Higher Education Digital Capability (HEDC) Framework.

An open-source framework to map and measure digital capability in Higher Education. Developed by HolonIQ and Higher Education leaders around the world to support practical and sustainable approaches to digital services and online learning.

September 2020
In 2018, HolonIQ released an open source 16-point framework identifying key capabilities underpinning digital higher education. The 16-point framework was used by institutions in different ways to articulate, share and showcase current and emerging models in digital learning, and to identify areas for strategic focus and development.
Background

The 2020 Higher Education Digital Capability (HEDC) Framework builds on the earlier model and adds a deeper focus on digital capabilities across the whole learner lifecycle. Institutional capabilities have been mapped to four connected dimensions across the lifecycle, from Demand & Discovery (DD) to Learning Design (LD), Learner Experience (LX) and Work & Lifelong Learning (WL).

The framework encompasses current capabilities such as recruitment, curriculum design, assessment and career planning, but also looks ahead to future and emerging capabilities for successful digital learning.

Informed by academic research and with input from higher education leaders globally, the HEDC Framework offers an overarching view for institutions to map and measure digital capabilities across the learner lifecycle, ultimately to support practical and sustainable approaches to digital services and online learning.
Diagnosis and Action

The Open Source Framework identifies key domains and capabilities required for digital delivery across the whole student lifecycle and provides a structure to facilitate cross-institution conversations. It is designed to allow flexibility and interpretation in context. The 70+ capability blocks can be used to assess institutional strength in areas of strategic priority, to conduct internal and external benchmarking and ultimately to guide strategic procurement decisions.

Open Source HEDC Framework

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEMAND AND DISCOVERY</th>
<th>LEARNING DESIGN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product &amp; Service Design</td>
<td>Curriculum Design</td>
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<td>Marketing Processes</td>
<td>Digital Courseware</td>
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<td>Recruitment</td>
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<td>Enrolment Management</td>
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<th>LEARNER EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>WORK &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</th>
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<td>Academic Administratio n</td>
<td>Work Integrated Learning</td>
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<td>Assessment &amp; Verification</td>
<td>Career Advisory &amp; Placement</td>
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<td>Student Learning</td>
<td>Industry Engagement</td>
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<td>Student Life</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
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Tools to support capability building and decision making

- Institutional diagnostic survey
- Self-assessment against 60+ digital capabilities
- Benchmarked results
- Internal and external benchmarking
- Strategic decisions & digital choices
- Buy | Build | Partner
- People | Process | Tech
The digital capability framework is expanded to include 70+ capability blocks, following key stages in the learner lifecycle.
4 Dimensions, 16 Domains and 70+ Capabilities

The capability framework is built on four core dimensions with sixteen underlying domains. Each domain is comprised of multiple blocks that represent digital capabilities.

Four core capability dimensions, mapped to the higher education learner lifecycle

Each dimension breaks down into four capability domains (themes) for deeper analysis. These are groups of capabilities needed to successfully deliver on digital learning at each stage of the lifecycle

- 16 capability domains expand into 70+ capability blocks
- A capability block is expressed as a statement, against which an institution can rate its performance and the importance of the capability

Rate your institution's performance and the importance of each digital capability in your context

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<th>SCORING SCALE</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
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Demand & Discovery

This dimension brings together digital capabilities which impact institutional strategy and early stages in the learner lifecycle, connecting marketing processes, student recruitment and enrolment management.

New models and competitors are challenging established programs, and successful institutions draw on deep and complex data sets to understand and respond to the changing needs of learners, partners and markets.

Data now connects every stage in the student journey, enabling the creation of personalised communications across an array of channels and partners. Prospective learners are diverse and fragmented, requiring sophisticated tools and organisational capabilities to profile, segment, qualify and convert leads.

The demands on user experience (UX) continue to rise; recruitment and enrolment processes are expected to provide consistent, responsive and tailored digital experiences across every touchpoint.
Learning Design

Digital capabilities in Learning Design combine evidence-based understanding of learner needs and learning processes with emerging skill sets in user experience design (UX), instructional strategies, content and mixed media design.

Successful institutions are designing programs and courses to suit new learning environments, delivery modes and learning approaches. Diverse types of digital content are created, licenced and managed to support learning, responding in particular to the need for immersive learning and simulation in STEM subjects.

Emerging disciplines are also demanding new subject matter expertise, which must be sourced, managed and updated to keep pace with changing industries and knowledge.

Instructional strategies draw on an increasing range of digital capabilities to provide active and adaptive learning experiences for students to learn in different ways, both as individuals and as members of class groups and communities.
At the heart of the learner lifecycle is a broad set of digital capabilities supporting student life, community and wellbeing as well as learning processes, academic progress and assessment.

Within Learner Experience, improved digital capabilities are bringing efficiency and relief to burdensome academic administration processes such as timetabling, compliance and reporting. As learning design and delivery changes, faculty professional development remains as important as ever, and remote training brings increased options and opportunities.

Students are able to take more control over their learning journey with improved digital learning environments and a single view of their priorities and progress, tailored to their needs. Where students are geographically distant, digital solutions can help them to create and engage in social groups and communities, and seek out the support they need, when they need it.

Digital assessment and verification capabilities are evolving, with vast improvements showing the potential for assessments, portfolios and exams to be conducted fairly and securely online. Graduations and celebrations can now take place in digital formats for those who can’t attend in person, with digital credential options embedded throughout the student journey.
Traditionally thought of as the ‘final’ stage in the learner lifecycle, the focus has been shifting for some time to consider how learners can be supported as they choose and change careers throughout their lives, underpinned by ongoing learning and skill development.

Work-Integrated Learning remains a key focus, with digital capabilities enabling virtual internships and remote mentoring with industry professionals. Career planning and placement services are making use of AI and machine learning for skills assessment and matching, whilst jobs fairs and events explore virtual possibilities.

Technology also supports networks and partnerships with industry, connecting learners and professionals and facilitating access to industry expertise. Finally, alumni engagement is thriving in the digital age, as institutions future-proof their roles as education providers by supporting learners at many different points in their lives.
If you’d like to learn more about how the Higher Education Digital Capability Framework could support your institution, to give feedback on the framework or get more involved as the Framework evolves, please contact: hello@holoniq.com