Academy Forum 4: Digital Capabilities (Part 1)

# Session Details

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UKPSF Mapping: A1, A2, A3, A4, K3, K4

During this Academy Forum (Part 2 will follow in semester 2), participants will be provided with an insight into the work of the Digital Capabilities Team and the different resources available to support the development of students’ digital capabilities.

Staff will have an opportunity to share the different practices they currently have to support their own students to feel confident and capable in using various digital technologies, in addition to the challenges this may entail and approaches to overcoming these. We will also discuss and reflect on the use of key resources which are available to support students to assess and develop their digital capabilities, the [Jisc Digital Discovery Tool](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/discovery-tool/) and [LinkedIn Learning](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/linkedin-learning/).

# Background to Digital Capabilities at AU

* Introduction to the Digital Capabilities Project (see [Digital Capabilities Webpage](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/) and [Digital Capabilities WordPress](https://wordpress.aber.ac.uk/digital-capabilities/) site). Project is focused on developing the digital capabilities of students and staff at AU.
* Student Digital Champions (SDC) have been supporting the project since September 2022 (see resources produced by the SDCs for other students: [SDC blogposts](https://wordpress.aber.ac.uk/digital-capabilities/category/student-digital-champions/) and [SDC LinkedIn Learning collections](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/search?contentBy=urn%3Ali%3AenterpriseAccount%3A107524890&learningCategoryIds=633048~635058&u=107524890)).
* Digital Capabilities is not only about learning how to use specific pieces of software, but more about making the most appropriate choices when it comes to digital tools – e.g. considering their suitability for different audiences, etc.
* 2 main resources are available to support students (and staff) to assess and develop their digital capabilities:
  + Jisc Digital Discovery Tool ([direct login](https://jisc.potential.ly/signin); [AU support page](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/discovery-tool/))
  + LinkedIn Learning ([direct login](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/?u=107524890); [AU support page](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/linkedin-learning/))

# Activity 1: How are digital capabilities developed in departments?

* Discussion focused on how staff could make use of the Jisc Digital Capabilities Checklist (see checklist at end of document) to help identify the digital capabilities that are embedded in their existing modules.
* Document could be used when setting up new modules.
* A key theme during the discussion was the assumptions that we make about students’ digital capabilities – either because we think that they arrive at university with certain skills, or because it’s not always clear what support is provided in other parts of the university.
* Some participants felt that their departments gave a basic grounding on some issues, but more could be provided. Those modules which provided some support in developing their digital capabilities saw an improvement in students’ capabilities over time.
* There was also recognition that some staff do great work on an individual basis with students.
* Staff would find it very useful to know what skills/capabilities students are coming into university with.

# Discussion Points

1. **How do you think we could better motivate our students to develop their digital capabilities?**
   * A lot of students won’t know what the term ‘digital capabilities’ means – that could be a good place to start.
   * Important to explain the benefits – not only direct benefits for studies but also wider benefits (e.g. employability).
   * Encouraging an easy and accessible route for self-reflection, rather than making it a slog and a burden so students can assess their own skills gaps as well as logging improvement (e.g. encouraging the use of the Jisc Digital Discovery Tool).
   * Difficult to motivate students unless it’s a mandatory part of a lecture. Incorporating this into other activities may be a solution.
   * Using gamification to develop students’ digital capabilities in a fun way.
2. **Do you think that incentivising students’ achievements using digital badges/certification could work?**
   * This is likely to work for some students but not for others.
   * Badges can work particularly well if attached to their student record/academic transcript.
   * Could help students recognise the skills they’ve acquired when preparing their CVs.
   * Some students will like having something to work towards.
   * Is there a way to incentivise students using some form of reward – e.g. vouchers?
3. **How useful would the DC Module Checklist be in supporting you to identify which digital capabilities your students gain through their modules? Or what other support would you find beneficial?**
   * Useful resource, especially to help staff identify the breadth of areas identified as digital capabilities.
   * Terminology of some questions is confusing – e.g. what is meant by *digital artefact*?
   * Checklist could be simplified (overlap of some options – these could be merged).
4. **Are there certain digital capabilities that you think would be better supported by central teams?**
   * We assume that the base level of technological literacy has changed significantly, meaning that it is becoming easier for some students to get left behind.
   * Digital Wellbeing and digital identity seem to fit more naturally with central teams.
   * Other capabilities (e.g. ICT proficiency, Information, data and media literacies) seem to have transferability in each subject area.
   * Resources and advice on AU systems students need to use.
   * A lot of areas related to digital capabilities are covered and supported by Subject Librarians (e.g. finding reliable resources online).
5. **Can you think of any additional challenges to students developing their digital capabilities and how could these be overcome?**
   * Students don’t always own the ‘right’ devices. For example, some devices don’t support certain formats that are required for assessments.
   * Ensuring that any information or resources that is given to students isn’t too time consuming.
   * There is a huge number of different tools and technologies being used within HE. We need to consider what we should support students to use and why.
   * Not enough time to support everything.
   * Wellbeing, digital identity, and the cost of living rises also emerged as issues that participants were concerned about.

# Useful Resources

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| Jisc Digital Capabilities Framework  ([Welsh](https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8846/7/2022_Jisc_BDC_Individual_Framework_Welsh.pdf); [English](https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8846/1/2022_Jisc_BDC_Individual_Framework.pdf)) | We closely follow Jisc’s Digital Capabilities framework at AU. The framework identifies six main elements which make up different aspects of a person’s digital capabilities. |
| [Jisc Digital Discovery Tool](https://jisc.potential.ly/signin) | A bilingual resource that enables students and staff to self-assess their digital capabilities. Also see:   * [Jisc Digital Discovery Tool AU webpage](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/discovery-tool/) * [Teaching resources for staff](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/discovery-tool/staff-teaching-resources/) * [FAQs](https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/index.php?search=discovery+tool) |
| Jisc Student Digital Capabilities Role Profile ([Welsh](https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8863/7/2022_BDC_Student_HE_Profile_Welsh.pdf); [English](https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8863/1/2022_BDC_Student_HE_Profile.pdf)) | The document outlines the digital capabilities that a typical student at a UK university or college needs to flourish. |
| [LinkedIn Learning](https://linkedinlearning.aber.ac.uk/) | An online learning platform (available for free to all AU staff and students) which features over 16,000 expert-led courses and short videos, ranging from business courses to creative and technology-related content. Also see:   * [LinkedIn Learning AU webpage](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/linkedin-learning/) * [FAQs](https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/index.php?search=linkedin) |
| [LinkedIn Learning Digital Capabilities Collections](https://www.linkedin.com/learning-admin/content/curated-content?account=107524890&creators=ALL&learningCategoryIds=%5B%22633048%22%2C%22635058%22%5D) | Collections to support students to develop |

# Digital Capabilities Module Checklist

\*Adapted from the Jisc [*Digital capability checklist for curriculum developers*](https://digitalcapability.jisc.ac.uk/dashboard/subscribers-hub/developing-others-curriculum-confidence/)

This is a checklist for curriculum teams who are working to embed digital capabilities into a course or subject area.

It covers a range of issues that are investigated in more detail in the [learner profile](https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8863/1/2022_BDC_Student_HE_Profile.pdf) on the [Jisc digital capabilities framework](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/digital-capabilities-framework/digital-capabilities-framework/). The checklist can be used to assess how well a course of study is preparing learners with the kind of capabilities and practices outlined in the learner profile.

The main users of this checklist will be curriculum teams and the staff who support them, for example with expertise in e-learning, information and digital literacies, educational development and innovation, the student experience etc.

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| **Digitally capable learners should be able to…** | **What does this mean in the context of your course?** | **How in your course do learners encounter, practice and get feedback on this?** |
| Use digital tools appropriate to their subject area |  |  |
| Use digital tools effectively to achieve subject-related goals |  |  |
| Find, evaluate and manage digital information |  |  |
| Use digital media to learn and to present the outcomes of learning |  |  |
| Find, analyse and use digital data |  |  |
| Create digital artefacts |  |  |
| Use digital tools to gather and assess evidence, reach decisions, and solve problems |  |  |
| Take part in authentic digital research or professional practice |  |  |
| Communicate digitally |  |  |
| Collaborate digitally including with learners in other settings |  |  |
| Build and participate in digital networks |  |  |
| Develop digital learning skills and habits e.g., note-making, referencing, tagging, curation, review |  |  |
| Support, mentor, coach or develop others using digital media or resources |  |  |
| Develop and manage their digital identity |  |  |
| Consider their digital safety, privacy, health and wellbeing |  |  |