

A LEARNFRAME BOARD BRIEFING

Doing It Properly

What ‘properly’ actually means when your institute digitises a professional programme — and the questions a board should be asking before it commits.

FOR THE ATTENTION OF

Chief Executives, Directors of Education, and Boards of professional institutes and membership bodies considering or already committed to digitising a programme.

READING TIME

Eight minutes.

COMPANION RESOURCE

Programme Design Audit (XLSX) — a 30-question scoring tool for the team that would own the work.
Free, ungated.

www.learnframe.com/resources.html

WHY THIS BRIEFING EXISTS

The board-level question worth asking

Most professional institutes will, at some point in the next three years, take a strategic decision to move a flagship classroom programme into digital delivery. The pressure to do so is well-understood — member geography, scheduling friction, demand outstripping capacity, the expectations of a generation of professionals who learn online by default.

What is less well-understood, at the level the board sees, is the difference between a programme that has been *digitised* and one that has been *designed for digital*. The former is a classroom programme delivered through a screen. The latter is a programme that uses the medium properly — and produces a member experience that holds its own against the classroom version, sometimes surpassing it.

The gap between the two is rarely a budget gap. Both efforts cost roughly the same. The gap is a design discipline gap — whether the team building the programme has a shared, deliberate definition of what good actually looks like in the digital medium.

“The difference between the institutes whose members rave about the digital version and the institutes whose members keep asking when the classroom version is coming back is not effort. It is whether the team has a definition of properly that is fit for the medium.”

This briefing sets out the six dimensions that, in our experience working with professional institutes and membership bodies, define that discipline. It is written for the board and executive conversation — the moment where the institute decides whether it is genuinely committing to a digital programme, or simply approving a project to put an existing programme online.

Used alongside the companion **Programme Design Audit** — a 30-question scoring tool for the team that would own the work — it gives both ends of the institute, board and operating team, a shared language for the decision.

THE FRAMEWORK

Six dimensions of doing it properly

Each of the six dimensions below is a place where the classroom default does not translate to digital. The absence of a deliberate digital design choice on any one of them quietly degrades the programme. The presence of all six is what produces a digital programme members value as much as — or more than — the classroom equivalent.

1. Pacing & Structure

Designed around how working professionals consume learning — in the gaps in their week, not in two-day blocks. Units sized for a single sitting. Clear stopping and resuming points. A rhythm that respects the working week rather than competing with it.

2. Assessment Design

Built for digital from the ground up. Scenario-based decisions, applied artefacts, evidence of practice. Feedback that is timely and tied to professional capability. Defensible enough to carry the same credential weight as the classroom version.

3. Cohort & Community

The social learning experience deliberately engineered. Members visible to each other, conversation structured rather than hoped for, recognition moments built in. The goal is that members finish with relationships, not just certificates.

4. Faculty Presence

Subject matter experts showing up as engagement, not as recorded performance. Live and near-live touchpoints — masterclasses, Q&A, office hours. A clear path for members to ask questions and receive expert response.

5. Member Experience

The journey from enrolment to completion treated as a designed arc. Real onboarding, clear visibility of what is coming next, proactive support, and a completion moment that is genuinely recognised — not a downloaded PDF certificate.

6. Production Craft

Production quality that matches the institute's brand standards. Visual design, audio and video, written materials and platform experience that feel current. Members compare what they see to the consumer products they use every day.

FOR THE EXECUTIVE CONVERSATION

Five questions the board should ask

If a digital programme proposal is on the agenda, these are the questions that surface whether the team has thought about the work as a digital design discipline or as a classroom-to-online conversion. None of them require the board to be expert in learning design. They require honest answers from the executive team.

1. Who on our team owns the design discipline?

Not the project — the discipline. Is there a named individual accountable for the quality of the digital design across all six dimensions, with the seniority to push back when the work falls short? If the answer is “the project team collectively” or “the platform vendor will handle it,” the answer is no.

2. What does our completed digital programme look like to a member, end-to-end?

Can the executive team walk us through the member journey from enrolment to completion in concrete terms? If the answer is a feature list rather than a journey, the member experience has not yet been designed.

3. How will the digital credential be defended on rigour?

If a regulator, employer, or examining body challenged the rigour of the digital version, what evidence would we put on the table? This question protects the credential — the institute's most valuable asset.

4. What are we doing differently from a recorded version of the classroom?

Three concrete things. If the team cannot name them, the programme is being digitised, not designed for digital.

5. When and how will we know whether it has worked?

What member outcomes will we measure, when, and what threshold counts as success? A digital programme without defined success measures cannot be improved — or defended — when its first year produces uneven results.

WHERE WE COME IN

At LearnFrame, this is the design discipline we bring to the institutes and membership bodies we work with. Three decades of digital learning experience, a senior strategic team in Dublin, and a development capability that delivers enterprise-quality work at a fraction of typical agency cost — a structural advantage we have built deliberately, not a compromise on quality. If your institute is on this curve and would value an experienced second opinion on a programme you are about to commit to, we would welcome a conversation.

LearnFrame Solutions

Dublin

www.learnframe.comCompanion audit tool: </resources.html>