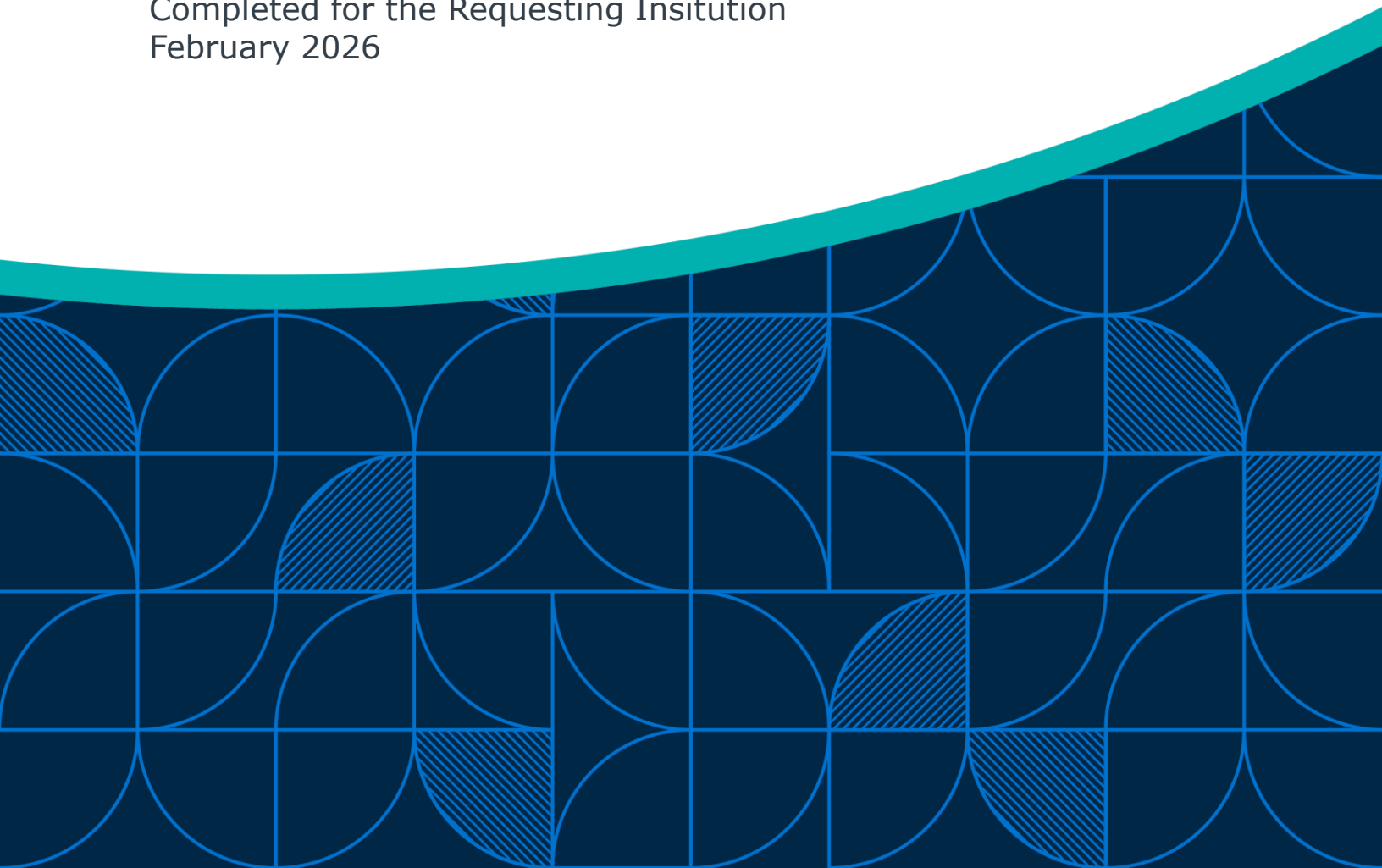




RESPONSIVE RESEARCH

Physical Infrastructure and Associated Staffing for Online Module Delivery

Completed for the Requesting Institution
February 2026



Project Contributors

Strategic Leader

Cricket Francisco

Project Director

Lauren Edmonds

Lead Researcher

Zoe Macuto

Legal Caveat

EAB Global, Inc. ("EAB") has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the information it provides to partners. This report relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and EAB cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or any analysis based thereon. In addition, neither EAB nor any of its affiliates (each, an "EAB Organization") is in the business of giving legal, accounting, or other professional advice, and its reports should not be construed as professional advice. In particular, partners should not rely on any legal commentary in this report as a basis for action, or assume that any tactics described herein would be permitted by applicable law or appropriate for a given partner's situation. Partners are advised to consult with appropriate professionals concerning legal, tax, or accounting issues, before implementing any of these tactics. No EAB Organization or any of its respective officers, directors, employees, or agents shall be liable for any claims, liabilities, or expenses relating to (a) any errors or omissions in this report, whether caused by any EAB Organization, or any of their respective employees or agents, or sources or other third parties, (b) any recommendation by any EAB Organization, or (c) failure of partner and its employees and agents to abide by the terms set forth herein.

EAB is a registered trademark of EAB Global, Inc. in the United States and other countries. Partners are not permitted to use these trademarks, or any other trademark, product name, service name, trade name, and logo of any EAB Organization without prior written consent of EAB. Other trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos used within these pages are the property of their respective holders. Use of other company trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos or images of the same does not necessarily constitute (a) an endorsement by such company of an EAB Organization and its products and services, or (b) an endorsement of the company or its products or services by an EAB Organization. No EAB Organization is affiliated with any such company.

IMPORTANT: Please read the following.

EAB has prepared this report for the exclusive use of its partners. Each partner acknowledges and agrees that this report and the information contained herein (collectively, the "Report") are confidential and proprietary to EAB. By accepting delivery of this Report, each partner agrees to abide by the terms as stated herein, including the following:

1. All right, title, and interest in and to this Report is owned by an EAB Organization. Except as stated herein, no right, license, permission, or interest of any kind in this Report is intended to be given, transferred to, or acquired by a partner. Each partner is authorized to use this Report only to the extent expressly authorized herein.
2. Each partner shall not sell, license, republish, distribute, or post online or otherwise this Report, in part or in whole. Each partner shall not disseminate or permit the use of, and shall take reasonable precautions to prevent such dissemination or use of, this Report by (a) any of its employees and agents (except as stated below), or (b) any third party.
3. Each partner may make this Report available solely to those of its employees and agents who (a) are registered for the workshop or program of which this Report is a part, (b) require access to this Report in order to learn from the information described herein, and (c) agree not to disclose this Report to other employees or agents or any third party. Each partner shall use, and shall ensure that its employees and agents use, this Report for its internal use only. Each partner may make a limited number of copies, solely as adequate for use by its employees and agents in accordance with the terms herein.
4. Each partner shall not remove from this Report any confidential markings, copyright notices, and/or other similar indicia herein.
5. Each partner is responsible for any breach of its obligations as stated herein by any of its employees or agents.
6. If a partner is unwilling to abide by any of the foregoing obligations, then such partner shall promptly return this Report and all copies thereof to EAB.

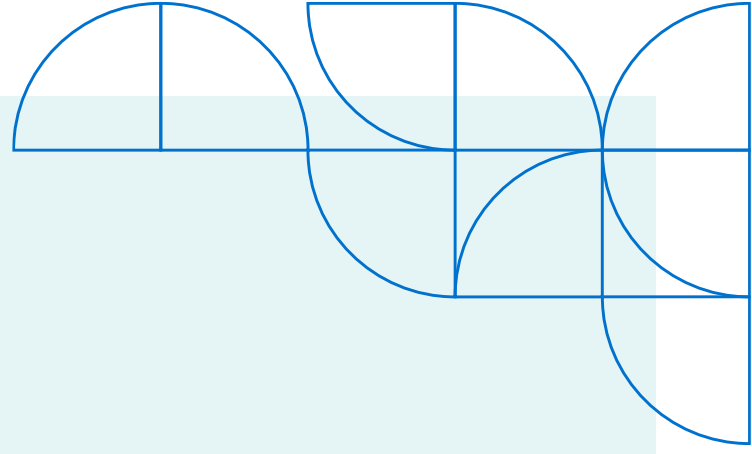


Table of Contents

Executive Overview	4
Research Findings	5
Infrastructure Strategy for Scalable Digital Delivery	6
High-End and Forward-Thinking Digital Delivery	8
Institutional Readiness and Academic Staff Enablement.	9
Appendix	10
Research Methodology	11

Executive Overview

Project Challenge

As leadership at the Requesting Institution continue to expand and strengthen their digital delivery capabilities, they approached EAB for support in understanding how peer institutions design, resource, and scale digital delivery infrastructure, including early stage models, evolving investment strategies, and advanced production environments.

See the [Research Methodology](#) section for further details.

Prioritise familiar, lower-technology recording infrastructure and invest more heavily in instructional design and module video editing.

While contacts have small audio/video suites available for the academic staff to record lectures, digital education experts judged those as less essential today. Academic staff members' comfort with laptop-based web conferencing and recording and the flexibility offered by an individual setup reduce the value of audio/video suites. If academic staff discomfort would prevent self-service laptop-based systems, however, audio/visual suites with standardised equipment and a single support staff member available on demand could ease the transition to digital education.

Professionally edited, shorter format videos produced from academic staff lectures align with digital education best practices.

While academic staff deliver a typical lecture in their chosen recording setup, staff able to edit and modularise that content ensure it remains engaging and instructive for digital learners. Academic staff also need support from instructional designers who facilitate the transition to digital education delivery; a consultant-style instructional advisor who supports academic staff with their own module adaptation can serve 50 to 70 academic staff members. Contacts emphasise maintaining academic staff focus on content and instruction while professional staff provide best practices in digital education and editing support.

Hybrid classrooms offer greatest flexibility as student preferences and academic staff comfort with digital education evolve.

Standardised classroom infrastructure for in-room microphones, camera placement, and remote participant audio speakers enables classrooms to serve both in-person and remote audiences simultaneously. One contact's infrastructure includes video screens for each remote participant, with synced audio, to replicate the in-class experience; this higher cost setup currently serves only their high-tuition executive/professional doctorate modules for which students expect a "premium" experience. Academic staff can also use available classrooms for lecture recording, allowing a more natural delivery than an audio/visual suite. One to two support staff can serve as on-demand help for as many as 100 hybrid classrooms.

High-calibre production studios offer maximum video production quality but often beyond what modules require.

Contacts' video production studios receive less use as academic staff increasingly choose self-service models. Large-scale digital education efforts include as many as four full-time video producers supporting studios with green screens, lightboards, and teleprompters. However, even contacts do not regularly choose these spaces for their online lectures, preferring the ease and flexibility of laptop-based sessions.



Research Findings



Infrastructure Strategy for Scalable Digital Delivery

Foundational Digital Delivery Infrastructure

Prioritise Academic Staff Familiarity and Teaching Flexibility

Digital education leaders embrace simplicity for foundational infrastructure. Laptop audio/video suffices for most module needs and leverages the academic staff's familiarity with online video-based communication.

While contacts maintain small audio/video suites, these physical spaces no longer appear necessary for effective digital education. These suites offer neither the flexibility of a laptop-based approach, nor do they enable the classroom-feeling many academic staff prefer. When specifically asked about the approach of converting unused office space into small audio/video suites, contacts did not encourage such a resource investment given expectations of a quick transition to greater academic staff independence.

Familiar Technology Infrastructure Limits Additional Investments and Staff Support Requirements

Prioritise establishing standard systems and committing to their use to minimise academic staff adjustments. Academic staff participating in synchronous sessions or recording asynchronous lectures largely rely on pre-existing platforms for:

- Video conferencing and recording, most often either Zoom or Microsoft Teams
- Module management via the learning management system, such as Canvas
- Video capture and management, such as Panopto

Today's academic staff laptops offer acceptable video and sound quality via embedded cameras and microphones; though some rare departments provide lighting add-ons or external microphones at contact institutions, the university does not invest centrally in enhanced technology resources.

However, if small audio/video suites offer transitional support to the academic staff less comfortable with a personal laptop setup, the suites can be largely self-service. Standardised design across suites and fixed lighting, video equipment, and audio inputs increase "push-button" success. Typically, academic staff require only an initial introduction, and one staff member can support studios simultaneously as on-call help for occasional technical needs.

Inform Choices Between Familiar Video Conferencing/Recording Products

Zoom

- Better audio-video quality overall

Microsoft Teams

- Better shared document management, improves collaboration
- Simpler interface and use



Foundational Digital Delivery Infrastructure (cont.)

Asynchronous Lectures Require Video Editing Support

Digital education leaders recommend video production and editing support for any primarily recorded (i.e., non-interactive) lecture experience. Contacts noted recorded lectures should be in increments of 10 or fewer minutes, while past adult learner research¹ has found success with larger increments of 20 minutes. Ultimately, a typical lecture would be too long to anticipate engaging a student in full. At Institution A, three-to-five-minute segments paired with embedded knowledge checks and interactive elements compose online classes.

Hybrid Classrooms

Hybrid Classrooms Maximise Educational Flexibility and Integration

At Institution A, hybrid classrooms, nearly 370 across campus, are equipped with integrated microphones, webcams, and display systems to support synchronous instruction with both in-person and remote students. These classes can be broadcast live for interactive engagement as well as recorded for future use as online asynchronous lectures. These rooms also function as independent recording spaces when not scheduled for live classes, which academic staff often prefer given the classroom setting enables more natural lecture delivery and engagement.

Institution B's hybrid studios represent a strategic investment in premium educational experiences and a response to digital education disengagement. These spaces feature digital whiteboards, wall-sized student video displays, and real-time audio routing to enable highly interactive synchronous instruction. Academic staff movement around the room and continuous visibility of remote students replicate classroom dynamics and maintain high engagement levels.

Small Technical Teams Can Support Hybrid Classroom Use

Available technical staff provide on-demand support, but contacts emphasise that standardised classroom design enables academic staff and in-class learners to achieve independence. Seven full-time staff, in addition to student workers, support the roughly 370 hybrid classrooms on campus at Institution A. With only one fully operational hybrid classroom at Institution B, one technical support person is typically on hand, but contacts suggest a trained graduate assistant or other part-time staff could support simple technical needs at a lower cost.

While WeConnect currently enables the virtual classroom experience in Institution B's hybrid classrooms, contacts note platforms such as Zoom are developing similar capabilities.

For Institution A's engineering modules, a Crestron system auto-starts in classes broadcast live. Contacts note a high-quality microphone either on the podium or clipped on to the lecturer is essential.

1) Murphy, Maureen (2008) Matching workplace training to adult attention span to improve learner reaction, learning score and retention. *Journal of Instruction Delivery Systems*, 22 (2). pp. 6-13. ISSN 0892-4872.

High-End and Forward-Thinking Digital Delivery

Advanced Production Studios

High-Cost, Advanced Production Facilities Offer Most-Polished Learner Experience

While institutions maintain professional audio/video studios, academic staff increasingly prefer more flexible and less polished setups (including one contact personally noting rare use of on-campus recording studios for his own digital modules). At Institution A, the on-campus production studios include green screens, teleprompters, and a high level of staff support. While high-end content has proven effective and award-winning, it is both time- and resource-intensive; Institution A employs four full-time producers and three graphic artists to enable their high-quality module production.



Low-Tech, Flexible Models Broaden the “Classroom” Experience

Laptop-based and other low-resource models enable education beyond the classroom and lecture. For example, an Institution A theatre professor employed their hybrid classrooms for students to meet while watching the professor teach from venues nationwide. Disciplines with fieldwork can similarly offer opportunities for instructors to expose students to experiences off campus at a lower cost than physical travel.

AI-Enabled Modules

AI-Avatars Potentially Future of Digital Education Delivery

Contacts at Institution B are monitoring AI-driven instruction pilots at peer institutions, including avatar-led graduate courses and AI-integrated learning interfaces. Institution A is experimenting with AI avatar tools such as HeyGen and Synthesia to produce standardised content like compliance training rapidly, significantly reducing production timelines. Digital education leaders expect the possibility of AI lecturers will underscore need for academic staff with applied expertise, lived experience, and real-world insight rather than content delivery abilities alone.

Institutional Readiness and Academic Staff Enablement

Change Management

Academic Staff Readiness and Support Outweighs Technical Infrastructure

Contacts emphasised academic staff support and change management practices as more essential to digital education initiatives' success than technology investments. Prioritise familiar and standardised setups to reduce academic staff burden and invest in pedagogical training even more than technical.

Small, limited-term incentives can encourage early adopters to pioneer new digital education models (e.g., digital module delivery, hybrid classroom teaching). Leadership at Institution B's College of Business offered \$2,500 annual incentives for the first two years to encourage hybrid classroom module development. Contacts and EAB best practices, however, caution against indefinite incentives which becomes cost-prohibitive.

Instructional Design Experts Enable High-Quality Digital Instruction and Build Academic Staff Capability

A consultant model in which instructional designers support larger groups of academic staff in redesigning their own modules distributes expertise. At Institution A, approximately two dozen instructional designers function as pedagogical consultants. Each instructional designer supports 50 to 70 academic staff members.

Alternatively, institutions can hire larger instructional design teams to translate all academic staff modules to digital delivery, but this model reduces academic staff empowerment and requires a greater number of staff.



For More Information on Engaging Academic Staff in Online Education

Review our key lessons on [rightsizing academic staff incentives and optimising academic staff support](#): training academic staff in online pedagogy and course design, resourcing online course development, structuring academic staff compensation, and safeguarding course quality.



Appendix



- Research Methodology



Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at the Requesting Institution approached EAB with the following questions regarding digital education infrastructure:

Initial, Smaller Investment Digital Delivery Models

- As schools make early investments in widespread digital delivery, what physical infrastructure do leaders prioritise?
 - To what extent have contacts successfully adapted existing spaces like offices for digital delivery use?
 - How do spaces remain adaptable for changing campus and student needs?
- What technological systems and platforms support early stage digital delivery (e.g., recording equipment, editing software)?
- What staff do these spaces require?
 - Who contributes to the digital delivery (synchronously or asynchronously) of a representative online lecture?
 - What choices in design and systems can minimise additional staff needs (e.g., A/V staff not required for every lecture)?
 - What ratios of support staff to lecturers do most early stage initiatives operate?

Digital Delivery Infrastructure as Initiatives Evolve

- As digital delivery grows and schools can invest more, how does the physical infrastructure evolve?
 - What do contacts prioritise in typical digital delivery suite construction?
 - How do spaces adapt for hybrid, fully online, synchronous, or asynchronous lectures?
- What additional technological systems and platforms do contacts invest in as digital delivery efforts scale?
- What staff do these spaces require?
 - What roles do contacts add as they begin to scale digital delivery infrastructure?
 - What ratio of support staff to lecturers do established models require?

Advanced Digital Delivery Infrastructure

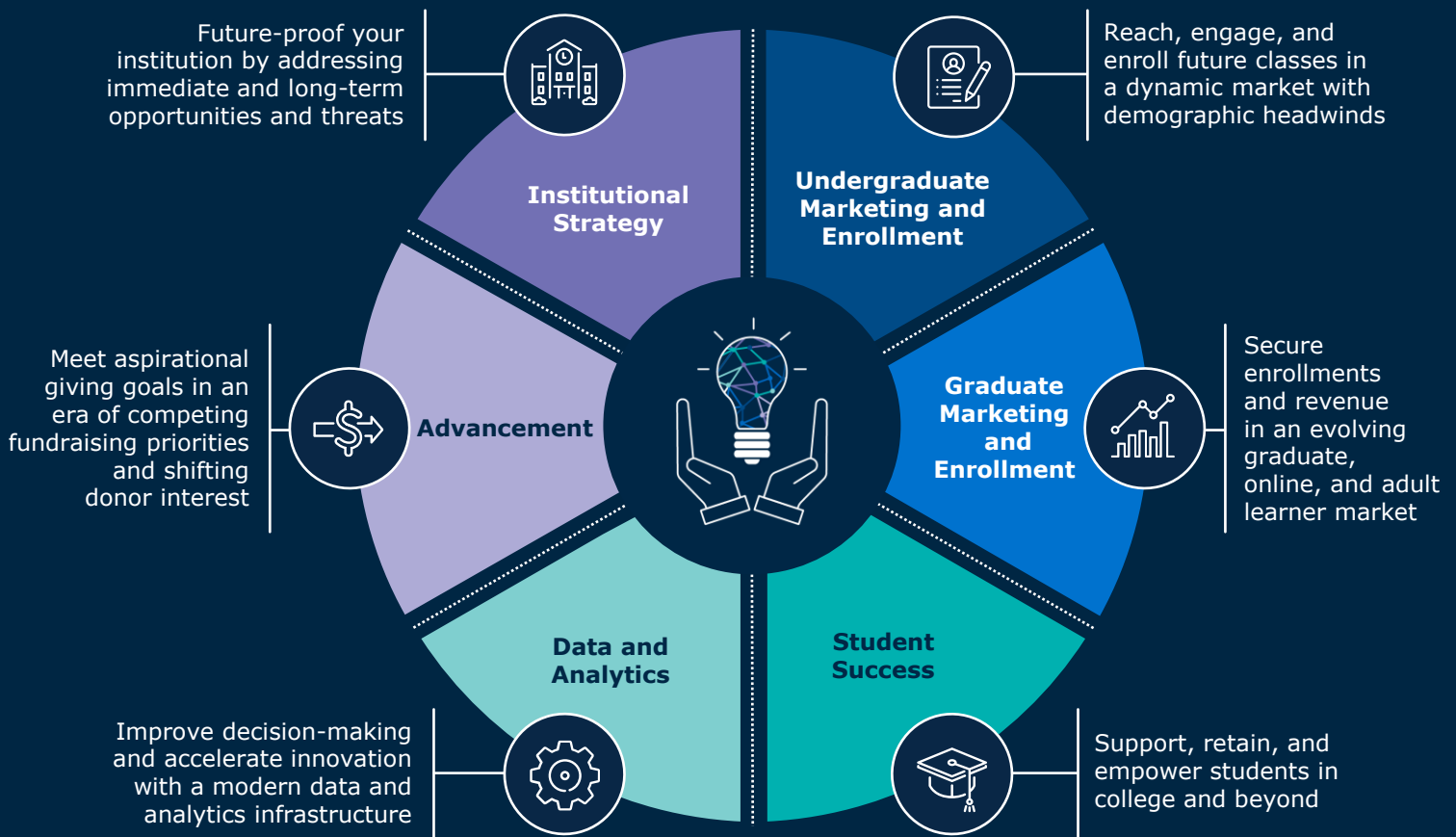
- What physical infrastructure supports the most advanced digital delivery models?
- What technological systems and platforms support advanced digital delivery (e.g., television production-style studios)?
- What staff do these spaces require?
 - What additional roles do advanced digital delivery models require?
 - What ratio of support staff to lecturers do the most advanced models require?
- What leading edge technologies, models, or other enhancements are contracts tracking for their digital learning investments?

Research Methodology (cont.)

Research Limitations

Fewer digital learning experts than hoped were willing to participate in interviews and this research leverages their perspectives as well as best practices in digital delivery to the greatest extent possible.

**Insight-Powered Solutions for Your Top
Priorities and Toughest Challenges**



We partner with **2,800+** institutions to accelerate progress, deliver results, and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year because of results we achieve, together.



202-747-1000 | eab.com

 @eab  @eab-  @WeAreEAB

ABOUT EAB

At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We work with more than 2,800 institutions to drive transformative change through data-driven insights and best-in-class capabilities. From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and advancement. We work with each partner differently, tailoring our portfolio of research, technology, and marketing and enrollment solutions to meet the unique needs of every leadership team, as well as the students and employees they serve. Learn more at eab.com.