.

For a full A-Z of system-specific guidance, visit the [Digital Education Systems Help website](#).



# 2.2 Impactful Improvements to the Virtual Learning Environment

Over the past year, key updates have been made to the Minerva (Blackboard) VLE to support students and connect educators to their learners' progress. These include:

- new tools to improve the formatting of Minerva documents,
- email notifications to keep track of discussions,
- improved navigation of module content,
- a new Gradebook overview of outstanding tasks and assignments to be graded,
- student activity logs, providing insights into individual learning patterns, and identifying where support might be needed,
- AI Conversations activity allowing students to explore a situation or task through role play.

## Revised institutional module template

The University's institutional Minerva template was updated for 2024-25 in response to feedback and in alignment with strategic objectives for student education.

To ensure a more consistent user experience for students, several elements of the template are now signposted as mandatory for all modules. These include:

- teaching staff contact details and school support information,
- module-specific digital accessibility statement,
- module reading list created using the Leeds Reading List tool and link to Lecture Capture recordings,
- module assessment overview, and summative assessments added to the default 'Assessment and Feedback' folder,
- information about how to provide feedback on the module.

## Extended templates for schools and faculties

This year has also seen the development of 24 extended versions of the module template, which have been modified to streamline school-specific resources and reduce the workload for staff involved in updating modules each year.

With input from academic and professional services colleagues, including School and Faculty-based Digital Education Academic Leads and School Leadership Teams, these tailored templates were designed to meet local requirements, improve consistency and reduce set-up time for staff.

“Updating the Minerva templates with the new School-facing documents has transformed the Faculty of Environment modules. Students can now access accurate, centralised resources seamlessly from any module, reducing confusion and improving the student experience. This change has driven consistency across four schools, supports better engagement, and ensures that the information provided to students remains consistent, reliable, and adaptable to future needs.”

### Mark Thomas

Digital Education and Assessment Academic Lead for the Faculty of Environment



## 2.3 Collaborative Learning Tools

As part of the digital education ecosystem at Leeds, staff and students have access to a range of collaborative tools including that support interactive and reflective learning.

### Case study: Buddycheck tool supporting groupwork in the Business School

Leeds University Business School, in collaboration with the Digital Education Enhancement team, piloted the Buddycheck peer review tool to help students evaluate each other's contributions to group projects.

The trial was conducted with postgraduate students enrolled in Human Resource programmes. Feedback from students highlighted how the tool strengthened their sense of voice and authority within group projects, while also developing self-reflection skills.

“Our students work in diverse groups, practicing and developing communication skills as part of their master’s programme. The introduction of Buddycheck allowed us to boost this skill development, introducing feedback and self-reflection. As academics working alongside the DEE team, we were supported every step of the way, making the integration of the software into the curriculum easy and the enhancement to the learning experience seamless.”

#### **Marianne Savory**

Curriculum Redefined Lead, Leeds University Business School



## Case study: FeedbackFruits links feedback to learning objectives in the Language Centre

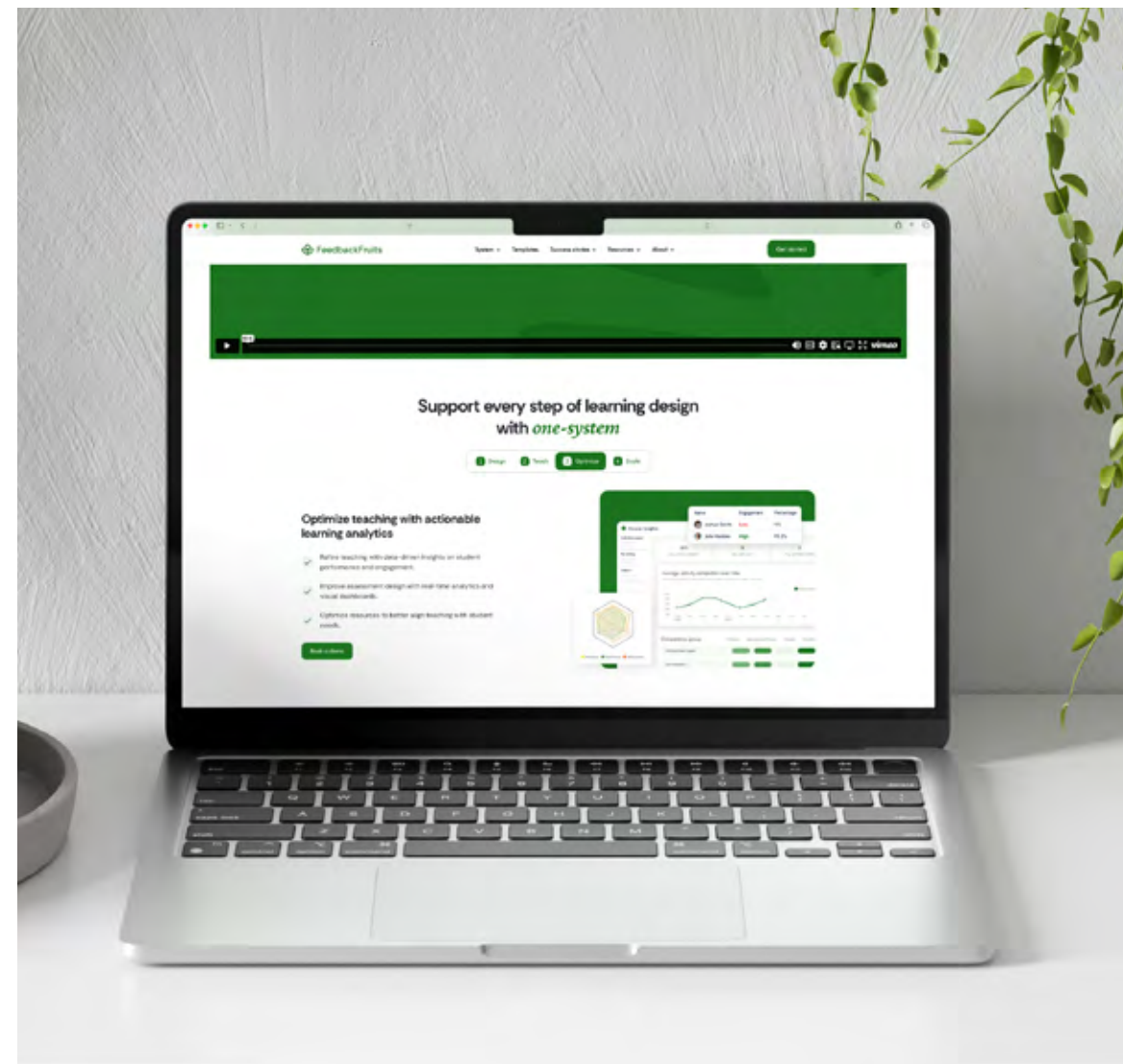
In alignment with the University's objective to develop authentic assessment methods, the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures has adopted the FeedbackFruits system for providing students with assessment feedback.



Built into the Minerva VLE, the tool has been pivotal in encouraging students to engage more actively with feedback from tutors, promoting deeper reflection on their own learning.

By facilitating a two-way feedback dialogue, Feedback Fruits empowers students to take ownership of their learning, thereby improving their capabilities at planning, monitoring and evaluating their progress.

In particular, the tool's 'explanation card' feature has allowed educators to prepopulate learning objectives and directly link these to feedback comments, providing students with clear expectations and a transparent assessment process.



“I’ve really enjoyed using Feedback Fruits. It’s quite intuitive and I love the dialogic functionality of giving feedback. The students seem to have found it easy too as I’ve not had any complaints about uploading files which is a first!”

**Alison Leslie**  
Language Center

## Case study: CampusPress class blog for Dickens analysis and assessment

In the School of English, the module “Charles Dickens Then & Now”, led by Dr Emily Middleton, offers third year students the opportunity to review modern adaptations of the Victorian novelist’s work.

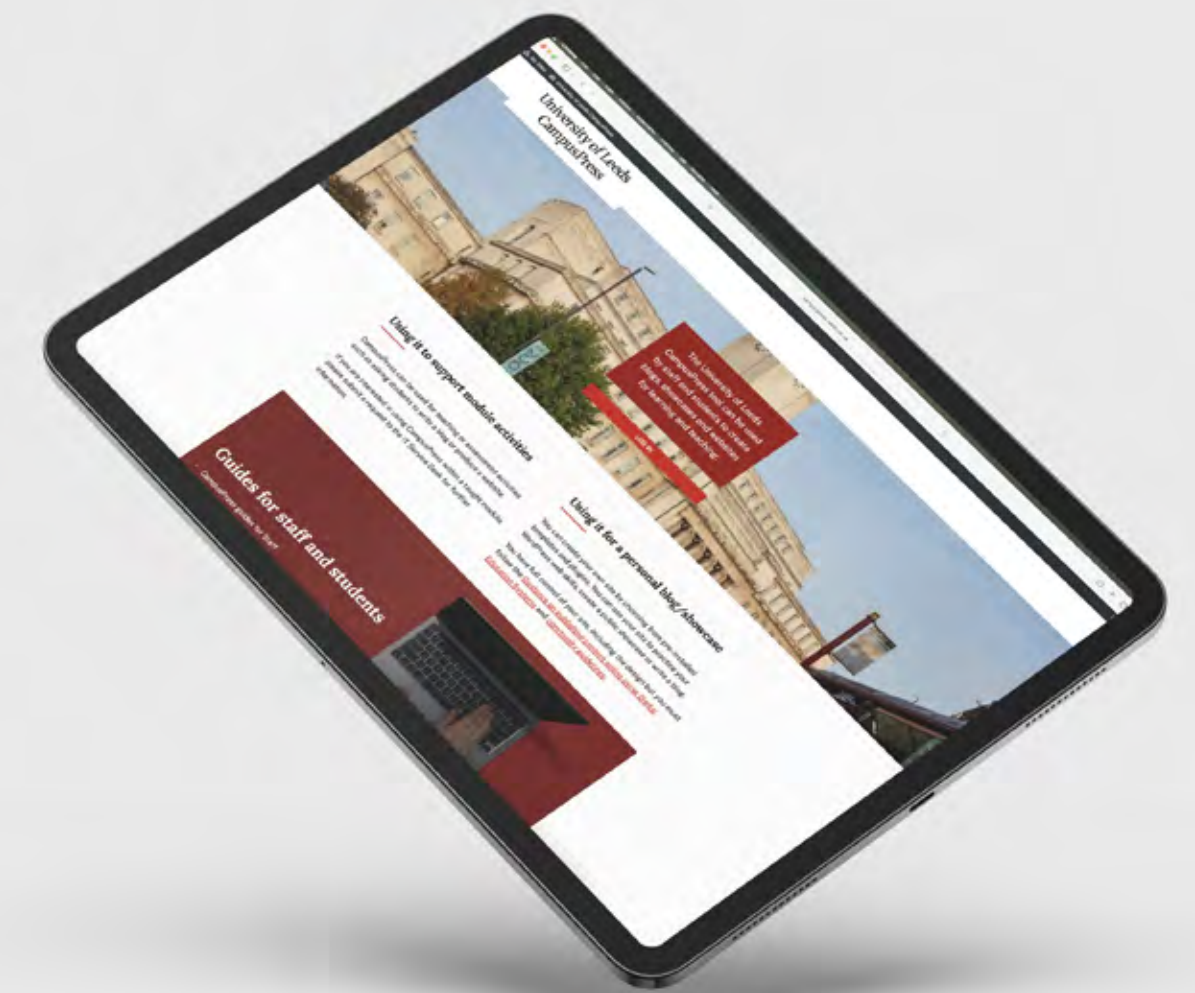
Using a collaborative class blog hosted on CampusPress, students were encouraged to seek out films, books and plays based on the works of Charles Dickens, with a view to understanding the writer’s influence, contemporary importance, and modern reception.

As well as providing a collaborative space for shared learning, the blogs also formed the basis of a summative assessment midway through the module.

The use of CampusPress, both as a learning tool and as a form of assessment, received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students.

“I loved the class blog, it felt like we were a little intellectual group, and I actually found it super helpful for assessment sources.”

**Student feedback**



# 2.4 Media Enhanced Learning (MEL)

**Media Enhanced Learning** refers to the use of digital media, such as videos and animation, to enhance learning and improve the student experience. It involves using digital tools to create interactive and engaging resources that can be used to support teaching, both on and offline.

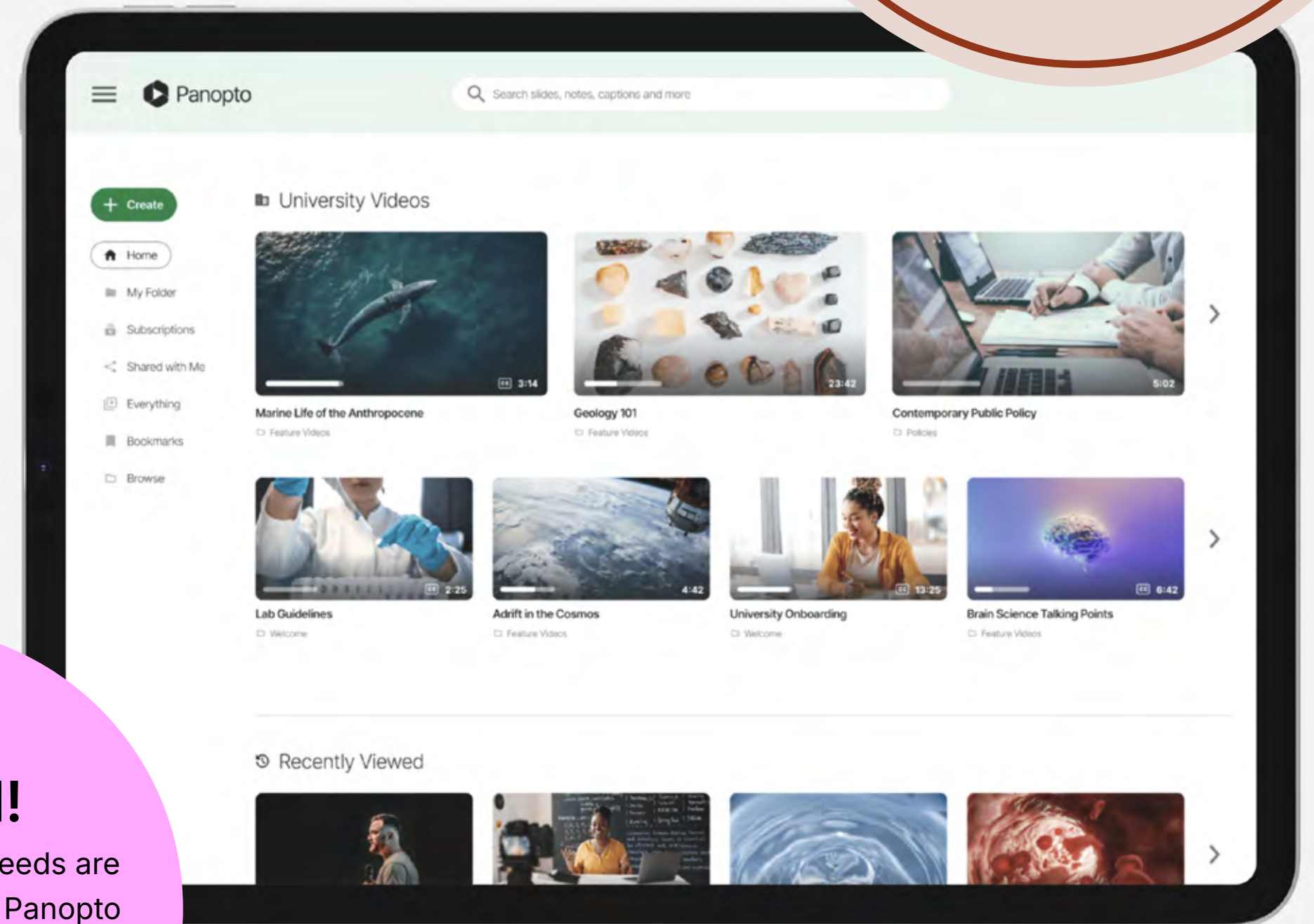
## Introducing Panopto: A sector-leading platform for Leeds

During the 2024-25 academic year, an extensive evaluation process took place to review the University's requirements for media-enhanced learning (MEL) and lecture capture technology, incorporating staff and student voices throughout the process.



In April 2025, Panopto was confirmed as the University's new MEL system, replacing the existing Mediasite system by summer 2026.

Prior to launching across the institution, new approaches to using multimedia in teaching and assessment have been introduced to the wider University community. An 'early adopters' scheme has involved over 100 academics across all schools, generating examples of good practice from across the institution.



“Our ambition is to lead the sector in media-enhanced education, empowering both teaching staff and students to innovate, co-create, and engage with media in new ways. With Panopto, we have a future-ready solution that stays true to our commitment to leverage advanced technologies that enhance teaching and learning experiences.”

**Dr Margaret Korosec**

Director of Digital Education and Learning Innovation

**Get involved!**

Staff and students at Leeds are encouraged to join the Panopto Early Adopter Groups to find out more about using multimedia resources in teaching and learning.

# 2.5 Two Years of Learning Innovation in HELIX

HELIX is the University's pioneering hub for creativity and experimentation, blending cutting-edge digital technology with an ethos of openness and accessibility.

Since launching in September 2023, it has transformed students and staff interactions with technology through an innovative, community-first model.

From virtual reality in fine art to rocketry in the makerspace, HELIX has fostered interdisciplinary collaboration across staff and student communities, helping users make their ideas a reality, from first beginnings to scale.

## Frictionless access to technology

Removing barriers to access is a core principle guiding how HELIX grows and adapts to meet the evolving needs of the University community.

Students now benefit from loyalty schemes, enabling them to get the most from rooms and equipment, including 3D printers and laser cutters.

HELIX is now available round the clock with 24/7 access cards



“The HELIX community is creative, entrepreneurial, and open to exploration. This year, they have made transformative medical education interventions in virtual reality, launched their own AI-powered digital enterprises, and connected with peers across the globe.”

**Kerr Hunter**

Senior Community Development Manager

## Upgraded spaces

Additional investment has enhanced the space in alignment with evolving student and academic needs. In April 2025, a £250,000 funding package supported:

- upgraded accessibility infrastructure including automatic doors,
- automated self-service solutions (e.g. booking systems, key cards),
- enhanced multimode teaching rooms and meeting spaces.



## Training and events

HELIX has expanded its regular programming for students and staff to explore popular and emerging technologies. They can now benefit from learning programmes in games design, virtual reality development, and multimedia and design, deepening their knowledge and enabling them to experiment confidently.

### Popular HELIX events 2024-25

3D Filament Printing

3D Modelling using Blender

VR gaming

T-Shirt Printing

Studio Photography Essentials

Introduction to 3D Scanning

Getting Started with Unity VR Development

Introduction to podcasting

Laser Cutting Induction

Make a Tabletop Game

Over 3,000 registered users (staff and students)



10,000+ participants



Reached through 190+ events



Scan here or search Eventbrite for HELIX@Leeds to explore upcoming events!



## Award-winning Student Partnership

Students have played a critical role in shaping the ongoing development of HELIX. A full-time Digital Innovation Intern and a team of five part-time Student Innovation Partners have led masterclasses, events, and showcases as educators in their own right.

In September 2025, HELIX interns were awarded the [Student Partnership Impact Award](#) by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). This award recognises their dedication to supporting the HELIX community, working as a team to build confidence and skills across the entire facility.

## Innovation and Student Enterprise

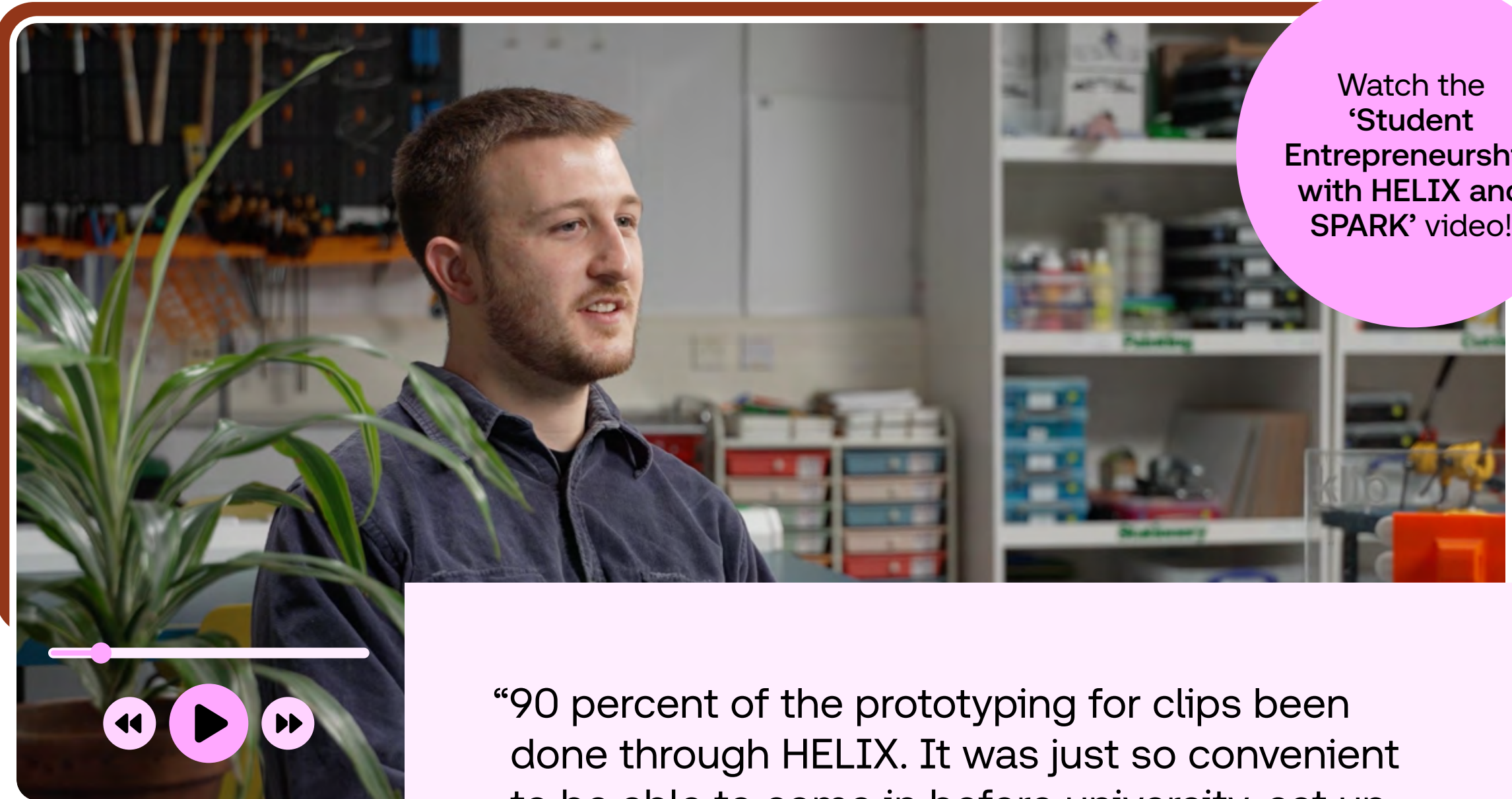
In partnership with Spark, the University's student enterprise programme, HELIX has provided a home for student-led projects built on creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration and entrepreneurial ambition:

### Tom Milner, MSc Mechatronics and Robotics Engineering

Alongside his postgraduate studies, Tom was supported by the SPARK and HELIX to develop Klip, a non-destructive house planter solution for student accommodation.

Using the 3D printers in HELIX, Tom was able to develop prototypes for the product alongside attending lectures.

Watch the 'Student Entrepreneurship with HELIX and SPARK' video!



"90 percent of the prototyping for clips been done through HELIX. It was just so convenient to be able to come in before university, set up a print, go to lectures, come back and pick up the print. I could do that for a few days, and I could prototype really quickly."

### Nikhil Gandamaneni, Dental Surgery (BChD)

A dentistry student with a passion for sports media, Nikhil Gandamaneni transformed his love for cricket into a successful digital content platform whilst studying dentistry.

Nikhil used HELIX facilities to elevate the production quality from basic equipment such as phone cameras and entry-level microphones to professional recording equipment and studio spaces.

"The resources at HELIX allowed me to reduce production time while improving content quality. The availability of wireless microphones for public interviews and tools like whiteboards for video breakdowns further enriched the variety and professionalism of my content."



Visit the [HELIX website](#) to read more and join the HELIX mailing list!

# 2.6 Digital Design and Multimedia Services

Based in the HELIX production studios, the Digital Education Production and Creative teams produce video, graphics and animation to enhance student education at Leeds.

## Immunology explained through animation

When studying scientific processes, traditional teaching methods often struggle to convey the complex dynamics that are at play.

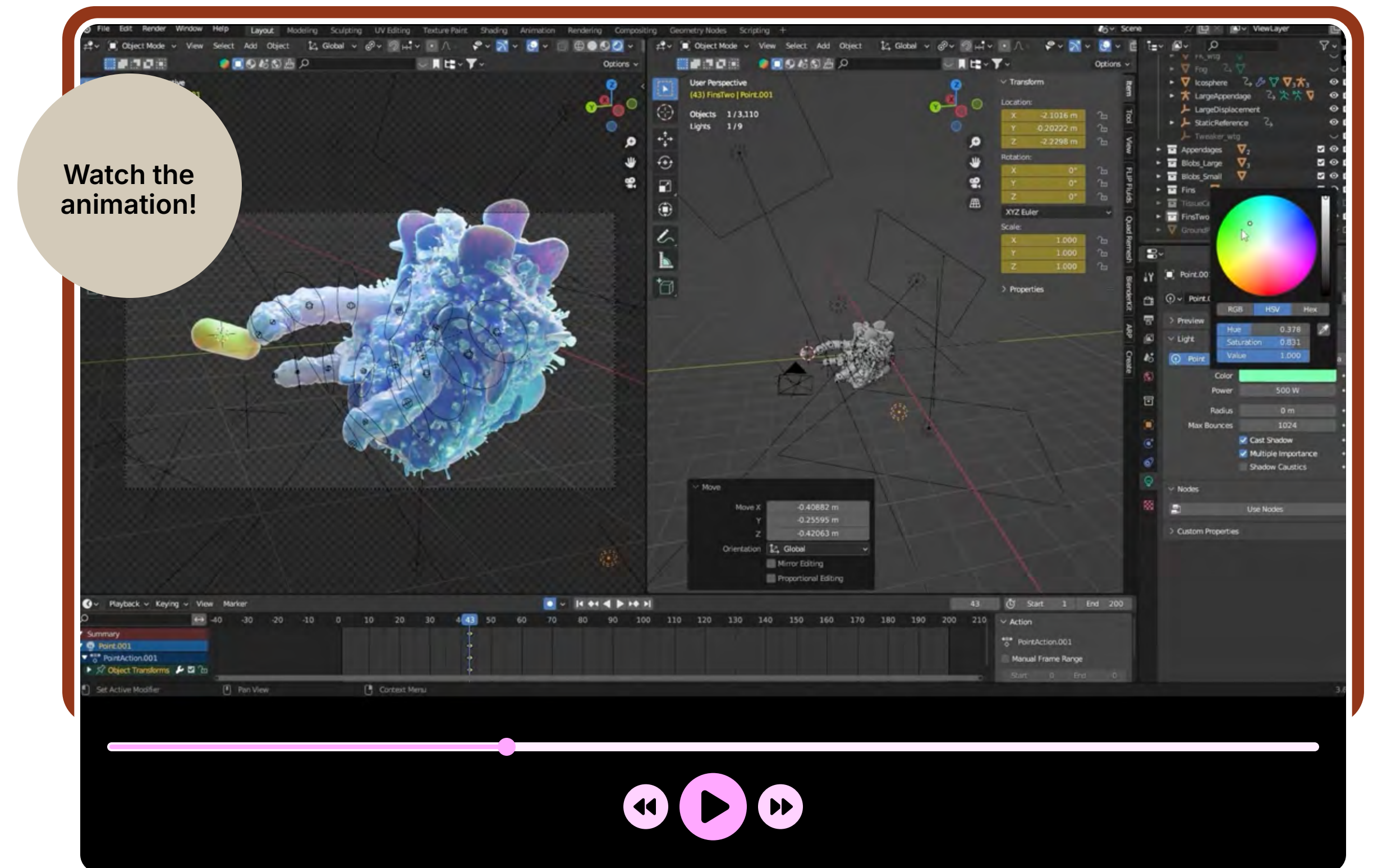
Lecturer in Immunology Dr. Erica Wilson collaborated with the Digital Education production team to develop animated visualisations of the immune system in action.

The animations depict cellular interactions, from the onset of infection to immune response, offering a vivid, motion-based understanding that static images cannot provide.

“One of the processes that is more difficult to convey in lectures is cells travelling around the body and then interacting in different ways within an organ. The team were able to animate this within a lymph node so that you can travel in and out of the node to different areas where cells interact slightly differently and refine the type of response required. Creating the movement and wide aspect view was invaluable.”

**Dr Erica Wilson**

Lecturer in Immunology



Feedback from students highlighted the animation’s effectiveness in simplifying abstract concepts and enhancing retention, especially for visual learners.

## Illustrated aliens teach statistical theories

Developed in collaboration with the [School of Mathematics](#) and the [Leeds Institute for Data Analytics](#), the online Data Science (Statistics) MSc programme offers postgraduate students the opportunity to learn in-demand data skills.

To support students' understanding of an approach to probability known as Bayesian Statistics, a series of digital illustrations were created depicting alien life forms navigating uncertainty on a new planet. The static illustrations were then animated to create short videos showing the alien learning to understand its surroundings.



“It was a pleasure working with the Digital Education colleagues to create these animations, which were evaluated highly by the module reviewer. I was impressed by the responsiveness to my feedback throughout the process, and I truly appreciate the effort that went into perfecting the final videos. Support from the Learning Designer was invaluable in helping to capture my academic perspective through Digital Design team’s technical expertise.”

**Sofya Titarenko**

Lecturer, School of Mathematics

## Custom-built interactive exercises to enhance learning

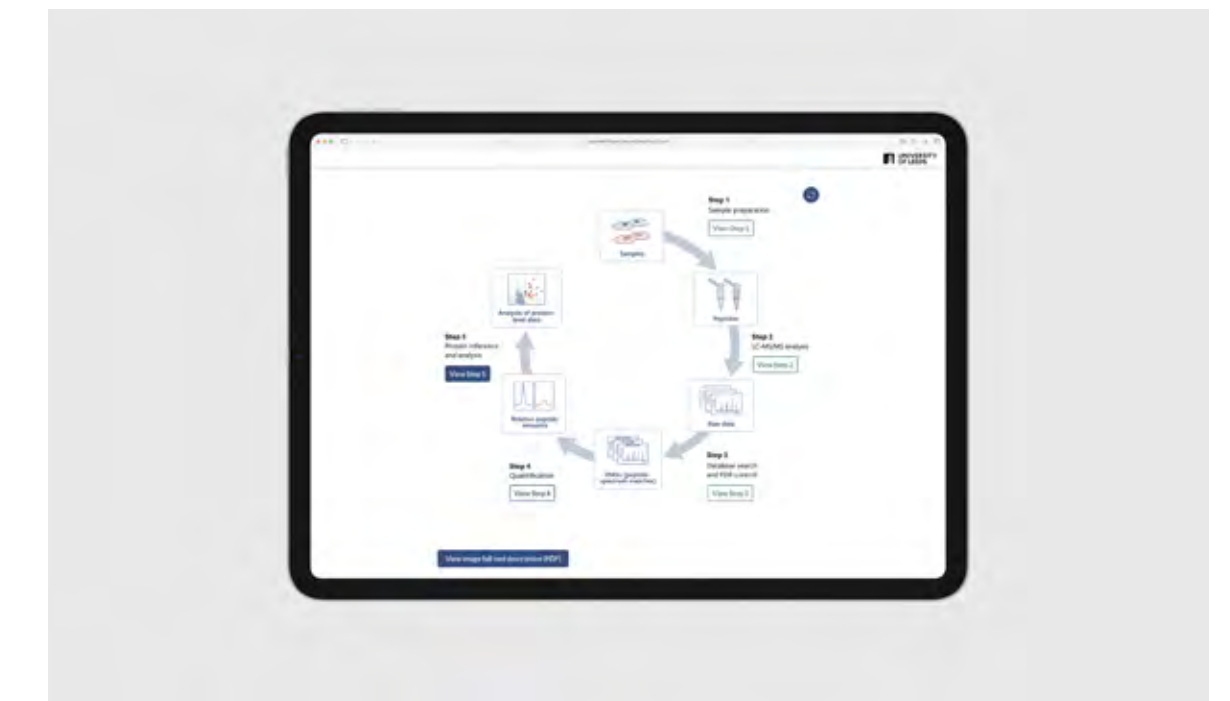
### Explaining aircraft velocity

Interactive exercises were designed to explain aircraft velocity calculations and particle physics for a short online course on Fluid Dynamics.



### Interacting with biology

For the MSc Genomic Medicine with Data Science programme, digitally enhanced interactive exercises were used to illustrate complex biological processes, including Ribosome profiling techniques and Proteomics workflows.



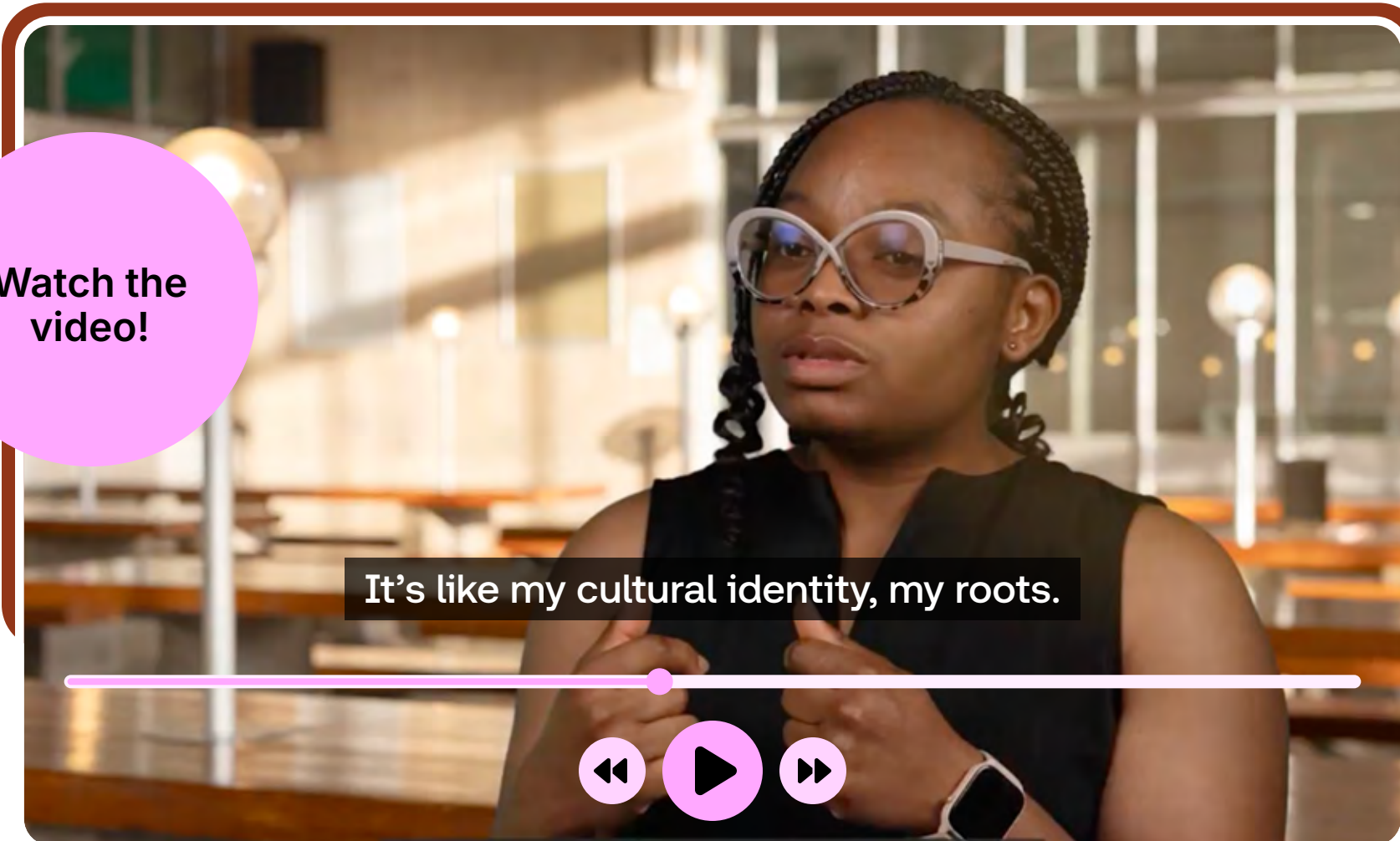
### Forcefield analysis

An interactive decision-making tool was designed to help students assess the factors influencing a potential change by identifying and analysing the driving forces (advantages) and restraining forces (disadvantages).



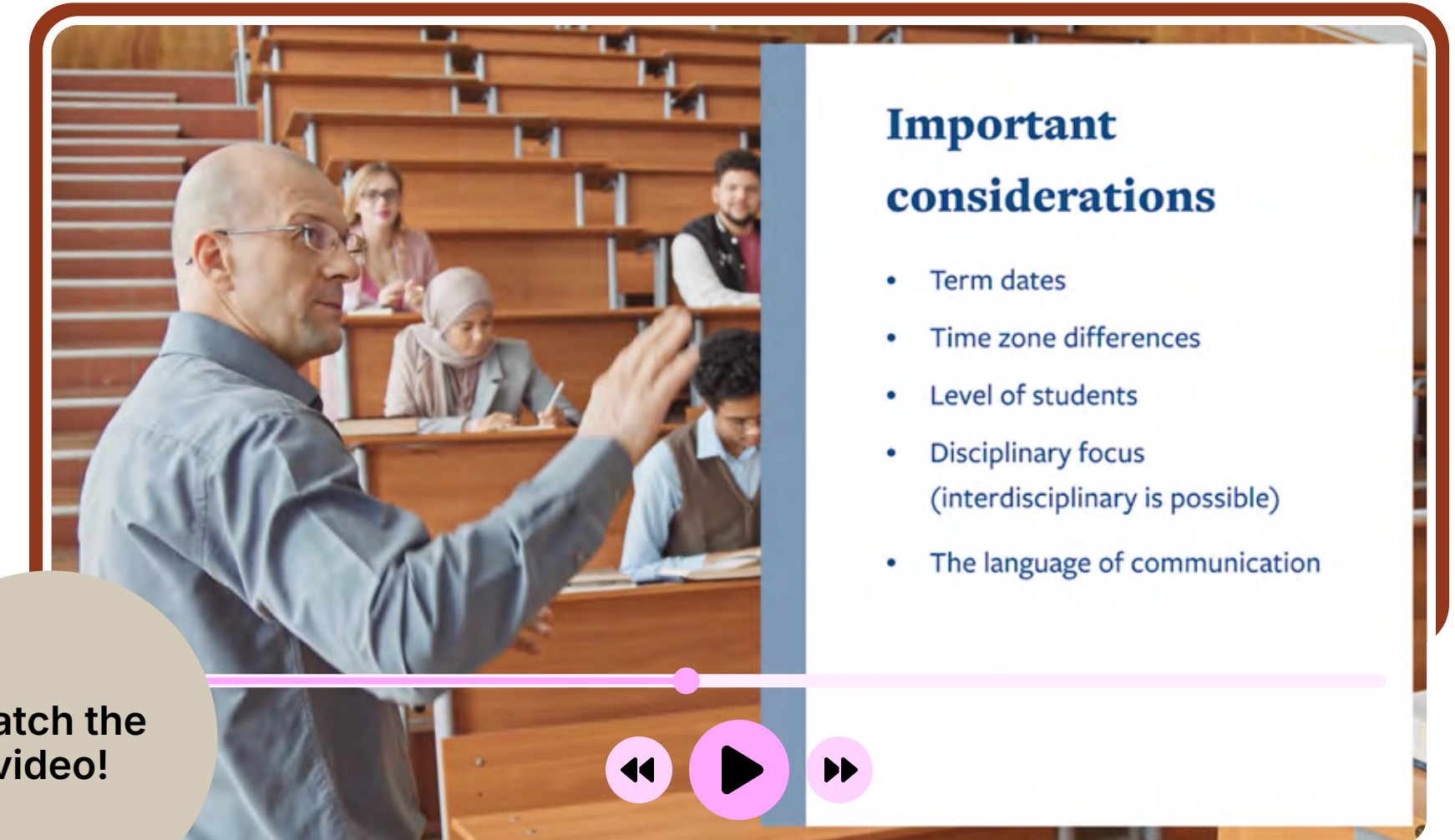
## Digital media to engage new audiences

Watch the video!



**Tackling accent bias**  
As part of the University's "All Accents Welcome" campaign, a powerful video featuring impactful interviews was created to celebrate linguistic diversity among students and staff, while also raising awareness of how accent bias can lead to discrimination.

**Spreading the word about COIL**  
A two-part video series was created to promote the University's Collaborative Online International Learning initiative, highlighting international learning opportunities.



Watch the video!

### Uncovering global health histories

Developed by the School of History in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, the Global Health Histories podcast brings together historians and medical professionals to enhance understanding of worldwide health challenges.



### Managing work-related stress

Digital illustrations of individual characters and their work environments provided visual aids for a new resource to help staff tackle work-related stress, with subtle visual clues to aid the story.

# 3. Student Experience, Success, and Opportunity

**Digital Education Objective:**  
Utilise online and digital education to increase the reach, accessibility, and impact of research-informed study opportunities at Leeds and increase the diversity of students who can see themselves at Leeds.



# 3.1 Digital Accessibility and Inclusion

The University of Leeds is committed to providing an inclusive environment, and to ensuring digital accessibility for people with disabilities. We are continually improving the user experience for everyone, and we are working to apply the relevant accessibility standards.

[Read the full accessibility statement for the University of Leeds](#)

Over the past year, several initiatives and events have helped to ensure accessibility and inclusion remain at the heart of the University's Digital Education strategy.

## Compulsory accessibility statements in modules

As part of the University's institutional module template, it's now compulsory for teaching staff to provide an accessibility statement for their modules on the Minerva VLE.

The statements offer an overview of accessibility considerations within each module to support inclusive learning.

“An inclusive module is one where every student can access and engage with learning materials without barriers. It's about designing digital spaces that are clear, consistent, and flexible – so all learners, regardless of their circumstances, can find what they need and thrive. By embedding accessibility from the outset, staff can ensure their modules support every student's success – whether or not individual needs are visible.”

**Johanna Fenton**

Faculty Digital Education Manager and Digital Accessibility Lead for DEE



## Course Accessibility Service

A six-month pilot Course Accessibility Service was established to help teaching staff improve the digital accessibility of their teaching modules by removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing, using, or engaging with digital content.

Supported by colleagues from the Digital Accessibility team, faculty-based Learning Technologists, and specially trained Student Ambassadors, the service used Ally software to provide a digital accessibility report for each module, as well as offering step-by-step guidance to fix issues for common issues, including:

- poor or missing alt text for images,
- incorrect use of heading formats,
- non-descriptive link text.

## Bringing DigAcc25 to Leeds

In June, the third international Digital Accessibility Conference hosted by the University of Nottingham brought together practitioners, educators, and advocates from across the sector to explore the theme “Towards Institutional Maturity.”



Satellite viewing events at Leeds saw DigAcc25 livestreamed on campus, with speakers from across the University presenting their contributions to digital accessibility.

“In simple terms, institutional maturity is when digital accessibility is considered as important as wearing your seatbelt... In other words, it becomes something you do without thinking.”

### Learning Content team Leader

Learning Technology, University of Nottingham

## An ongoing commitment to allyship

Each year, Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) offers a moment to spotlight the University’s commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment. For GAAD 2025, a new [Digital Accessibility Allies blog](#) was launched to celebrate contributions from colleagues who have made small, local changes to advance the accessibility of digital teaching materials and student-facing resources.

“Accessibility and inclusion are critical to our strategy to deliver world-class digital and online education. In line with the University’s commitment to these values, I encourage you to learn about the innovative work taking place in this area and find out how you can take part, whatever role you are in.”

### Dr Margaret Korosec

Director of Digital Education and Learning Innovation

Coming Soon...  
Introduction to accessible teaching, learning and work

In 2025-26, a new online training course that introduces the importance of digital accessibility will be available to all staff on the University’s online training portal.



# 3.2 Digital Skills and Capabilities

The University of Leeds plays an active role in supporting staff and students to recognise and build the skills, confidence and understanding needed to thrive in increasingly digital environments.

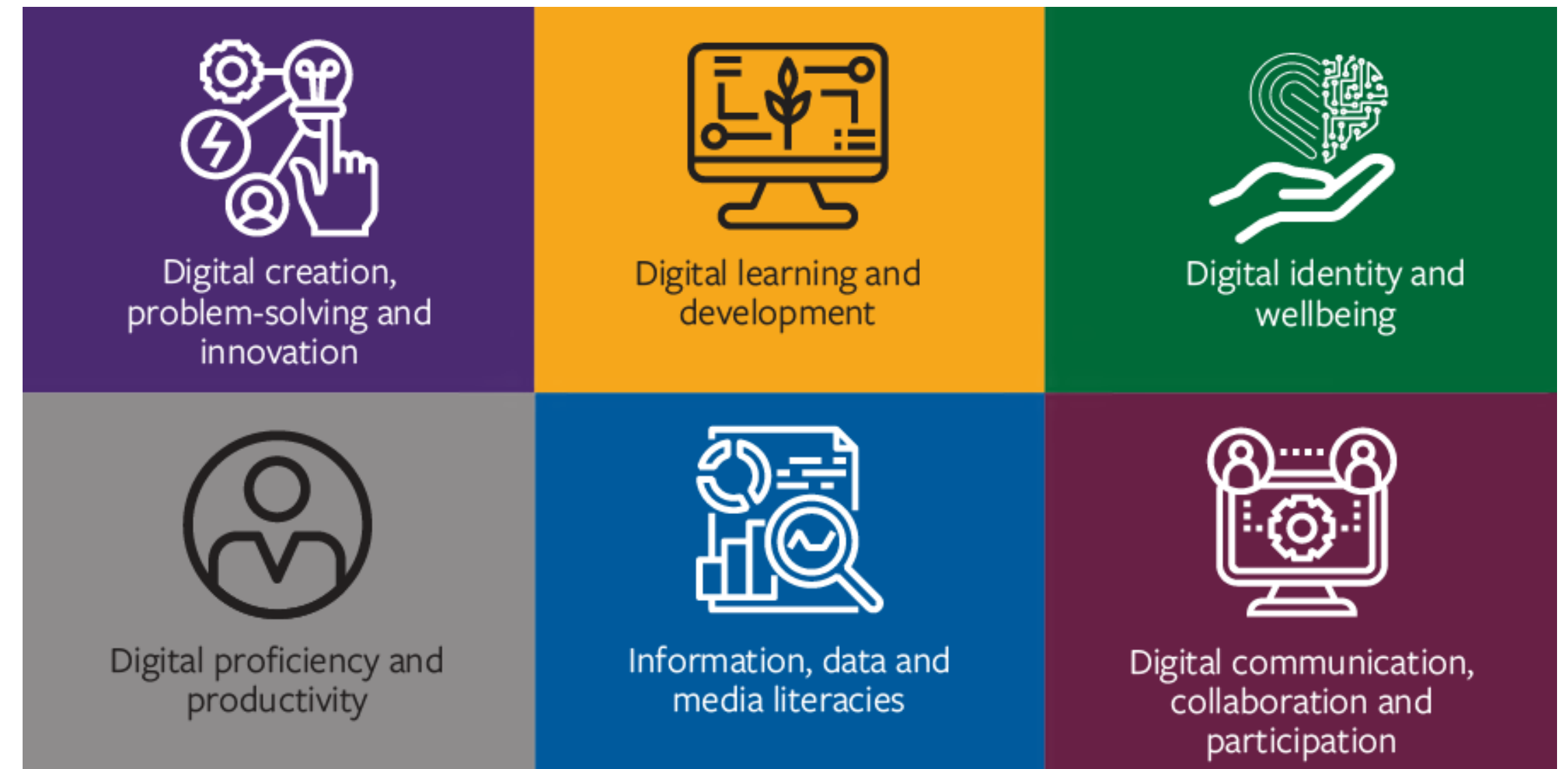
Taking a collaborative approach to developing these collective capabilities, a dedicated working group oversees the provision of support for the wider University community, with representatives from Digital Education working alongside other teams including:

- The Learning Development Team (University of Leeds Libraries).
- Organisational Development and Professional Learning.
- Faculty teaching staff.

## The Jisc Digital Capabilities Framework

Since it was first adopted at Leeds in 2022, the nationally recognised Jisc Digital Capabilities framework has enabled a common understanding of the skills and competencies needed to live, learn and work successfully in a digital society.

In addition to the framework, Jisc’s self-assessment Discovery Tool has also enabled staff and students to understand their own digital skills, and access resources for their own personal development.



“It is essential that students have opportunities to develop their digital skills and capabilities if they are to live, learn, and work successfully in a digital society. At Leeds, we have taken a collaborative approach to supporting this development, drawing on the strengths and expertise of a wide range of teams and practitioners, and working with the students themselves, to provide effective opportunities both inside and outside the curriculum.”

**Dan Pullinger**

Head of Learning Development, University of Leeds Libraries

## Digital Skills Workshops

The Learning Development Team, part of Leeds University Libraries, continues to work closely with academic partners and faculty-based Digital Education Enhancement Teams to embed digital capabilities content into programmes across all faculties.

An expanded programme of bookable workshops was offered to students throughout 2024/25, including a suite of sessions to support them with using Generative AI, address the digital hidden curriculum, as well as teaching video production skills and coding languages, such as Python and R.

**86** workshops provided

**1,168**  
attendances  
(taught students, researchers and staff)

## Podcast skills training series

The practice of podcasting has continued to grow across the University, facilitating discussion-based reflective learning and providing alternative format for assessments.

As a result, demand for hands-on experience and training has increased across students and staff alike. To address this need, the Libraries' Learning Development Team joined forces with colleagues from Digital Education to deliver a series of practical podcasting workshops.

Taking place over six weeks in the spring, the sessions covered:

- technical audio skills,
- scripting and outlining,
- performance and speaking,
- copyright, sourcing materials and open education,
- distribution, accessibility and metadata.

The training also signposted opportunities to connect with podcasting communities to support peer learning and idea exchange, which will continue to evolve throughout 2025/26.

Over 80%  
of attendees  
reported increased  
confidence

## Podcasting Skills Series

Join the conversation on podcasting in higher education at our June events.

[Sign up now!](#)

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



“The podcast training series gave staff, students and researchers a chance to learn together, and to connect around a shared interest in podcasting in HE and beyond.”

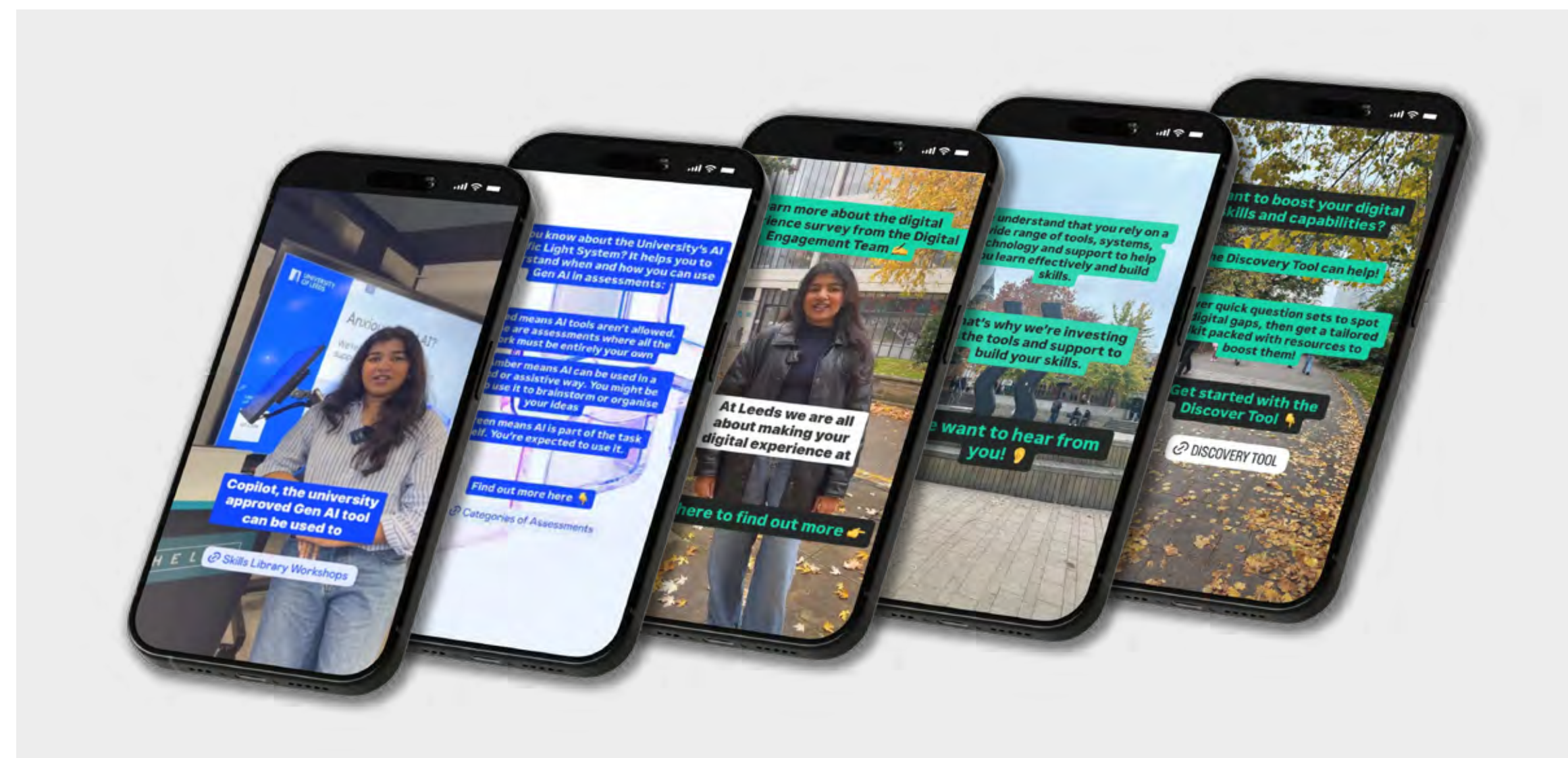
**Liev Cherry**

Digital Learning Advisor, Leeds University Libraries

## Engaging student audiences

In addition to using the University's established central communications channels, social media campaigns have helped to reach diverse student populations with opportunities for skills development.

Instagram 'takeovers' at key points in the academic year have promoted opportunities to book onto workshops and access guidance, from 'Protecting your Digital Wellbeing' to 'Using AI effectively in your Studies'.



## LUBS Digital Skills Week

Leeds University Business School collaborated with the Careers Service, OD&PL and academic colleagues to host a Digital Skills Week in February 2025.

Over 175 students participated in workshops, interactive activities and talks on topics including "Mastering Excel", "The Dark Side of AI", and "Starting Out in Social Media".

100% of survey respondents said they were likely to apply what they had learned, and usage of the Digital Capabilities Discovery Tool increased by 184%.

## Digital Portfolios for Reflective Learning Journeys

Bringing together education and personal development, PebblePad offers teaching staff the ability to create digital workbooks for independent learning and self-reflection, empowering their students to manage projects, store portfolios and keep track of their learning.

In June, the University held its second annual "PebbleShare" event to showcase examples of how the platform has supported teaching staff to streamline academic processes, featuring case studies from the School of English, Leeds Institute of Medical Education and the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies.



In 2024-25, PebblePad usage increased by 14% across the University, with almost 40,000 active users.

"In the School of English, we used PebblePad on a core module for first-year students to develop digital literacy and try out different kinds of writing in a supportive space that allowed them to customise visual and layout features. Across two years we had them writing evaluations of AI, making blog posts with embedded media, producing videos, and writing reflections, all within a PebblePad workbook. It took a bit of coordination to set up, but it helped us move away from students just submitting endless Word documents."

**Dr Emily Middleton**

Lecturer in Digital Humanities

# 3.3 Digital Learning Resources

Collaborating with academic staff and professional services, a range of resources have been created to support students, broaden opportunities, and foster a sense of belonging.



## Preventing student fraud

Developed in collaboration with West Yorkshire Police, a new online Fraud Awareness resource has supported students at Leeds to recognise and avoid common scams.

- 37% increase in confidence spotting a scam.
- 39% increase in confidence knowing what to do when falling victim to a scam.

Beginning with a first-person video illustrating the devastating impact of a phishing attack, a series of animations then highlight the risks surrounding the payment of tuition fees, visa applications and accommodation costs.

A digital escape room focusing on fraud and cybercrime is also in development for the 2025-26 academic year.



“Really impactful. I’ve been scammed before, so the protagonist’s inner monologue really resonated with me.”

### Student feedback

# 3.4 Student Voices in Digital Education

## Student Ambassadors

Each year, a cohort of part-time Student Ambassadors are recruited to provide student-focused perspectives and task-based support for a wide range of projects.

### User testing

Student Ambassadors have helped to ensure that digital content and resources reflect the needs of the wider student community, sharing feedback on:

- three short online courses published on FutureLearn,
- a University-wide Fraud Awareness course,
- new wireframes for the University’s student website to improve navigation.

### Multi-mode teaching support

The 2024-25 cohort of Ambassadors helped to support academics to deliver over 170 interactive hybrid lectures across a range of faculties.

“This role has been incredibly inspiring and rewarding. I really enjoyed getting involved with behind-the-scenes activities, like testing out online resources, creating social media content and providing first hand support to academics”

**Arianna Farabella**

Student Ambassador

## Student Internships

In 2024-25, Digital Education teams hosted internships for seven students, who gained transferable skills for the workplace and industry expertise from video production and photography to copywriting and communications.



Watch the ‘**Internship in Digital Education Service**’ video created by Production Intern **Minh Hanh Nguyen**

# 3.5 Celebrating Graduation Online

For many students, graduating in front of friends and family is the most important part of the University experience. However, celebrating on campus isn't always possible.

Virtual graduation ceremonies, which started as an interim solution during the COVID-19 pandemic, have now become a key part of the University of Leeds graduation offer.

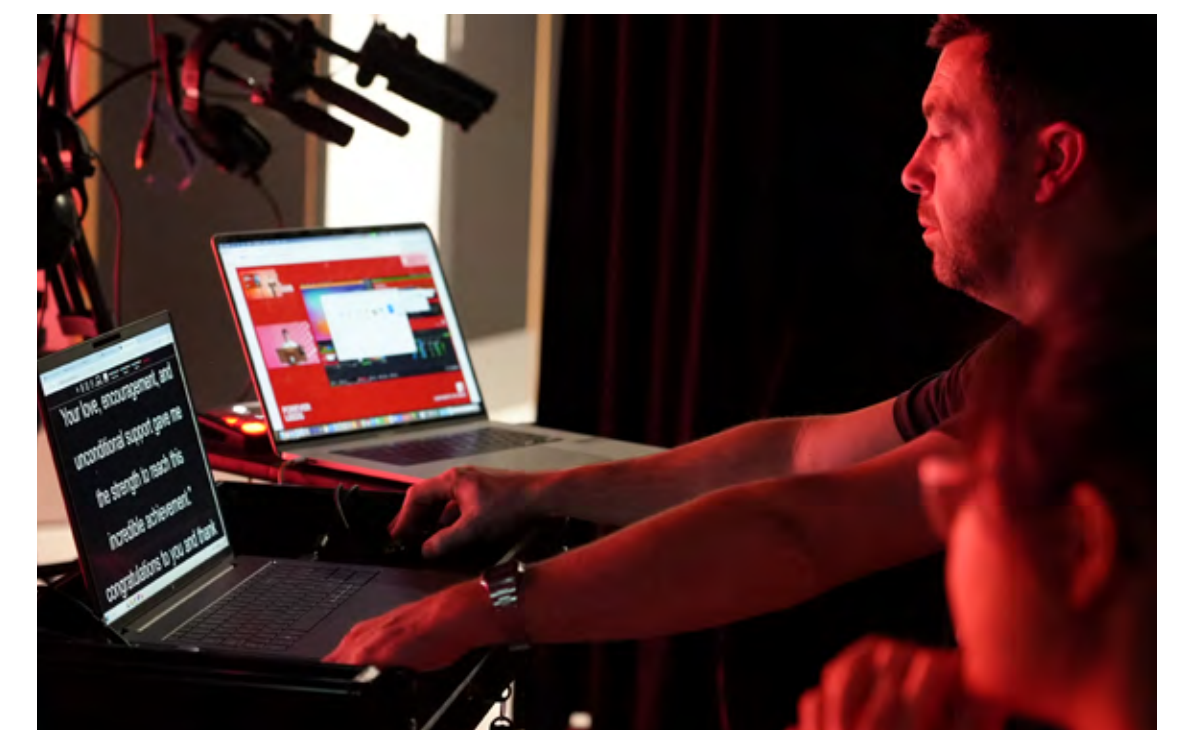
Hosted on Zoom, the online ceremonies allow Leeds students from all disciplines to graduate from the comfort of their own home or workplace. Graduates celebrate in breakout rooms alongside their peers, often appearing on-camera with children and pets as their names are read out.

In July 2025, the virtual ceremonies moved from the traditional venue of the Great Hall to a new home in the HELIX production studios, broadcasting a live-stream from the purpose-built set for loved ones and supporters to watch along.



“Virtual ceremonies are now a popular choice, particularly for international students, and have allowed hundreds of graduates to mark their achievements from anywhere in the world.”

**Andrew Fox**  
Graduation Manager



# 4. Online and Professional Learning



**Digital Education Objective:** Provide key capabilities to enable the sustainable growth of fully online education, and evolve these capabilities to also support the emerging strategy for professional learning.



# 4.1 Student-Focused Online Education

Online Learning has seen significant progress this year, with a clear focus on expanding access and opportunity for students. The growth of the online course portfolio is enabled by close collaboration between academic and professional teams, whilst remaining responsive to the fast-evolving demands of online learning provision.

Central to this is the development of online postgraduate degree programmes designed to meet the needs of professionals studying remotely. This work draws on cross-institutional expertise across Marketing, Student Education and Experience (SEE), and Digital Education (DE), and includes the introduction of more inclusive entry pathways, such as performance-based assessment, to widen participation.

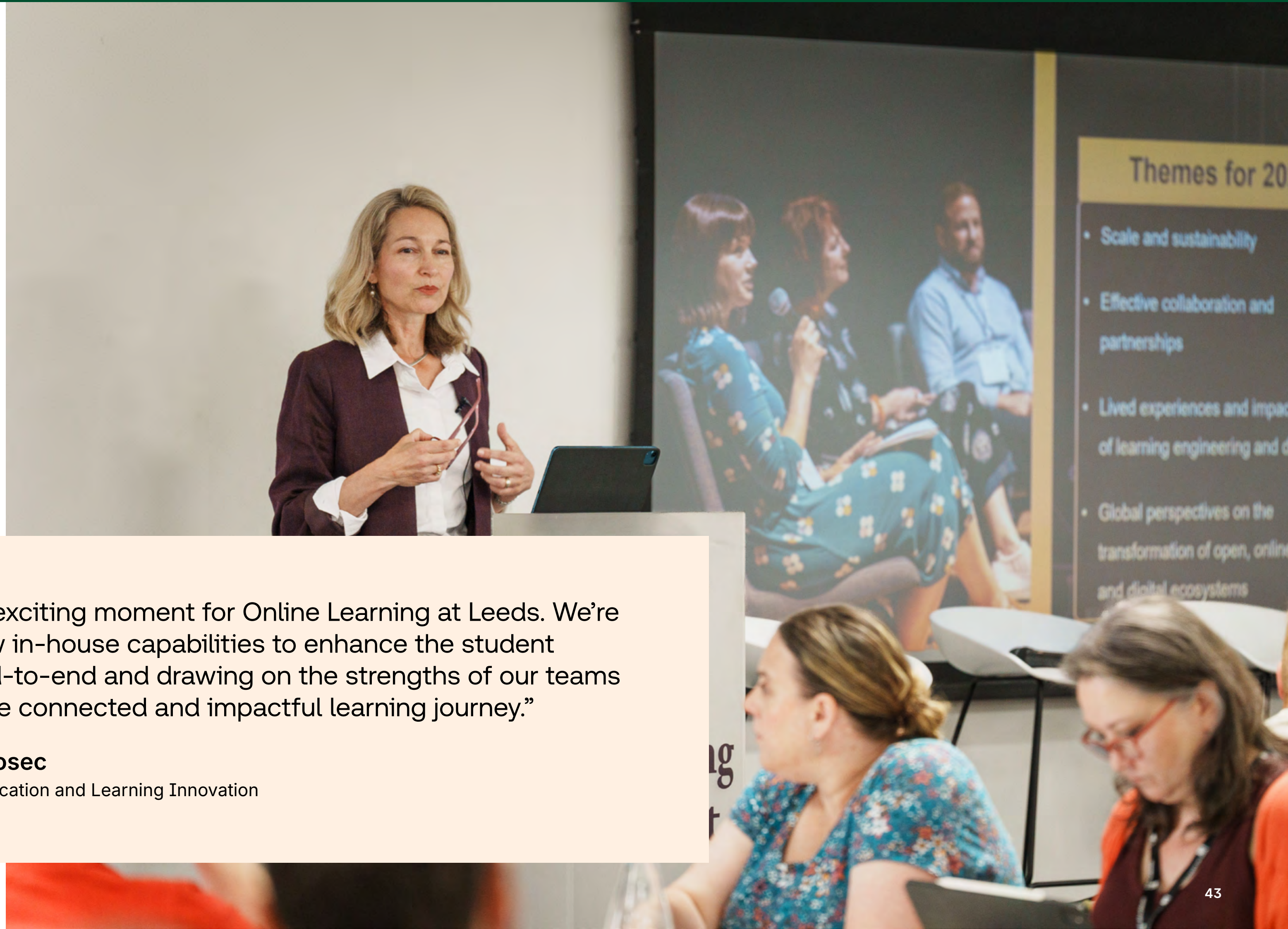
Our approach to online learning considers the full educational experience – supporting academics from concept to delivery, to ensure coherence across modules, assessments, and learning activities. Every decision, from course structure to student support, is made with the learner experience in mind.

This intentional, joined-up approach sets a high standard for accessible online education, ensuring that what the University delivers is not only sensitive to student needs, but also pedagogically sound and professionally relevant.

“This is a really exciting moment for Online Learning at Leeds. We’re developing new in-house capabilities to enhance the student experience end-to-end and drawing on the strengths of our teams to shape a more connected and impactful learning journey.”

**Dr Margaret Korosec**

Director of Digital Education and Learning Innovation



# 4.2 New Online Degree Programmes for 2025-26

The addition of two new fully online postgraduate degrees reflects the University's commitment to creating courses that draw on rich, interdisciplinary content.

These courses exemplify how online learning can bring together diverse academic perspectives to address complex global challenges.

Their development has been a deeply collaborative effort, involving multiple faculties and professional services, including Digital Education, Marketing, Admissions, and Student Education and Enhancement.

Free-to-access taster courses for our degree programmes are available on [FutureLearn](#) and [Coursera](#).

## Genomic Medicine with Data Science MSc



“The idea of using genetics as a routine part of clinical practice is just starting to open up. This could be to provide risk assessment in the general population to inform lifestyle changes or screening schedules, or to assess treatment in terms of risk of side effects and disease progression for precision medicine. There are huge national cohorts across the globe, as well as many individual studies, looking at using genetics far more widely in public health and patient care. It’s a very exciting time.”

**Mark Iles**

Associate Professor in Genetic Epidemiology

## Global Health MSc



“Now more than ever, we need fresh thinking about how to do global health better. This programme is designed to give students invaluable skills and foundational knowledge for any career associated with global health, whether that is for international organisations, NGOs, CSOs, government departments, foundations, think tanks, or community-level advocacy.”

**Professor Garrett Wallace Brown**

Chair in Global Health Policy and Co-Programme Leader of Global Health MSc



# 4.4 Online Learning Summit 2025

Solidifying the University's sector-leading position in online learning design, thought leadership, and quality practice, the University hosted its second [Online Learning Summit](#) in July 2025. The hybrid event welcomed over 200 attendees, including colleagues from across the institution and external delegates from the higher education and online learning sectors.

Curated by Dr Margaret Korosec, the two-day programme featured presentations, workshops, and panel discussions exploring the future of digital and online education. A diverse line-up of [33 speakers and panellists](#) joined from across the UK, USA, Australia, and beyond, exploring insights around the new knowledge currency and the credentials graduates really need.

The fully hybrid format enabled over 100 additional participants to join remotely via Zoom, supported by online facilitators who ensured active engagement through live Q&As and interactive sessions.

Highlights included an inspiring [keynote speech from Professor Martin Bean OBE on leadership and skills gaps in higher education](#), and panel discussion featuring graduates who shared their lived experiences of an online degree – underscoring the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and inclusive access.



“OLS25 prompted debate on how higher education could be more adaptive, responsive, and integrated in a vision of education for lifelong learning. Our exploration of online education challenged the status quo and in doing so, offered ideas for a new future for higher education.”

**Matt Cornock**  
Head of Online Learning

Be the first to hear about the next Online Learning Summit!

Visit the Digital Education website to join the OLS mailing list.



# 4.5 Connecting the Online Learning Community at Leeds

Online Learning projects at Leeds are made possible by the collective creativity and expertise of academic and professional service colleagues, working together to address shared challenges and explore the future of education.

A series of open forum-style events have provided a space to connect and co-create solutions, building a vibrant, forward-thinking culture around online learning.

This growing community is united by a commitment to making online education not only accessible and impactful, but also joyful – for students and for everyone involved, in designing and delivering programmes.

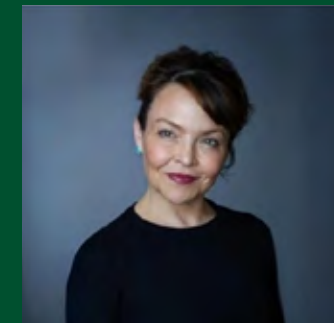


# 4.6 Graduates Making a Global Impact

A total of 196 online learners were awarded qualifications this year from 47 countries, many of whom travelled to Leeds for the first time to attend graduation events on campus.

These events provided a meaningful opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of students who have often balanced their studies alongside personal and professional commitments.

By welcoming students from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, the online degree programmes have cultivated significant global impact.



**Rika Nakazawa**

**Country:**  
USA

**Course:**  
Sustainable  
Business  
Leadership MSc

Rika Nakazawa completed the online MSc while working as Chief Commercial Innovation Officer at NTT in California. During her studies, she published *Beyond the Black Swan*, a book examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and digital innovation on sustainability practices. The course has given her the academic structure and inspiration to support and expand her research.

“The Leeds programme has been a hallmark in the pursuit of what I anticipate to be a long and enriching journey. We need these anchors of inspiration throughout our life... I’m so pleased that Leeds activated one of those anchors for me.”



**Alaa Bouomar**

**Country:**  
Kuwait

**Course:**  
Artificial  
Intelligence  
MSc

Alaa, originally from Lebanon and now based in Kuwait, graduated from the online programme in Winter 2024. While working in the university sector, she developed a strong interest in data and was encouraged by her employer to pursue further study. The flexibility of the programme allowed her to continue working while exploring her academic interests.

“The AI Masters programme actually helped me propose all the questions I had and get the answers I needed... You get the faculty or academic connection you’re looking for, as well as the friendship or classmate group you’re looking for.”



**Sha's Al Shafari**

**Country:**  
Oman

**Course:**  
Engineering  
Management  
MSc

Sha's Al Shafari used the online MSc in Engineering Management to build on his civil engineering background. The course's flexibility helped him balance work and family life, whilst feeling fully connected to Leeds as an institution. Since he started the course he has progressed to a project engineer role at a major energy firm.

“One of the benefits is that there is a lot of experience there. Some of my fellow students had years of experience in different industries. I had the opportunity to meet people from aviation, telecoms and other industries. It allowed me to get their perspective.”

# 4.7 Driving Impact with Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women*

Now in its seventh year, the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* online programme provides a collection of ten free-to-access business education courses via Coursera.



Delivered by the University's Digital Education teams with academic support from Leeds University Business School, the programme has continued to achieve significant global reach in 2025.

## Supporting small business owners across Africa

Since October 2024, the University has worked in partnership with the Goldman Sachs Foundation and the International Finance Corporation to deliver an enhanced version of the online programme for entrepreneurs in countries where access to business education is limited.

Working with national banks across Africa including Stanbic Bank Kenya, Baobab Madagascar, and Sterling Bank Nigeria, the online programme has been promoted via social media and local in-branch initiatives.

The programme has benefited thousands of small business owners, from coffee farmers to film makers.



“The University of Leeds Digital Education team have ensured an excellent online learning experience for our clients, with well-managed support from enrolment to completion. We continue to receive positive testimonies from participants who have developed their skills and confidence as a result of the online courses and additional programming.”

**Caroline Omanga**

Head of Sales (Women Banking) Stanbic Bank Kenya

# 4.8 Empowering Public Sector Leaders

In 2024, the University partnered with the Civil Service, via the professional services network KPMG, to develop a line management skills programme to be delivered across multiple government departments.



The seven-month programme launched in June 2025 and is now playing a key role in delivering better outcomes for the public through innovative professional education for over 1,000 civil servants.

The first cohort of 200 participants received a blended approach of in-person workshops as well as interactive webinars, self-paced online learning, reflective practice and virtual networking opportunities.

“Developed in partnership with the University of Leeds, the Accredited Pathway supports and equips Senior Civil Service managers with honing their essential skills for effective leadership. Successful participants receive a university-accredited certificate and Chartered Management Institute Level 7 Chartered Manager status – recognition of their expertise and commitment.”

**Gov.UK**

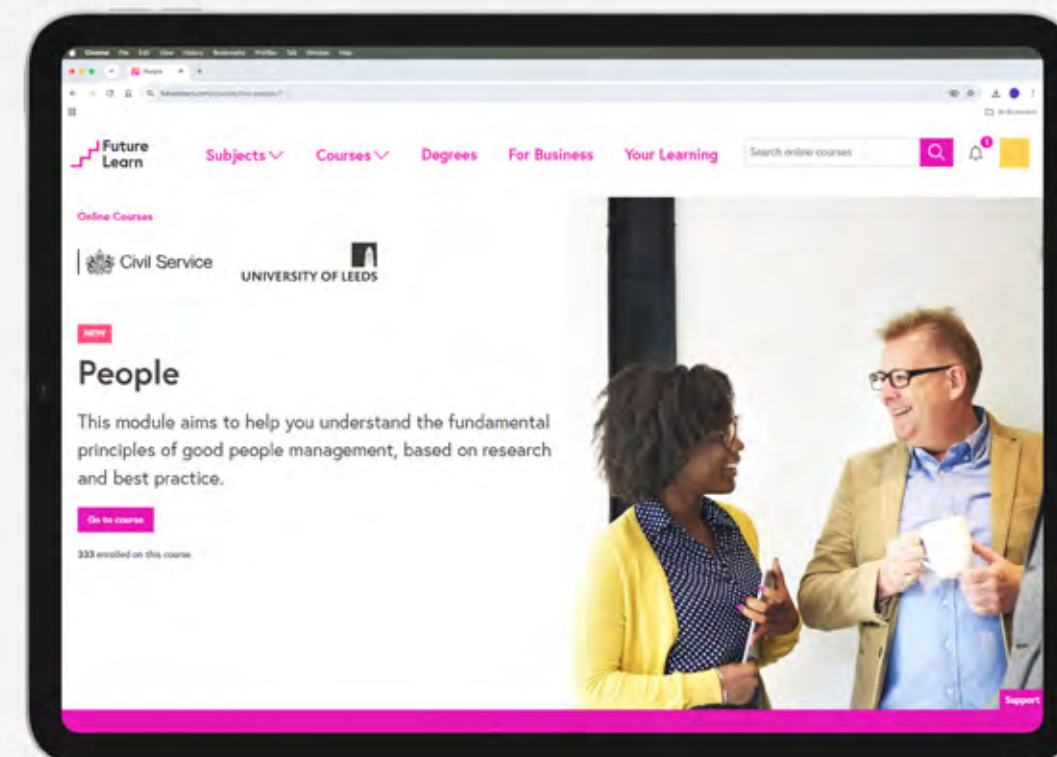
“We have strong links with UK Government organisations and an excellent track record of delivering high-quality professional education courses. We work hard to produce high-standard professional programmes that combine academic rigour with practical application. This programme will equip civil servants with the professional management skills needed in today’s complex public service environment.”

**Professor Julia Bennell**

Executive Dean of Leeds University Business School

**KPMG  
Winter Learning  
Awards 2025**

Winner of  
‘Successful Launch’ award  
Nominated in the  
‘Innovative Learning  
Design’ category



# 4.9 Helping Entry-Level Learners Develop Work-Ready Digital Skills

Since 2023, the [Click Start programme](#) has provided an important route for young people to develop technical and professional skills for the workplace.

Funded by public benefit company Nominet and coordinated by the Institute of Coding, the UK-wide project offers educational programmes for young people from under-represented communities in the UK to gain entry-level skills.

The University of Leeds Click Start programme offers 29 free short courses on FutureLearn, with 16 courses also available on Coursera. Over the past two years, the project has helped over 164,000 individual learners worldwide improve their digital and professional skills.

The Click Start project reached **28,663 learners** from underrepresented groups, exceeding its enrolment KPI target by **14%**:

17% had a disability or debilitating health condition

27% were young carers

27% from households with an income of less than £25,000

41% had parents who didn't go to university

“Together, we’ve achieved a huge milestone: the programme has met its KPIs and, more importantly, given opportunities to thousands of individuals who may not have had them otherwise. This has been a programme like no other, and it’s been a real pleasure to work alongside the University of Leeds in making it a success.”

**Professor Rachid Hourizi**

Director - Institute of Coding



# 4.10 Professional Learning Partnerships

## Future flexible lifelong learning

Through strategic partnerships with industry and public sector organisations, digital learning opportunities are being created to meet the evolving needs of professional workforce at all levels. By building the capacity to deliver engaging, flexible, research-led education at scale, Leeds is actively contributing to the resolution of real-world challenges both nationally and globally.

The University brings together academic expertise and specialist skills in learning design, creating a digital education provision primed to meet professional development needs across a wide range of sectors.

“Growing our professional learning portfolio to meet the needs of a diverse range of lifelong learners is a strategic priority. Building on our existing catalogue of short online courses and full degree programmes, we have a growing pipeline of professional learning projects scoped in collaboration with academic colleagues and the Business Engagement and Enterprise team. We look forward to delivering more accessible and engaging online programmes to upskill and support diverse professional audiences.”

**Megan Parsons**

Head of Partnerships and Engagement





# Digital Education Annual Report

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2024-25