



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

University Digital *Strategy*

2026 - 2031

University
ofGalway.ie

Foreword from the *President*

Digital capability is now fundamental to how our University can deliver on its mission. It shapes the quality of teaching and learning, enables world leading research, and underpins how we operate as an effective, inclusive and sustainable organisation. The University of Galway's Digital Strategy 2026–2031 sets out a clear, coherent approach to how digital technologies will support our academic purpose and institutional ambitions.

The digital strategy is firmly aligned with the University's priorities of Distinctive Research Impact, Education for the Future, and an Effective and Sustainable Organisation that Empowers our People. It also reflects the increasingly complex environment in which universities operate, characterised by rapid technological change, heightened regulatory and cyber security requirements, and growing expectations from students, academic and professional services colleagues.

Developed through extensive engagement across the University community, this strategy recognises that digital transformation is not primarily a technology challenge. It is a strategic and cultural endeavour, requiring clear governance, shared accountability and collaboration across academic and professional services.

The three strategic themes: Enterprise IT Governance, Digital Transformation, and Data as an Enabler, provide a structured framework to guide investment, prioritisation and delivery in support of University wide goals.

This is a strategy for the whole institution. While Information Solutions and Services plays a central leadership role, its success depends on active participation and partnership across the University. I encourage all members of our community to engage with this strategy and contribute to shaping a digitally enabled future for the University of Galway.

Professor David Burn
President



Foreword from the *Director of ICT/Chief Information Officer*

The University of Galway's digital estate provides critical infrastructure for teaching, research and public service. As a publicly funded University, we must ensure that our digital capabilities are secure, resilient, well governed and aligned with national policy, while remaining responsive to institutional priorities and emerging opportunities. This Digital Strategy sets out how we will meet that responsibility.

The strategy has been developed with explicit regard to the University's Strategic Plan 2025-2030, our National Digital and AI Strategy 2030, evolving national cyber security policy and regulatory obligations, and sectoral best practice. In particular, it recognises the growing importance of strong cyber resilience, data protection, and responsible adoption of emerging technologies such as automation and artificial intelligence, in line with national and EU regulatory frameworks.

At its core, this strategy is about enterprise discipline and delivery. It establishes clear governance structures, decision-making pathways and guiding principles to ensure that digital investment is prioritised transparently, managed sustainably and delivers measurable value.

The three strategic themes, Enterprise IT Governance, Digital Transformation, and Data as an Enabler, reflect the reality that technology decisions now cut across all University functions and must be approached in a consistent, coordinated and risk aware manner.

The accompanying three year ICT Roadmap - a living document - translates strategic intent into prioritised, achievable actions, while retaining flexibility to respond to regulatory change, emerging risks and institutional needs. Information Solutions and Services (ISS) is positioned as a centre of excellence, working in close partnership with colleges, professional services and external bodies to deliver secure, resilient and scalable digital services.

Delivering this strategy will require sustained collaboration, continued investment in capability, and a willingness to adopt new ways of working. In this context ISS welcomes the University's strategic investment in the ISS Operating Model – a key enabler of the strategy.

Success will be measured not by technology outputs alone, but by the extent to which digital capability enables better decisions, reduces risk, improves experience and supports the University's long term mission, in line with national and sectoral expectations.

Dr Beatrice Heneghan
Director of ICT / Chief Information Officer



Executive Summary

The University of Galway's Digital Strategy 2026–2031 sets out a bold and transformative vision for how digital capabilities will empower our institution to thrive in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Rooted in the University's overarching strategic priorities: **Distinctive Research Impact, Education for the Future**, and an **Effective and Sustainable Organisation that Empowers our People**, this strategy articulates a digital future that is inclusive, innovative, and aligned with our academic mission.

At the heart of this strategy is a commitment to **Enterprise IT Governance, Digital Transformation**, and **Data as an Enabler** - three strategic themes that emerged from extensive consultation with stakeholders across the University community. These themes are underpinned by a set of guiding principles that include governance, operational excellence, managed data, cybersecurity, innovation, and value for money. Together, they form a coherent framework for delivering measurable impact through technology.

The strategy is not merely aspirational; it is operationalised through a detailed **three-year ICT Roadmap** that outlines high-level actions and yearly initiatives from 2026 to 2028. These include the implementation of a next-generation IT operating model, the establishment of a Digital Governance Committee, the rollout of a cloud-first strategy, and the development of AI and automation capabilities to support teaching, research, and professional services.

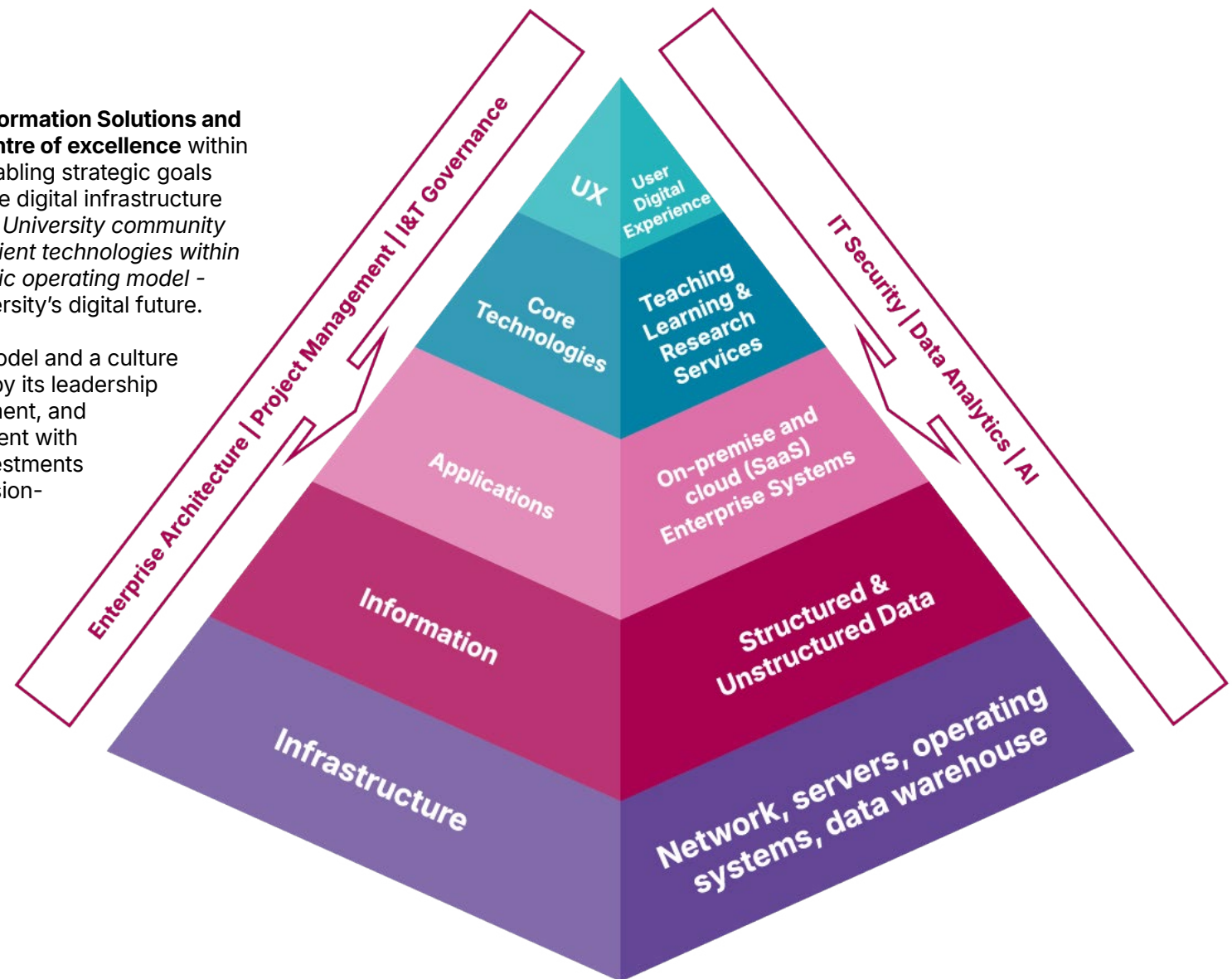


Executive Summary

Central to the delivery of this strategy is **Information Solutions and Services (ISS)**, which is positioned as a **centre of excellence** within the University. ISS plays a pivotal role in enabling strategic goals by providing resilient, secure, and innovative digital infrastructure and services. Its mission - *empowering our University community through strategic data and secure and resilient technologies within a knowledge-based and governance-centric operating model* - reflects its integral role in shaping the University's digital future.

ISS work is guided by a robust operating model and a culture of continuous improvement, as evidenced by its leadership in enterprise architecture, project management, and service delivery. The unit's strategic alignment with University priorities ensures that digital investments are not only technically sound but also mission-driven and impact-focused.

This Digital Strategy is both a roadmap and a call to action. It invites all members of the University community to engage with digital transformation as a shared endeavour, one that will enhance our collective capacity to teach, learn, discover, and serve.



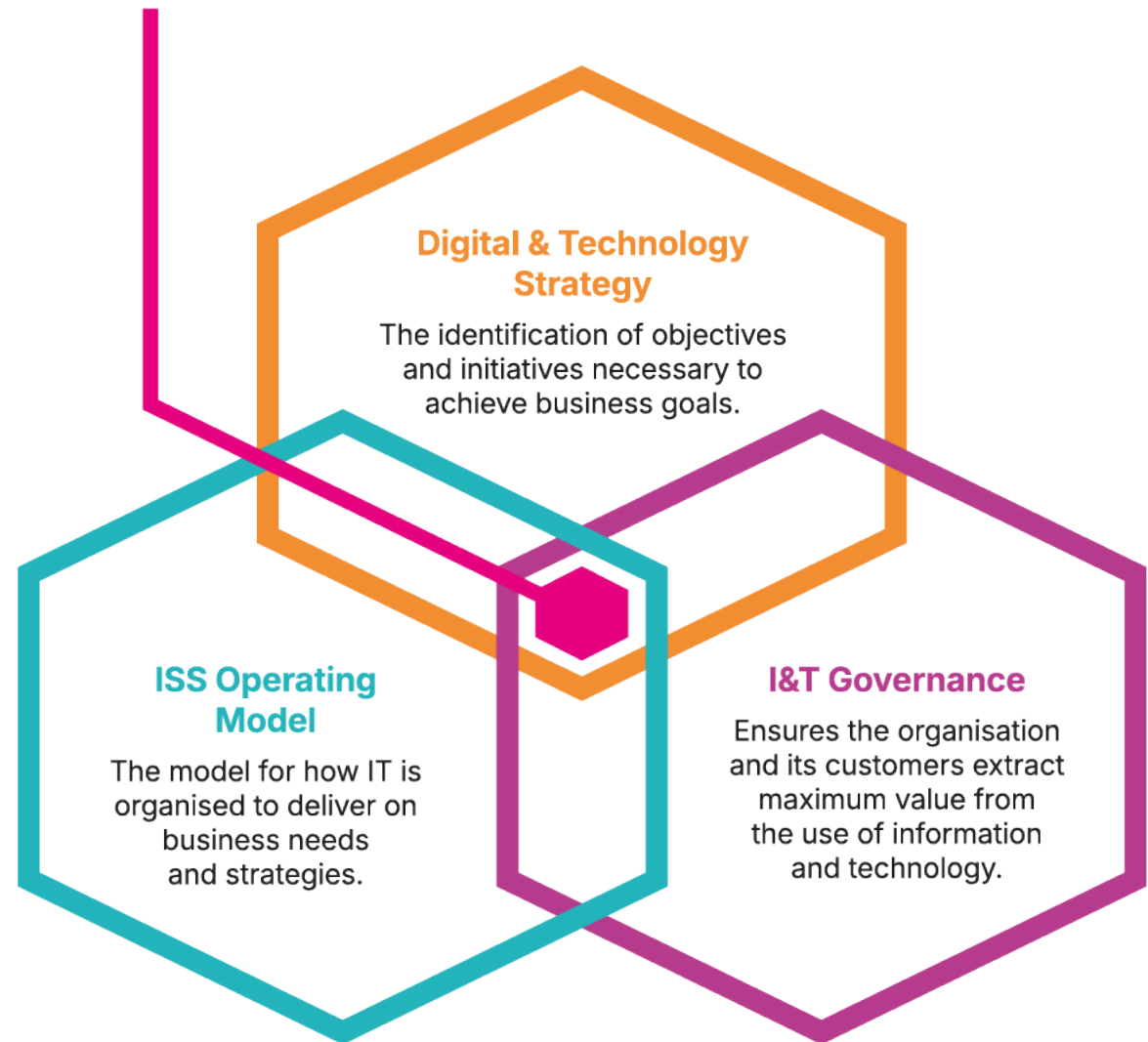
Our *Digital Vision:*

We will grow and enhance our digital ecosystem and look towards the horizon of technological innovation in support of the University in its role as a regional, national and international centre of research and teaching excellence.

Our *Digital Mission:*

Empower our University community through strategic data and secure and resilient technologies within a knowledge-based and governance-centric operating model.

Delivery of Business Value & Strategic Needs




Strategic Themes

The University of Galway's Digital Strategy is built around three core themes:




Enterprise IT Governance

Ensuring technology is managed responsibly and aligned with University goals.



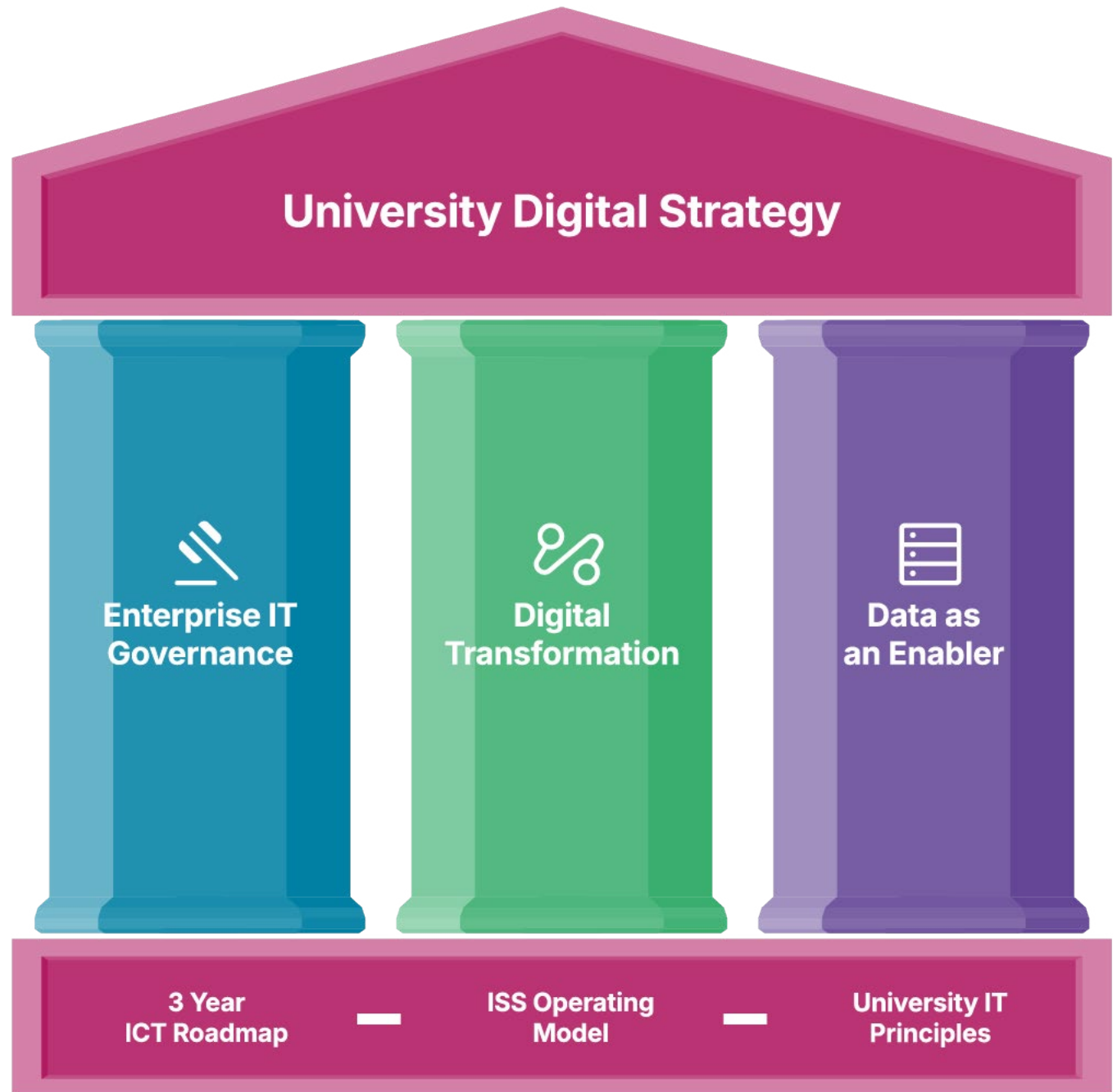
Digital Transformation

Leveraging technology to enhance teaching, research, and operations.



Data as an Enabler

Using secure, high-quality data to drive innovation and informed decision-making across the institution.



Theme 1: *Enterprise IT Governance*

Govern with Purpose, Build for Performance

Enterprise IT Governance is recognised as a critical enabler for the University's strategic priorities. By embedding IT governance across teaching, research, and operations, the University ensures technology is leveraged responsibly, efficiently, and in alignment with institutional goals and as such delivering measurable benefits for students, staff, and the wider academic community.



Teaching & Learning

- Governance frameworks that underpin the deployment and support of educational technologies, ensuring robust, secure, and innovative digital learning environments.
- Ensure technology investments deliver value for money and directly enhance student engagement, learning outcomes, and staff experience.
- Empower staff and students to leverage digital platforms for self-directed learning and collaboration.



Research

- Facilitate secure, resilient, and interoperable systems that underpin research excellence and collaboration.
- Enable the translation of research outputs into teaching and support data-driven research through strong data governance and compliance.
- Support partnerships and knowledge sharing within the University, through international collaboration, and with external research bodies.



Theme 1: *Enterprise IT Governance*



Operational Excellence

- Deliver a next-generation operating model for Information Solutions and Services (ISS), optimising infrastructure, support and cyber security.
- Implement principles-based digital governance to ensure value for money, risk management, and continuous service improvement.
- Focus on business continuity, performance monitoring, and capacity management to maintain high standards of operational reliability and resilience.



Holistic, University-Wide Impact

- Align IT initiatives with University-wide strategic priorities, ensuring that digital transformation benefits all core functions: teaching, research, and operations.
- Encourage a culture of accountability, clear roles, and measured improvement building on core competencies and mature capabilities.
- Employ best practice frameworks and reference architectures such as COBIT and the UCISA reference architecture for higher education.
- Foster business partnerships and two-way communication between ISS, academic, and administrative units for shared success.



The University risks missing research opportunities by not being ready to adopt emerging technologies like AI.



Theme 2: *Digital Transformation*

Innovate Together, Transform Tomorrow

Digital transformation at the University of Galway is recognised as a key enabler for flexible, student-centred teaching and learning, world-class research, and efficient, resilient operations. This strategy emphasises leveraging technology to empower people, streamline processes, and deliver measurable benefits for students, staff, and the wider University community.



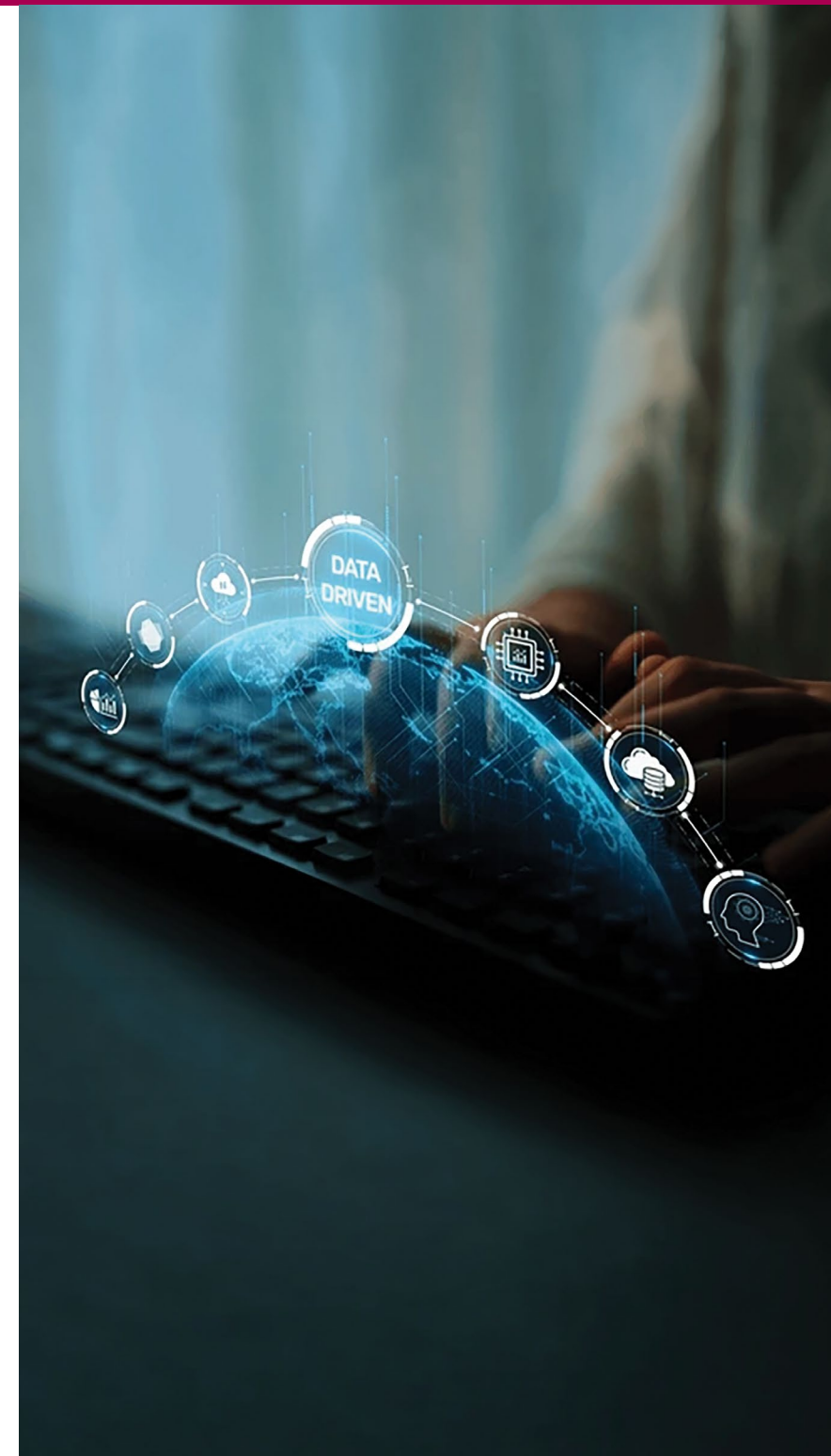
Teaching & Learning

- Support delivery of the Turas programme and provision of an enhanced virtual learning platform, enabling hybrid, interactive, and student-centric solutions.
- Support the design of a more flexible curriculum, stackable credits, and professional certification, supporting diverse student needs and academic integrity.
- Facilitate blended, accessible, and flexible learning environments, enhancing student success and retention.
- Support the use of technology for monitoring student engagement and early intervention, improving outcomes for students at risk.



Research

- Align with the University's research process improvement programme by providing technical capability for automating administrative tasks and reducing bureaucracy.
- Integrate new systems such as the research information management system, CRIS, to enhance research connections, partnerships, and funding opportunities.
- Promote data-driven decision-making and evidence-based research through improved data management and integration.
- Encourage adoption of emerging technologies to accelerate research and empower academics in a competitive and collaborative ecosystem.



Theme 2: *Digital Transformation*



Operational Excellence

- Drive operational efficiency by automating and streamlining processes, eliminating duplication of effort, and reducing manual paperwork.
- Work with professional service units and colleges to build a culture of organisational change that underpins significant technological change projects.
- Establish a citizen development capability to scale up capacity for small projects and quick wins that deliver significant impact across the University.
- Enhance user experience by making systems intuitive, reducing training needs, and improving communication and engagement.

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Technology can be a really positive thing and will play a huge role in an effective and sustainable organisation. The University needs to accelerate strategic projects, supported by process redesign, to enable transformation and improve agility.

”



Theme 3:

Data as an Enabler

Empower with Insight, Lead with Data

Data is recognised as a foundational enabler for the University's digital transformation, driving innovation in teaching, research, and operations. By prioritising data security, quality and integration through the data lifecycle, the University empowers staff and students to make informed decisions, enhance performance, and deliver measurable value across all strategic priorities within a central governance model.



Teaching & Learning

- Access to accurate, timely data supports flexible curriculum design enabling diverse learning pathways.
- Data-driven insights to monitor student engagement and retention, allowing early interventions for students at risk.
- Provide for a holistic view of the student journey, from recruitment to graduation, that enables informed decision-making to support student success
- Effective data management enables blended, accessible, and flexible learning environments, improving outcomes for all student cohorts.



Research

- Data integration and quality for research excellence, supporting connections, partnerships, and identification of expertise and funding opportunities.
- Centralised data management and governance accelerating research processes, reducing administrative overhead, and enabling evidence-based decision-making.
- Data exploitation and analytics to empower researchers to leverage institutional knowledge and drive innovation.



Theme 3: *Data as an Enabler*



Operational Excellence

- A federated, co-created, data model suitable to the scale and complexity of the University's data - its most valuable strategic asset.
- Data to enable streamlined, automated processes, reducing duplication of effort and freeing up staff for strategic activities.
- Cohesive, centralised data supporting dynamic integration between systems, improving reporting, visibility, capacity, and operational efficiency across units and colleges.
- Data governance and quality to underpin continuous improvement and management of data through its lifecycle, ensuring systems are fit-for-purpose and support organisational goals.

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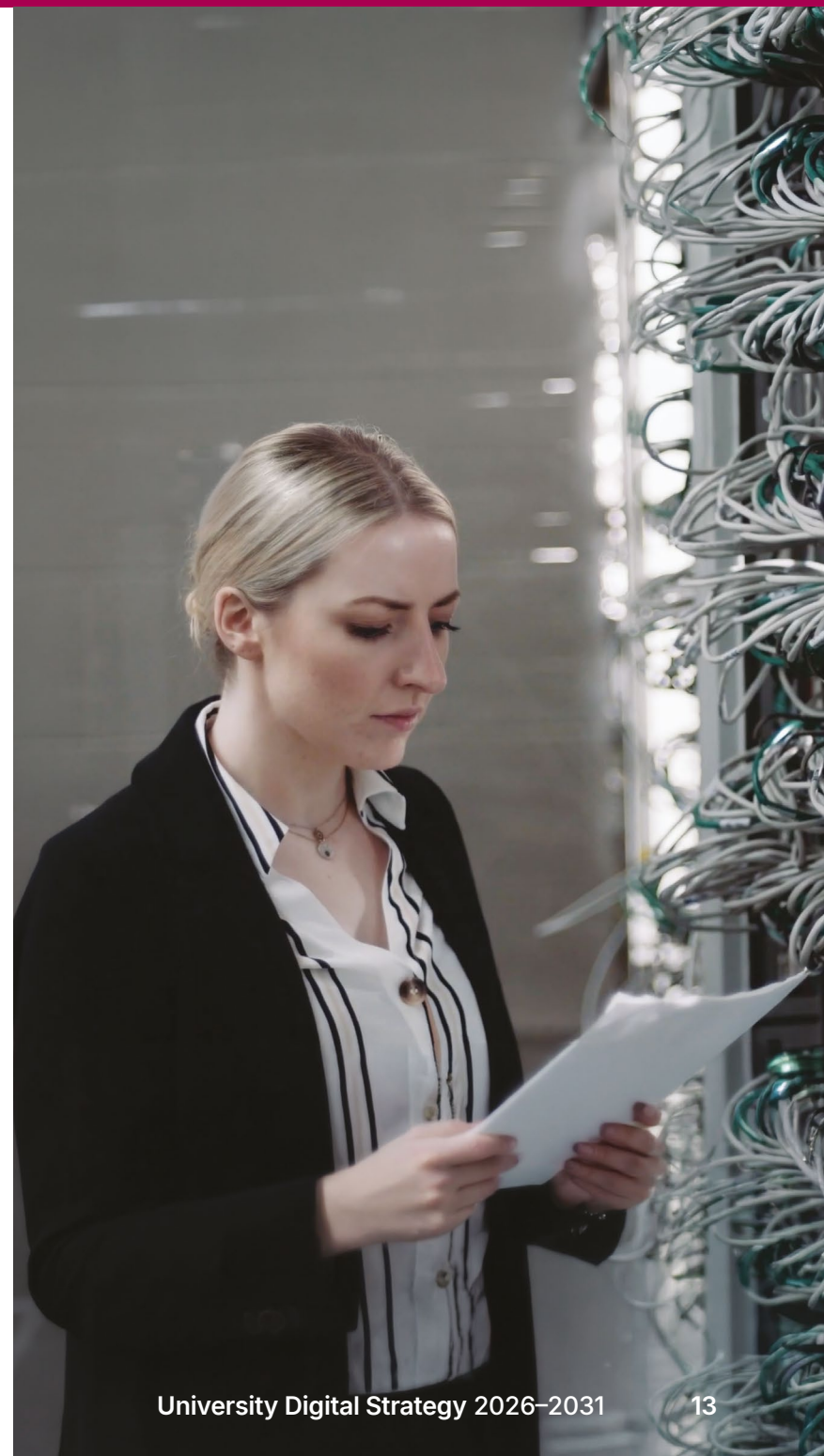
Effective AI and data governance are essential for compliance with emerging regulations.

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Data at our fingertips in support of evidence-based decision-making.

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University IT Principles

The University IT Principles are a set of design principles whose purpose is to provide governance, consistency and an enterprise approach that supports decision-making around ICT and digital projects, policy and related initiatives at University of Galway.

The scope of these principles is University-wide and include:

Governance

We will operate within a robust ICT governance framework with architectural sign-off, strategic alignment and qualification against longer term business needs.

Operational Excellence

We will optimise service provision to ensure customer focus within a measured performance framework.

Managed Data

We will champion the use of data as a strategic asset for the University that underpins our ICT security and continuous improvement initiatives.

Managed Security

We will manage IT security as a strategic imperative through the application of a cybersecurity framework, legal compliance, policies, technical defence measures and user awareness.

Stronger Partnerships

We will build and maintain relationships as a trusted partner to our University community supporting strategic objectives through meeting technological needs.

Innovation

We will deliver on our cloud strategy, AI and automation opportunities and horizon scan to maximise technological innovation.

University *IT Principles*

Value for Money

We will streamline our purchasing capability and look towards longer term sustainable value to avoid short-term approaches that cause technical debt.

Fit for Purpose

We will leverage best practice standards and frameworks and deploy state of the art technologies for a secure, scalable and accessible IT environment.

Controlled Technical Diversity

We will deliver our infrastructure and systems from a unified, standardised and sustainable perspective.

Managed Capacity

We will continuously monitor required capacity ensuring adequate skills and resources to support effective operations and strategy delivery.





ISS Operating Model

The ISS Operating Model has been designed to align the IT structure, processes, metrics and talent to University strategy to drive efficiency and effectiveness within a transformative digital landscape.

Objectives of the ISS Operating Model include:

- Deliver a next generation IT operating model to support the University in achieving its strategic goals.
- Move towards a capability-based approach to IT that creates value for stakeholders.
- Provide for an IT operating model that is agile and can adapt to change.
- Establish a delivery framework to maximise IT efficiency, consistency and alignment with University strategic priorities.
- Ensure clarity regarding staff roles and responsibilities, and how they contribute to achievement of University objectives.

3-Year ICT *Roadmap*

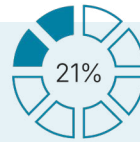
The University Digital Strategy is supported by a rolling three-year ICT Roadmap, refreshed annually. The Roadmap provides a list of strategic deliverables mapped to the overall themes and objectives of the digital strategy. These, in turn cascade the objectives of the University's Strategic Plan (2025-2030).

The delivery of the strategy will be a collaborative activity, closely aligned with stakeholder needs within a co-creation delivery model.

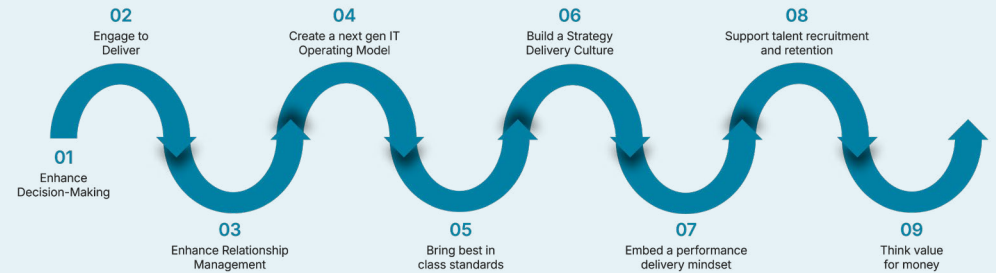
University Digital Strategy - Themes and Objectives

Enterprise IT Governance

- Create a next generation IT operating model
- Enhance decision-making at all levels
- Bring best in class standards

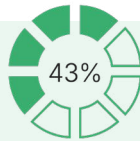


of ISS time is allocated to supporting governance and strategy activities: ISS will establish a robust digital governance process

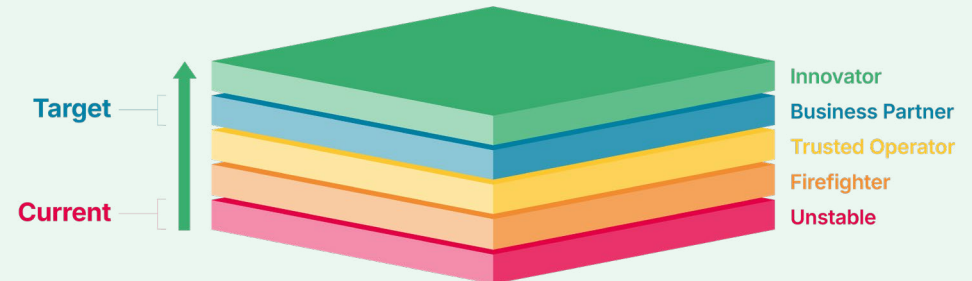


Digital Transformation

- Accelerate innovation through partnerships
- Enable personalised learning pathways
- Establish excellent Research IT
- Bring a capability maturity focus
- Enhance enterprise architecture
- Build a culture of thought leadership & innovation

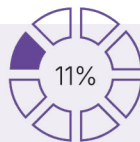


of IT is spent on maintaining and improving technology and processes: ISS will be a business partner to improve IT operations and drive innovation



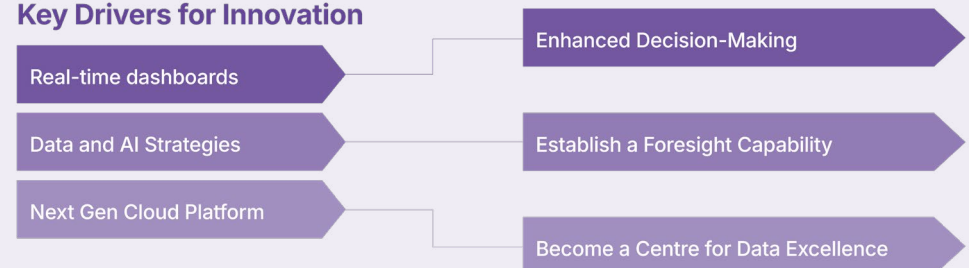
Data as an Enabler

- Federate data governance
- Democratise data analytics
- Embed strategic data management
- Minimise security incidents and risks



of IT is dedicated to driving data & security innovation: ISS will focus on the most impactful data and technology drivers

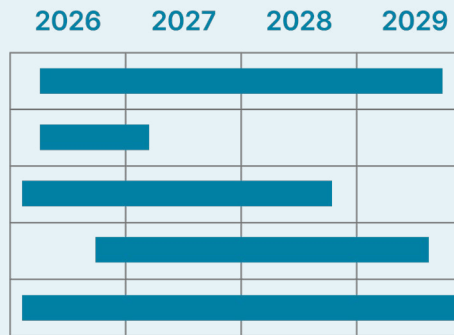
Key Drivers for Innovation



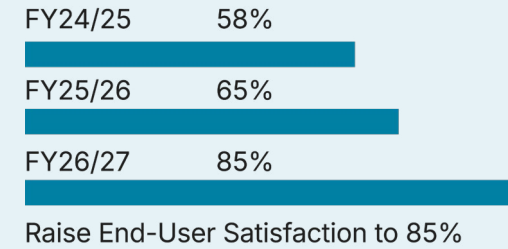
University Digital Strategy - Themes and Objectives

High Level Actions in Support of Enterprise IT Governance

- Implement ISS Operating Model Phase 1
- Operationalise IT Principles
- Establish Digital Governance process
- Design measurement framework for targeted IT functions
- Mature IT PMO process and standards

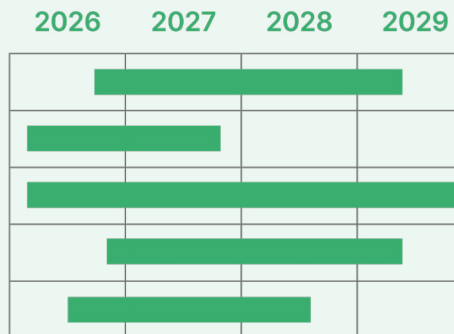


What success looks like:

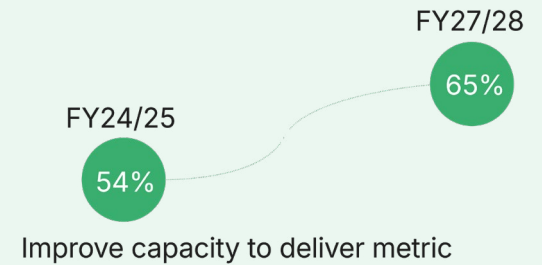


High Level Actions in Support of Digital Transformation

- Framework for emerging technology innovation and exponential IT
- Develop a cloud strategy and FinOps expertise
- Deliver digital enhancement programme for students
- Mature Research IT in alignment with industry and government initiatives
- Establish citizen development for software design and automation

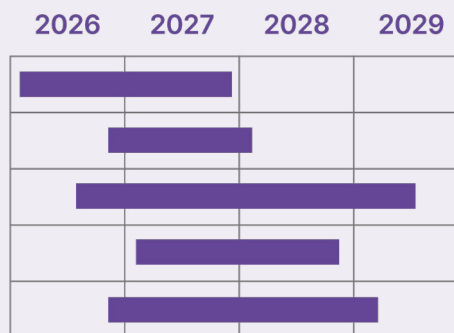


What success looks like:



Initiatives for the Realisation of Strategic Data Value

- Establish cross-functional data governance
- Develop data governance framework and strategy
- Design centralised, real-time analytics dashboards
- Create state of the art cloud data platform
- Strengthen data security and AI policies and processes



What success looks like:

