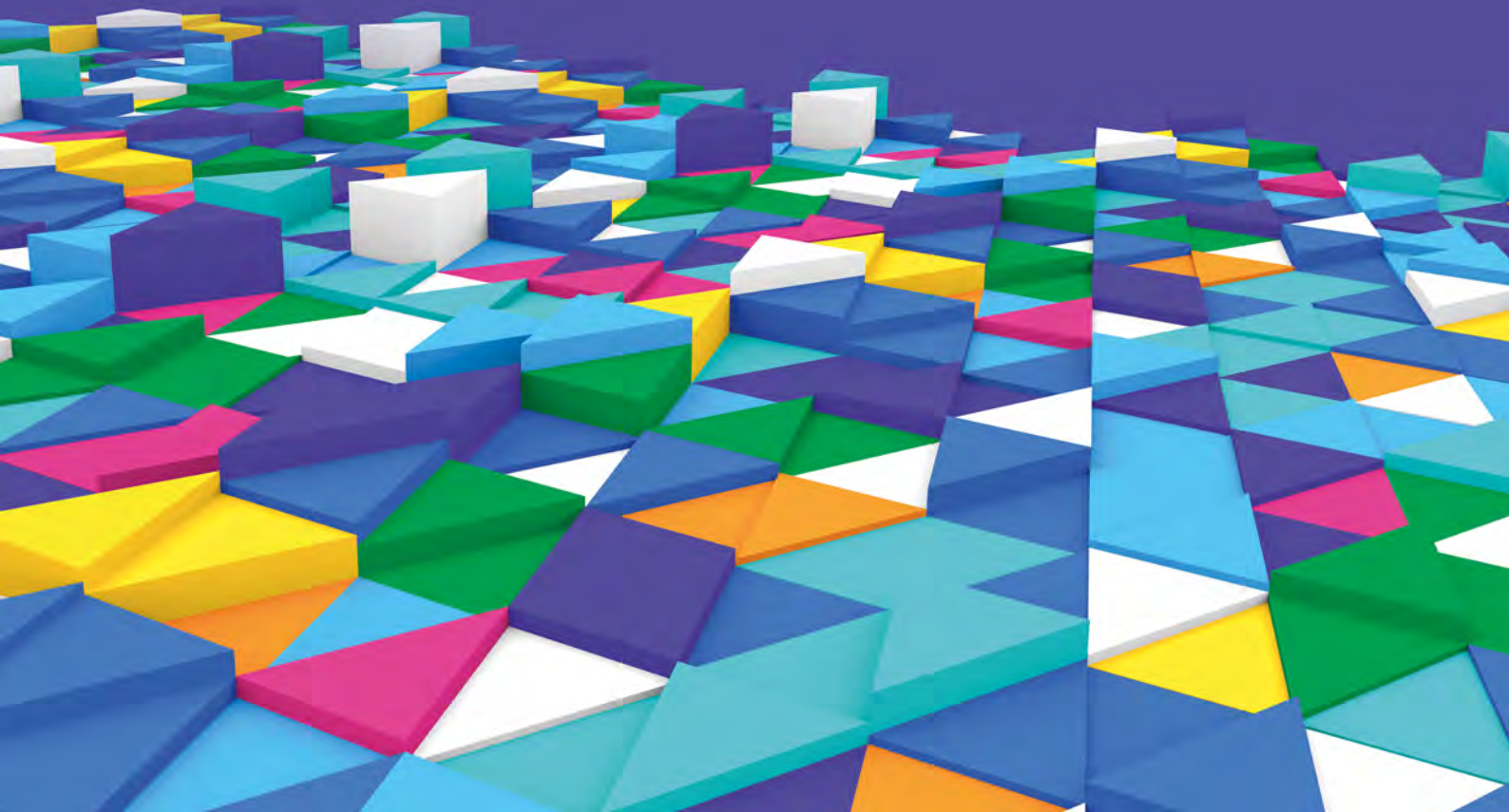


# Success through partnership with Adobe.

Discover insights and best practices from  
four higher education institutions.



More than 60 leading universities worldwide are part of the Adobe Creative Campus programme. Having committed to digital literacy as a core part of their strategic goals, these institutions provide university-wide access to Adobe Creative Cloud and/or Adobe Express so they can teach creative and persuasive digital communication skills while enhancing curricular development, student experience and career readiness. Adobe Creative Campus institutions also collaborate with one another to share findings and develop best practices for teaching and learning with professional creative tools.

The stories below provide tangible examples of how four Adobe Creative Campus universities have implemented their strategies in partnership with Adobe. Bath Spa University, Solent University, Teesside University and Weber State University are at different stages in their Adobe Creative Campus journeys, and they've all taken different approaches. You'll discover the factors that have influenced their implementation plans as well as some of the specific initiatives they've undertaken to help ensure success. From onboarding staff and students to building digital capabilities, transforming the learning experience to preparing students for the future, these initiatives are relevant to the challenges faced by all higher education institutions today.



# Bath Spa University, UK

## Rapid impact through strategic fit

Bath Spa is a campus university with a strong creative approach. Initially a school of the arts and teacher training, the institution now provides teaching and research across arts, sciences, social sciences and business studies — and it's one of the UK's largest providers of teacher education. The Bath Spa leadership team see creativity as a multi-disciplinary tool that can solve complex social and cultural challenges such as climate change and world poverty. As such, creativity is relevant to all departments and central to the university's positioning to students and employers.

The leadership team saw synergies between their digital transformation strategy and the possibilities of the Adobe Creative Cloud platform. By joining the Adobe Creative Campus programme, they knew they could give staff and students of all disciplines access to Creative Cloud, create new opportunities to embed 'professional creativity' into the curriculum, and develop students' digital fluency.

Despite being in the early stages of their journey with Adobe, Bath Spa's highly motivated team made an impact within a matter of months. Their clear governance, agile nature and willingness to learn from other institutions enabled them to deliver quick wins alongside initiatives to support longer-term cultural change.

## Leading from the top

**The leadership team's excitement and engagement added dynamism at every stage, from developing the business case to communicating across the university.**

The strong strategic fit between Bath Spa and Adobe meant there was a high level of attention from the university leadership team from day one. From the Chief Information Officer to the Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Experience, everyone recognised that the Adobe partnership had the potential to enable the university's transformation goals around teaching and learning while equipping students with skills to make a difference in the world.

Members of the leadership team engaged throughout the project, their passion and excitement contributing to the pace of the implementation.

## Learning from others

**By leveraging the expertise of Adobe and of other Adobe Creative Campus institutions, Bath Spa was able to rapidly develop a business case and raise awareness about the programme.**

Whilst shaping the business case, CIO Rachael Johnson realised it was not like other IT projects. The value, she said, 'Was all dependent on our strategy, and what it was we wanted from the partnership.' This made it challenging to articulate to the wider team, but Johnson was able to learn from experiences at Teesside University, an established Creative Campus, to find practical tips that helped her team understand what a mature, successful implementation should look like.

Bath Spa managed to rapidly drive awareness by adopting techniques used by two more Adobe Creative Campus institutions — Solent University and Teesside University. Working with Adobe, Bath Spa held an event where students were able to create designs in Adobe Express and then print them onto free tote bags. The event was heavily publicized, and all students were given access to Adobe tools on their phones so they could start creating designs in advance. The Adobe team set up in the main learning building in the centre of the campus, where queuing students amplified the publicity. The tote bags continued to raise awareness as students carried them around campus.

## Securing faculty engagement

**Implementation at Bath Spa was designed to maximise faculty enthusiasm and engagement.**

Bath Spa leadership wanted to generate enthusiasm and excitement among faculty to ensure the success of the project. The implementation plan aimed to deliver cultural change rather than simply offer standard technical training. This 'hearts and minds' approach involved tailored learning sessions developed for the heads of school and course tutors, with a focus on what Creative Cloud and partnership with Adobe could do for them. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of their leadership team, Adobe and their peers at Teesside University.

The practical implementation of Creative Cloud into teaching and learning has also been designed to encourage buy-in from faculty. Building on the experiences at Teesside, Bath Spa leadership decided to integrate Creative Cloud into the curriculum by starting with assessments. This will allow the university to immediately improve the student experience without adding pressure on academic staff who are already going through a period of change.

“ We can start to integrate the use of Adobe Creative Cloud into the curriculum, without our academic staff needing to do too much... moving away from essays and moving towards blogs, infographics... the assessment is much more creative, and much more meaningful to our students.

**Rachael Johnson**

CIO, Bath Spa University

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## Solent University, UK

### Expanding access with an inclusive, real-world curriculum

Solent focuses on the applied and authentic side of higher education, creating opportunities for its students and preparing graduates to thrive in an unpredictable world. The university's inclusive teaching and learning strategy is designed to make students 'work-ready, world-ready and future-ready', making a partnership with Adobe a natural fit.

Solent leadership focused on the specific needs of staff and students, designing a bespoke Adobe Creative Cloud implementation programme and support resources to encourage engagement. In line with its student-centred ethos, Solent began implementation by driving students' awareness and digital capabilities. However, it quickly became clear that to maximise the value of the partnership, teaching staff would need to be highly engaged as well. Implementation is now closely aligned with the university's inclusive real-world curriculum, and the focus is on supporting teaching staff to use Adobe's apps to 'design-in' active learning experiences.

### A bespoke approach

**Solent worked with Adobe to create an institution-specific experience that connected with staff and students.**

The implementation plan ensured that staff and students would experience Adobe through a Solent lens and authentic to Solent's pedagogy. Training and communication tapped into existing needs and used university terminology. By establishing a good fit, university leadership knew they could avoid overwhelming staff and students.

The Adobe team developed launch events with names like Digital Storytelling, Social Media and Taking the Physical into the Digital to meet needs identified through a staff and student survey. The Learning Technology team tailored the standard Adobe support material using Solent-specific terminology and links which contextualised the content. They also supplemented Adobe support with an internal site which shows how to access and download the apps onto a phone or laptop. This scaffolding supported the launch webinars, making it easy for staff and students to put what they had learnt into practice.

## Student access and awareness

**Solent carried out a multi-pronged campaign to enable all students to benefit from having access to Creative Cloud.**

As a widening participation university, Solent made inclusivity a core element of the implementation plan. Not all students have had the opportunity to build digital literacy skills, so the Adobe partnership enabled the university to democratise access to tools, skills and confidence.

Affordability issues and lack of access to devices can exclude those students most in need. To combat this, Solent upgraded the Mac computers in the library and provided locker-laptops which students can borrow for use on campus.

The university also drove awareness about the Adobe partnership through a campaign demonstrating the tangible benefits. More than 600 students from across the institution attended an Adobe pop-up event where they could claim a free tote bag printed with their own Adobe Express design.

The Learning Technology team are building students' digital capabilities through 'one task-one tool' workshops. Each 30-minute session helps students complete a specific task using a single Adobe tool. Some tasks are focused on employability, such as creating a CV. Others are developed in conjunction with teaching staff to support academic assignments. These will be repeated for each incoming cohort.

## Authentic learning experiences

**The Adobe partnership provides new opportunities for active learning across all subject areas.**

The university's decision to become an Adobe Creative Campus was led by its teaching and learning strategy. Through experience, Solent leadership has concluded that teaching and learning must also be central to the implementation approach and that active learning experiences must be designed into the curriculum rather than led by students.

The university's inclusive real-world curriculum is reshaping the learning experience to give students an edge when they graduate. The Adobe partnership has become part of the more comprehensive initiative to ensure that learning and assessment reflect authentic activities carried out in the workplace. Teaching staff are required to design-in active learning experiences, such as case studies and problem-based lessons, as part of the Collaborative Learning aspect of the university's Learning Design Framework. Adobe tools have been introduced to support this goal alongside specialist, subject-specific technologies.

The teaching and learning implementation has begun, with faculty rethinking existing activities to support core learning outcomes. For example, Accountancy and Finance students are learning to supplement dense spreadsheets with infographics that call out financial headlines and budgetary information, and marketing students are designing their own consultancy brands and logos.

There's a learning curve, but the Learning Design team are in place to guide the use of the Adobe tool, deliver activities that complement engaging on-campus learning experiences and extend learning opportunities to virtual learning environments.



It's a way of expanding the learning beyond the physical space and making the online space just as rich and interactive and challenging for the students. The Adobe Creative Cloud is so much more than just reading a document on a screen; there's so much more we can do with our students to engage them in their learning.

**Karen Heard-Laureote**

Vice Provost Education, Solent University

# Teesside University, UK

## Empowering faculty to deliver Future Facing Learning

Teesside University is a post-1992 campus institution with a growing reputation for innovation in teaching and learning. Its Future Facing Learning programme equips students with the skills, knowledge, expertise and resilience to thrive in an ever-changing landscape, shaping strategy in all areas including 21st-century curriculum design and delivery, initiatives to create inspiring and enabling learning spaces and the development of digital capability and confidence

In 2022, Teesside became the first Adobe Creative Campus institution in Europe. For the institution's leadership, the partnership was a strong fit with their strategy and opened a new phase of digital transformation.



The synergies between what we were doing as a university with Future Facing Learning and what Adobe was driving with Creative Campus were really, really clear to see.

**Professor Mark Simpson**

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Teesside University

In this second phase of the institution's transformation, Teesside has been able to build on digital literacy foundations established in phase one. Rather than mandating that teaching staff incorporate technology into their courses, the pedagogical focus has been on inspiring and empowering them. A university-wide project has allowed faculty across the institution to experiment and consolidate their findings to shape best practices.

## Building on a broader strategy

### Teesside's Future Facing Learning strategy provided a foundation for its Adobe partnership

The university's digital transformation journey started in 2017 when leadership realised how rapidly students' knowledge was becoming outdated in a fast-changing world. The disruptive Future Facing Learning programme was designed to supplement knowledge with skills and resilience that would allow students to flourish in the workplace and make a difference more widely. An essential part of the programme called for building the digital capabilities of staff and students by conducting mandatory training for teaching staff. This training, developed and delivered by a Digital Transformation team, provided a standard level of skills and understanding that the team could build on when they launched the Adobe partnership.

The Adobe Creative Cloud implementation utilised the wider infrastructure of the university so that Teesside could embed Adobe into the culture. This included Adobe takeovers at The Student Life building, one of the inspiring and enabling physical spaces constructed to support Future Facing Learning. Located in the Campus Heart, it's a technologically enabled environment with flexible spaces for collaborative learning, well-being and socialising. Posters and videos around the site are designed by the Teesside professional services team using Creative Cloud, and students can access equipment and support to build their skills.

## Shaped by the need

### Teesside has designed its implementation to suit challenging circumstances and diverse needs.

Having introduced Creative Cloud to academic staff during the Covid-19 pandemic, the university needed to be flexible in its implementation. Teesside leaders believed that the partnership was essential to ensuring that the university would survive the crisis and thrive. As such, they hosted six live training events during the first six months of the 2020 academic year and provided structured opportunities for teaching staff to come together and explore the power of Creative Cloud. Despite these events being delivered online due to pandemic-related campus closures, there was a high level of engagement.

The university has been flexible in incorporating Adobe's tools into the curriculum. Rather than taking a top-down approach, the leadership team have empowered teaching staff to decide for themselves how to use the technology. In this supportive environment, faculty have been able to develop the skills and confidence they need to become agents of change. They've engaged more deeply, and they've given their students highly relevant learning experiences.



Success for us often looks like the use of technology in ways we never imagined when we started on the journey.

**Dr. Jonathan Eaton**

Director of Student Learning and Academic Registry , Teesside University

## **Structured to build best practices**

**By exploring the potential for digital affordances to support pedagogy through structured projects, Teesside has built digital competencies and best practices throughout the institution.**

The partnership with Adobe has allowed faculty, in collaboration with the Digital Transformation team, to explore the affordances of Creative Cloud and its impact on learning. Across the five schools, teaching staff embedded creative assessments into the curriculum in alignment with their strategic teaching and learning priorities.

The project had strong governance, reporting to the designated school leads and Teesside's Institutional Adobe Creative Campus Group. The project generated actionable insights into staff and student engagement and assessment design as well as positive student feedback, and the structured feedback process has enabled the sharing of best practices through the university.

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## **Weber State University, US**

### **Building new learning spaces and community relationships**

Weber State is a public open-enrollment university in Utah offering a wide range of certificate and degree programmes. After staff attended an Adobe Creative Campus Collaboration event in 2016, the university's leadership was inspired to explore how they could better prepare Weber State students for the future.

Through consultation with local businesses and other universities, digital fluency and experiential learning emerged as the top ways to improve the student learning experience and increase employability. Becoming an Adobe Creative Campus helped the university make progress towards both goals, allowing students to build their abilities as they participated in hands-on learning. Leadership supported the investment in technology through university-wide engagement and training, and by constructing tailored physical spaces on campus to draw attention to the revitalised approach and provide a central hub to bring people and technology together.

### **Shaping the vision**

**A newly created body defined the strategic vision and coordinated the Adobe Creative Cloud rollout across the whole university.**

The Digital Fluency Council was created as a small team to define and coordinate the project. It now encompasses many committees and working groups of staff across the institution. The council works with deans, department chairs and faculty on various college, programme and course-level commitments in the curriculum. It reaches beyond teaching and learning with groups that include Marketing & Branding and 'Space Force'. This approach means that all areas of the university are engaged in creating and implementing an ongoing process of change. The close links to the leadership team give the council the authority to be effective and ensure that plans align with the university's wider strategy.

When the council consulted with local businesses, feedback revealed a demand for graduates who are broadly comfortable in a digital environment. Three priority core digital competencies emerged: the abilities to use technology to create, collaborate and consume. These competencies became the foundation for the university's approach, and they've been supported by integrating Creative Cloud within university courses.

The council's internal training supports cultural change, broad digital competencies and Adobe skills, and the Digital Fluency Faculty in Residence helps faculty across all disciplines apply these competencies within their modules. For example, the first-year writing experience programme asks students to work on creative projects such as interactive magazines and digital documentaries.

## **Creating the Digital District**

**Weber State developed physical spaces to support the digital focus.**

The university created a blueprint for change by learning from universities with similar aspirations which were further along in the digital transformation journey. A tour of other universities convinced leadership to both build innovative spaces on their own campus and to add technology-enhanced areas into existing buildings. This research led to the construction of the Digital District, which champions the Adobe partnership and makes it visible to staff, students and visitors. The Digital District, including the Stewart Library and Lampros Hall, forms a tangible and visible commitment to the new approach. It includes an innovation studio, a podcast studio and an IT help desk. The district acts as a focal point for implementing change, promoting it as a hub for staff and students who want to engage with new technology. It combines well-equipped teaching and learning spaces, structured training and drop-in support facilities in a single area, making it easy for everyone on campus to explore the technologies that support the experiential curriculum. Faculty can build the digital confidence to introduce new teaching and learning approaches while their students can access any technical support they need for new-style assignments.

## **Supporting ongoing change**

**The implementation effort continues with support from Adobe and community partners.**

The university encourages internal and external collaboration, with faculty and staff attending events such as Adobe Creative Campus events where they can learn from the experiences of other institutions. The council continues to gather feedback from local businesses, which provides new insights and opportunities. As a result, the university is now developing credentialing to build digital fluency skills for employees.

Measuring the impact of the digital transition is vital to the university. By monitoring feedback, leaders can be confident that changes so far have contributed to better student outcomes and an improved student learning experience.



# Commonalities

Despite taking different paths to implementing Adobe Creative Cloud across the institution through close partnership with Adobe, the four universities studied share some common behaviours and focus areas that may be of interest to other institutions looking to differentiate through technology or teaching and learning innovation.

## Strategic fit

**A new technology or approach is more successful when aligned with the institution's strategic priorities.**

Each university's implementation story begins with a strong fit between the affordances of Adobe's tools and the institution's long-term plans. At Solent University, Adobe tools provide learning experiences for the 'work-ready, world-ready and future-ready' curriculum. At Bath Spa University, the partnership supports the Digital Capabilities strategy. Teesside University's Future Facing Learning programme drove the decision to become an Adobe Creative Campus and provided a strong foundation for the implementation. This complementary relationship between technology and strategy allows institutions to commit confidently to the partnership and make it sustainable long term.

## A strong coalition

**Becoming an Adobe Creative Campus is an institution-wide initiative. It requires a strong coalition of support to lead and coordinate the project.**

Every department and its senior leaders need to be involved in the Adobe partnership process. Throughout this paper, you'll find examples of leadership engagement. Cross-functional cooperation, particularly the strong partnership between faculty and Learning Technology/Digital Transformation teams, is crucial. For example, Weber State University formed the Digital Fluency Council to guide its initiative and involve every part of the university in the implementation.

## Teaching and learning are central

**Teaching and learning staff are critical to realising the potential of implementing Creative Cloud across the curriculum, so it's essential to nurture and inspire them.**

By building the confidence and skills of teaching staff, universities ensure that they can use Creative Cloud tools to develop learning experiences that fit seamlessly into their courses and provide a richer student experience across all subject areas. Bath Spa targeted heads of school and course tutors with a 'hearts and minds' campaign and designed a stepped introduction to avoid overloading teaching staff. Solent followed up its student-focused launch by switching the focus to teaching and learning staff, recognising that the best way to realise the value of the partnership is to design it into the curriculum.

## Consultation and collaboration

**Looking outward helps universities create a clear vision for their implementation and to implement it more rapidly.**

The Adobe Creative Campus institutions haven't developed their visions and implementation plans in a vacuum. Weber State developed its blueprint for a successful implementation following campus tours of institutions with similar goals, and leadership continues to gather input around employability from businesses. Bath Spa took a 'fast-follow' approach by consulting with Teesside, a more mature Adobe Creative Campus, to speed up business case development and find examples of successful launch activities.

## Physical supporting digital

Adobe Creative Campus institutions have successfully harnessed physical elements to communicate and support their digital transformations.

Both Weber State and Teesside have linked their digital transformations to the development of new physical spaces on campus. Their initiatives are highly visible and provide a hub for equipment, support and collaboration. However, this is a major capital investment and there are alternatives. For example, Bath Spa and Solent launched tote bag events that had been successfully piloted at Teesside. This brought the Adobe team to campus and gave students a tangible takeaway — a free tote bag printed with a design they created with Creative Cloud tools. Events like these make the partnership more concrete, and the creations themselves provide an ongoing reminder of the practical outputs and real-world possibilities of the tools.

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