Leeds Trinity University: "make plenty of noise when you implement the discovery tool"

In a little over a year, Leeds Trinity University implemented the **building digital capability discovery tool** (digitalcapability.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/discovery-tool), created a buzz about it with teaching staff and embedded it into key HR processes. Academics are engaging with the tool and they are using technologies more creatively and consistently to support student learning.

"We wanted to create a structured, trackable portfolio of digital skills training for staff," says the university's IT systems trainer, Patrick Turner. *"Implementing the discovery tool was an important first step."*

"Doing this is a big deal for us, so we keep shouting about it and we carve out time for people to engage with the discovery tool."

Strategic approach to developing skills and confidence

Leeds Trinity has always delivered digital skills training on request but decided in 2020 to create a more formal offer for all staff.

"We looked at various options to help staff reflect on their digital skills and allow us to identify training priorities, and we decided the Jisc discovery tool was our best fit," says Patrick.

Although the immediate priority was to help staff get the most from technologies used in learning and teaching, like Moodle, Microsoft Teams and Panopto, the plans go deeper. The university wants to foster digital confidence so no one is fazed about experimenting with existing technologies or adopting new ones.

The university piloted the tool with academic staff and created a custom layout for its own version of the discovery tool, signposting users to resources and training links, mostly hosted on Moodle. The pages highlight internally produced resources and others available through **LinkedIn Learning** (linkedin.com/learning), **Jisc** and the **Microsoft Learn Educator Center** (docs.microsoft.com/en-us/learn/educator-center/programs).

"Our Moodle layout is easy to navigate and it takes users to resources that are approved by the institution," explains Patrick. *"We were keen to encourage staff to use university approved resources rather than third party ones, to ensure consistency".*

Milestones keep things on track
Patrick decided that setting a timeline would be essential to keep implementation of the tool moving forwards. A set of milestones helped to give the programme structure:

"People tend not to worry about using the discovery tool because it's for self-reflection and they can keep the findings to themselves," says Patrick. *"It's not 'Big Brother-ish' but it gives the university anonymised data that we can use to plan, to benchmark our progress and to keep developing our training offer.*

*"Early on, it showed us four areas where we had training gaps so we could plan how to address these. And by benchmarking our progress through the **building digital capability programme** (jisc.ac.uk/building-digital-capability) we also learned that our staff's skills and confidence in these areas were, in fact, above the average across the sector. It was motivating to see we'd been doing well with our training even before we took it up a gear."*

January 2021	Learning and training day	All academics invited to a 30-minute workshop during a Teaching and Learning Day, to explain the discovery tool and how to log in. Time was allocated for them to complete the tool's 'effective online learning' question set Question set left open for several weeks to allow all non-attendees time to complete
April 2021	Data analysis, using anonymised data	Analysis allowed Patrick to focus training development on the four priority areas of confidence identified through the tool. One of these – 'collaboration with peers' – was especially timely as this took place during pandemic lockdowns when people were working remotely Relevant resources identified and mapped to the priority areas so individuals could easily find content that their personal discovery tool report showed they needed. "We wanted to make it very easy for them to get started," says Patrick
June 2021	Embedding the tool into HR processes: working with HR to add the discovery tool's 'overall digital capabilities' question set into mandatory annual 'performing and developing' forms	Each individual's report from the discovery tool is private but they're encouraged to identify a development objective and agree it with their line manager during their annual review
August 2021	'Overall digital capabilities' question set added to the induction form for all new starters, with specific training built into the probationary period	Adding digital skills training to mandatory training requirements makes it 'business as usual'

Talk about it – all the time, to everyone
The discovery tool is being embedded into as many university processes and initiatives as possible, and Patrick is making sure this isn't done by stealth.

"We talk about it often, at all levels," explains Patrick. *"We talk to senior leaders to get their buy-in. We need them to make sure time is given for training and we want their enthusiasm for it to cascade down. We keep the conversation going on Teams channels, and we give progress updates in staff newsletters. Talking about it shows people we're serious about supporting their development."*

Extending the programme
In summer 2022 the university launched a digital skills progression programme for academics who want to keep working on their skills and confidence. To complete the entry level they simply have to complete the questions contained within the discovery tool, attend at least two training sessions in, for example, Teams, Moodle and Panopto, and show they have completed some elements of self-directed learning through Microsoft Learn. They have the university's full support to complete successive levels and they achieve recognition when they do. Patrick comments:

"This is our latest initiative to embed the tool and put digital at the front of people's minds. Our plans are coming together and digital is becoming second nature for teaching staff – they are even starting to request training in new areas.

"In early 2023 we will introduce a digital skills programme designed to meet the training needs of our professional services staff. In time, we may introduce the discovery tool for students."

Patrick's tips for implementing the discovery tool

- Get senior leadership on board

- Create dedicated events to promote it and give people an opportunity to engage

- Keep the conversation going about the tool and your digital capabilities programme

- Embed the tool into other institutional initiatives and programmes

- Provide accessible, easy and engaging learning resources

Leeds Trinity University's IT systems trainer Patrick Turner is a member of the Microsoft Innovative Educator Program (docs.microsoft.com/en-us/learn/educator-center/programs/microsoft-educator), a global community of digital innovators committed to supporting teacher effectiveness and a better student learning experience.

As part of the programme he contributes to workshops, detailing Leeds Trinity's work to build digital capabilities and its use of the discovery tool. He received a Microsoft Innovative Inspiration Award for this in 2022.

To find out more about our digital capabilities service and about the discovery tool visit jisc.ac.uk/building-digital-capability and digitalcapability.jisc.ac.uk/our-service/discovery-tool.

Or if you prefer, contact your account manager: jisc.ac.uk/contact/your-account-manager