

Digital Education Annual Report

2025-26



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Foreword

Ambition, expertise and impact where it matters

At a time when assumptions about universities are changing, this report demonstrates how digital education is enabling bold transformation in how we understand, teach and connect with learners in a wide range of contexts.

Aligned to our 'One Leeds' strategy, our focus extends well beyond tools and technology. We bring pedagogical expertise, evidence and care to the design of inclusive and engaging learning experiences, while deepening our understanding of how people learn and exploring new ways to support both students and educators.

In the unique environment of online learning, we design intentionally, recognising that each course becomes an enduring educational asset, and that every choice matters. By stewarding the learner journey from first click to graduation, we are committed to rigorous evaluation and sharing effective practice that enhances the student experience across the University.

Working in partnership with academics, faculty teams and professional services colleagues, we are crafting rich digital education opportunities that make an impact where it matters, both in the classroom and beyond.

As higher education evolves, leadership across our institution continues to fuel a culture of partnership, creativity and continuous improvement, helping us respond, evolve and grow in a rapidly changing environment.

Dr Margaret Korosec

Director of Digital Education and Learning Innovation



Executive summary

Reflecting on activity throughout 2025-26, it is inspiring to see how digital education has championed a holistic approach to accessible and inclusive learning whilst supporting key priorities for Student Education and Experience at Leeds.

Over the past year, the University has moved from reviewing and refreshing its ten-year strategy into implementation through 'One Leeds'. Digital education is contributing directly to that work, supporting our institutional ambitions for better student experiences, stronger digital capability and the responsible use of emerging technologies.

The human-centred approaches highlighted throughout this report demonstrate how these ambitions are beginning to translate into practical improvements for students, staff and lifelong learners.

Working closely with faculties to promote thoughtful learning design has helped to embed opportunities for active learning that we know have a positive impact on student engagement, understanding and sense of belonging.

Continuous improvements to the Virtual Learning Environment and other core tools have simplified processes, helping to reduce confusion and enable students to learn and teachers to teach.

Equally important has been the provision of skills support for staff. The work that has been done to enhance our capabilities and set clear expectations for digital accessibility and responsible use of Gen AI has laid the groundwork for all colleagues to feel more confident in their roles.

HELIX's frictionless access to technology, equipment and space is supported by step-by-step guidance and inspirational showcases of effective use in teaching, independent learning and assessment.

Looking ahead, the rollout of the new multimedia management platform Panopto has put in motion a transformation of the way we use digital media in learning.

Alongside this, development pathways for teaching staff to explore digital education enhancement have been finetuned to align with both faculty priorities and institutional ambitions.

We look forward to furthering these successes in 2026-27, and we are grateful to the teams who made them possible.



Professor Wendy Robinson

Pro Vice-Chancellor
Student Education and Experience



Sarah Mulholland

Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Student Education and Experience

Recent awards

Sector awards



Winner: Blackboard Exemplary Course Awards 2026

‘Natural Hazards; Human Disasters’
(School of Geography)

Liam Taylor and Edward Wilson-Stephens

‘Doing Disability Research’ (Centre for Disability Studies)

Dr Andrea Hollomotz, Professor Hannah Morgan and Emma Dibb



Winner: Educate North Awards 2026

Category: Innovation Award

NewsdayVR project (School of Media and Communication)

Winner: HEIST Awards 2025

Category: Best Student or Alumni Engagement Initiative

Show Up for Leeds campaign video



Winner: KPMG Winter Learning Awards 2025

Category: Successful Launch

Civil Service Learning Programme team

Finalist: THE awards 2025

Category: Innovation

HELIX

Shortlisted: MEDEA Awards 2025

Newsday VR project

University Partnership Awards 2026

These awards recognise the efforts of Digital Education colleagues working in collaboration with academic teams and professional services to design high-quality learning experiences.

Cross-institutional awards

Category: Student Education and Experience

Special commendation: HELIX team

Category: Community Impact and Innovation

‘Essential Skills for Volunteers’ project team

Faculty awards

Faculty of Environment

Community Impact: Faculty of Environment Digital Education Enhancement Team

Faculty of Business

Technical Staff Member of the Year: Frances Noble (Learning Technologist)



University Teaching Awards 2026

Category: Early-Stage Collaborative Excellence

Winner: LEGO Serious Play team

Winner: The SOUL Modules team

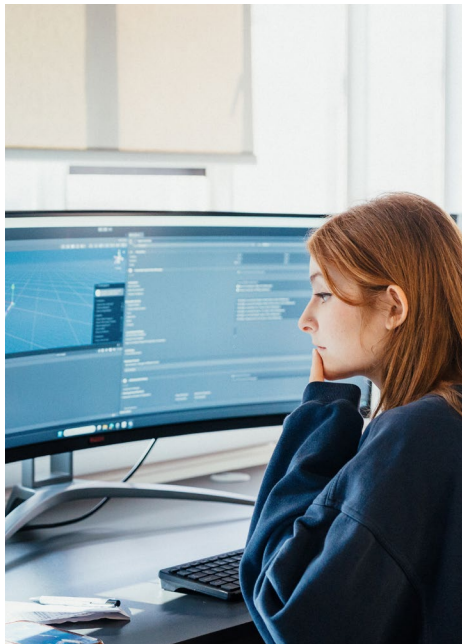
Digital Education at Leeds

Within the University and beyond, we are a strategic partner for leading learning innovation, learning design and the digital education ecosystem across campus education, online learning, professional learning and flexible provision.



Pedagogically-led design:

- enhancing teaching in faculties and schools through learning design, advice and consultancy
- supporting institutional capability and digital skills development
- championing inclusive and accessible learning through student-centred approaches.



Learning innovation:

- supporting our staff and students to explore the benefits of emerging technologies and multimedia for learning
- enabling frictionless access to equipment and spaces with expert guidance on hand
- creating high-quality learning assets including video, graphics and animation.



Flexible, online and lifelong learning provision:

- establishing strategic partnerships to develop impactful, industry-relevant programmes
- improving the learning experience for all through engagement and insight across the learning journey
- developing new educational models that help people learn across a range of different course types.



Digital education ecosystem:

- leading institutional governance and management of digital learning systems
- building strong communities of practice through events and communications
- creating opportunities for student partnership, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Our vision...

All our learners engage with accessible and inclusive learning experiences, underpinned by innovative and intentional digital pedagogies and technologies.

Creating a student-centred university

We put students at the heart of everything we do, designing experiences that help them feel supported, connected and empowered throughout their time at Leeds. From enabling a smooth transition into study to enhancing engagement and celebrating achievement, we focus on creating experiences that respond to student needs and support positive outcomes.



79% (+11% from 2024/25)
Student rating of support for learning effectively using technology.

150
Graduates from online programmes attended special degree celebrations on campus.

7
Interactive resources created for students focusing on wellbeing, safety and academic success.

87% (+2% from 2024/25)
Overall student satisfaction rating for the quality of digital learning on course.

600
Leeds graduates celebrated their graduation in a live online ceremony.

21
Student ambassadors and innovation partners recruited to promote student voices in digital education.

84%
Of online Masters students found their programme useful for their professional development.

The digital student experience continues to improve

Conducted over a three-week period in October, the 2025 Jisc Digital Experience survey was completed by over **3,500 students** at Leeds, marking an +80% increase in responses from the survey in 2023.

Key indicators of overall student satisfaction with the quality of digital learning at Leeds increased by +2%, with support to learn effectively using technology increasing by +11%.

87%

+2%

Overall quality of digital learning on course

79%

+11%

Support to learn effectively using technology

89%

+2%

Overall quality of the digital learning environment

Source: 2025 Jisc Digital Experience survey



Digital resources for our community



Five courses created to support University-wide culture and values:

- 'Using GenAI at Leeds'
- 'Disability and Inclusion' (Equality and Inclusion Unit)
- 'Understanding Competence Standards' (Disability Advisory Team)
- 'Introduction to Sustainability' (Sustainability Service).

Launching September 2026:

- 'Effective AI Prompting'.

Seven courses designed to improve student wellbeing, safety and academic success:

- 'Escape the Scam' virtual escape room for fraud awareness
- 'Looking After your Wellbeing at University' (Student Support)
- 'Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Misconduct' (Student Support)
- 'Foundations of Financial Wellbeing' (Student Success)
- 'Leeds Futures – Medicine' (Educational Engagement)
- 'Leeds Futures – Dentistry' (Educational Engagement)
- 'Access to Leeds' (Educational Engagement).

Four training courses created for staff in student-facing roles to meet regulatory requirements and good practice recommendations:

- 'Dealing with disclosures' (Harassment and Misconduct team)
- 'Harassment and Sexual Misconduct' (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)
- 'West Yorkshire Practice Educator and Assessor Preparation Programme' (Faculty of Medicine and Health)
- 'Human Tissue Storage Compliance' (Leeds Institute of Medical Research).

Working with students as partners

Student Ambassadors for Digital Education

In 2025-26, ambassadors contributed more than **500 hours on projects**:

- multimode classroom support for hybrid lectures
- user testing of tools, resources and modules
- content creation, communications and campaigns
- student voice representation at meetings, conferences and events.



“ My role allowed me to stand at the forefront of navigating new education technologies. I feel accomplished having contributed to the development of digital learning tools and to enhance the learning experience for future students. Participating in focus groups and user-testing made me think deeply about existing systems and platforms and how they assist our learning. ”

Janis Law – Student Ambassador,
BA Digital Media

Co-creating assessment rubric with online MSc students

For the team behind the online MSc Data Science (Statistics), what began as consultation on a project’s assessment rubric via surveys and facilitated discussions evolved into a meaningful collaboration where students had the opportunity to shape their own curriculum.

This project demonstrated how collaborative design can enhance both quality and experience in an online setting. During the consultation, students shared that the process strengthened their motivation, sense of ownership and connection to the programme.

“ The impact of this is more than just a list of improvements to a specific course as it has sparked ongoing dialogue and interactions that have shifted from designing for students to designing with them and made my work feel more meaningful. ”

Dr Jenny Sexton – Module Lead



Delivering academic excellence

Digital education enhances the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback by using tools and approaches that create more effective and inclusive educational experiences. This enables academics to move beyond traditional lecture-based delivery and adopt a wider range of pedagogical approaches supported by strong digital capabilities.



654

Attendees at in-faculty development sessions for teaching staff on themes including AI, digital productivity and media literacy.

48

Colleagues have received training on the LEGO Serious Play methodology for strategy development, curriculum design and organisational change.

278

Early adopters participating in pilot activity for the University's new multimedia management platform, with:

22

introductory sessions hosted on campus and online.

190

Colleagues attended a Media Enhanced Learning conference, with:

94% of survey respondents gaining new ideas.

267

Colleagues attended:

9

Digital education events exploring key themes and priorities for Online Learning.

4

Online training courses for staff in student-facing roles to meet regulatory requirements and good practice recommendations.

292

Completions of the 'Introduction to Accessible Teaching, Learning and Work' staff training course.

1

New Gen AI prompting skills course developed for staff and students.

Setting expectations for digital accessibility



Published in July 2026, the University's guidance for Digital Accessibility Minimum Expectations (DAME) sets out what students should be able to rely on in all digital teaching, learning and assessment spaces.

The minimum expectations are grounded in the Leeds Curriculum Framework and our Baseline Standards for Inclusive Learning and Teaching.

Across six categories, the expectations reflect a commitment to anticipating and removing barriers through inclusive design in key areas:

- digital learning materials
- recorded and live teaching
- digital assessments and exams
- digital platforms and tools
- communication and engagement
- student support and awareness.

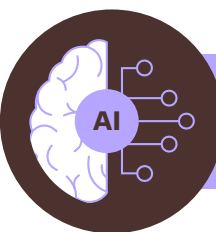
[View the Digital Accessibility guidance on the staff intranet.](#)

“ We know that meaningful change happens when staff are supported with practical tools, guidance and opportunities to develop their practice. ”

Jenny Brady – Inclusive Learning and Teaching Manager

Development pathways for educators

In 2025-26, teaching staff at Leeds had access to an extensive programme of digital education development opportunities, which supported approximately 10% of the academic population to build confidence in six key areas:

 Using Generative AI

 Learning Design in Minerva

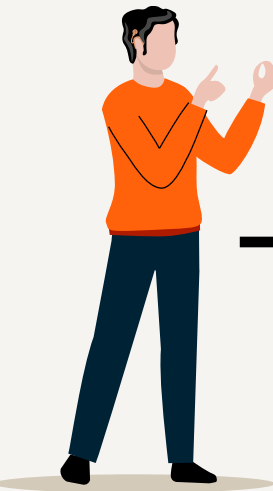
 Digital Accessibility and Inclusion

 Digital Assessment and Feedback

 Media Enhanced Learning

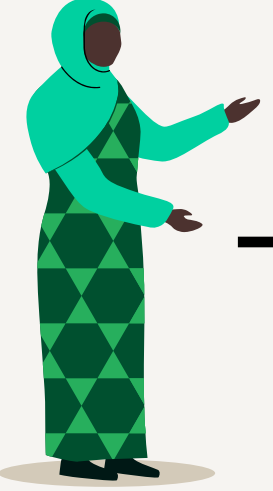
 Student Engagement and Belonging

A three-tier approach is in development to help educators identify opportunities to enhance their practice with support from faculty-aligned digital education teams.



Getting started

Build a solid base of digital education knowledge and gain confidence in digital teaching environments.



Developing your practice

Workshops to help you test out new ideas and make practical changes to modules and programmes and enhance student experience.

We can provide:

Online courses | Videos | Podcasts | Templates | Blogs and guides



Transforming your teaching

Transform your practice as an educator through bespoke training to address specific challenges in your context.

Bespoke consultancy includes:

Programme support | Reviews | Design sprints | Bespoke interventions

Accelerating our innovation journey

Digital education offers a platform for experimentation, collaboration and institutional innovation, enabling us to respond to changing learner expectations and emerging technologies while creating more engaging and scalable learning experiences.

1,056 Students using Virtual Reality in the curriculum.

62 Teaching staff attended a 'Getting started with VR in teaching' workshop.

6 Fully online degree programmes in delivery.

7 XR in education showcase events reaching:
120 staff and students.

1 'Design Innovation' SOUL module developed for HELIX.

320 Teaching spaces upgraded across campus with Panopto lecture-capture technology.



Exploring innovation in teaching

Where student education meets digital transformation

For educators who are keen to explore the use of immersive technology in teaching, HELIX offers easy access to equipment, advice and inspiring communities of practice.

And for students, frictionless access means a space which welcomes students 24/7, allowing them to prototype, experiment and learn at the times they need it the most.

Combining this open approach with the pedagogical expertise on hand from learning technologists in faculty-based Digital Education Enhancement teams, a series of recent XR initiatives have helped to:

- explore the pedagogic value of XR through practical applications
- support meaningful adoption of innovative teaching approaches
- provide pathways for experimentation and implementation
- build a sustainable community of practice across faculties and services
- celebrate impact through evaluation and case studies
- contribute to wider strategic priorities including Curriculum Redefined
- understand XR usage and inform future investment.

Community building and knowledge sharing

We capture and share good practice in digital education through networks, events, showcases and curated resources to make effective and innovative approaches easier to adopt.

HELIX

A physical space to explore innovation:

- technology
- resources
- VR
- space
- support
- multimedia.



HELIX

Digital Education Network

A peer community to connect, share and learn:

- meetings
- events
- presentations
- forums
- Q&A
- demonstrations.



DEN
Digital Education Network

Media Enhanced Learning

Preparing for Panopto

Prior to launching Panopto as the institutional platform for Media Enhanced Learning in September 2026, an ‘early adopters’ initiative saw 300 colleagues sign up for early access to the platform and training sessions to explore key functionality.

“Moving to Panopto is not just a technical upgrade. It is part of a wider effort to reduce unnecessary complexity for colleagues, create a more consistent and inclusive student experience, and make it easier to design high-quality digital learning activities at scale.”

Charlotte Haigh – Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Educational Enhancement and Student Experience



Engaging early adopters

Staff and students influenced platform configuration, tested functionality, identified guidance and staff development needs, and created authentic examples of Media Enhanced Learning in action.

More than 90% subsequently shared their experiences through departmental meetings or informal peer networks, extending the programme’s reach:

- 320 lecture capture-enabled teaching spaces upgraded with Panopto recorders
- 11 ‘Lunch and Explore’ sessions for faculties and early adopters
- 6 online Panopto drop-in sessions
- 1,167 Panopto submissions using Blackboard assignment
- 228,501 total hours stored (including migrated content).

“Early adopters created approximately 3,000 recordings, which is more than were typically produced across an entire academic year using our legacy platform. Unlike automatically generated lecture recordings, these were colleagues actively choosing to enhance their teaching through flipped learning, video assessment, richer feedback, module introductions and student-generated content.”

Farzana Latif – Head of Digital Education Systems

DENFest 2026

In July 2026, over 170 colleagues from across the University attended DENFest, a two-day conference focused on Media Enhanced Learning, hosted by the Digital Education Network.

Guest speakers

- Dr Nicholas Worsfold from Brunel University of London discussed what it really means to put students at the centre of learning design.
- Professor Emily Nordmann from the University of Glasgow shared the latest lecture capture research to explore why live lectures with recordings remain vital.

Attendees also explored digital approaches to:

- active learning
- e-portfolios
- assessment and feedback
- digital accessibility.



“ My head is brimming with ideas and inspiration from Day 1! ”

DENFest attendee



Interactive workshops

The agenda included 15 interactive sessions featuring presenters from across the University, plus representatives from Panopto, PebblePad, Explorance and Blackboard.



Holistic online student journeys

For those who choose to study an online Masters programme with the University of Leeds, we remain focused on empowering learners to make the choices that are right for them.

Over the past year, cross-institutional teams have worked collaboratively to enhance the student experience across different stages of the online learning journey:

- Dedicated support teams have expanded capability and capacity to provide the right support at the right time, helping students find and apply for courses and navigate their study journey.
- A new online application management platform has enabled more inclusive and efficient admissions processes that are particularly beneficial for mature professional entry applicants and students with disabilities.

Online student feedback surveys:



Connecting study with professional relevance:

86% said:

“I feel able to apply my learning in a professional context.”



Academic support on programmes:

87% said:

“The academic team supported my learning on this module.”



Scaffolded learning and academic facilitation:

91% said:

“My ability to apply my knowledge of this subject has improved.”

Industry-aligned programmes

“ The course content helped me fill in gaps in my professional knowledge. I got a new role as a product manager. During the interview for it, I was able to draw upon what I had learned and that really helped me get the position. ”

Anju Rajan – MSc Engineering Management, 2025

Pathways to Success

The refreshed ‘Pathways to Success’ induction course has been redesigned with a focus on academic and digital integrity, study skills and wellbeing to build confidence from day one.

“ Since its launch with our first online programme, Pathways to Success has been a staple of our students’ online experience. This timely refresh showcases the University’s academic and student support strengths, while building upon the experiences of our students and the staff teaching the module. ”

Dr Adam Richardson – Digital Education Manager (Student Education)

Civic engagement done digitally

Two training resources co-created with local organisations to support community engagement in Leeds, publicly available nationwide and internationally:

Safer Parks for Women and Girls (School of Law)

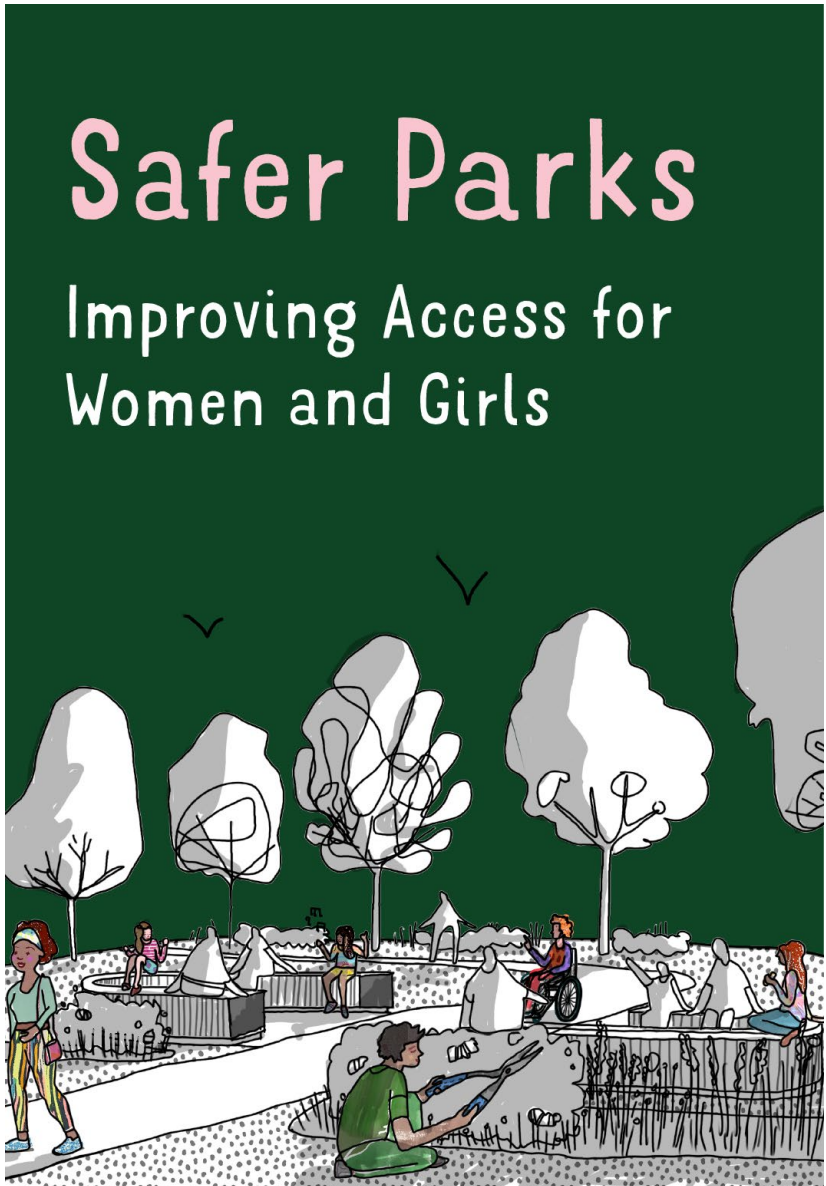
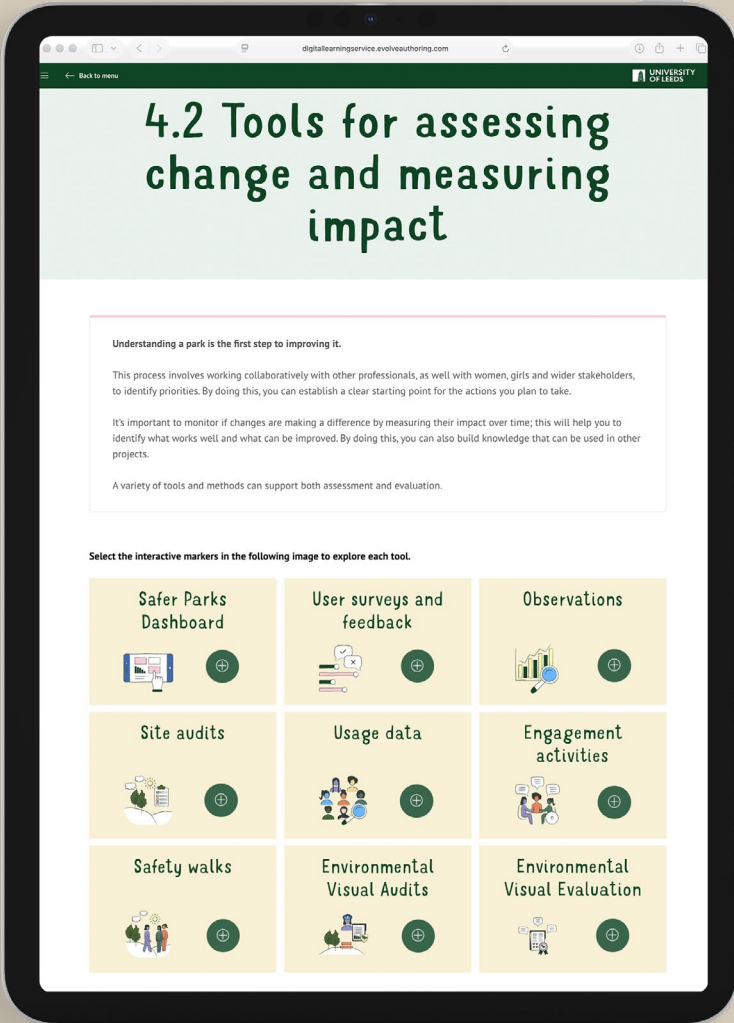
“ This course applies University of Leeds research effectively in an accessible online resource and will be used to train people working in public space design and management to increase safety in West Yorkshire and beyond. ”

Dr Anna Barker – Associate Professor in Criminal Justice and Criminology

Essential Skills for Volunteers (Lifelong Learning Centre)

“ It’s a fantastic example of universities, cities and the community coming together to develop something for the people in their area. ”

Louise Banahene – Director of Student Success and Educational Engagement at the University



Building cross-institutional capability for lifelong learning

Looking ahead to 2026-27, online learning will bring together supporting strategies from across the University to coordinate our CDP offer

NEW professional learning platform pilot

A new offering for professionals looking to upskill and apply their learning directly within their current roles for non-credit bearing short courses.

Institutional infrastructure

Coordination to deliver flexible, credit-bearing academic short courses complementing our full degree programmes with short, focused professional learning options.

Developing industry partnerships

Proactively anticipating changing markets and widening access to new audiences.



Working with the wider sector

ICDE

International Council for
Open and Distance Education



RiDE

Research in Distance
Education



ALT

Association for
Learning Technology



Jisc

Joint Information
Systems Committee



UCISA

Universities and Colleges
Information Systems Association



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