University of South Australia

2015-2020
Digital Learning Strategy

UniSA's
Digital learning future

I am delighted to present our strategic plan for transforming the digital learning experience at UniSA.

The *University of South Australia Digital Learning Strategy 2015-2020* builds on our values of innovation, scholarship, engagement and openness and outlines the vision, strategic priorities, commitments and key projects that will provide enhanced educational offerings, as articulated in the University's strategic plan *Crossing the Horizon 2013-2018*.

Extensive consultation with the UniSA community has been crucial in informing this strategy and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who contributed to the conversation while our thoughts evolved. Further consultation will be undertaken as individual projects are progressed.

In developing our strategy we were aware that the Australian Government is proposing radical reforms to higher education, which will provide students with more choice in where they study than ever before. Irrespective of the outcomes of these reform proposals, competition between educational providers will intensify. Universities will need to sharpen their focus on the quality of their degree offerings and the overall student experience they provide. Graduate employment outcomes will become a key determinant of the value of a university degree.

UniSA has an excellent reputation in teaching and learning and an enviable record of achievement in graduate employability. For this, we acknowledge the strong commitment of our staff — past and present — to preparing work-ready graduates through relevant and industry-informed curricula. In large, but certainly not exclusively, much of this preparation occurs through face-to-face student-staff interactions. The immense value that our students and graduates place on these interactions came through very strongly during all stages of consultation. So, in launching a strategy for enhancing digital learning it is important to emphasise our commitment to face-to-face teaching as the primary mechanism through which we inspire, train and develop highly competent graduates who are prepared for a future of life-long learning.

At the same time, we cannot allow the age of digital disruption and learner enablement to pass without embracing the genuine opportunities it provides for curriculum transformation, improved student accessibility to education, and an enriched student experience. We also cannot dismiss our obligations to provide students with the best possible learning resources, to encourage deeper and broader intellectual engagement and to support personalised learning and assessment strategies. Our digital learning strategy extends beyond the support we provide for our current students. It will become a vehicle through which our academic staff will become educators for a global audience.

The *University of South Australia Digital Learning Strategy 2015-2020* is a whole-of-university strategy, through which we will deliver an engaging curriculum, support our students to be productive professionals in a digital age, expand our flexible learning arrangements, develop our academics to be leaders in the digital learning experience, and inspire the entire UniSA community through life-long learning. By 2020 UniSA will be recognised internationally as a leading university for its use of innovative digital technologies to ensure a high quality student learning experience.

Professor Allan Evans
Provost and Chief Academic Officer

The digital
learning environment

We are living in a rapidly evolving digital world, where technology pervades almost every aspect of our lives. Our students and staff are accustomed to connecting, inquiring and discovering online, but as a sector, Australian universities are yet to fully capitalise on the potential that new digital technologies can bring to education.

There are key drivers for universities to embrace digital learning. Students now have access to more information than ever before, are increasingly mobile and globally connected, have diverse needs, and require flexibility to balance work, family and study commitments. Industry and the community seek professionals who are digital leaders, with transferrable skills and knowledge, creativity, developed networks, and the ability to engage locally and globally.

Now is the time to challenge our institutional practices and collectively embrace pedagogical models that further engage our learners in their education. We need to introduce scalable and sustainable practices that better leverage the affordances that technologies can provide to deliver a flexible and personalised learning experience.

Building on our
digital learning success

In 2009 we launched our Personal Learning Environment initiative, which included the establishment of *learnonline* – our learning management platform. With more than 11 million student log-ins to *learnonline* in 2014 it is clear that UniSA is well advanced in its blended model of teaching, where digital resources complement face-to-face teaching. We continue to extend the capabilities of *learnonline* to allow ongoing innovation in our teaching practices and learning resources and to respond to the needs of staff and students.

Lectures at UniSA have been made available as digital recordings since 2010, with access to these recordings via *learnonline* peaking at almost 700,000 'views' in 2014. The lecture is being transformed from an opportunity for a student to receive 'content' from a single academic, at a single place, at a single time, to an enduring resource that can be enriched with digital content from multiple sources and remain available for students to engage with where and when they like, at their own pace, and with their own device. Increasingly, academic staff are using the video production studios on each of our campuses to create high-quality recorded presentations. As the quality of our digital lecture production improves students are increasingly

deciding to watch and listen to lectures online rather than attend in person.

At the same time, our teaching spaces are becoming more collaborative. The state-of-the-art Jeffrey Smart Building, which opened in 2014, combines digitally enabled teaching and study spaces with student learning and support services; a model that is being replicated across all of our campuses. We also have a vast array of specialised laboratories, clinics, workshops and studios that draw on cutting-edge digital technologies to provide unique experiential learning opportunities for our students and facilitate staff-student engagement.

These recent developments build on UniSA's long tradition of distance education and off-campus learning. Indeed, in 2014 40% of our 33,549 students decided to take one or more components of their degree online in areas such as business, social work, information technology, education, health and engineering. This flexibility is seen by many students as a major differentiator for UniSA.

UniSA is well positioned to build on its strong foundation in blended and online education to lead the sector with its institution-wide strategy.

learnonline
UniSA's learning management system

learnonline provides an integrated suite of tools that support teaching and learning at UniSA. Built on the Moodle platform, every UniSA course has a dedicated *learnonline* website, through which students interact with other students and staff.

Current features of *learnonline* include:

> **Lecture recording and personal capture:** the *learnonline* lecture recording system is powered by Echo 360 software and provides an automated solution to record the audio content of lectures and images processed through the data projector. Recordings are automatically scheduled and published to the *learnonline* course site as Flash, M4V video and MP3 audio files which can be viewed or downloaded by students.

> **Virtual classroom:** powered by Adobe Connect, a web conferencing technology, virtual classrooms provide an online environment, accessed from *learnonline* course sites, in which students and academics can collaborate in real time. Audio, video, images and a range of interactive tools can be used to create a face-to-face classroom interaction.

> **ePortfolio:** the ePortfolio is a student's personal online space for collecting and recording academic, professional and life experiences with text, photo, video, music and multimedia. Students can use it to build a resume, publish a blog, showcase achievements and academic knowledge, or simply network with friends and colleagues.

> **Turnitin:** an online tool used to promote academic integrity at UniSA. Turnitin can be used to verify the originality of any text document. Text based assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin when uploaded from a *learnonline* course site and compared with millions of other documents in the Turnitin database and on the Internet.

> **iSpring Pro:** a software application that allows staff to create integrated learning modules from a PowerPoint presentation, incorporating audio commentary, videos and documents.

> **Course outline:** the course outline is made available to students prior to the commencement of a course and contains important information about the course objectives, assessment requirements, text books, teaching staff and a course calendar.

> **myCourseExperience:** through *myCourseExperience* UniSA students are encouraged to provide feedback on each of their courses and teachers through online surveys. The information collected helps UniSA enhance each of its degrees.

Our vision, objectives and strategic priorities

Vision

The University of South Australia will be recognised internationally for its use of innovative digital technologies to deliver a compelling and industry-relevant learning experience for students.

Objectives

Through an enterprise-wide digital learning approach we will:

> Support our students to become industry-engaged professionals with the digital competencies required to excel in their future careers

> Support our staff in the development of digital literacies and capabilities to evaluate and introduce new digital technologies into their teaching practice

> Provide increased opportunities for face-to-face interactions between teaching staff and students and between students and industry practitioners

> Improve the utilisation of digital technologies to provide authentic experiential learning opportunities

> Provide flexible and personalised learning opportunities to allow students to have more control of their progression through their degree

> Expand the reach of our academic programs locally, regionally and globally

> Inspire life-long learning among UniSA students, alumni, staff and the external community

> Ensure that digital innovations in teaching and learning can be undertaken seamlessly, reliably and sustainably within our overarching learning platform

> Build and foster a culture of innovation across our academic community

> Develop a culture of evidence-based practice and continuous improvement in the use of digital technologies in our teaching and their impact on student learning and graduate outcomes

Strategic priorities

To achieve our objectives we will deliver on a series of commitments and key projects aligned with five strategic priorities:

> **Strategic Priority 1:** Delivering an engaging and digitally enriched curriculum

> **Strategic Priority 2:** Supporting our students to become productive professionals in a digital age

> **Strategic Priority 3:** Expanding our flexible learning arrangements

> **Strategic Priority 4:** Developing our academics as leaders in the digital learning experience

> **Strategic Priority 5:** Inspiring and supporting life-long learning

Strategic
priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Delivering an engaging and digitally enriched curriculum

UniSA will transform its curriculum to make the best use of digital technologies in the design, development and delivery of our degrees. We will ensure our students are provided a high quality and digitally rich learning environment, including state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities, systems, and resources.

Our commitments

1.1　We will take a whole of curriculum approach to designing our degrees to ensure an optimal blend of face-to-face teaching and online resources.

1.2　We will commit to extending the capabilities of *learnonline* to enable innovation in teaching practice and ensure that all our degrees are enriched through the inclusion of digital tools, media and virtual environments.

1.3　To facilitate high quality student and staff interactions, and to ensure our students are supported with suitably equipped study spaces, we will continue to redesign our teaching and learning infrastructure, incorporating relevant digital technologies, across each of our campuses.

1.4　Continued investments will be made in our information systems infrastructure to ensure we can deliver an integrated, robust, agile and sustainable digital learning environment. We will also ensure appropriate technical support is provided across our learning systems to assist students and academic staff.

1.5　Ongoing investments will be made in our digital library to build our online resource collection, including through partnering with reputable academic publishers, and supporting our academics to develop high quality digital teaching resources and online texts.

1.6　Drawing on the latest digital technologies we will provide our students with authentic assessment tasks that enable them to receive timely and personalised feedback to assist them in their development.

1.7　To help students to build their knowledge and understanding over their degree, and revise key disciplinary concepts, we will provide students with access to online resources in *learnonline* for the courses they have completed throughout their degree.

1.8　The University will form strategic partnerships with other universities and educational providers to develop and share high quality online learning resources and courses.

Strategic
priorities

Strategic Priority 2: Supporting our students to become productive professionals in a digital age

UniSA will empower its students to develop their digital competencies to excel in their future careers. We will provide opportunities for online collaboration that enable students to engage and develop their peer and professional networks.

Our commitments

2.1 Throughout each UniSA degree students will build their media literacies, including skills in communicating using digital systems relevant to their disciplines. We will facilitate the development of student capabilities to navigate a complex information landscape, question the authenticity and reliability of unfiltered information, engage with scholarly publications and assume greater control over their own learning.

2.2 Our degrees will provide students with exposure to the digital technologies and systems specific to their industry and field of work, ensuring our graduates are equipped with the professional skills and capabilities required in their future careers.

2.3 Our students will have greater opportunities to build their connections with other students, staff and industry practitioners, to support their learning and develop their professional networks, through online collaboration.

2.4 UniSA students will have access to dedicated online resources for their degree to prepare them for their studies and to help build a sense of community through connecting and engaging with other students and staff.

2.5 We will continue to invest in our online systems to manage students' industry work placements in conjunction with government, community and professional organisations.

Strategic
priorities

Strategic Priority 3: Expanding our flexible learning arrangements

UniSA will provide students with enhanced opportunities to tailor their studies to suit their personal circumstances. We will develop digital solutions that allow students to choose their own device, and where and when they study, and to determine their pace of progress through their degree.

Our commitments

3.1 Through the use of high quality digital content we will expand our suite of online programs and dramatically reduce our reliance on traditional lectures for content delivery.

3.2 For all undergraduate degrees our students studying on campus will have the choice to complete at least 25% of their studies online, enabling a more flexible timetable and adding versatility to individual study choices.

3.3 We will enable students who study on campus to have greater choice in where and when they attend classes across our metropolitan and regional campuses.

3.4 Through digital technologies students will have increased opportunities for self-regulated learning and will have greater opportunities to personalise their pace of progress through their degree.

3.5 We will provide students with access, from anywhere and any device, to the specialised software applications they need to support their learning.

3.6 We will shift from a traditional model of 'examination-hall' testing using paper-based submissions to greater use of computer-based examinations and validated online invigilation.

Strategic
priorities

Strategic Priority 4: Developing our academics as leaders in the digital learning experience

UniSA will encourage a culture of innovation in which academic staff are empowered and enabled to advance their teaching practices in a rapidly changing digital environment. We will support staff to develop their digital proficiency to enhance interactions with students and to provide them with improved learning resources.

Our commitments

4.1 We will support our academic staff through a comprehensive professional development program to enhance their teaching practices, interactions with students, and approaches to curriculum design.

4.2 Formal qualifications leading to a Master of Education in digital technologies will be offered to support secondary and tertiary teachers to specialise in teaching within a digitally enriched learning environment. Competitive scholarships to complete this degree will be made available to UniSA academic staff.

4.3 Digitally enabled teaching practices will form an integral component of the performance expectations of UniSA academic staff.

4.4 We will recruit academic staff with expertise in digital learning and teaching pedagogies and will incorporate training in UniSA's digital learning approaches and systems within the induction program for all new academic staff.

4.5 Grants will be made available for academic staff to undertake research to inform innovations in teaching and learning, and to collaborate with universities and industry to develop understandings of best practice digital learning approaches, for application at UniSA.

4.6 We will assist academic staff to create and manage engaging video content and to facilitate a shift in learner behaviour from students as passive consumers of content to active creators of digital resources.

4.7 We will support our early-career academics through providing online in-depth information on a wide variety of topics related to teaching and learning, including course design, classroom technologies and strategies, student engagement, assessment design, evidence-based teaching practice and other useful teaching tools.

4.8 Academics who show leadership and excellence in teaching and learning within a digital environment will be recognised and rewarded.

Strategic
priorities

Strategic Priority 5: Inspiring and supporting life-long learning

UniSA will extend the reach of its faculty expertise and talents to our local, national and global community. We will inspire prospective and current students, graduates, industry practitioners and the general public to pursue life-long learning.

Our commitments

5.1 Recent graduates will be provided ongoing access to the online learning resources offered throughout their degree. This will ensure that they can draw upon previous educational experiences as they progress into their professional career and are provided with additional post-graduate study opportunities.

5.2 To support our graduates, industry and the community in their pursuit for life-long learning we will offer a suite of online professional programs to allow individuals to dip in and out of study to meet the ongoing professional accreditation requirements of industry.

5.3 Our researchers will be supported to develop high quality online content for inclusion as teaching and learning materials in undergraduate and postgraduate curricula.

5.4 To showcase our research themes and expertise, we will support researchers in the development of online documentaries, symposia, webinars, and virtual exhibitions.

Key
projects

The following key University-wide projects will be delivered to support the achievement of our commitments across our strategic priorities.

1. UniSA Online

We will offer 20 off-campus degrees through UniSA Online, which will:

> extend our leading undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to students based locally, in regional South Australia, interstate and overseas

> offer flexible learning, such that students can choose where and when they study, to help balance their work, study and personal commitments

> provide students with opportunities to gain real-world experience and engage with industry, to ensure every UniSA graduate has the professional competencies that employers and the community demand

> ensure every student is well supported to succeed with their studies through the provision of personalised learning support.

2. UniSA^{TV}

We will launch UniSA^{TV} to enable prospective, current and previous students, staff and the external community to access high quality educational content relating to UniSA's teaching disciplines and research activities free of charge. UniSA^{TV} will provide:

> open access to high quality digital content covering UniSA's teaching and research disciplines, including content from our academic programs, documentaries, research seminars, symposia, artistic performances and virtual exhibitions

> access to a rich repository of online research papers produced by current and past academics

> prospective students and their families exposure to the teaching and research activities across our broad disciplines

> current students with opportunities to explore knowledge beyond the boundaries of their own academic program

> alumni with continued access to academic material to keep up to date with their field and maintain their connection to their alma mater

> individuals with online resources to undertake continuing professional education for self-development and accreditation purposes

> schools, industry and community groups with access to high quality educational content to assist in teaching and training.

Key
projects

3. Teaching Infrastructure Master Plan

We will develop a Teaching Infrastructure Master Plan to coordinate the redesign of our teaching spaces to facilitate high quality digital learning experiences and interactions between students and staff. Through this plan we will:

> continue to invest in collaborative teaching and learning spaces as we move to a blended mode of curriculum delivery

> ensure that our laboratories, workshops, studios and simulation facilities are equipped with cutting-edge digital technologies

> provide digitally enriched study and social spaces

> enhance connectivity across our metropolitan and regional campuses

> enable remote access to tutorials, workshops and other activities.

4. Learning Technology Enhancement

As the University's primary online learning platform, we will continue to invest in developing the capacity and functionality of *learnonline,* and provide greater access to essential learning resources, including:

> program-based online resources for students that provide a sense of community, facilitating connections with industry, professional bodies, fellow students as well as access to quality learning resources

> video creation and editing software, tools and support to enable academic staff to produce high quality video content

> increased access to online learning resources for the following groups:
  – prospective students with interests in particular disciplines
  – current students throughout the life of their program
  – recent graduates seeking to remain connected to their program

> greater student access to specialised software applications from anywhere, anytime and any device.

Transforming the digital learning
experience across UniSA

Redesigning our curriculum and strengthening the UniSA digital learning experience will require a whole-of-University commitment.

This strategy will draw on the expertise, creativity and innovative approaches of all our staff and students. Each of our academic divisions, schools, central administrative units and the student cohort will play a pivotal role in translating our strategy across UniSA through the commitments and key projects outlined in our ambitious plan.

The commitments articulated in this strategy will be supported by the Curriculum Innovation Process, enterprise support plans, and division, school, unit and local area strategic and operational plans.

Each of the key projects outlined in this strategy will be led by the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, in conjunction with dedicated project teams.

A budget will be made available to support the commitments outlined in this strategy, including funds to invest in pilot projects and research activities to inform innovative teaching practices.

A Digital Learning Strategy Steering Group, led by the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, will oversee the implementation of the strategy. A detailed Roadmap will chart our course of action to deliver on our plan over the next five years, and annual progress reports will be provided to staff and students.

University of South Australia

Further information about the *University of South Australia Digital Learning Strategy 2015-2020* is available, including:

> background paper for the consultation process

> literature and research on digital learning practices

> details on the consultation process to inform the strategy

> showcases of online learning resources across UniSA

> updates on progress with implementing the strategy

Visit: unisa.edu.au/digitallearning