

Jisc

Medr
Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Enhancing the digital future of Welsh FE

Priorities and sustainable investment beyond Digital 2030

This study was commissioned by Medr and undertaken by Jisc to assess the future digital investment needs of Further Education Institutions (FEIs) in Wales.

It examines how colleges have used Welsh Government's 2022–25 Call-to-Action funding to strengthen digital learning and identifies what is now required to sustain and scale this progress. The report is intended to inform future policy and funding decisions and to support college leaders in shaping the next phase of digital transformation across Wales's FE sector.

Drawing on desk-based analysis and interviews with senior leaders from all 13 FEIs, ColegauCymru and Estyn, the study builds on the Digital 2030 framework, originally co-constructed by Welsh Government, the post-16 sector and Jisc, which continues to guide digital learning and teaching in Wales.



A strong foundation for digital transformation

Since Digital 2030 was launched in 2019 and the Call-to-Action funding introduced in 2022, the FE sector has achieved measurable progress that has strengthened its capability and resilience.

Together these initiatives have:

- Enabled over £9 million of targeted investment in networks, devices, hybrid learning, accessibility and cyber security
- Accelerated digital confidence among staff and learners, supported by professional learning and peer networks
- Improved inclusion and accessibility, with device-loan schemes, accessibility audits and bilingual delivery now embedded in provision
- Strengthened leadership and collaboration, with digital strategies developed in every college and active coordination across the FE network
- Colleges report clear impact in improved wifi and connectivity, enhanced cyber resilience through partnership with Jisc, modernised learning environments and increased learner engagement through digital platforms and emerging technologies such as AI and XR

Challenges to sustaining progress

While progress has been substantial, FE leaders highlight a series of challenges that could limit future impact if not addressed through long-term planning and investment:

- Short-term, capital focused funding cycles that restrict sustainability and sector wide collaboration
- Policy and funding frameworks that have not yet fully adapted to cloud-based services and AI adoption
- Inconsistent connectivity, particularly affecting rural campuses
- Rising cyber security and licensing costs
- Staffing pressures and digital-skills gaps



Strategic priorities for future investment

The study identifies six inter-linked priorities that will enable Wales's FE sector to build on its current success and deliver sustainable digital transformation aligned to national priorities:

1. **Changing the funding mechanisms** – Introduce flexible, multi-year funding that combines capital and revenue elements, recognising digital infrastructure as an ongoing operational need rather than a one-off investment.
2. **Consistency and maintenance of technologies** – Establish sustainable funding and clear national standards for connectivity, cyber security and infrastructure maintenance.
3. **Encouraging the uptake of emerging technologies** – Support sustainable innovation in AI and XR, recognise intangible digital assets and enable bilingual technology development.
4. **Embedding Artificial Intelligence (AI)** – Refresh Digital 2030 through an AI lens, guided by coordinated policy and investment to ensure equitable and ethical use.
5. **Staffing and skills** – Invest in professional learning, shared specialist roles and national digital-competency standards to strengthen workforce capability.
6. **Collaborative solutions** – Build on strong local partnerships to develop sector-wide shared services, procurement and infrastructure coordination that maximise value for money.

A shared direction for the sector

Welsh Government's strategic commitment through Digital 2030 and the Call-to-Action has been pivotal in accelerating digital transformation. Responsibility for digital learning and FE funding transferred to Medr in 2024, offering an opportunity to consolidate that success through a coordinated, long-term approach.

The findings demonstrate that Wales's FE sector is ready to move from one-off investment to sustainable digital strategy. Colleges have built strong leadership and capability; what is now required is policy and funding stability to match that ambition.

With continued collaboration between Medr, Welsh Government, Jisc and the FE sector, Wales can deliver a post-16 system that is resilient, inclusive and digitally confident, realising the ambition of Digital 2030.