

‘Beyond blended’ pillars: strategic lenses

About

These lenses have been designed to provide a starting point for strategic discussions around blended learning, such as planning and using campus spaces, timetabling and other related agendas. The lenses align with the Jisc [framework for digital transformation](#), in particular the areas of **organisational digital culture** and **knowledge development**. You may choose different lenses depending on your role or the strategic projects that you are involved with. The lenses can be used in conjunction with the other curriculum resources produced by the Jisc curriculum and learning design project that are available from the **beyond blended: rethinking curriculum and learning design** web guide. Each lens starts from our ‘beyond blended pillars’ and offers a set of related prompts or questions. These are not definitive and can be edited to suit your organisational needs. There is some repetition between the lenses as there are some issues that are relevant across all of the lenses. A blank template is also included so you can design a complete lens to suit your project or organisation.





The lenses are:



- Holistic strategic issues
- Learning space design
- Platform design
- Teaching time and workload
- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- Data collection and analytics



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Holistic strategic issues


Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the needs of each programme of study factored into timetabling and room bookings? • How are campuses and learning spaces designed to maximise the benefits of in-person learning? • Are spaces flexible and reconfigurable? • What specialist learning spaces are available and might we need to develop in response to emerging technologies? • What does it mean to be 'at' university for our students? How are we building inclusive in-person communities?
 <p>Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What platforms are provided and what are learners choosing for themselves? • How do learners and educators rate our online platforms and what improvements or alternatives would they like? • How are the needs of different programmes and groups of students taken into account in the development of platforms and digital infrastructure? • How are we building inclusive online communities within and beyond programmes?
 <p>Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What flexibility is afforded for curriculum teams to choose different session types and schedules, including assessment schedules? • How do we support students outside of timetabled hours? • What opportunities do we offer, or plan to offer, for flexible study such as part-time, staggered start, micro-credentials etc? How do these meet the changing needs of learners and stakeholders?
 <p>Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constraints of the physical campus can we mitigate by using our virtual estate (for example carbon costs, out-of-date teaching rooms)? How are we planning to better integrate online and in place learning experiences? • How can we do this across places and courses of study, rather than for a few specialist locations? • How do learners and educators contribute to our curriculum models and frameworks, including for blended learning?

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Flex Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What day-to-day flexibility is afforded to educators and learners to support their needs? Are our systems flexible enough? • How does curriculum flexibility support our strategies for accessibility and inclusion? • Do we have a strategy for offering diverse modes of assessment and feedback? • How is resilience being built into the curriculum system to meet future shocks? • How can learners access services away from campus and out of timetabled hours?
 <p>Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did we learn during the pandemic shift and how are we consolidating that learning? • How are we investing in staff/student digital capabilities (for example skills for different modes of learning, teaching and assessment)? • How are we investing in platforms and devices for a greater diversity of modes of learning? • What support is in place for learners and educators accessing learning online? • How do we keep our curriculum up to date as new modes emerge (for example immersive learning, AI-assisted learning)?




Learning space design




Pillar	Prompts / Questions
<div data-bbox="120 496 237 611"></div> <p>Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the university estate understand space requirements for different modes of participation? How are these spaces provisioned, in consultation with curriculum teams (for example with recording facilities, plug and play screens, wrap around wifi)? • What spaces allow large cohorts to be taught simultaneously in different locations and/or online? How are these differences managed so students can benefit equally? • How is learner engagement with the formal and informal curriculum supported (for example by providing flexible spaces for independent study and online learning, providing spaces for informal collaboration)? • How does learning space design support the broader aspirations of the university curriculum (for example sustainability, interdisciplinarity, global citizenship, equity and diversity, social justice, community engagement)? • How does the university, through its provision of space, support learners' wellbeing and sense of belonging (for example by providing spaces for students to relax, eat, meet, stay warm/cool, access facilities)? • How is data collected to understand learners' use of formal and informal spaces for learning? • Who is involved in the development/procurement/evaluation of learning and teaching spaces (for example IT/digital Services, academic teams, students, registry/timetabling, finance, estates, senior management)? How can students/external stakeholders play a meaningful role?
<div data-bbox="120 959 237 1074"></div> <p>Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are platforms chosen to support learning, teaching and assessment? How are these decisions integrated with learning space design? • How is learning space design made flexible and responsive to future developments in learning platforms and in modes of learning? • What assumptions are made about learners' and educators' access to university platforms? How are these assumptions built into learning space design? How might they evolve in the future, and how might they be different?

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assumptions are made about learners' use of different spaces through the day, week, and learning year? How are these assumptions built into learning space design and use? How could things be different? • How are the changing needs of learners taken into account in learning space design (for example consideration of students learning in transit, in parental homes and away from home, in different time zones, and studying while unable to attend in person)? • How does learning space design support different session types, timings and paces of learning (for example live co-located sessions, live online sessions, independent study, time-window or drop-in sessions, different timed assignments/assessments, iterative learning)?
 <p>Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is learning space design, timetabling and access to different spaces informed by changing pedagogies and modes of participation? For example how does room allocation and timetabling support large cohorts? • How do different learning spaces support students in collaborative and independent, live and own-time learning? How do spaces enable students to transition among different modes of learning? • How does the campus overall reflect the pedagogical values of the university? • How are IT services supporting diverse learning spaces, with facilities for different modes, alongside relevant safe/durable/accessible devices and systems, and general and specialist software?
 <p>Flex Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What choices do learners and educators have regarding where they engage with the curriculum? How are those choices supported in practice by learning space design and allocation? • Is there flexibility within timetabling and room allocation for responsive changes (for example in response to changing student needs, session content, new opportunities)? • What spaces, bookable and flexible, are available for students to occupy as they choose? How are students given flexible access to specialist learning spaces such as studios and laboratories?




Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Support Learners and educators need support to engage in diverse modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are learners introduced to different learning spaces and supported in their use? • Do educators have development opportunities (for example formal PG certification, micro credentials, informal workshops and induction sessions) in relation to pedagogic use of learning spaces? • Do educators and learners have opportunities to evaluate and be consulted about learning space design? • Can learners and educators experience diverse places, spaces and modes of learning including innovative and interdisciplinary? • How is parity of learning ensured across different modes, particularly around student engagement and experience? How and when is this communicated to learners? • How are learners supported to develop and extend their learning ecosystem? How is this embedded into learning and teaching?




Learning platform design and implementation

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are learning spaces designed to support access to digital platforms, both formal and informal (for example students' personal study apps)? • What new spaces are being designed or provisioned to support specific platforms for learning (for example augmented and virtual reality, hybrid participation spaces, video conferencing suites, simulation environments)? • What assumptions are made about learners' and educators' access to platforms from different locations, on and off campus? How are these assumptions informed by evidence?
 <p>Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are platforms chosen and implemented for different modes of learning and session types? • How are platforms chosen and implemented for learning and engaging at scale? • How are platforms chosen and implemented for different subjects of study? • How are platforms chosen and implemented to ensure accessibility, privacy, security, equity and resilience? • How are platforms chosen and implemented to reduce carbon footprint (explore Jisc's exploring digital carbon footprints report for more information)? • How do platforms support learners' wellbeing and sense of belonging to the university? • How does platform choice and implementation support the broader aspirations of the university (for example sustainability, interdisciplinarity, global citizenship, equity and diversity, social justice, community engagement)? • Who is involved in the procurement, development and evaluation of learning and teaching platforms (for example IT/digital Services, academic teams, students, registry/timetabling, finance, estates, senior management)? • How is information about learners' use of platforms gathered and used to inform decision making?
 <p>Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are digital platforms used to support live classes, discussions and collaborations? How are presence and responsiveness maximised? • How are digital platforms used to support independent study? How are reflection and self-organisation maximised? • How are platforms used to support learning across different times and at different paces (for example providing lecture recordings, offering online collaborative environments, having a range of assignment options, flipped classroom)?

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are students supported to engage effectively across a range of platforms, session types and modes of learning? • How is the specific blend of modes and sessions negotiated with learners, and/or how is it represented to learners (for example via course schedules, lesson plans, learning pathways)?
 <p>Flex Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What choices do learners and educators have over the devices and platforms they use? • How are digital platforms providing learners with new choices, and how are these choices managed (for example taking into account teaching resource and the additional work involved in supporting more than one mode)? • What equity issues arise in relation to student choice, and how are these addressed? • How is information gathered about the platforms students are choosing and the ways they are choosing to engage, and how is this acted upon?
 <p>Support Learners and educators need support to engage in diverse modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are new learning platforms introduced to students throughout their course of study? How are any new skills for learning supported? • How is learner engagement supported through platform choice, design and use? • How are new platforms introduced to educators? What time and support do educators have to understand their affordances for teaching (for example managing presence, managing pace and timing, supporting diverse students, maximising engagement)? • What CPD opportunities do educators have to develop pedagogies for diverse modes (for example PG Cert programme, workshops, online resources, mentoring)? • How are different platforms and functionalities evaluated for the modes of learning that students are expected to engage with?




Teaching time and workload




Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are workload models (WLM) linked to ideas of place – for example how are ‘contact hours’ defined? Does this adequately reflect contemporary modes of teaching and learning? • How do WLMs reflect the requirements of different subject areas for educators and learners to be ‘in place’ (or not)? • What flexibility do teaching staff have to decide where they are located when undertaking different aspects of their role? • How does the organisation understand teaching staff use of campus space? What information-gathering and consultation takes place?
 <p>Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do WLMs reflect teaching time in platforms, and the time required to develop engaging online teaching experiences and materials? • How do WLMs reflect the requirements of different subject areas (for example with online assessments, preparing specialist platforms, software, devices and materials)? • How do WLMs take account of the need for educators to collaborate with a wider team in preparing and delivering online learning (for example professionals such as learning designers/learning technologists/librarians)? • How does the organisation understand teachers’ use of digital spaces/platforms? What information-gathering and consultation takes place?
 <p>Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do WLMs encourage the best use of teaching staff time, attention and presence across different places and platforms (for example by supporting different modes of teaching and different teaching sessions)? • How do WLMs recognise the teaching requirements of different session types? • How do WLMs recognise the additional time requirements of teaching online (for example facilitation across different time zones, meeting students’ expectations of online support)?

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are expectations around modes of learning and participation commonly shared and understood? • Do WLMs support the delivery of blended and mixed mode participation (for example, is there additional time allowing for following universal design for learning principles and providing multiple means of engagement in learning)?
 <p>Flex Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do WLMs enable educators to respond flexibly to student demand for different session types and modes of learning? • Do WLMs provide educators with flexibility to work in ways that meet their own preferences and needs?
 <p>Support Learners and educators need support to engage in diverse modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is adequate time allocated for educators to develop their teaching and learning materials? (for example attending professional development workshops/courses?) • Is adequate time allocated for educators to develop their capabilities in designing and delivering different session types? • Is adequate time and support allocated for educators to develop approaches to support large cohorts both in person and online? • What reward and recognition are in place for educators that engage in curriculum and learning design activities, and/or develop their practice to support different modes of participation?




Equity, diversity and inclusion*




*Jisc does not provide a definition of equity, diversity and inclusion as each organisation will have their own contextualised definitions, organisational values as well as policies relating to statutory regulations and requirements (for an example see this resource form see **UCL's understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion**). The prompts and questions are designed to provide additional routes to explore how approaches to learning and teaching are being developed and implemented.

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do equality, diversity and inclusion policies and implementation plans address issues of space and place design?• How is inclusive, accessible participation ensured across all places and spaces of learning?• How can learners and educators participate equitably from off-campus spaces (for example considering different access to private study space, networks and devices)?• What on-campus spaces are available for independent study and for participation in online learning? Are these sufficient, taking into account contemporary modes of learning?
 Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is equitable access to teaching and learning platforms ensured for all learners and educators? Where there are challenges to equitable participation, how are these addressed and mitigated?• How are diverse perspectives and needs taken into account in platform procurement and design, including students and educators from different user groups?
 Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is an equitable learning experience provided across in place and online modes of learning?• Can learners choose to participate in learning at different times and paces, to suit their different needs?• Can learners choose diverse pathways through the curriculum, to suit their different needs?





Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the curriculum follow UDI (universal design for learning) principles (that is, providing multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation and multiple means of action and expression)? • What examples are there of blended curricula meeting a wider range of student needs successfully? • If new modes are available (for example hybrid classes, immersive and augmented experiences), how are these made equitable, inclusive and accessible for all students?
 <p>Flex Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What choices do students have around their modes of learning and assessment? • Do students understand these choices in relation to their needs, identities and aspirations? • How are learning outcomes and learner destinations monitored in relation to different choices about modes of learning (also materials, platforms) to ensure equity overall? • What choices do educators have around their modes of teaching, and how can this enable a more diverse teaching workforce?
 <p>Support Learners and educators need support to engage in diverse modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where (and when) can educators access support for managing different modes of participation, and for considering impacts on EDI? • Where (and when) can learners access support for managing different modes of participation? • How does the organisation gather information about different types of diversity and about how they can be supported through the design of places, platforms, sessions and modes of learning? • How is effective EDI practice for learning and teaching, place and platform design, recognised by the organisation? • How is curriculum equity, diversity and inclusion evaluated? Does this include evaluation of different places, platforms and modes of learning?

Data collection and analytics

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data are we collecting on use of buildings and rooms for learning, teaching and assessment? How is this associated with particular session types (eg exams, lectures, workshops, practicals)? • How do we monitor use of student-bookable spaces and informal learning spaces on campus? • How could this inform timetabling and curriculum planning? • How might learning space data support a more sustainable curriculum (eg understanding and minimising the energy and carbon costs of different modes of learning in different places)? • How is attendance monitoring data (included in Jisc's learning analytics solution) interpreted in courses of study? • What data do we collect on use of locations off campus (eg field visits, placements)? • What data do we collect about student term-time residence/distance to travel and any impact on attendance and engagement?
 <p>Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data do we collect about students' use of tools, content and platforms? • What data do we collect about how students access tools, content and platforms (eg device types, locations, times of day/week)? • How can this data be used to inform curriculum design, while protecting students' privacy and data security? • How can this data be used to support the choice and implementation of curriculum platforms?
 <p>Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we capture data about the time allocated to different modes, sessions and activities on courses of study? • How do we capture data about different assessment types? • What research and consultation takes place to discover student preferences for live and asynchronous study, and for different assessment types?

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
 <p>Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we capture data about the modes, sessions and activities planned for each course? • How could we relate this data to student feedback about the course? How could we relate it to other information about student engagement (again assuming privacy of individual students is rigorously protected)? • What research and consultation takes place to discover student preferences for different sessions, modes of learning and timetabling arrangements?
 <p>Flex Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can data be used to give educators and students more choice? (What choices are valuable? What choices are practicable)? • How can students and educators control their own data, in order to have more agency in learning and teaching?
 <p>Support Learners and educators need support to engage in diverse modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we use existing data sets better to support curriculum design and delivery? • What support is available for curriculum teams to do this? • What support is available for using data strategically to plan learning, teaching and assessment? • What support is available to educators and students to understand the data available to them and use it to make meaningful decisions?

Create your own

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
	Place Learners and educators are always physically somewhere
	Platform Learners and educators can always be (virtually) somewhere else
	Pace Learners experience time and pace differently (synch/asynch or responsive/reflective)
	Blend Most learning has in place and online, synch and asynch elements

Pillar	Prompts / Questions
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Flex

Learners and educators expect choice and flexibility in mode(s) of learning



Support

Learners and educators need support to engage in diverse modes
