![University of Reading logo]

Our Digital Strategy

to 2027

Introducing our new vision for digital

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Contents

Executive Summary

The University of Reading has a brand new, business led Digital Strategy to take it to 2027. It's been designed and developed from the ground up with collaboration and listening as its foundations. Over 18 months, teams have joined together to debate and co-create the core strategic components, values and objectives that will enable real digital transformation. By that we mean ultimately helping to improve the lives and experiences of every student and member of staff here at the University of Reading.

The Digital Strategy has been created in line with the Estate Strategy and emerging People Strategy, agreeing a common set of drivers focused on improving the staff and student user experience, enabling growth, meeting financial and environmental sustainability targets and effectively managing our digital risks.

The programme will be delivered over 5 years to 2027 with a total expenditure forecast of between £45-50m with over 30 major programmes on the roadmap. Those projects that will deliver real transformation for our staff and students have been financially prioritised to ensure we can compete and improve productivity, whilst balancing the requirement to make sure our systems, data and cyber security needs are met.

University Council have approved this exciting and ambitious direction of travel for our digital transformation and the associated budget to realise it to 2027.

30 major programmes
The strategy will deliver 30 major programmes

5 years
The strategy will be delivered over 5 years to 2027

£45-50m
Total expenditure forcecast

Introducing our Digital Strategy to 2027

Digital is a challenging word to define. Whatever way we interpret it, we can be clear that it is, and will continue to be, a vital component in how the University works, how we interact with our students, how we grow, undertake our research, meet our sustainability targets, deliver the wider student experience, and interact with people globally.

To be clear, this is not an IT Strategy - this Digital Strategy is for the whole institution and has been crafted in a way that makes it business and consumer focused and not IT focused. Of course, the core IT infrastructure will be fit for purpose and secure, however, the strategy will deliver new values focused on an **engaging user experience**, digital fluency training for our staff and students and centred on data and analytics with **opportunities** to change how we work, teach and study using **new technologies**, processes, experiences and insights.

As the last few years have shown, nothing stays the same for very long. Agility is at the heart of our Digital Strategy and we will therefore ensure that colleagues are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be able to embrace this constant change.

"This is a Digital Strategy focused on delivering business and customer value – and is for the whole institution"

Why do we need a Digital Strategy?

As an institution, it's clear we have a lot that we want to achieve. We want to compete with the top 25 in the UK and top 200 globally. We want to inspire our students and colleagues to achieve more, and we want to grow. Digital has a big role to play in such an ambition and by having an institution wide Digital Strategy that considers all the strategic principles and aims of the University and that aligns closely to the People and Estates strategies, we can be sure that it is planned for, delivered, measured and governed appropriately to achieve those ambitions.

Our Digital Strategy will bring together the University's strategic digital business aims with the knowhow and expertise of its digital technology functions to improve existing services, implement new where needed and add benefits and value to our staff and students.

We want to be a university offering a digital estate that is focused on excellent user experience and, as a result, empowers all students and colleagues to achieve more in an increasingly competitive world. That is our new Digital vision and purpose.

Student Experience

Growth

Risk & Compliance

Staff Experience

Digital Strategy to 2027

Sustainability
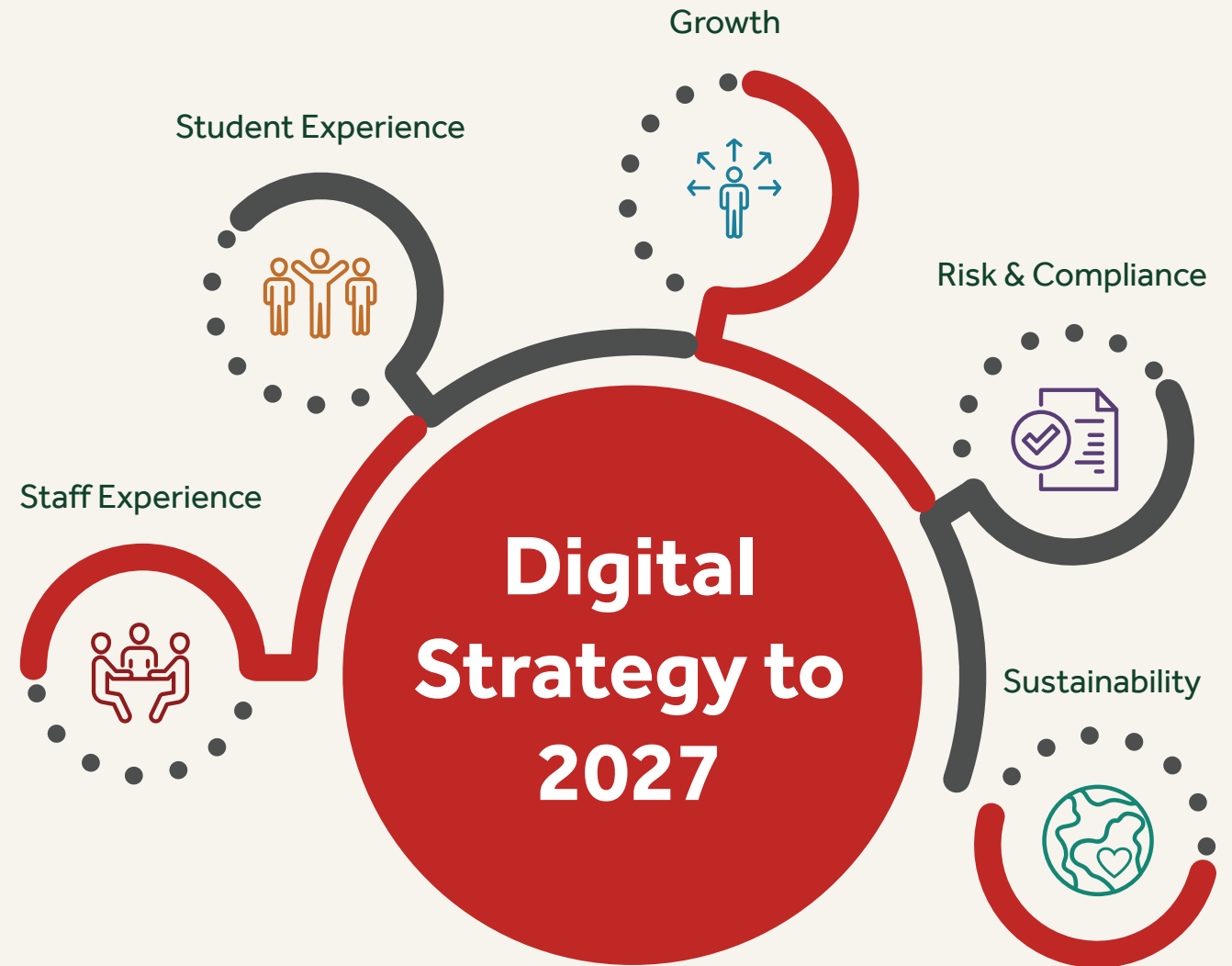
Core Drivers

This strategy will support the University's broader, overarching strategy to 2027. New core, strategic drivers, and values have been developed and agreed that will support the four key principles of Community, Excellence, Sustainability and Engaged University. The 5 core digital drivers are shared with the emerging Estates strategy above.

Empowering us all to achieve more

1. Staff Experience

- Faster, more efficient systems & support
- Improved digital capability
- Training
- Modern research infrastructure
- Easy to use & simplified experiences
- Reliable infrastructure

2. Student Experience

- Improved classroom technology
- Increased student engagement
- Employability skills & Digital capability training
- Learning analytics/Data insights
- Simplified & personalised user journey
- On demand & simplified access to information

5. Sustainability

- Modern workplace
- Device lifecycle
- Reduced exceptionalism
- Smart campus
- Automation
- Move to cloud apps
- Reducing our digital carbon footprint
- Process improvement programme

Digital Strategy

3. Growth

- Optimised infrastructure
- Support for new digital services
- Work space analytics - making better use of our spaces
- New student recruitment & retention platforms (student lifecycle)
- Data driven decisions

4. Risk & Compliance

- Accessibility & inclusivity by design
- Providing greater insights into University risk
- Cyber security programme
- Simplified data & system architecture

Core Values

To accompany these core drivers, an agreed set of core values have been developed that will focus our culture and behaviour to enable us to digitally transform.

With a simplified architecture, our data should be widely and easily used to measure our performance against targets, inform business decisions and carry out important interventions

Agreed best practice Digital ways of working and governance will be applied consistently across the University.

Our digital environment should always be seen from a user's perspective. We need to listen and deliver outcomes that add value and services with inclusivity at their core.
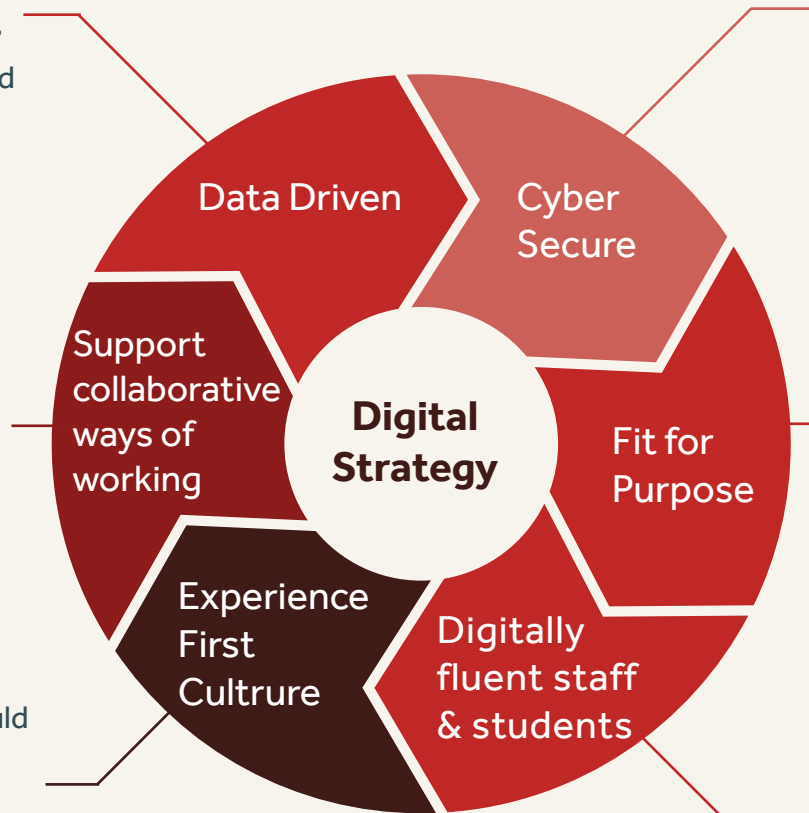
Our digital environment should be protected from malicious cyber attack through technology, working practices and education.

Our products and services will allow us to compete and be highly available, scalable and performant to changing business, teaching and research needs.

Staff and students should feel comfortable using digital technology, maximising the opportunities and improving wellbeing.

Data Driven · Cyber Secure · Fit for Purpose · Digitally fluent staff & students · Experience First Cultrure · Support collaborative ways of working — Digital Strategy
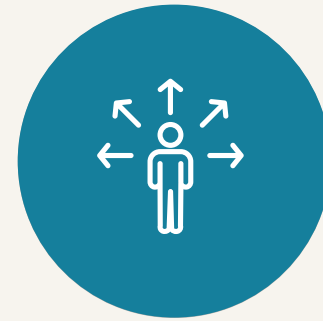
Six Digital Enablers

Technology enhancement is vital for Digital transformation, but it cannot be achieved in isolation. There are a total of 6 "enablers" that need to work in harmony to really achieve it. Culture sets the tone for transformation; processes relate to improving productivity and user experience; shared goals mean everyone pulling in the same direction (rather than working in silos); higher levels of digital skills of our people mean we will be better equipped to embrace digital change and security; and close alignment with the Estate creates a more joined up user experience between the physical and digital.

As well as the core drivers and values, we must ensure all the components set out below are in sync when designing our university wide digital operating model. This will ensure our services deliver better value for stakeholders and enable us to achieve successful transformation.

Goals/metrics · People · Processes/practices · Buildings/infrastructure · Culture · Technology
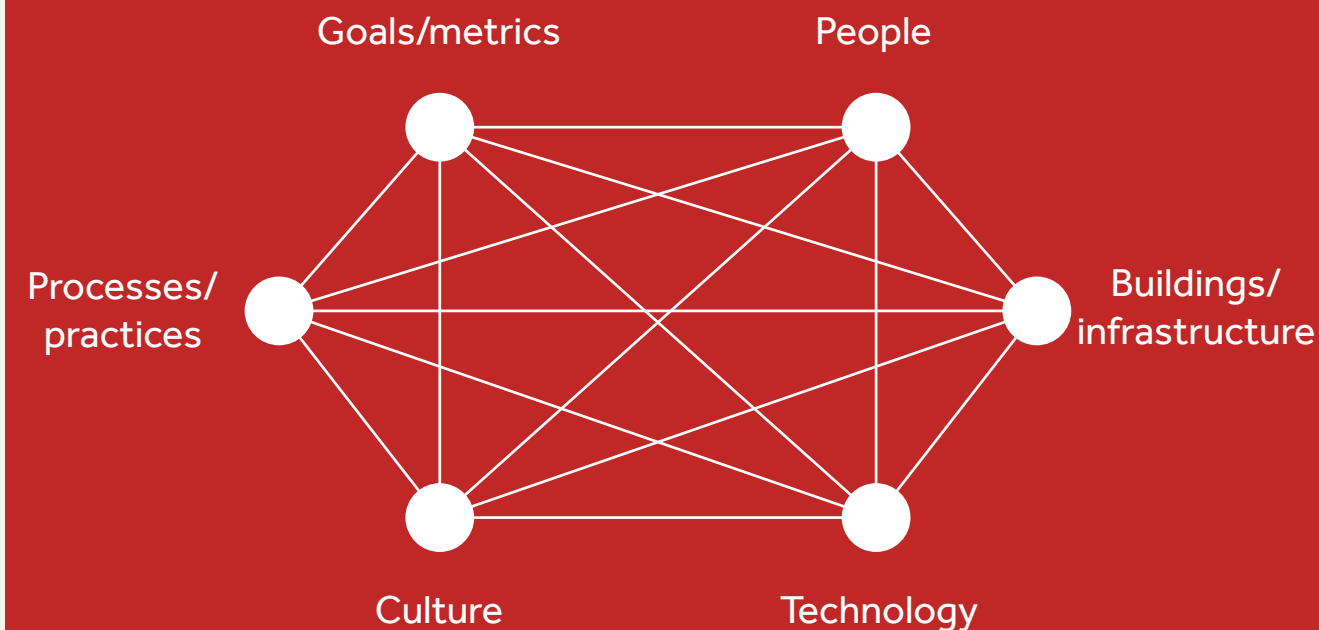
Over the next 5 years, and at a high level, this Digital Strategy will deliver:

Staff Experience

- Easy to use, reliable digital products and services focused on improving the user experience and enabling the delivery of business value.

- Support for developing digital capabilities to enable all staff to embrace change, new ways of working and prepare colleagues for this digital transformation journey and to be the best they can be

- Introduce automation as well as standardised processes and technology across the Digital estate to improve productivity and efficiency fit for a modern University.

Student Experience

- Personalised digital experience throughout the student lifecycle to improve individual student outcomes

- Simple to use and integrated digital systems and insights that provide real value to students

- In line with the Estates strategy, creating study and learning spaces with leading technologies that really enhance the experience

- Student digital skills development fit for the workplace

Growth

- Re-development of prospective student and customer relationship management tools to improve applicant levels

- Investment in online and distant learning platforms and support

- Ability to bid for new business and research by achieving compliance standards including ISO 27001

- Web development and AI to improve outreach capabilities

- Digital innovations for open days and welcome week to set lasting good first impressions for prospects and new starters

Risk & Compliance

- Reduction in risk of failure from investment in core infrastructure and systems

- Cyber Security Programme to mitigate risk and improve our ability to report data compliance.

- Extended support arrangements and 24x7 security operating centre to maintain service availability.

- Digitally accessible services by design and training programs to ensure they are maintained

Sustainability

- Smart campus initiatives to intelligently measure real time campus efficiency, occupancy levels and experiences

- Standardised processes and technology to reduce support overheads and boost productivity

- Sourcing suppliers only with sustainable credentials.

- Technology to enable hybrid working to reduce travel needs

Helping to deliver the University strategic aims to 2027

Community

Research Software Engineers Programme

Digital Talent & Skills Development

Laptop Loan Service

Current Research Information System

Product/Fusion Team Pilots

Digital Fluency Training Programmes & Champions Network

Single Service Management & Support Hub (ESM)

Hybrid Working Solutions

Cyber Security Programme

Learning Analytics

Research Preservation & Archiving

E-commerce

Core Systems Refresh & Upgrades (HR, RISIS, Estates, Finance, Library)

Research Cloud Infrastructure refresh

Accessibility Awareness & Compliance

Modern Data Architecture & Management

Student App Developments

Cyber Security Standards Programme (CE, ISO 27001)

One Digital Governance

PC lab refresh

Core Network refresh

Process improvement Programme

Device Lifecycle Programme

Web & Intranet Developments

Student Analytics

New Classroom Equipment

Blackboard Ultra

Workplace Analytics

Automation and AI

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Programme

Lifelong Learning - Micro Credentials & Online Courses

Continual Wifi investment

Digital Dining

Cloud infrastructure migration (various)

Smart Campus

Excellence

Sustainability

Engaged University

9

We have developed the core drivers and values of the digital strategy in line with the four pillars of the University (Community, Excellence, Sustainability and Engaged University) outlined below. This will ensure that our digital estate fully supports the delivery of the overarching University Strategy to 2027 alongside other key strategic initiatives. The projects and initiatives that will get us there are outlined below.

We know that we can't do everything at once so we will be balancing compliance initiatives with exciting and value adding ones. Digital is forever changing so planning for 5 years ahead requires flexibility and agility in the approach to ensure success. The first 2 years of the strategy are more heavily focused on getting the basics right, particularly in user experience and efficiency, the latter years more on true transformation but there will be some quick wins too. Details of the projects for each driver are outlined overleaf or in Appendix A for a full roadmap:
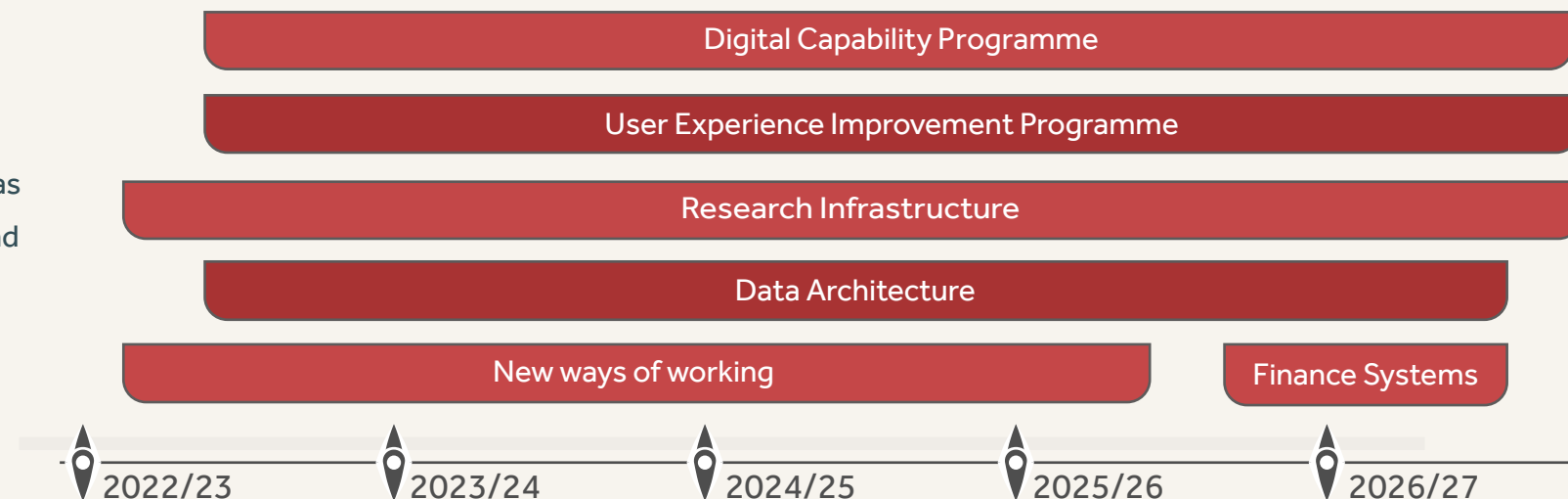
Staff Experience

Highlighted Benefits:

- Chat introduced to improve support call resolution times; processes reviewed and automated where appropriate; and resourcing levels enhanced in critical service areas
- Standardisation & simplification = reduction in support overheads across campus and better user experience
- Improved hybrid working experiences
- A research service that's easy to use and allows us to compete
- Simple to use, high performing infrastructure

Digital Capability Programme

User Experience Improvement Programme

Research Infrastructure

Data Architecture

New ways of working

Finance Systems

2022/23 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26 2026/27

Future Vision

> I'm really glad the University is enabling me to improve my digital capability - I'm able to do so much more and feel less anxious about all the new tech being introduced. it too.

> I now have a dashboard that shows me how my team is feeling and performing, which is really valuable to managing their wellbeing and workloads.

> The introduction of chat has really helped speed up the response to my queries so that I can be as productive as possible.

> The work on improving the user experience means processes are no longer tiresome to go through, there are fewer clicks and things are really joined up.

Student Experience

Highlighted Benefits:

- Digital Skills training to support learning and employability
- Good quality loan laptops to improve access to digital materials and improve inclusivity
- Simple to use, high quality and available technology that users are skilled in interacting with - driving better student outcomes
- Interventions and insights to improve learning, student and employability outcomes.
- A student app that is a one stop front door to navigating campus, finding study spaces and getting the information they need efficiently

Projects:

Learning and Student Analytics

Classroom, Study Space and Meeting Space Technology

T&L Software and Lab Equipment

Laptop Loans

Library System Refresh

New ways of working

VLE Blackboard Ultra

2022/23   2023/24   2024/25   2025/26   2026/27

Future Vision

> The onboarding was seamless! I got connected easily and up to speed really quickly on the app. I found everything I needed there in one place and found the wayfinding particularly useful...

> I've really appreciated being able to enhance my CV with employer ready digital skills that I've found from University sponsored resources.

> Finding study space and digital resources is really simple and a great user experience.

> The classroom tech always works and my lecturers understand it which makes it such a good experience whether online or face to face.
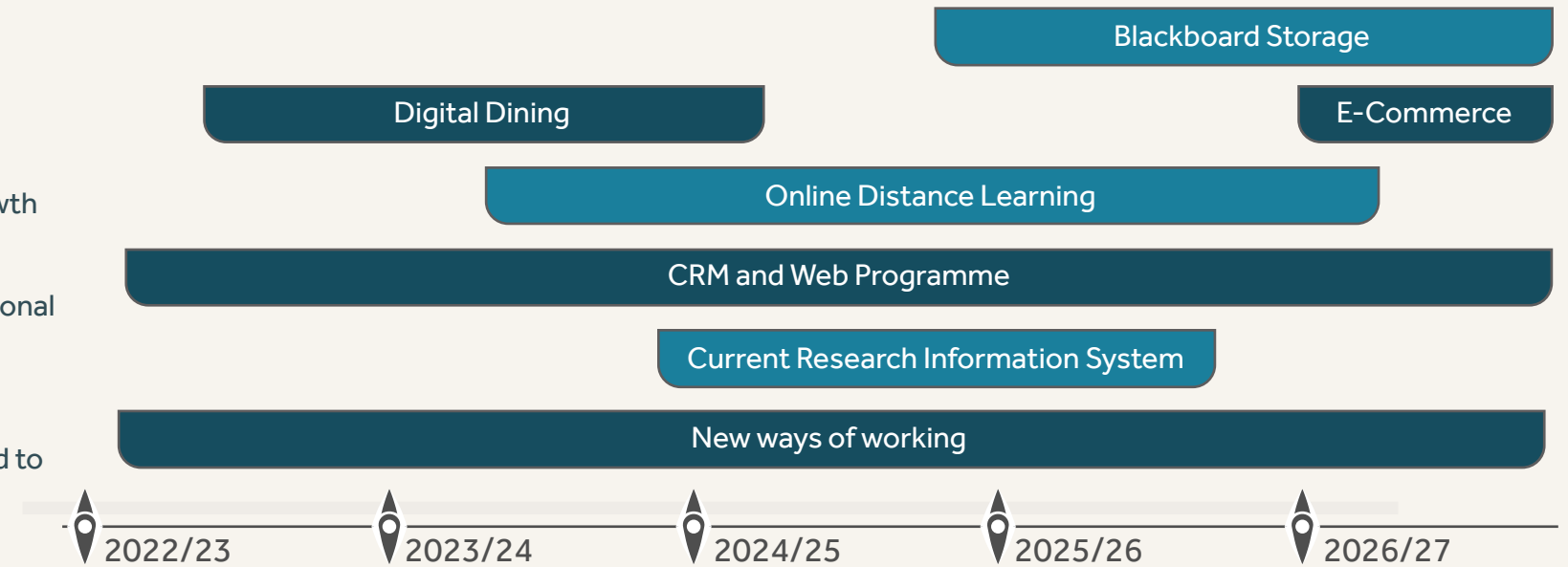
Growth

Highlighted Benefits:

- CRM and web investment will enable us to personalise the experience and drive growth through higher conversion, retention and repeat business
- Campus commerce and merchandising (e-commerce) initiatives will generate additional income through digital investments
- Cyber Security standards (ISO27001) will allow us to go after new revenue streams
- A research information system is an essential component to managing workload and to efficiently document our research for the next REF
- Our network will be fit for purpose for the digital demands of our staff and students

Projects:

Blackboard Storage

Digital Dining

E-Commerce

Online Distance Learning

CRM and Web Programme

Current Research Information System

New ways of working

2022/23   2023/24   2024/25   2025/26   2026/27

Future Vision

> The introduction of the prospects app is really helping us to provide that personalised engagement and early commitment to coming to study with us.

> The new CRM and distance learning platforms have helped us to tap into new global student markets and new business opportunities.

> Our network has been future proofed to manage demand for connectivity everywhere and anytime. It's fast, resilient and simple to support.
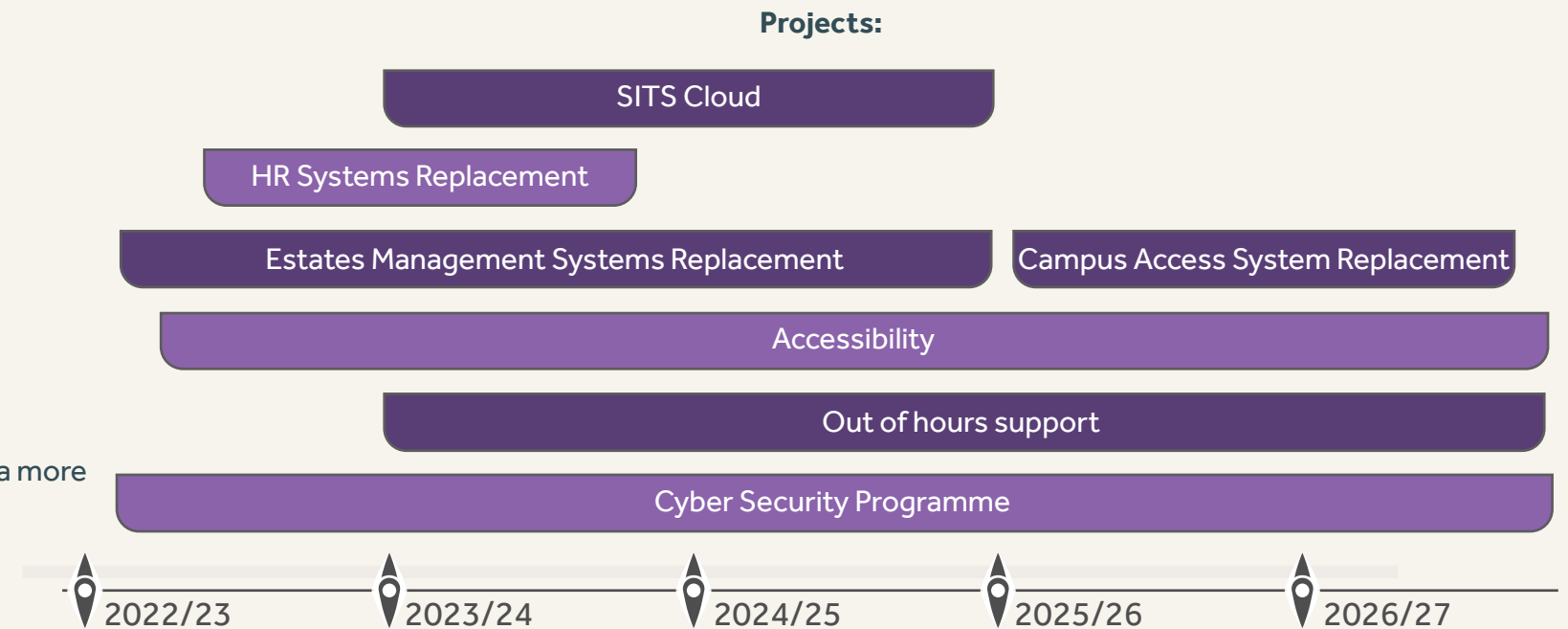
> With real time access to the space usage. I can accurately and effectively manage our space in the most optimised way...

Risk & Compliance

Highlighted Benefits:

- Risk to disruption of services reduced, particuarly at peak periods
- Improved literacy of staff and students to reduce cyber risk
- Improved performance and availability of core services
- Improved confidence in Digital risk management and risk register score reduction
- Ability to unpick the complexity of our systems and intergrations to manage our data more effectively and securely
- Cyber and Accessibility aware staff and students

Projects:

- SITS Cloud
- HR Systems Replacement
- Estates Management Systems Replacement
- Campus Access System Replacement
- Accessibility
- Out of hours support
- Cyber Security Programme

2022/23   2023/24   2024/25   2025/26   2026/27

Future Vision

> Our investment in cyber has protected us from serious business disruption and if it does ever occur, we are really well versed on our recovery.

> With a continous 5 year overview of Digital systems and products, we can ensure we plan better for contractual milestones, reduce risk and be in improved negotiating positions,

> We have improved our inclusivity score by adopting an accessibility first posture, ensuring all our digital experiences meet expectations.
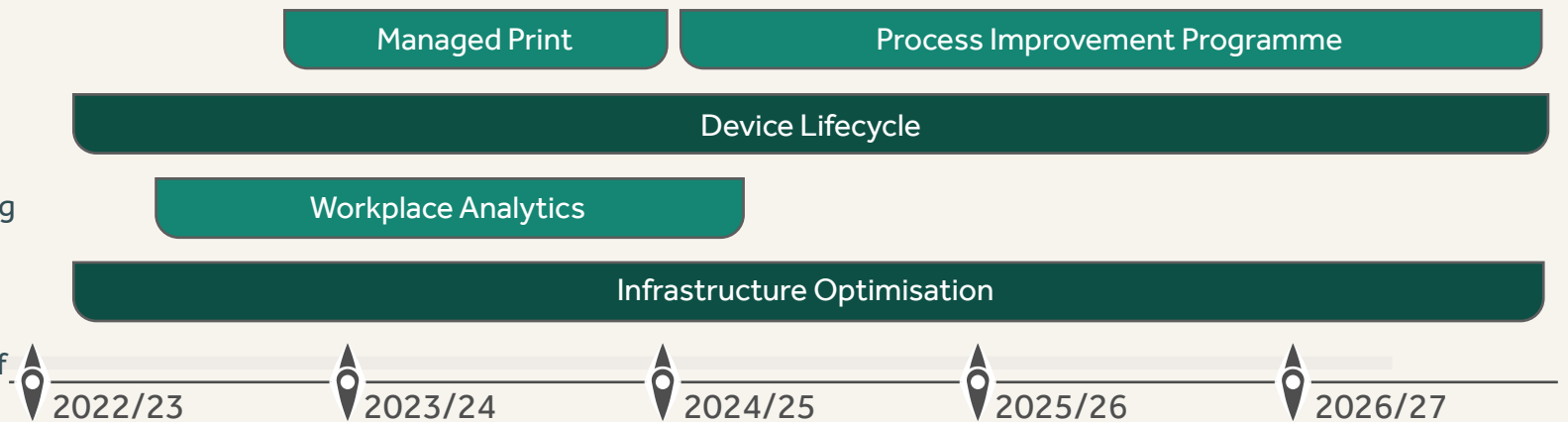
> Our data architecture is fully understood and classified correctly. We can now use it to make better business decisions and student interactions as well as manage access to it more securely.

Sustainability

Highlighted Benefits:

- Standardisation and a reduced number of devices, printers, less paper and lower power consumption related to digital to help reduce waste
- Ability to undserstand real time space occupation to maximise the use of the estate
- Reduced infrastructure carbon footprint on campus in favour of low carbon cloud hosting
- Review of inefficient processes and using AI and automation engines to improve productivity and reduce support overheads
- Introduction of a new laptop reuse/repurpose initiative to reduce waste and benefit staff and students

Projects:

Managed Print

Process Improvement Programme

Device Lifecycle

Workplace Analytics

Infrastructure Optimisation

2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27

Future Vision

> By standardising our products and services, we've reduced our support overheads as there's less to go wrong.

> We've halved the number of printers in the estate, saving money, paper and the planet.

> Our devices are power efficient and sourced from sustainable suppliers. They are powerful enough to be your desktop, tablet and laptop in one.

> We've moved over 90% of our infrastructure to Cloud in more efficient data centres and with suppliers who share our net zero goal.
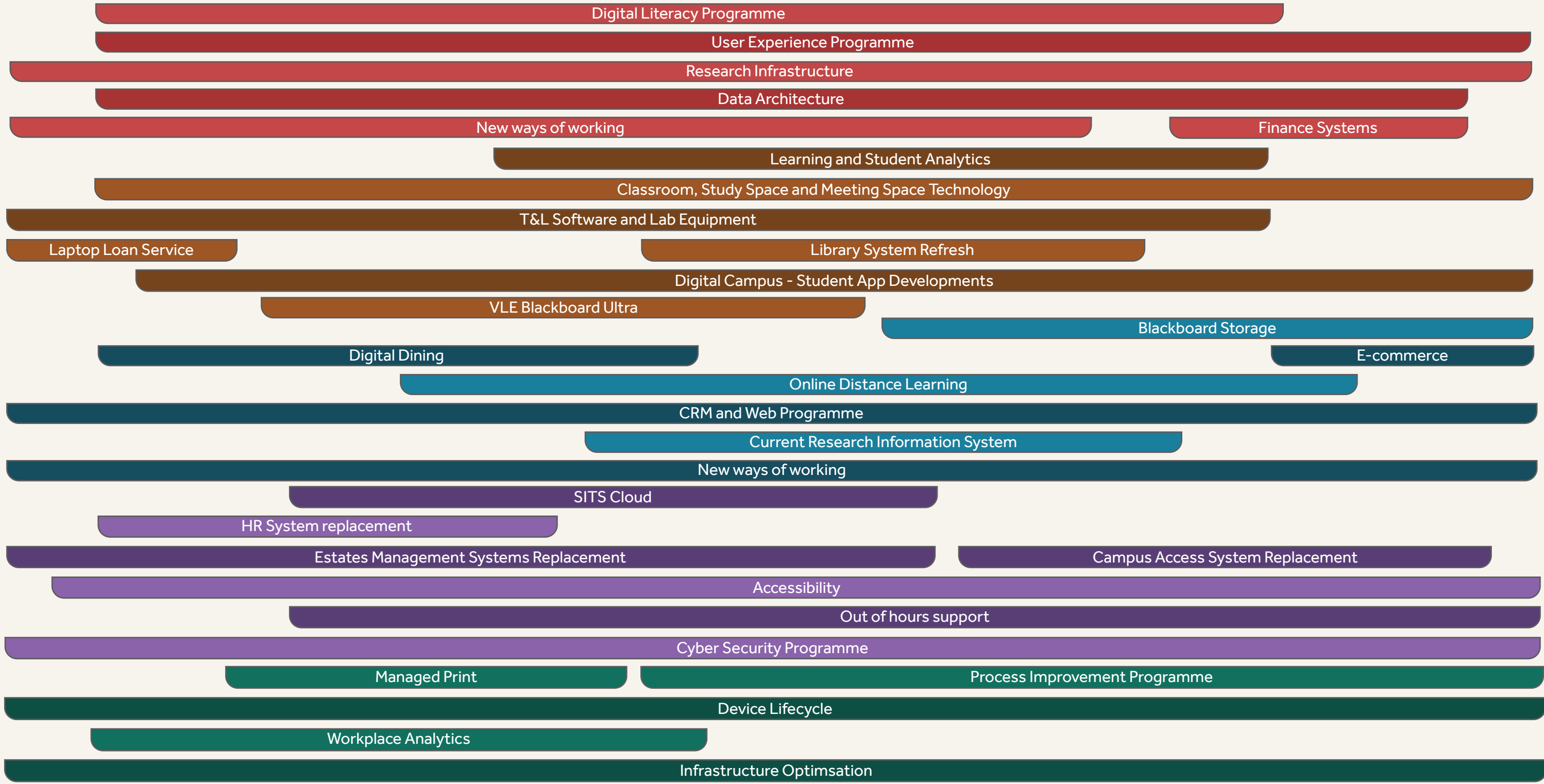
Measuring Success

	Staff Experience	Student Experience	Growth	Sustainability	Risk & Compliance
Metrics	1. % increase of staff proficient in using digital technology 2. Decrease in incidents related to core IT 3. % increase in staff survey results related to user experience 4. % increase in speed to resolution times in line with new SLA/XLA	1. NSS Q19 top 50 by 2027 related to student experience and digital 2. Impact of interventions based on data and analytics (specific KPIs to be developed) 3. Technology and training that meets the needs and levels required for business and student outcomes 4. Student voice/opinion regularly captured (through the student app)	1. Investment vs. additional income generation 2. Amount of time from set up to start seeing value from investments 3. Web stats to show increased traffic and stay time 4. Conversion and recruitment rate increase 5. Agility to go after new business (time to react) 6. Interactions that have improved outcomes and retention 7. Research growth related to digital	1. % efficiency saving in self-service and automated processes 2. % decrease in travel because of digital investments 3. % decrease in print volume 4. Ratio of devices per staff member decreased 5. % decrease in data centre and overall digital carbon footprint (including devices) 6. % increase in recycled digital assets 7. % decrease in e-waste	1. Compliance achieved where appropriate 2. Residual cyber and information risk score reduction in the corporate risk register 3. % increase in the availability of core digital products and services 4. % increase of accessibility aware staff, writing accessible content 5. % decrease in the number of business systems

Appendix - Full 5 year roadmap   Roadmap to 2027

Digital Literacy Programme

User Experience Programme

Research Infrastructure

Data Architecture

New ways of working

Finance Systems

Learning and Student Analytics

Classroom, Study Space and Meeting Space Technology

T&L Software and Lab Equipment

Laptop Loan Service

Library System Refresh

Digital Campus - Student App Developments

VLE Blackboard Ultra

Blackboard Storage

Digital Dining

E-commerce

Online Distance Learning

CRM and Web Programme

Current Research Information System

New ways of working

SITS Cloud

HR System replacement

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Campus Access System Replacement

Accessibility

Out of hours support

Cyber Security Programme

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Device Lifecycle

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Infrastructure Optimsation

| 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |