

2024 Digital Education Survey for higher education in the UK

ucisa Report
Highlights

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Introduction

The UCISA Digital Education 2024 Survey report records the results from a national survey undertaken by UCISA into the development, management and support of digital education in UK higher education institutions.

It builds upon previous UCISA Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Digital Capability surveys, bringing combined questions into a more comprehensive review of digital education provision within UK higher education, focussing on key topics such as how digital education is used, the systems supported, and provision for digital capabilities and digital accessibility.

This combined Survey still seeks to understand the drivers and organisational adjustments that facilitate organisation approaches and digital transformation projects in relation to digital education and how they have changed over time.

In this document we present some of the highlights from the Survey. For more information, please [read the full report](#).

Factors encouraging development of digital education

1st

Enhancing quality of learning and teaching

2nd

Assisting and improving the success, continuation and progression of students

3rd

Improving student satisfaction (e.g. NSS, PTES)

Enhancing the quality of learning and teaching for students continues to be a primary factor for institutions in relation to digital education. This has been the leading driver in the UCISA TEL Surveys since 2003.

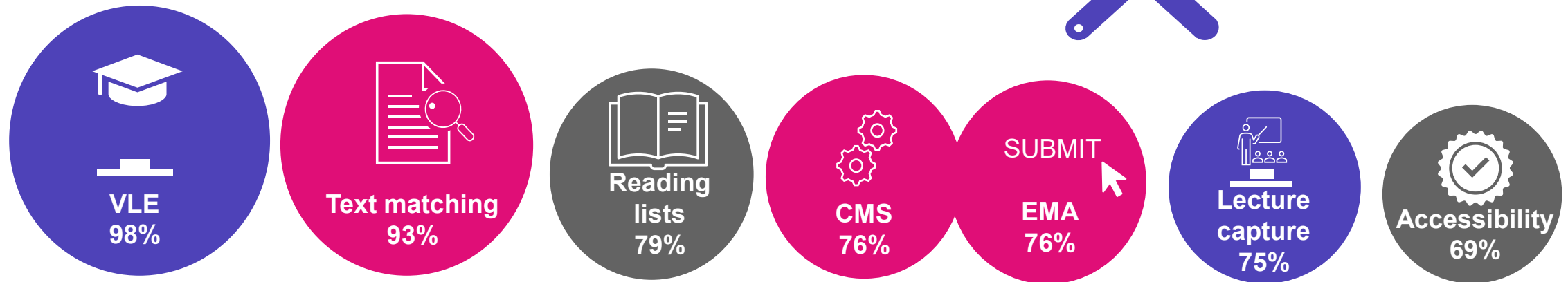
The top three factors focus on students, showing that students still remain central to institutional considerations for digital education.

Improving the accessibility to learning for all students was also a highly ranked factor.

[Question 1.1]

What's in your TEL toolkit?

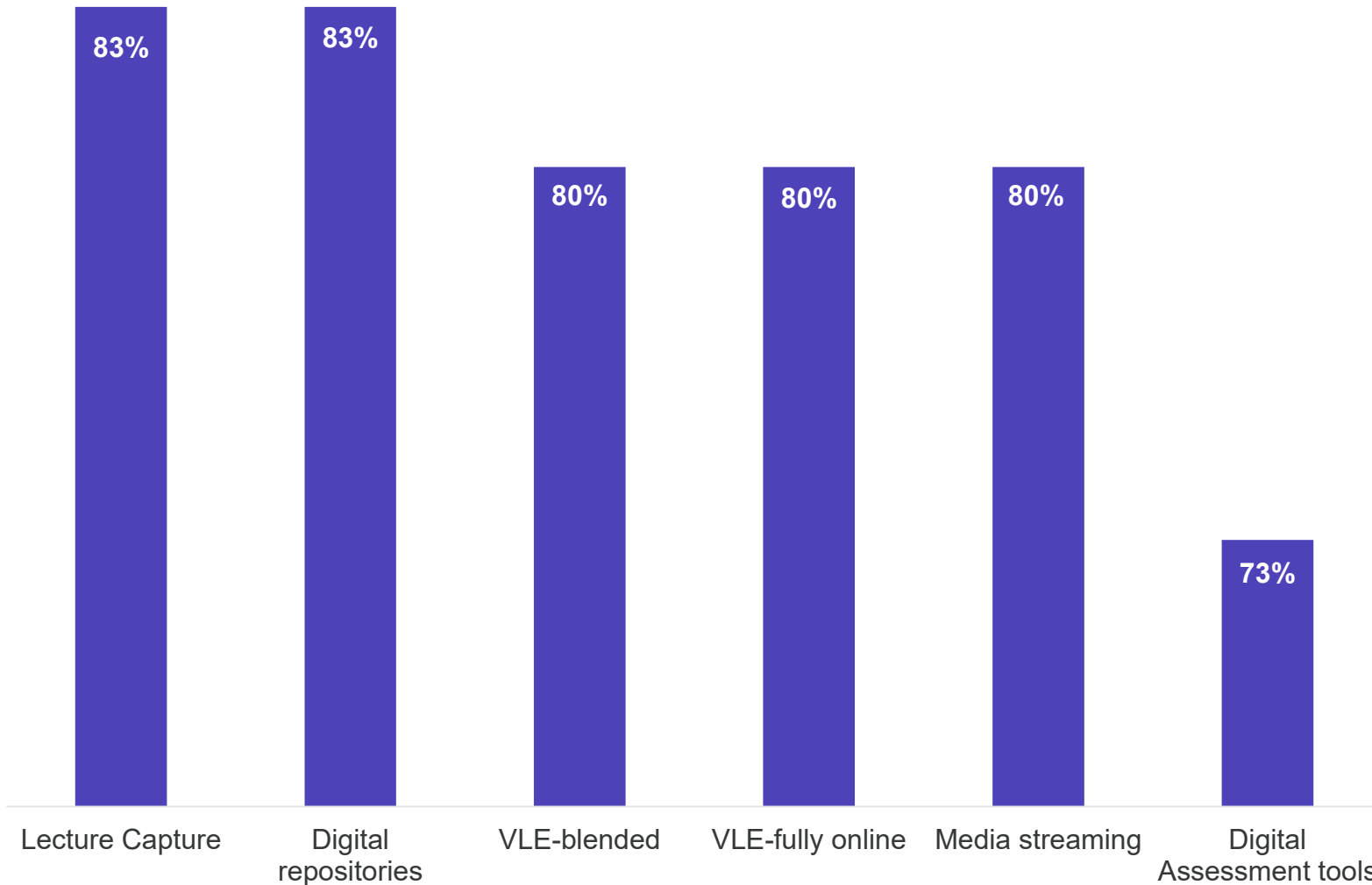
TEL Toolkit 2024



A wide range of TEL tools are supported across institutions; however, VLEs, text matching tools, reading list management software, as well content management systems (CMS) and electronic management of assessment (EMA) tools are the most frequently cited tools used in more than 50% of courses.

[Question 3.9]

Outsourcing of Digital Education services

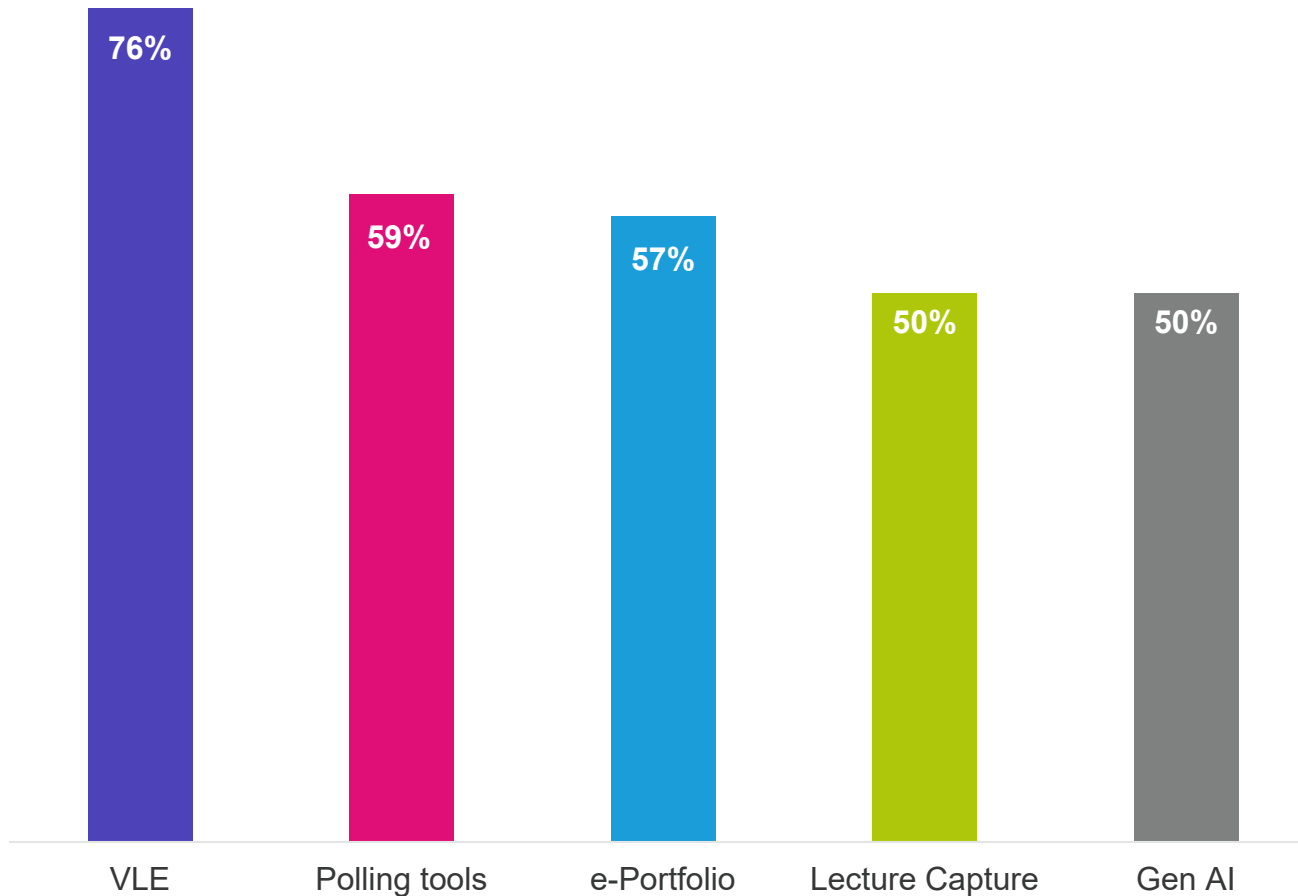


Outsourcing of Digital Education services is common across the sector with overall outsourcing of provision still high at 72%.

Lecture capture platforms, digital repositories (such as MS Office 365), VLEs (supporting the delivery of blended learning courses and fully online courses), and Media streaming are predominantly outsourced. Very few respondents are considering bringing outsourced services back in-house.

[Question 2.3, 2.4, 2.5]

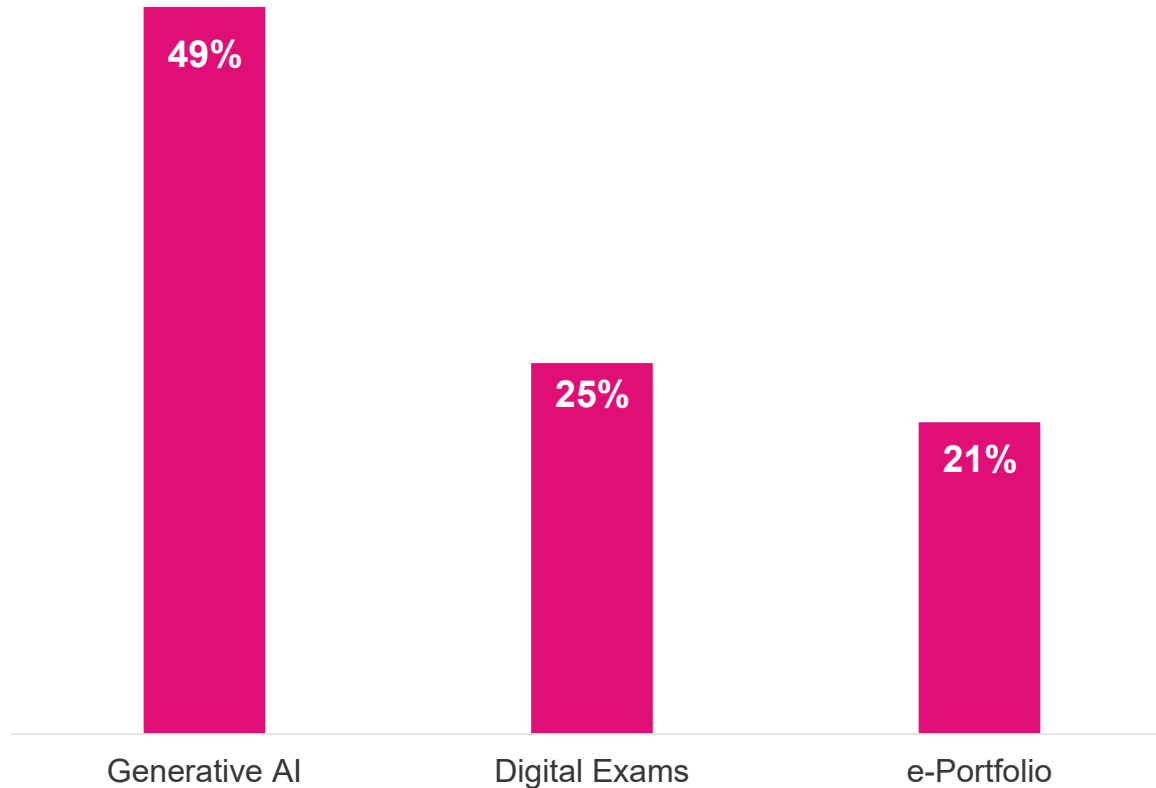
Institutional review of Digital Education Tools



81% of institutions reported that they had undertaken a review in the last two years, with 76% reporting they had reviewed the VLE. Of the 59% who reviewed their polling systems, 48% reported the outcome of the review was to implement or pilot a new system. Generative AI, perhaps unsurprisingly, featured in the top five services reviewed.

[Question 2.8, 2.9, 2.10]

New tools?



In terms of new or additional digital educational tools that institutions are considering, Generative AI systems were the most often cited tool to be implemented or piloted over the next two years. 65% of institutions have developed a policy as part of their engagement with AI.

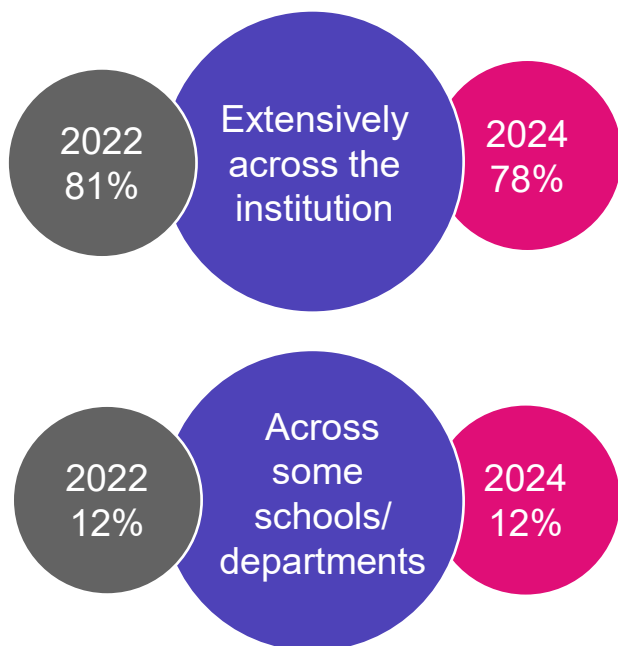
Digital Exams and e-Portfolios were the next two most cited tools.

[Question 2.11, 2.12]

Course delivery – blended learning

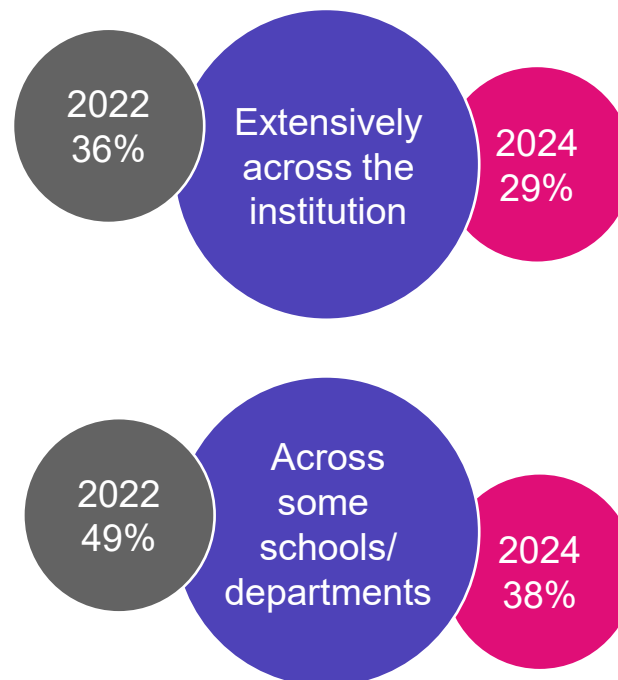
Blended learning

(lecture notes & supplementary resources)



Blended learning

(active learning)



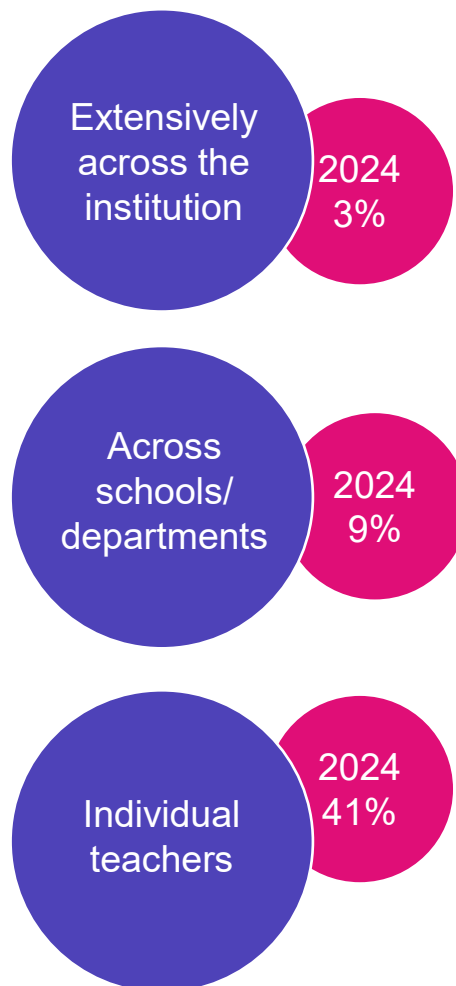
In terms of course delivery, blended learning with supplementary resources remains the most prevalent delivery mode across the sector with 78% of respondents supporting this across their institution.

There was a decrease in the use of active blended learning with 29% of institutions reporting that this is supported extensively across the institution, compared with 36% in 2022 but still up from the 20% in 2020. The reasons for this are unclear but may be due to a different response rate for this survey.

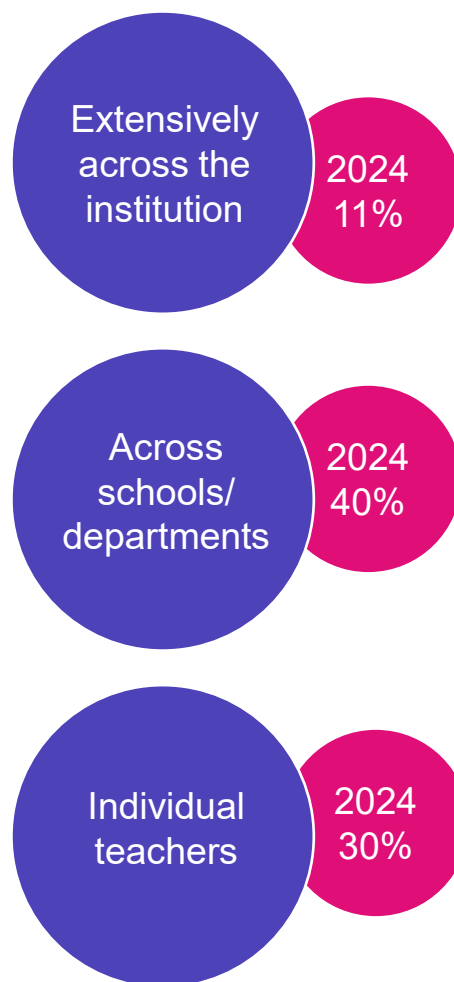
[Question 3.1]

Course delivery – hybrid/hyflex and fully online

Hybrid/HyFlex



Fully online



Hybrid learning continues to be offered post pandemic, but this provision is localised within institutions especially at individual teacher level.

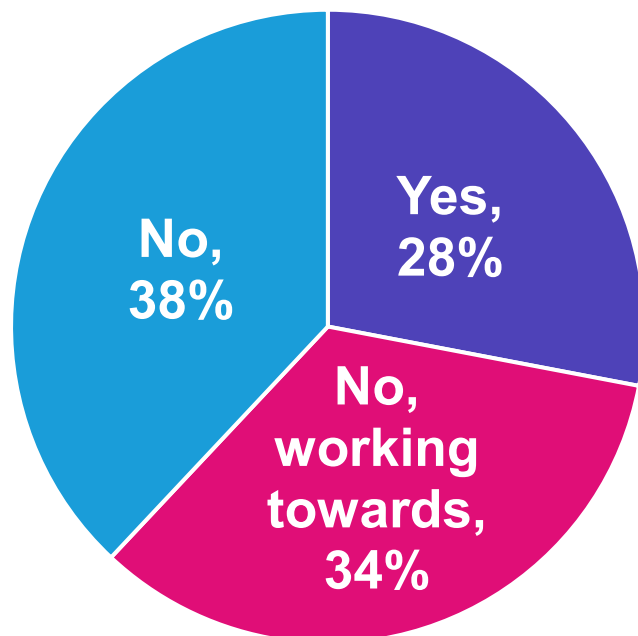
Hybrid/Hyflex delivery still does not seem to be well established across the sector.

Despite a growing number of new posts to support online delivery over the last few years, the number of institutions supporting fully online delivery remains low.

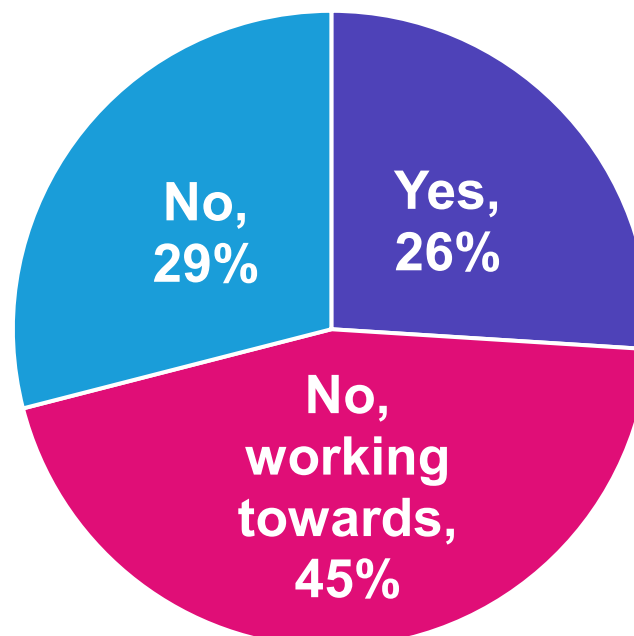
[Questions 3.1]

Evaluation - digital capabilities

Students



Staff

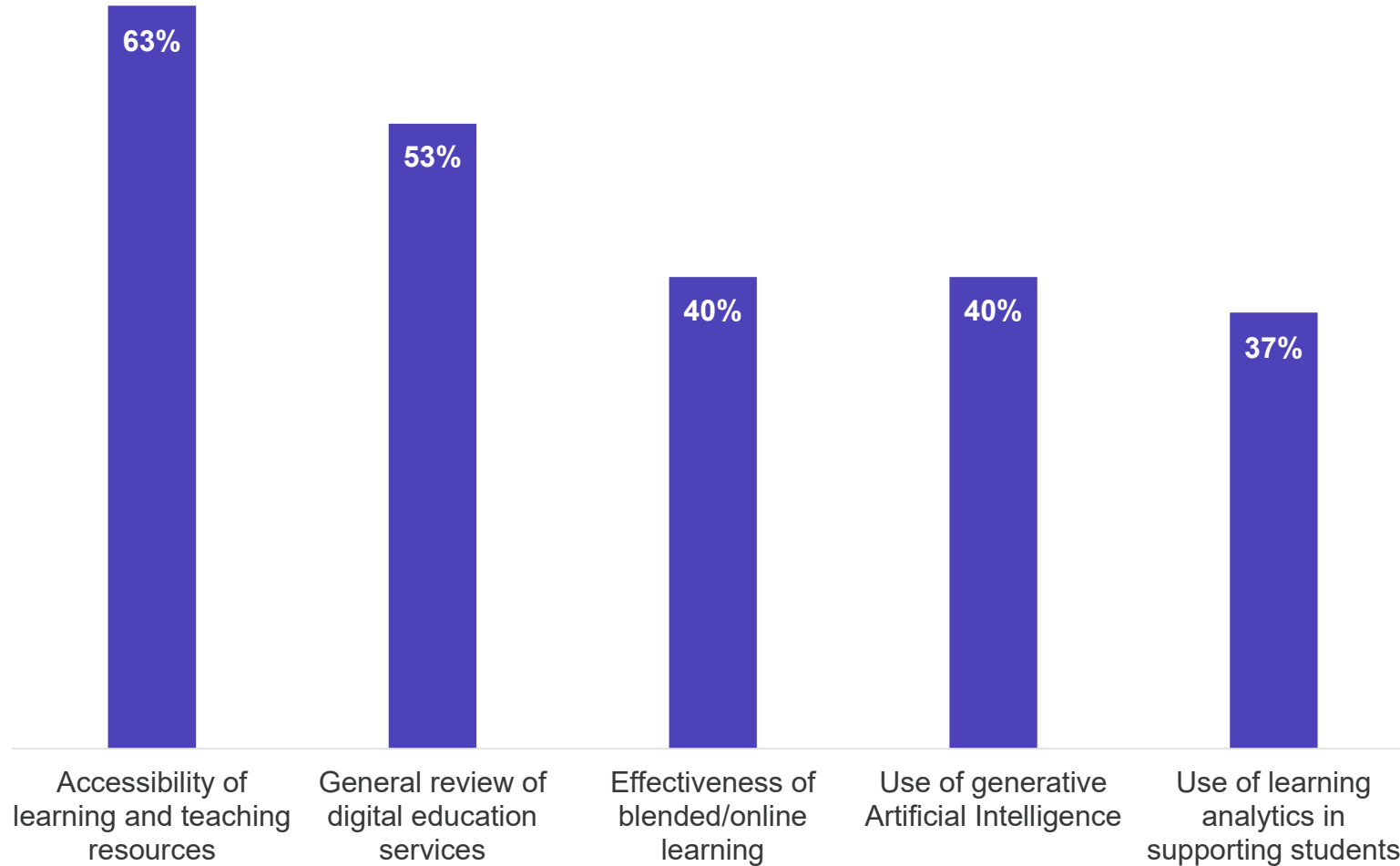


When asked about how the development of digital capabilities was measured either for staff or students, the majority of respondents reported they were not measuring the development of digital capabilities.

For those who do measure the development of digital capabilities, a self-assessment tool was cited, including the Jisc Digital Discovery tool, and the most cited use of the resultant data was to inform future training.

[Questions 3.6, 3.7, 3.8]

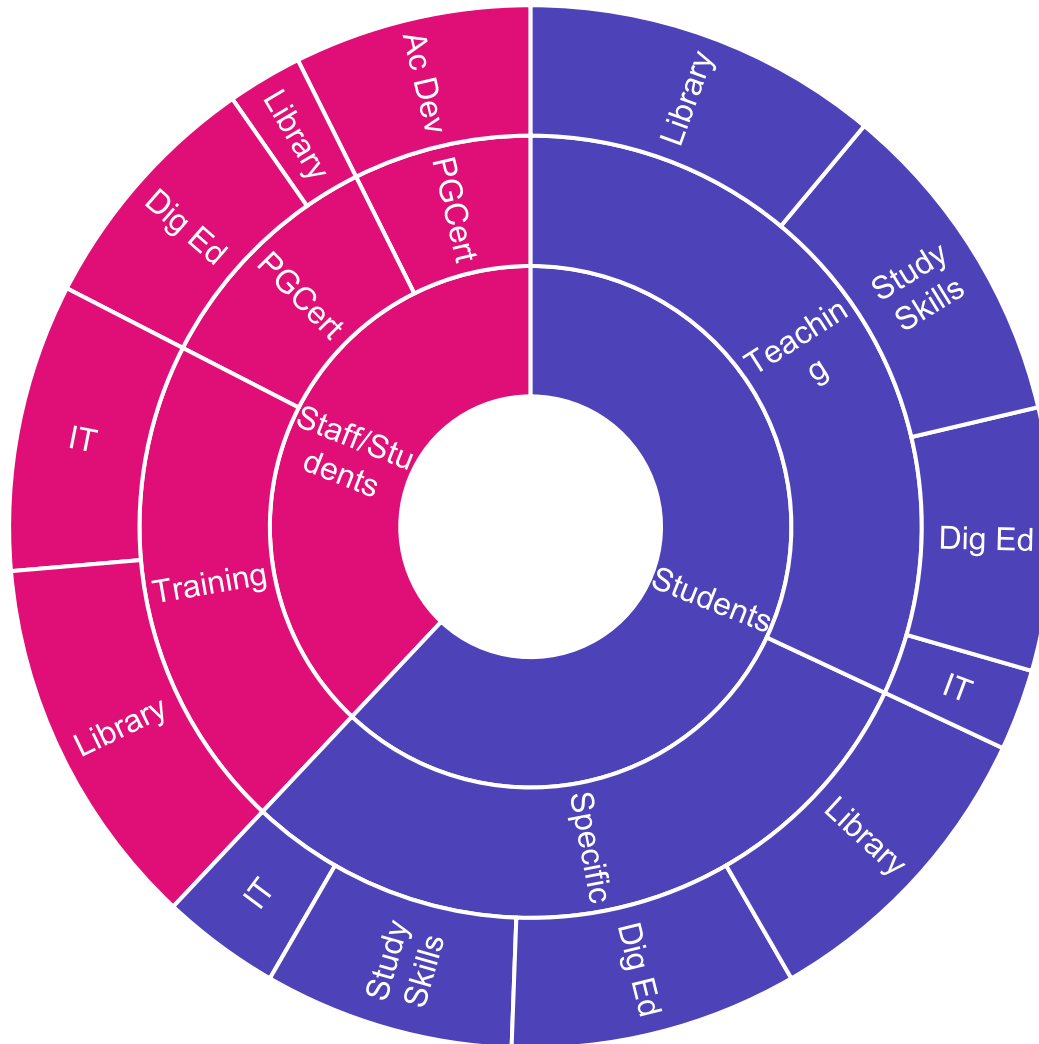
Evaluation - digital education



Evaluation of the impact of digital education was undertaken by 52% of respondents with the accessibility of resources and a general review of digital education services the two most common aspects of digital education that were evaluated.

[Questions 3.10, 3.11]

Digital Capabilities



Supporting the development of digital capabilities was ranked 14th as a possible factor for driving digital education.

Support and training for staff on TEL and digital capabilities is a key consideration for encouraging the development of digital education, ranked 3rd as a factor.

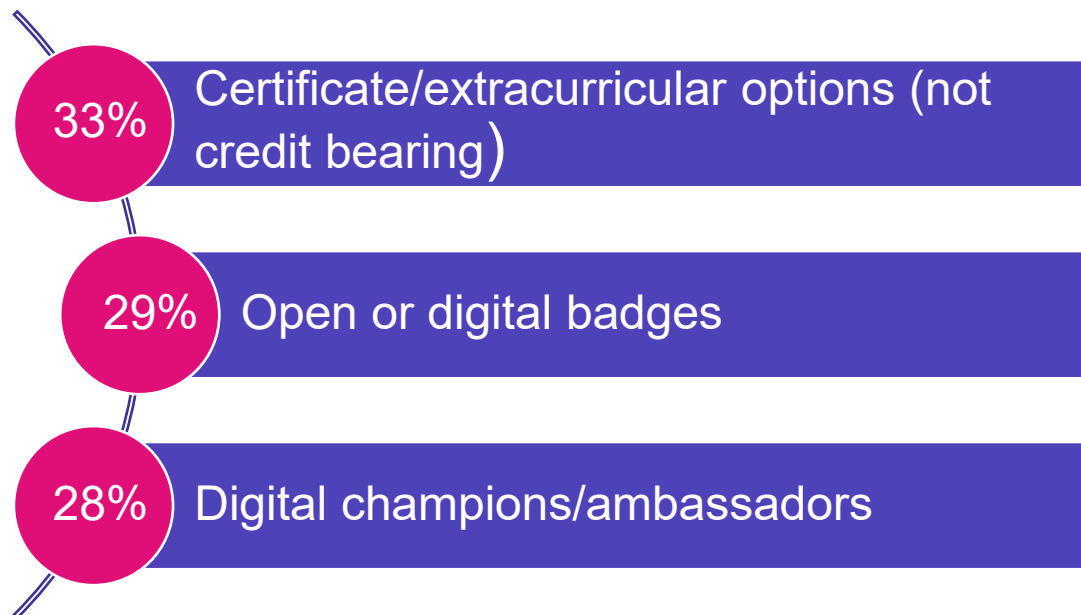
Libraries, Academic Study Skills or Digital Education teams were the most cited departments that take the lead in helping students.

For staff and students, optional in-person or online training and webinars by Digital Educations teams were the highest methods used. IT departments, led on Helpdesks.

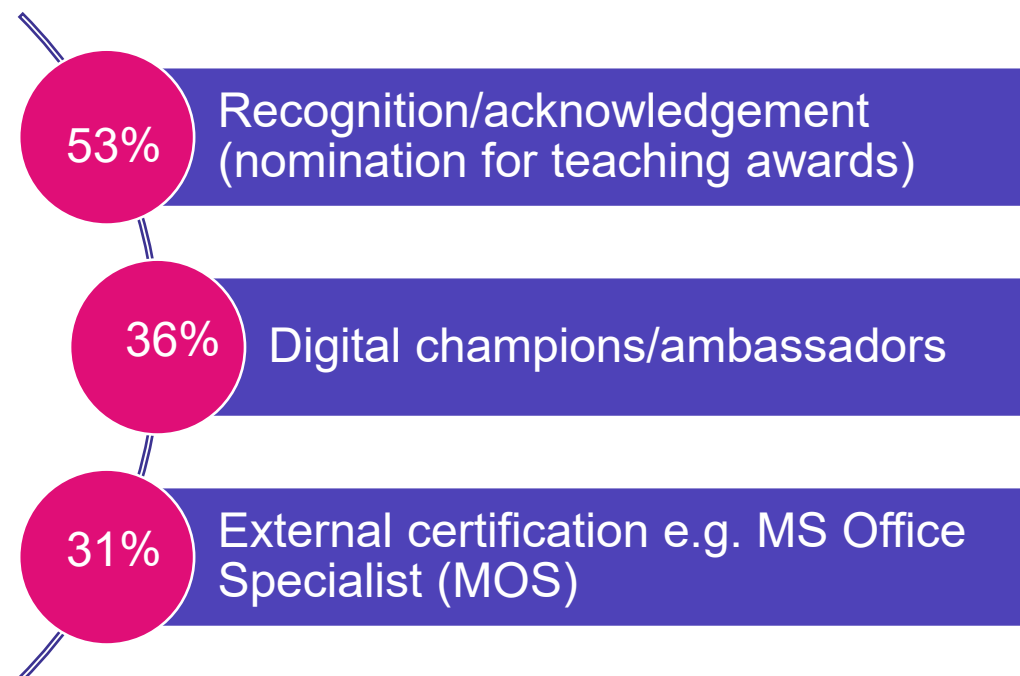
[Questions 1.1, 1.2 4.2]

Recognising achievement of digital capabilities

Top 3 ways to recognise achievement for students

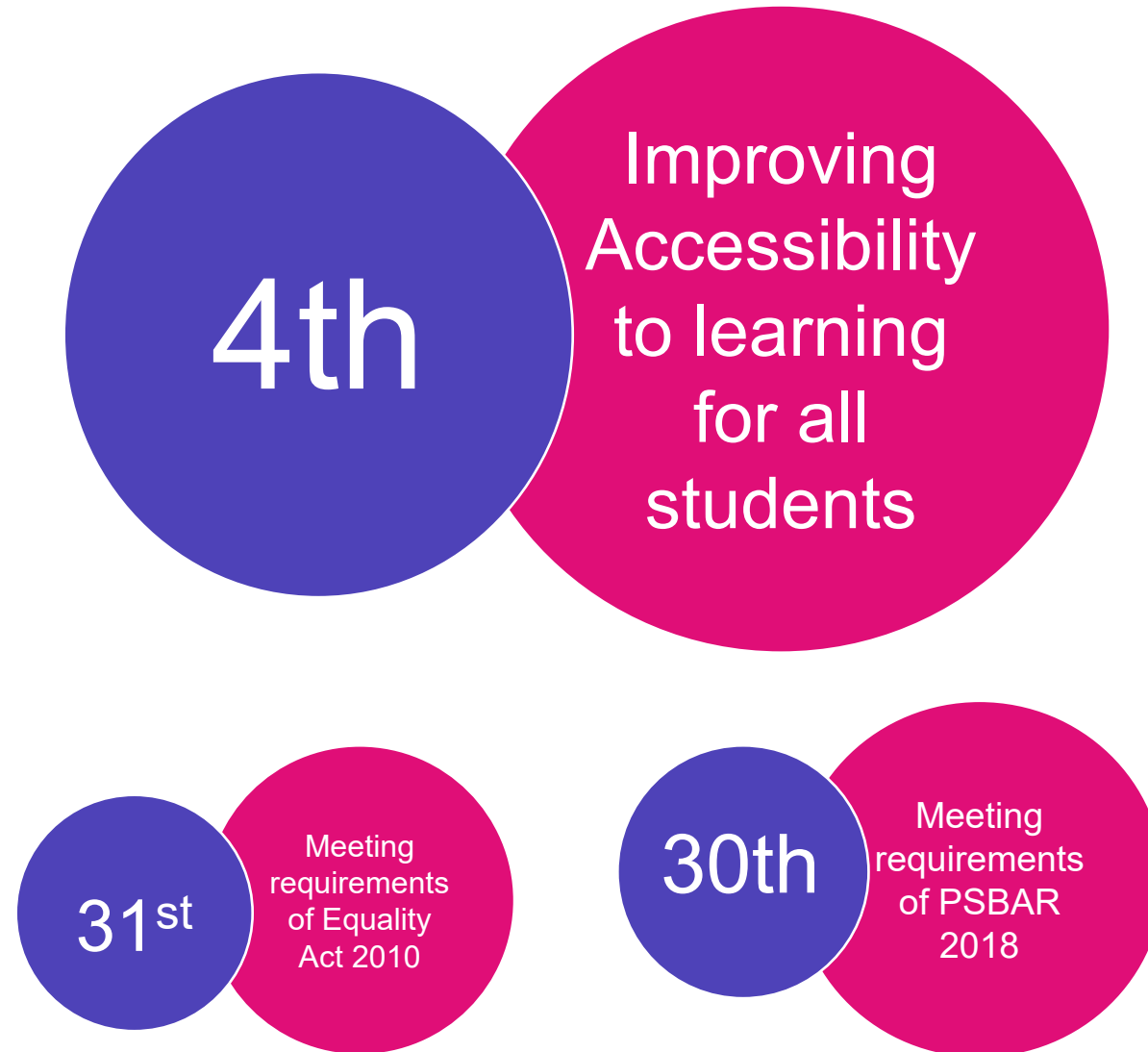


Top 3 ways to recognise achievement for staff



In terms of how achievements in digital capability were recognised, a range of methods were utilised. Digital champions/ambassadors were mentioned for both staff and students but are still low across the sector. It is interesting to see external certification offered to staff, but not so much for students (only 10%).

[Question 4.4]



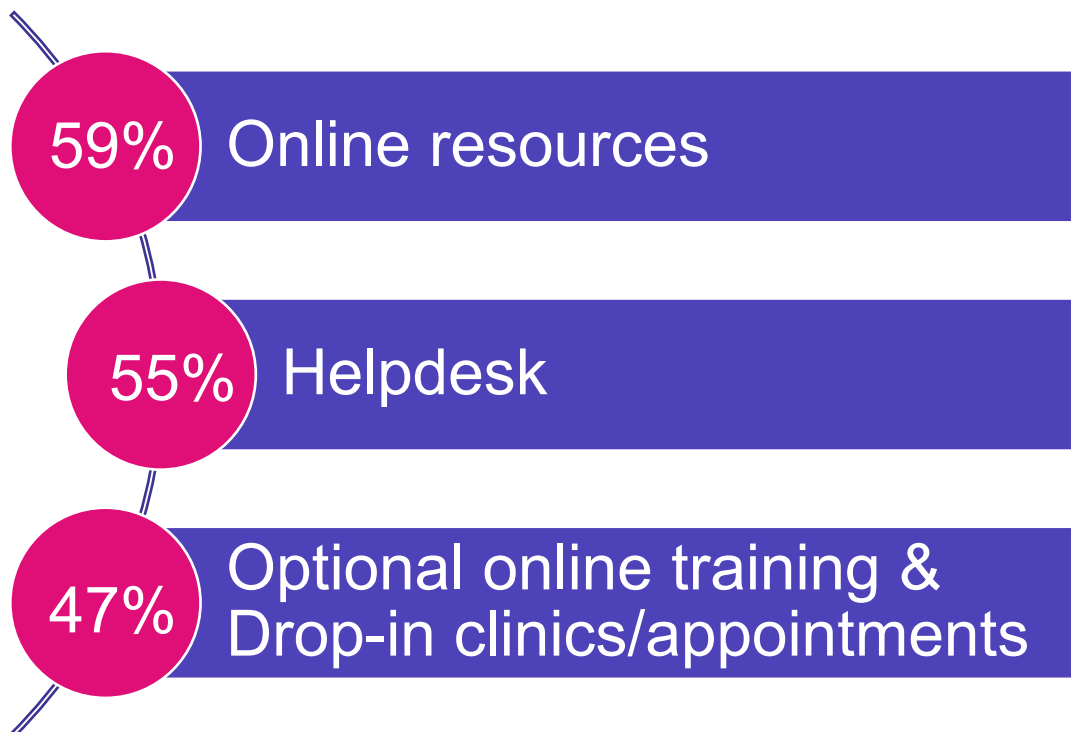
In terms of digital accessibility, improving accessibility for all students was ranked the 4th most cited strategic factor driving the development of digital education.

This compares with meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and Meeting the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) as 30th and 31st respectively.

[Question 1.1, 4.4]

Developing staff and students (accessibility and inclusion)

Top 3 ways for developing students



Top 3 ways for developing staff

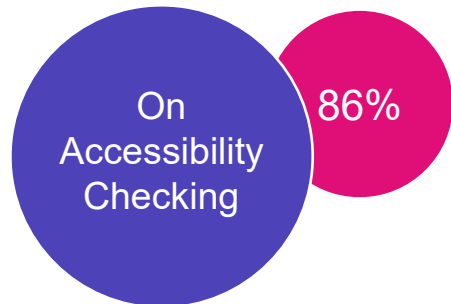
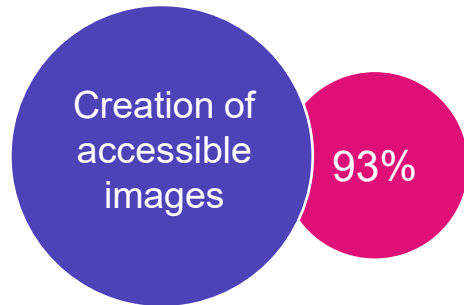
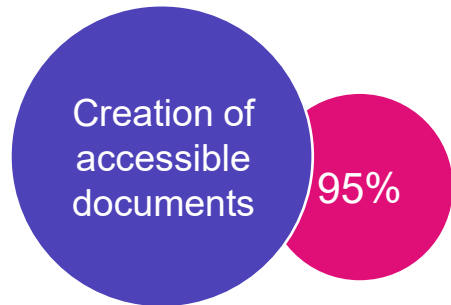


In terms of supporting staff and students to develop their digital capabilities with respect to accessibility and inclusion, a greater focus was put on the provision of training for staff, whereas for students, support is more about providing online resources for them to discover. Very few institutions provide mandatory training.

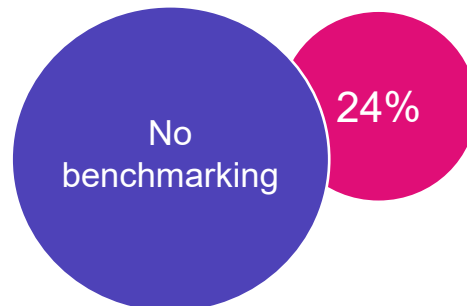
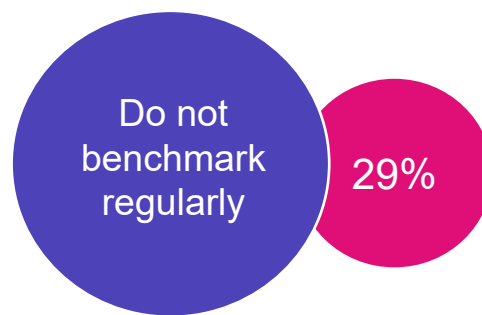
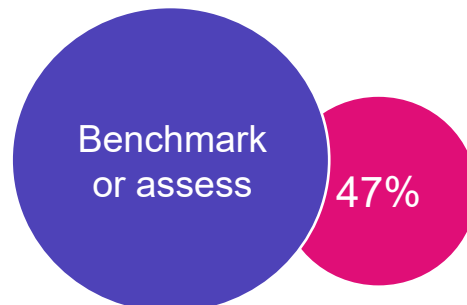
[Question 5.3]

Institutional guidance for learning and teaching on developing accessible materials

Online Resources



Benchmarking accessibility

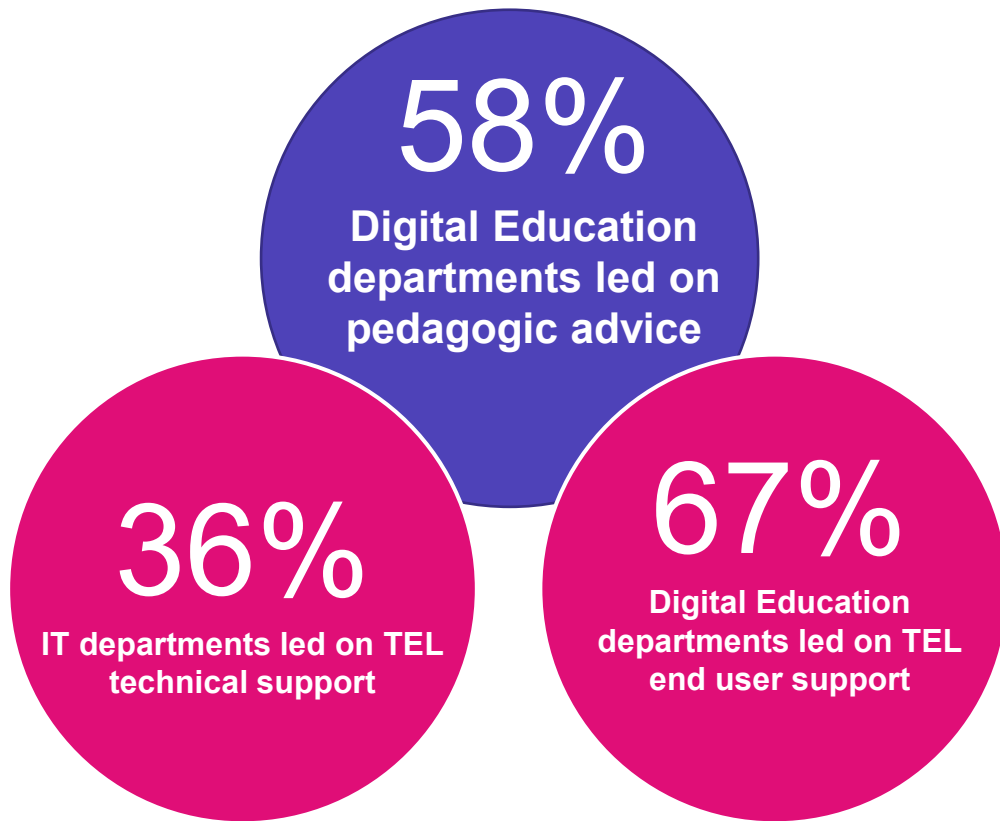


In terms of the online resources for staff, 95% of respondents said they provide guidance on the creation of accessible and inclusive documents, with an almost equivalent focus on accessible diagrams/images. 86% of respondents provide guidance on accessibility checking. In comparison with the guidance available, currently 47% of respondents formally benchmark their progress, with 29% stating they do not do so regularly.

[Question 5.2, 5.5]

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Supporting Digital Education



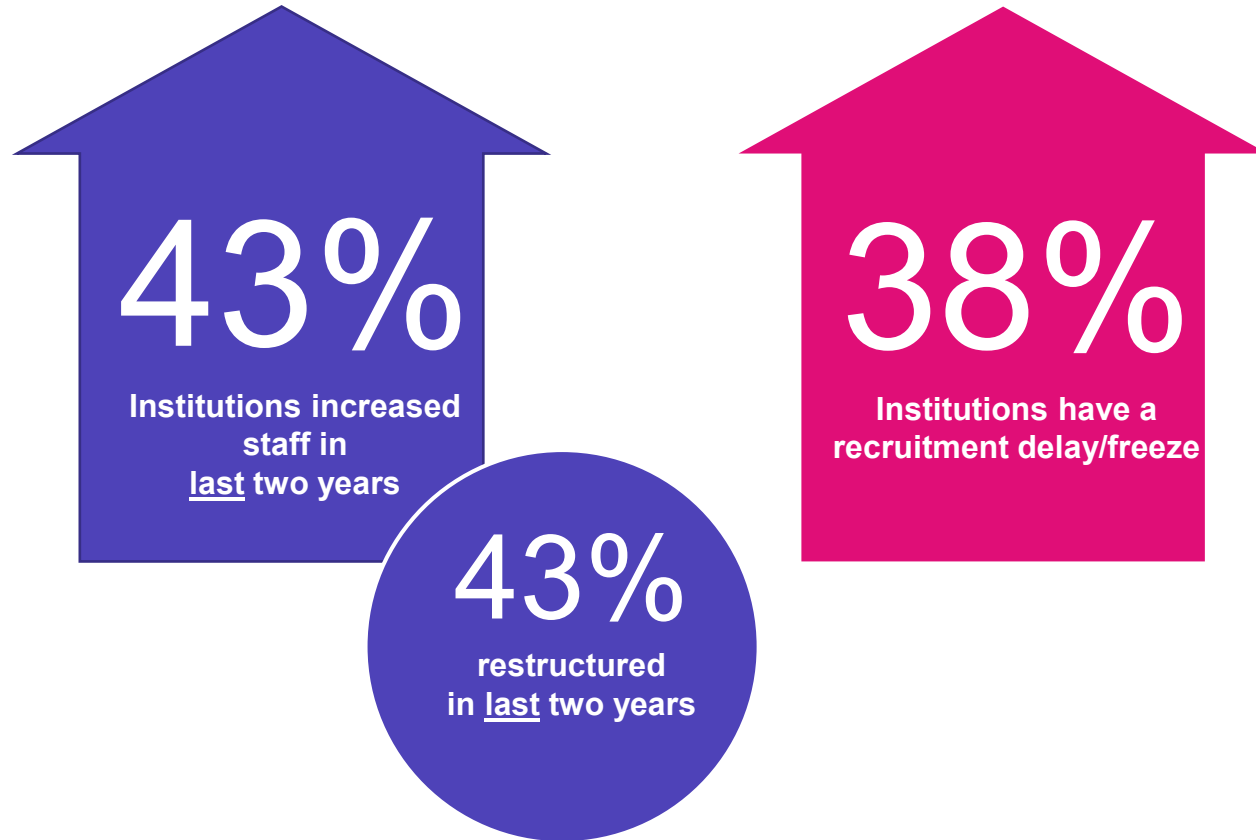
For this survey, we attempted to understand more deeply the provision of staff supporting digital education within an institution, recognising that it was ranked 3rd in terms of possible factors encouraging the development of digital education.

Often provision of a variety of different activities supporting digital education were attributed to a single FTE making estimations difficult.

However, Digital Education departments led on both TEL end user support and pedagogic advice on the use of TEL tools, with IT department leading on TEL technical support.

[Question 1.1, 6.1,6.1b]

Staffing levels continue to change



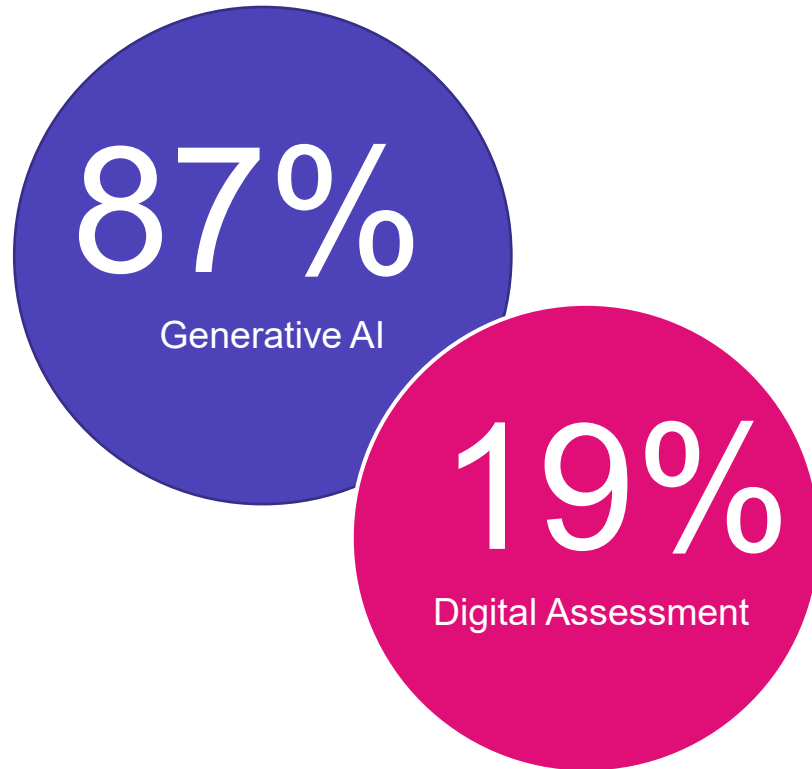
Staffing levels continue to change, though with current financial difficulties we note that these figures may not reflect changes that have occurred since the survey took place.

43% of institutions reported an increase in the number of staff (both permanent roles and fixed-term roles dedicated to specific projects); however, 38% reported a recruitment delay or freeze.

43% of respondents anticipated changes in staff provision but were unsure how it might change, reflecting some of the uncertainty across the sector.

[Questions 6.2, 6.3]

Looking to the future



We asked respondents about recent or prospective developments making demands. Generative AI, perhaps unsurprisingly, is making the most demands in terms of support. It is interesting to note that Digital Assessment support, including digital exams, was the next most mentioned development though at a much lower level.

[Question 7.4]

Potential barriers to developing digital education

1st

Lack of time

2nd

Lack of internal sources of funding

3rd

Competing strategic initiatives

When asked what institutions observed as the potential barriers to developing digital education, the top three responses included lack of time, lack of internal sources of funding to support development and competing strategic initiatives.

[Question 7.1]



Want to know more?

Want to know more?

[Read the full report](#)

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