

## **Work Based Learning Digital Technology Strategy Guidance and Template** **Including teaching/learning and development and digital skills strategy**

'Digital technology can be the tool to help you achieve your objective, its use is not the objective'

This document aims to provide guidance for a coherent approach to planning a Digital and Technical Strategy for work-based learning. It does not attempt to define your strategy as this should be appropriate to the specific needs, size and culture of your organisation.

The Digital Technology Strategy will be part of your organisation's business strategy and may feed into other strategic plans, such as the blended learning/training, content creation and staff development strategies. It provides the opportunity for business growth and developing a global organisation.

Your strategy must be a living document which defines your organisation's objectives for success through the use of digital (anything that can be viewed or accessed by electronic equipment) technology (computers, devices, robotics) and how you are going to achieve those objectives. It should include where the organisation is now, relating to the use of digital technology, as well as where you want to be in the future, and the roles and responsibilities relating to agreed objectives. Embedded within the strategy should be consideration to accessibility, management information, quality assurance, support and your legal responsibilities. Having set objectives within the strategy an action plan or schedule of activities should be put in place with timescales. Budgets should also be prepared identifying expenditures arising from the implementation of the strategy over the planning period.

### a) Organisation Background

### b) The Future

#### **1) Why do you need a digital strategy?**

In this section you are really saying why you need a digital strategy so that all your stakeholders understand the need for it. The research required will also enable you to define the organisation's vision and strategy. Research should include:

- Your sector's use of digital technologies; current trends and future predicted digital transformations
- Your stakeholder personas and how they are using digital technology e.g. how staff/learners are using digital technology in their private lives and at work
- How your competitors and wider society are using digital technology
- How digital technology is impacting environmental factors

How the use of digital technology will support the sustainability of the organisation.

Answers to the above will better enable you to understand what success should look like for your organisation. It will inform your vision for the future and how you will get from where you are now to where you want to be.

## c) Overview of Current Use of Digital Technologies

### d) Vision and Strategic Planning

#### 1) **What is your vision for development of digital technologies within your organisation?**

The vision statement defines where the organisation would like to be in the future. The vision should articulate how digital technologies will contribute to the organisation's provision. All staff should be involved in defining a clear vision and then the organisation should ensure that the vision is owned by all staff

#### 2) **How will you communicate the vision and strategy across the organisation?**

The vision and strategy should be shared across the whole organisation so that all stakeholders are aware of how digital technologies will contribute to the organisation's provision. This could be implemented through staff meetings, publicity material, a website, newsletters, focus groups, email and digital technology Champions communicating and promoting the vision.

#### 3) **How will your digital technology strategy relate to other strategic plans?**

The digital technology strategy should link with the annual cycle of strategic management activity and the other organisational strategies, for example: Development Plan, Blended Learning Strategy, Content Creation Strategy, Staff Development Strategy and Digital Marketing and Communication Strategy

#### 4) **How will you manage your digital technology strategy?**

There should be a defined framework or procedure for the management of the digital technology strategy which is lead at senior management level and includes representation from across the organisation. An example of this would be digital technologies Steering Group, made up of managers from all departments across the organisation, including administration and finance, which is chaired by a member of the Senior Management Team. The role of the Steering Group is to manage, review, monitor and support the progress of the digital technologies strategy, including identifying courses of action to be implemented and resource requirements, monitoring the delivery of digital technologies across departments, cascading good practice, ensuring all staff are aware of developments in digital technologies, reviewing developments, advising on staff training requirements and coordinating applications for available funding

#### 5) **How will you evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the digital technology strategy?**

A procedure for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the digital technology strategy should be put in place. The use of Digital technologies should be incorporated into the organisation's quality assurance procedures e.g. staff, learner, customer satisfaction surveys, training session evaluations, quality assurance sampling, team meetings and staff appraisal etc.

#### 6) **Identify local, regional and national strategic priorities; how might they inform your digital technology strategy?**

Full consideration should be given to local, regional and national strategic priorities, which includes a digital strategy from an inspectorate or auditing body, sector institutes, local authorities, funding bodies etc.

### e) Online Presence

Your Digital Marketing Strategy will define the details of your online presence, however here are a few top-level points to consider in your digital strategy.

#### 1) **How will people find you?**

A website is your shop window to the world, so make sure that it is accessible to everyone and therefore a mobile responsive site with quick

loading times. Social media is also a shop window, but ensure that your research has informed which social media channels attract your customers. Make sure you have the staff resources to maintain a consistent approach to social media activities.

## 2) **How will people communicate with you online?**

Your research should also inform your existing and potential customers preferred method for communication. Consider all existing options for communication including apps such as Whatsapp, which now has a business option, and also new technologies, but be careful not to choose an option because it's new and exciting. Ensure that your objective of providing your customers with excellent communication and customer service is the objective. If artificial intelligence tools make your work easier, but your customers don't want to engage with them then you will have a problem.

## f) Business Efficiencies

### 1) **How can business processes be improved through the use of digital technology?**

There is no doubt that digital technology can contribute to decreasing overheads, becoming more efficient and effective, and more environmentally friendly and sustainable, however it's important to choose the right digital technology to achieve these objectives. Examples are:

- Using cloud technology to reduce in-house infrastructure, automate backup and synchronise data
- Collating and processing data from different sources more quickly providing more comprehensive information as and when required.
- Providing mobile workers with mobile digital technology to access company data on the road
- Automation of manual tasks
- Sharing of online information and reduction of printing
- Mobile apps to enter standard form data, e.g. expenses, sales orders
- Online booking systems e.g. for annual leave, appointments
- Online appraisals and training plans

## g) Teaching/Learning and Development

### 1) **How are digital technologies currently used in teaching or learning and development? What contribution does it make?**

### 2) **How can you realise the potential of digital technology to personalise learning?**

Staff/learners need to be able to access learning and information in different ways, principally Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic (movement). This allows all learners, no matter what their preferred style, the opportunity to engage with the training.

The use of digital technology can enable the delivery of learning to achieve this, for example:

- Visual – images, animation, virtual reality, video, charts, graphs, screen captures
- Auditory – podcasts, video, VOIP chat and webinars e.g. Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and voice over
- Kinaesthetic – general computer usage, software games and quizzes, interactive white boards, mobile learning.

Everyone is responsible for making learning accessible to all. Assistive technology, mobile learning and delivering learning materials on-line can offer accessibility benefits and can also create new opportunities for learners with support needs. When considering appropriate systems it is most effective to add value to learners in different ways with a repertoire of tools and techniques, rather than disregarding resources because all learners cannot access them equally.

Staff should be aware of relevant legislation and techniques required to ensure that resources, presentations and support are accessible to all learners

Use branching scenarios in online courses which enables the learner to take the most appropriate path through the course for their level of understanding

3) **How can you realise the potential of digital technology to offer flexible learning?**

Consider how to enable learners to access learning at a time and place that suits them, using devices that are available to them. How will you offer provide choices about where, when and how learning occurs? This might be the adoption of a fully mobile responsive learning management system to make learning resources available 24/7 on any device, including smartphone.

4) **What model of training will you adopt?**

Different models of delivery should be evaluated to identify the most appropriate for the provision being delivered e.g. totally virtual or blended delivery.

5) **How is your delivery model reflected in training plans?**

Although training plans are not mandated by inspectorate, such as Ofsted, organisations that are inspected or audited do require evidence of plans that show how training is delivered and how it meets any required standards or criteria. (eLearning Marketplace has produced a series of training plan templates that are available on request).

6) **What training resources do you already have that can be appropriately repurposed for online delivery?**

Many training resources that have been used for face to face delivery, such as presentations, handouts etc, are not appropriate to deliver to learners online without some repurposing. The format of online resources must offer the same level of detail as is delivered face to face but in an engaging way to keep the attention of the learner. Instructional design of online learning is critical to ensure the success of learner outcomes.

7) **Will you purchase off the shelf online training or create all or some of the required content?**

Time is money and the instructional design, creation and publishing of professionally created online courses is a very costly task due to the time and skills required. A survey of the e-learning publishing industry found that a base price for professionally created online courses is £10k per hour of learning. With this in mind you may decide to purchase off the shelf online training for the core elements of knowledge requirements of your training programme and compliment this with your own content that sets the context of the training. There are also thousands of free digital tools for creating online learning content, but their use will depend on your chosen method of delivery and the skills of your training staff.

8) **How will you ensure that your online learning content meets legislative requirements e.g. Equality Act, Special Educational Needs, GDPR, Safeguarding and Disability Act and Copyright, Designs and Patents Act?**

Make clear in your strategy you answer to this question. There are plenty of online resources to guide you in making sure that you meet compliance requirements. With regard to safeguarding consider management of chat rooms, forums, online etiquette and protocols, private messaging, location of group online sessions etc.

9) **How will you ensure that online content meets the organisations standards for brand, structure, navigation, level, assessment, support etc?**

To ensure the standardisation and consistency of training resources across an organisation it is best to create a blue print for course design that everyone must comply with.

10) **How is digital technology used to communicate with, and support staff and learners?**

Using electronic methods to communicate with colleagues, learners and other stakeholders can mean more productive and timely interactions.

Technologies can bring recognition that learning and working on projects etc, is a social process in which all staff and learners can collaborate, both by helping each other and working together on common goals. Accessible communication is key to supporting staff and learners in their work and training.

11) **How will you ensure that staff/learners have the required digital skills to engage with the technologies implemented by the organisation?**

It is absolutely critical that you ensure that everyone has the necessary digital skills to utilise the required digital technology and access training. Many staff/learners have developed the skills required to make the most of electronic tools e.g. smartphones, apps, VOIP software in their everyday lives but not always to use digital technology in a work or training setting. As skill levels will vary it is important to assess the digital skill levels of staff/learners as they join your organisation and training requirements identified. Learning objectives should be recorded, actioned and monitored to ensure no person is disadvantaged due to their digital skills.

12) **How is digital technology used to set targets and record progress and achievement?**

**How can digital technology help your staff/learners to set, record and review targets?**

**How can digital technology assist you in obtaining accurate and detailed information on staff/learner progress and achievement, as and when you need it, in a form that meets your needs?**

It is important that staff/learners are engaged in the process of planning their own learning and recognising and recording their progress and achievements. The use of digital technologies can enable those overseeing learning and staff/learners to feed into the on-going process of setting targets and recording progress and achievement. Learning management systems and other types of management information systems can produce comprehensive reports on information gathered from every aspect of engagement with staff/learners and their managers.

h) Digital Skills

Staff need more than just digital skills to feel confident working with the wide range of digital technologies available today. They should be given support to develop confidence and competence in their ability to identify and apply quality information, using a variety of technologies, to inform and add value to their working lives and to the lives of those they teach or manage.

1) **What systems are in place to review staff needs and skills in the use of digital technologies?**

Identifying the skill level of staff is fundamental to the overall development needs within a digital technology strategy. Effective use of self assessment and training needs analysis tools can determine the nature and extent of the need.

All staff, whether full or part time, office based or peripatetic, must be part of any digital technology staff development strategy. Staff development should include solutions to ensure that staff become competent and confident in skills to facilitate and use, for example:

- Cloud document storage
- File sharing
- Online collaboration tools
- Learning management system
- Install and use mobile apps
- Content creation tools and applications
- Work productivity applications
- Video conferencing tools

For teaching or learning and development staff skills might include for example:

- Repurposing training materials for online use
- Creating online courses
- Tracking and supporting online learners
- Designing and delivering online live training sessions

2) **What digital technology staff development activities are you planning towards the achievement of your digital technology strategic objectives?**

3) **How do you plan to address staff digital technology development needs on a regular basis?**

A comprehensive and ongoing programme of training, based upon a staff digital technology skills audit, forms part of professional and personal development. Implementation will require a fresh approach in which digital technologies become a fundamental feature of all staff development policies. Digital technologies should be used in a variety of innovative ways to deliver staff development programmes e.g. online courses delivered via a learning management system, live webinar training sessions, social learning via online forums or organisation intranet.

4) **How do you make use of digital technology champions/enthusiasts?**

**How will you co-ordinate and integrate the work of digital technology champions/enthusiasts into a staff development programme and ensure that all staff have access to these individuals?**

**Where can your staff access support, advice and guidance on digital technologies?**

The delivery of digital technologies may provide an opportunity to involve staff from a number of departments/teams, at both senior and practitioner level, who have the knowledge, skills and subject interest to support the digital skill development of others. These individuals are often referred to as digital technology Champions. Developing an integrated delivery team has the potential to enhance collaboration across departments/teams, improve the content and relevance of the material and, in avoiding duplication of effort, maximise existing resources and expertise.

External organisations can also offer staff digital technology training, advice and guidance.

i) **Digital Technology Infrastructure**

Digital infrastructure represents the physical assets required to operate technologies. For digital transformation to be successful it is critical that the appropriate infrastructure is in place. The biggest influences today are cloud computing, connected devices, analytics and mobility.

1) **What is the current status of connectivity in your organisation?**

2) **What infrastructure needs to be in place to enable the meeting of your digital strategy objectives?**

Consider things such as wifi network, cloud storage, SAAS applications (software as a service e.g. subscription to cloud based software), PCs, laptops and mobile devices, learning management system, Customer Relationship Management software etc.

3) **What development or purchasing is required to enable the organisation's digital technology vision?**

4) **How will you ensure that all stakeholders have the necessary access to online content at required times and places to perform their roles?**

5) **How will you overcome the problem of staff/learners not having suitable internet connectivity when required?**

Will you need to supply mobile phones or data dongles to enable tablet or laptop connectivity?

6) **What security do you have in place to ensure that your digital infrastructure is not compromised?**

7) **What procedures do you have in place for data backup?**

8) **What procedures do you have in place for maintaining the safety of confidential information on mobile devices?**

- 9) **Do you require a BYOD policy (Bring Your Own Device) for staff/learners?**
- 10) **What procedures do you have in place for disaster recovery?**

j) **Technical Support and Security**

The level of technical support available is a determining factor in the success of your digital strategy. If support is focused on the commercial needs of the business, rather than the needs of the staff/learners aspects of the organisation can suffer or become very frustrated; both need to be encompassed. The person or persons responsible for technical support should ensure that processes are in place that enable staff/learners and other required stakeholders to access support where and when it is needed. Senior Management should ensure that the provision of technical support is adequately resourced, and is able to respond to the changing needs of individuals, as well as the business needs of the organisation.

- 1) **What technical support is currently available to staff, (internal function or an outsourced service)?**
- 2) **How do you plan to ensure that technical support will meet the needs of staff/learners?**
- 3) **Who has ownership, control and responsibility for maintenance of all aspects of your digital technologies provision?**

k) **Action plan and Budget for a Digital Technology Strategy**

- 1) **How do/will you finance your digital technology strategy objectives?**
- 2) **How will you ensure that appropriate finance enables sustainability of the outcomes of your digital technology strategy objectives?**
- 3) **For each activity in the Action Plan (see below) you will need to estimate an associated cost**

Senior management should be aware that funding for Digital technologies should be an integral part of the organisation’s budgetary processes. Define the budget required to meet the objectives of the digital technology strategy over the next three years, with an emphasis on prioritising expenditure over the first year. Analyse the intended investment required and the cost benefit, as many examples of the use of digital technology can bring long term cost benefits. Identify any existing money available and consider the sustainability of this.

<b>Action Plan</b>						
<b>Strategic Objective Ref</b>	<b>Key Activity/Objective</b>	<b>Key Staff/ Job Role</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Progress Monitoring</b>	<b>Success Indicator</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
cross ref. to strategy objectives	Objectives identified in the digital technology strategy	Who will be responsible for implementing the objective?	Date when you intend that the objective will be fully implemented	What processes will you put in place to monitor progress and when will it occur?	How will you know when the objective has been successfully achieved?	Date objective has been successfully implemented

**For Education Providers – see next page**

a) Formative/Interim and Summative Assessment and Quality Assurance

The use of digital technology is now a recognised and accepted method for recording learning objectives, delivery of training, progress monitoring, evidencing of learning, management reporting and internal and external quality assurance. A large variety of digital technologies are available to meet your objectives in relation to all these aspects of your provision. Your choice is down to which enable you to best meet your objectives.

- 1) **What digital technology is currently used to evidence learning?**
- 2) **How can the use of digital technology enhance evidence collection and interim assessment?**
- 3) **How can interim assessment procedures become more efficient?**
- 4) **How can the use of digital technology help enhance learner feedback?**
- 5) **How can the use of digital technology help in learner tracking?**
- 6) **What programme/occupational areas will be affected by changes to assessment procedures?**
- 7) **What organisational policies and procedures will be affected by changes to assessment practices?**
- 8) **How is digital technology used in internal quality assurance practices?**
- 9) **How can you use digital technology to plan and manage internal quality assurance?**
- 10) **What programme/occupational areas will be affected by changes to internal quality assurance procedures?**
- 11) **What organisational policies and procedures will be affected by changes to internal quality assurance practices?**
- 12) **What digital technology solutions are used by your end point assessment organisation?**
- 13) **How will you develop your learners' digital skills to confidently approach end point assessment when digital technology is used?**

It is important that your learners are well prepared for end point assessment and this might include the use of a range of digital technologies e.g. webinar or online communication service for virtual observations, video to record role play, web-conferencing service for virtual professional discussions, reflective e-portfolios for an evidence showcase.