

Brief for leaders of providers supporting apprenticeships, adult, community and offender learning

Learners' experiences and expectations of technology

This briefing shares the outcomes of our work on students' expectations and experiences of the digital environment in apprenticeships, adult and community learning and prisons, and makes recommendations for leaders and managers to help you meet the recommendations from the **FELTAG report** (<http://ji.sc/Feltag-report-recommendations>)

About our research

The project team was led by Giles Pepler and Nick Jeans of Sero Consulting. We conducted a literature review, 12 focus groups involving a total of 123 learners, and three consultation events for staff in 2016.

Key challenges

- » Access to meaningful learning opportunities is affected by **poor provision of basic technology** like Wi-Fi access and working printers. In work-based learning there are **problems with students accessing industry standard equipment and software**
- » Learners' digital experiences are **strongly dependent on the confidence and capabilities of their teachers**, but currently there are limited opportunities for staff development and training. Where there is a high proportion of part-time staff, this is exacerbating the problem
- » The **lack of access to devices, technologies, the internet and digital content** for learners in prisons limits the opportunities for tutors to make the most of online teaching and learning strategies

Our guide to **Enhancing the digital experience for skills learners** looks at these issues in more detail, provides links to resources and shares examples of effective technology-enhanced practice from a range of skills providers.

Learning provider solutions

In order to address these challenges, we recommend leaders and managers working in the skills sector take the following actions:

Develop your digital vision

Organisations need to recognise the importance of digital skills as contributors to economic success, personal prosperity and well-being. We recommend reviewing existing strategies to ensure technology is actively used to enhance learning and maximise organisational capacity.

Jisc can help:

Our **strategic advice** (<http://ji.sc/Strategic-advice-questions>) will help you to identify the issues you need to explore, while our **student digital experience tracker** (<http://ji.sc/Student-digital-experience>) will help you to gather evidence about your learners' digital experiences.

Develop staff digital capabilities

Peer learning and partnership approaches are effective strategies for focused CPD as are collaborative curriculum improvement projects. Staff may also need greater understanding of how assistive technology can support learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Jisc can help:

Explore our project on **developing digital capability** (<http://bit.ly/developing-digital-capability>) and browse our **accessibility blog** (<http://ji.sc/accessibility-blog>).

Build a robust digital environment

Top-rated student priorities include consistent access to adequate equipment and industry-standard facilities. Policy makers and managers can meet learners' expectations by providing reliable wireless internet access, encouraging use of learner owned devices and by making full use of online systems.

Jisc can help:

Our guides on **technology and tools for online learning** (<http://ji.sc/online-learning-tools>), **e-portfolios** (<http://bit.ly/get-started-e-portfolios>), **bring your own policies** (<http://ji.sc/BYO-policies>), **mobile learning** (<http://bit.ly/engage-mobile-learning>) and a range of **legal issues** (<http://ji.sc/legal-issues>) provide access to expert advice.

Involve learners in the planning and implementation of digital technology

Learners are keen to engage in discussions about how digital technologies can enhance their learning experience and feel empowered when they are actively involved in improvement initiatives. Support learners to develop their digital literacy skills and engage learners in dialogue and partnership activities.

Jisc can help:

Our **developing students' digital literacy skills** (<http://bit.ly/develop-digital-literacy>) guide provides advice while our **Developing successful student-staff partnerships** (<http://ji.sc/student-staff-partnerships>) guide offers comprehensive guidance and many resources.

Embed technology within inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

Develop a concept of digital entitlement that runs through your approach to curriculum design, assessment and feedback as well as inclusive practice. The range of technologies available to help you to do this is vast but you will want to be sure that the digital interventions and strategies you use are proven to be effective.

Jisc can help:

Explore our guides to **curriculum design and support for online learning** (<http://ji.sc/curriculum-design-support>) and **enhancing assessment and feedback with technology: a guide for FE and skills** (<http://ji.sc/enhanced-assessment-feedback>). See also our **quick guide to getting started with accessibility and inclusion** (<http://bit.ly/accessibility-inclusion>).

Find out more

- » Explore our guide to **Enhancing the digital experience for skills learners** (http://ji.sc/Enhance_Digital_Experience) with examples of practice from skills providers
- » **The Evolution of FELTAG** (jisc.ac.uk/reports/the-evolution-of-feltag) showcases some of the initiatives inspired by FELTAG and also provides practical examples of effective practice from across further education and skills
- » You can find out more on the **digital student project page** (<http://bit.ly/digital-student-project>) and read the **final report** (<http://ji.sc/digital-student-skills-report>)
- » Explore **the other outputs from this project** (<http://bit.ly/key-outputs>) including tools you can use in your own setting
- » Join the conversation by following **#digitalstudent** (<http://ji.sc/digitalstudent-twitter>) across social media

Jisc support

If you would like further help and support from your Jisc Account manager on this topic **please contact our customer services team** who will be glad to assist you.

Email us: on customerservices@jisc.ac.uk
or phone: 0203 006 6077