Digital maturity
model for
higher education

IN BRIEF · THE SHORT VERSION OF THE BOOK

COMPASS

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

The seven domains, the maturity scale and the three cross-cutting requirements of COMPASS, summarised for a first reading, a workshop or a steering committee.

This booklet condenses the COMPASS book, version 2.0. For the detailed explanations, the catalogue of 297 indicators and the survey templates, see the full book.

Version 1.0 · October 2026

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COMPASS. IN BRIEF

Jean-François (Jeff) Van de Poël · Version 1.0 · October 2026 · Short version of the book *COMPASS. A compass for digital maturity in higher education*, version 2.0.

Full book, online review and project kit: ialliance.ch/compass

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STATEMENT ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The COMPASS model and the text of the book from which this booklet is drawn are the author's work, and he takes responsibility for them. Generative AI tools (Claude, Anthropic) were used to select and condense passages of the version 2.0 book and to lay out the booklet. The key indicator targets are those of the book, which are proposed benchmarks. The author reviewed and approved the whole.

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Why COMPASS

Higher education has never stopped changing, but the pace has run away. Massification, the shift to distance and then hybrid teaching, the rise of data and now generative AI have each brought their tools, their obligations and their rhetoric. Most institutions did not have the leisure to choose them. They had them imposed.

Those who support digital transformation run into a discreet but stubborn difficulty: the abundance of reference frameworks. SAMR, TPACK, DigCompEdu, digital capability frameworks and maturity grids are useful, and often excellent. But almost all of them are set at the level of the educator or the course, and leave the level of the organisation in the shade. We have very good neighbourhood maps, but no plan of the city.

COMPASS was born of this gap. It connects the existing frameworks and offers an institution an overall view: seven domains that cover the whole ecosystem, a five-level maturity scale, and three cross-cutting requirements without which no maturity can be built to last. It helps an institution decide where to focus its effort first.

COMPASS does not prescribe. It says neither which pedagogy to adopt nor which tools to buy. It recalls the cardinal points and leaves each institution to chart its own route, bearing in mind that technology remains a means at the service of the people who learn and who teach.

> *What matters is decided in use, and no directive can decree a use.*

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The model at a glance

COMPASS describes the digital maturity of a higher education institution through seven domains, which together form a system. Governance and strategy set the direction. The tool portfolio and infrastructure provide the means. Educator competencies are extended by students' digital competencies. Support and the helpdesk sustain everyday use. Projects and innovation renew practice. Valorisation and recognition keep the energy of the whole alive.

Every domain is read on the same scale, from 0 to 4. The scale describes how firmly a practice is established in the institution, independently of any measure of performance or of teaching quality. A practice is mature only when it survives the departure of those who launched it. Positioning oneself is something other than undergoing an audit: a level indicates a direction, and serves an honest conversation.

The maturity scale

0	**Absent**	Nothing is structured; isolated, undocumented initiatives at most.
1	**Pilot**	Experiments led by a few motivated people, with no guaranteed framework or continuity.
2	**Partial**	An approach is in place, but unevenly: it covers part of the institution without being systematic.
3	**Deployed**	Institution-wide, documented and steered, with clear responsibilities and regular monitoring.
4	**Mature**	Established, evaluated and continuously improved; it survives the departure of the people who launched it.

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Three cross-cutting requirements

ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Design for student diversity from the outset, with reliable subtitles, documents a screen reader can read and alternatives when a format excludes some people. A highly advanced scheme that leaves some students behind remains immature.

DATA PROTECTION

Every tool and every use of learning data complies with the GDPR or the nFADP. Know which data are collected and why, where they are hosted, and carry out an impact assessment when the risk is high.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI

Say clearly what is permitted, keep a human decision where it matters, and provide an alternative when AI is deliberately excluded. In the online questionnaire, 26 of the 61 questions carry the AI badge, 5 the accessibility badge and 4 the data badge.

Five ways to use it

- The snapshot: where do we stand? Assign each domain a level, as honestly as possible, with evidence.
- The projection: where do we want to go? Set the level you wish to reach in each domain, in the light of your mission.
- The trajectory: where do we start? Turn the gap into a roadmap focused on two or three domains.
- Benchmarking: compared with what? Place faculties, services or successive years side by side in order to learn, never to rank.
- The common language: a vocabulary shared by governance, IT, teaching and learning, support services and students.

Running a first assessment

1. Bring together a small representative group: decision-making, the technical side, teaching and learning, a support service and, if possible, a student.
2. Go through the seven domains one by one and assign a level from 0 to 4. Where there is no evidence, you drop down a level.
3. Record disagreements rather than smoothing them over: a divergence is already valuable information.
4. Set down the result in a readable form, such as a table or a seven-branch profile, that can be compared from one year to the next.
5. Choose two or three priority domains, define a first concrete deliverable and a deadline for each, and set a date for reassessment in six to twelve months.

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A few pitfalls to avoid

- Complacency: awarding yourself good levels for reassurance. Evidence is the best antidote.
- The league table: a ranking of faculties pushes everyone to embellish their situation.
- Spreading too thin: two or three priorities that are kept to are worth more than seven open projects.
- Forgetting the cross-cutting requirements, or doing the snapshot once and putting it away in a drawer.

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DOMAIN 1 · P1

1 Governance and strategy

Mature governance outlives the departure of the people who launched it: it is written into the processes.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

Governance is the founding domain of COMPASS: the ground and the foundations on which tools, training, support and innovation are built. An ambitious strategy without a coherent tool portfolio remains a text with no effect; rules on AI that nobody communicates to students produce arbitrariness.

Digital governance is far more a matter of decision-making than of IT. It is an institution's capacity to take informed, coherent and transparent decisions about the place of digital technology in teaching, and then to keep to them over time. Solid governance is invisible: it shows in the absence of avoidable crises.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Four questions: who decides, on what criteria, with what transparency, and how do we check the effects?
- Four components: a strategy that sets the course, a roadmap, a roles chart and a monitoring arrangement.
- Subsidiarity: a minimal common framework within which academic freedom is exercised safely.
- Three distinct objects: the strategy (why), the plan (what and when), the policy (what is permitted).
- Data governance: deciding what you do not collect, who can access what, and being transparent towards students.

THE SCALE APPLIED

0 No written strategy, no body, no defined roles; decisions are taken case by case.

1 A first charter or informal working group, dependent on motivated individuals.

2 A strategy exists and a body meets, but their reach is uneven and the AI policy remains patchy.

3 The strategy is communicated and applied, roles are clear, a dashboard feeds into decisions.

4 Decisions are recorded, indicators discussed, the AI policy revised; it withstands changes of people.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Is there a clear digital education strategy, written down and communicated to everyone involved?*
- *Do you have an AI use policy specifying what is permitted, prohibited or conditional?*
- *Does a multidisciplinary body steer AI, with a known membership, a defined rhythm and accessible minutes?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- A digital education strategy of about ten pages, that can be read in one sitting
- A roadmap with deadlines, people responsible and a budget
- A tool governance framework setting the criteria for choosing, maintaining or withdrawing a tool
- A roles chart, or responsibility matrix
- A steering dashboard with a small number of indicators really monitored
- An AI use policy, an AI steering body and a risk map

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **The ghost strategy.** Voted through at the top, with no grip on everyday practice. Shorten it, link it to a funded roadmap, genuinely communicate it.
- **The graveyard of decisions.** Nobody knows any longer what was decided, or why. Keep an accessible catalogue of decisions, with criteria and dates.
- **Governance mistaken for IT.** Pedagogical, legal and ethical questions are left to the technical service. Set up a multidisciplinary body where pedagogy and law have a say.
- **AI settled by circular.** A memo circulated once, quickly out of date, then circumvented. A short policy backed by a body that revises it.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

The strategy is short, clear, read and understood, and embraces subsidiarity towards the dean's offices. Decisions are recorded in an accessible catalogue with their criteria. Each course states what is permitted where AI is concerned, with alternatives. A multidisciplinary AI body meets at a defined rhythm and publishes its minutes. A change of leadership does not call governance into question, because it has become a shared way of doing things.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Begin with an honest snapshot, then one or two high-impact deliverables, most often a short AI use policy and a roles chart.
Level 2	Extend the approach to all: cover the missing faculties, circulate existing good practices, give the body a stable rhythm, set up a minimal dashboard.
Level 3	Work on lasting: document decisions, spread responsibilities, evaluate effects and revise the AI policy at regular intervals.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
Strategy in force	**Document published < 24 months**
Decisions published with criteria	**≥ 90%**
Shared dashboard	**5 out of 5, updated every six months**
AI policy in force	**< 24 months, revised**
AI transparency in courses	**≥ 80% → 100% of course plans**

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DOMAIN 2 · P2

2 Tool portfolio and infrastructure

A mature portfolio can be recognised by its calm: knowing what you use, where the data lives and how you would change.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

If governance is the ground, the tool portfolio and the infrastructure are the load-bearing structure: this is where strategy meets everyday reality. As long as educators and students do not have reliable, simple and secure access to the tools they need, pedagogical intentions remain theoretical.

It is the most visible domain, put to the test every day. Having tools is not enough, and piling them up even less so. Maturity lies in the coherence of a whole: tools chosen for good reasons, interoperable, accessible, hosted under controlled conditions, which you know how to develop or withdraw. Infrastructure is the material condition of pedagogical freedom.

WHAT IT COVERS

- The portfolio: the learning platform at its heart, with videoconferencing, assessment, content production, collaboration and AI tools.
- The infrastructure: identity systems, networks, storage and backups.
- The rules for adding, maintaining or abandoning a tool.
- Interoperability, data portability and accessibility of every tool.
- Reversibility: how you would change, on the day you want to.

THE SCALE APPLIED

0	1	2	3	4
Everyone chooses tools alone, with no inventory, no rules and no organised backup.	A central platform and a few integrations, dependent on a few people; shadow IT thrives.	A catalogue and single sign-on for the main tools; accessibility and usage sheets are uneven.	Documented portfolio, clean integrations, accessibility by default, incidents managed by procedure.	Reversibility planned, a sandbox for new tools, every AI tool documented with an alternative.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Is the tool portfolio listed in a catalogue that is consulted and kept up to date?*
- *Does every tool have a usage sheet stating its owner and the data it processes?*
- *Do you know which tools are used outside the official framework, and why?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- A living catalogue of tools, each with a usage sheet
- Documented integrations, including single sign-on
- Content accessible by default, through accessible course templates
- Incident management and a status page
- A hosting and protection register, a supervised sandbox and exit plans
- For every AI tool, a data sheet and an alternative

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **Proliferation.** Tools pile up with no inventory and no criteria, each team adopting its own. An honest inventory, followed by deliberate sorting and entry criteria.
- **Accessibility left until the end.** You deploy first and make things accessible afterwards, if time allows. Build it into the selection criteria and the course templates, upstream.
- **Vendor lock-in.** A product becomes too costly to leave. Require data portability from the contract onwards and keep a credible alternative.
- **The illusion of free.** Payment is made in personal data, advertising or dependency. Examine what happens to the data before adopting, and count this hidden cost.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

The catalogue is alive and consulted, because it helps people choose. Integrations are clean and access tickets are rare. Accessible content is available without special request. Every AI tool carries a data sheet readable in two minutes, with a documented alternative, and a sandbox produces reasoned decisions. A tool's departure is handled with no loss of data or work, and the whole no longer depends on the memory of a few administrators.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Start with an honest inventory of what is really used, with no intention of penalising anyone; give the main tools a sheet and a responsible person, and offer accessible course templates.
Level 2	Generalise: extend single sign-on, complete the missing sheets, open a sandbox for AI trials and build a register of data hosting.
Level 3	Write down reversibility for every important tool, measure real effects and build sobriety into your criteria.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
Catalogue coverage	**100% of tools listed**
"Data & AI" sheets published	**≥ 95% up-to-date (< 12 months)**
SSO/MFA coverage	**100% of critical tools**
Captioned media (verified)	**≥ 90%**
LMS/video uptime	**≥ 99.5% uptime**

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DOMAIN 3 · P3

3 Educator competencies

Professional development is measured by transformed practices far more than by satisfaction or by the number of people trained.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

Designing an activity, assessing with integrity in the AI era, creating an inclusive environment, protecting students' data: none of these competencies is purely digital, and none is foreign to the digital. Version 2.0 therefore brings professional development and educators' digital competencies together in one domain with two strands.

Knowing where to click in a platform is no more a pedagogical competency than knowing how to hold a pen makes a writer. It is easy to confuse activity with effect: an institution can multiply workshops and display flattering participation rates while nothing has changed in the classroom. What counts is the number of practices genuinely transformed.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Designing activities, assessing, collaborating and engaging in reflective professional practice with digital technology.
- A shared description of competencies, drawing on DigCompEdu and its six areas.
- Guiding students towards their own digital autonomy: educator competencies mirror student competencies.
- AI competencies: critical verification, knowledge of the machine, technical literacy, distinctive human capabilities.
- Two audiences: educators and the services that support digital learning.

TWO STRANDS

Strand 1 · Framework and state of competencies
Competency framework, self-positioning, pedagogical design, assessment in the AI era.

Strand 2 · Professional development and recognition
Training offer, individual support, resources, communities of practice, recognition, transfer into practice. The domain score is the average of the two strands; the gap between them is diagnostic information.

THE SCALE APPLIED

0	1	2	3	4
No shared description of competencies; people train themselves, with no organised offer.	A framework known to a few; one-off workshops for volunteers, with no follow-up.	A framework and a self-positioning tool used unevenly; a training offer whose effects are rarely evaluated.	Self-positioning widespread and a coherent pathway open to all staff, support services included.	Support differentiated by need, effects evaluated, communities of practice lively and autonomous.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Are the expected digital competencies described in a common framework, rather than left to each person's judgement?*
- *Does self-positioning systematically lead to resources or support?*
- *Does training reach all teaching staff, or always the same volunteers?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- A competency framework that is adopted and used
- A self-positioning scheme linked to support, and a competency map
- Reference points on AI-related competencies
- A structured development pathway and facilitated communities of practice
- Recognition schemes and accessible training materials
- A needs analysis and an evaluation of effects

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **Reducing competency to mastery of tools.** Training covers buttons, and pedagogy and judgement disappear behind technique. Anchor each competency in a pedagogical and disciplinary intention.
- **Self-assessment with no follow-up.** Educators obtain a score and nothing happens next. Connect every self-positioning exercise to resources and support.
- **The one-off training session with no follow-up.** Participants leave motivated, then fall back into their habits. Think of training as a supported process.
- **Measuring satisfaction instead of transformation.** Good ratings straight after the session are taken as sufficient. Build effect indicators, however modest, and look later at what has shifted.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

The expected competencies are described in a common framework, owned by the teams, bringing together general digital competencies and those specific to AI. Educators place themselves on it without fear, because self-positioning opens onto support. Professional development is a coherent pathway open to educators and support services, with lively communities of practice and organised recognition. The institution tracks the real transformation of practices and adjusts its offer accordingly.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Adopt a recognised framework such as DigCompEdu, offer a no-stakes self-positioning exercise, launch one or two communities of practice on burning topics and set up a simple form of recognition.
Level 2	Link self-positioning to support, integrate AI competencies into the framework, include support services in the offer, and start measuring transformation, even on a sample.
Level 3	Track the competency profile over time, make communities of practice autonomous, differentiate pathways and connect development with institutional recognition.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
Self-assessment rate	**≥ 70% per year**
Progression ≥ 1 level	**≥ 40% per year**
AI transparency in courses	**≥ 80%, then 100%**
AI module participation	**≥ 60% per year**
Transfer to classroom	**≥ 60%**

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DOMAIN 4 · P4

Students' digital competencies

A mature approach is written into the curricula, ties digital skills to critical judgement and leaves no one behind.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

Every institution enters into a contract with its students that it almost never writes down: to prepare them to find information, to work and to exercise critical thinking in a digital world and, tomorrow, to collaborate there with AI systems. These competencies belong to every curriculum and to none in particular, and everyone imagines they are developed elsewhere.

Generative AI has made this issue a burning one. Students took up these tools with a speed few institutions had anticipated. A mature institution goes beyond prohibition or tolerance: it regards the responsible use of AI as a competency in its own right, on the same footing as evaluating a source or protecting one's data.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Information and data literacy
- Communication and collaboration
- Digital content creation, respecting copyright
- Safety, data protection and digital well-being
- Problem solving and the responsible use of AI

THE SCALE APPLIED

0 No explicit attention; the competencies are assumed to be already there.

1 One-off actions such as a library workshop or an AI session, with no framework or continuity.

2 A framework and a few schemes, unevenly integrated; equity barely addressed, AI not yet a competency.

3 An explicit framework integrated into the curricula, self-positioning, framed and taught use of AI.

4 The institution knows its students' profile, adjusts its schemes and treats equity as a constant priority.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Are the digital competencies expected of students described somewhere, as opposed to being assumed?*
- *Is responsibility for each competency assigned to a specific course or service?*
- *Have you abandoned the presupposition that students are spontaneously competent because they are young?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- An explicit student competency framework
- Integration into the curricula
- A self-positioning or diagnostic arrangement
- Guidance on AI use
- Equity measures
- Accessible resources

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **Assuming the competencies are already there.** Students are regarded as competent because they are young, and nothing is planned. Abandon the myth of the digital native and name the expected competencies.
- **Handling AI by prohibition alone.** Reduced to a set of prohibitions, guidance drives use underground. Make AI a competency to be developed, programme by programme.
- **The diagnostic with no follow-up.** A diagnostic with no follow-up fades away and supports no one. Link the positioning to real support.
- **Ignoring equity.** The gaps widen between well-resourced and poorly resourced students. Provide equipment loans and targeted support.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

The once invisible contract is written down and owned. The expected competencies are described in an explicit framework, integrated into the curricula, each with an anchor point in a course and an identified responsibility. Students position themselves at the start of their studies and this diagnostic leads to support. AI is taught as a competency of responsible use, which shifts the question from cheating to discernment. Equity is a constant concern and accessibility runs through all resources.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Make the contract visible by describing, even in outline, the competencies you undertake to develop, grounded in DigComp; choose one or two anchor points in the curricula and propose initial guidance on AI.
Level 2	Integrate the competencies into the curricula, identify and support the least well-resourced students, and turn AI guidance into a taught competency.
Level 3	Track the students' profile over time, adjust the framework and the AI guidance as tools evolve, and check that declared competencies show up in students' work.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
Entry diagnostic completed	**≥ 80% of incoming students (L1/M1)**
Programmes assessing digital competencies	**≥ 60%**
AI rules published	**Present + inter-course consistency**
Helpdesk SLA	**≤ 24h 1st response; ≥ 80% < 72h**
Self-declared digital confidence	**≥ 4/5 (annual progression)**

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5

DOMAIN 5 · P5

Support and helpdesk

A clear point of entry, and help that reaches out to people without judging them and leaves no one behind.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

An ambitious strategy, reliable tools and well-described competencies are useless if an educator who is stuck at eight in the morning, ten minutes before class, cannot find anyone to help. Support and the helpdesk form the last mile of digital maturity, the moment when the whole edifice meets people's everyday reality.

This domain is experienced from the point of view of the person who needs help, who does not care whether the problem belongs to IT or to teaching support. Mature support joins up the service desks. AI runs through it twice: as a major subject of support, and as a support tool, used with discernment.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Technical support for incidents and difficulties in using tools
- Pedagogical support for design, assessment and teaching scenarios, on a continuum with the technical
- Self-service: tutorials, frequently asked questions, knowledge bases
- Reactive, close and proactive support
- AI as a subject of support and as a support tool

THE SCALE APPLIED

0
Support is non-existent or informal; people manage alone, ask a colleague or give up.

1
Fragmented arrangements: IT and teaching support with no coordination; people guess where to turn.

2
A point of entry and a knowledge base, but weak links between technical and pedagogical support.

3
A clear point of entry, defined tiers and escalation, developed self-service, joined-up support.

4
A real single point of contact experience, proactive support, monitored quality, guaranteed accessibility.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Does a person in difficulty know immediately where to ask for help?*
- *Is there a shared point of entry, as opposed to competing service desks?*
- *Are requests taken in charge and routed, and not referred on with no follow-up?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- An identified point of entry
- A self-service knowledge base
- Support tiers and escalation rules
- A pedagogical support catalogue
- An outreach and proactive support scheme
- A framework for AI in support

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **Siloed service desks.** The person is sent endlessly from one desk to the other. A shared point of entry and clear handover rules.
- **The dead knowledge base.** Out of date or impossible to find, nobody consults it any more. Keep it up to date and make it findable.
- **Support that judges.** The reception makes the person feel they should have known, and requests become rarer. Normalise the act of asking for help.
- **The chatbot wall.** An AI agent traps people in generic answers with no access to a human being. Make every AI tool a door to a human being.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

A person in difficulty knows immediately where to ask for help. Whichever door they come in by, they are directed to the right expertise, technical or pedagogical, without having to explain everything again. A living knowledge base often lets them solve the problem alone. Support reaches out to those who do not dare to ask, and the reception never judges. AI is used as a door to a human being. Quality is organised and monitored.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Establish a clear point of entry known to everyone, start a knowledge base with the most frequent questions, and state who supports uses of AI.
Level 2	Organise tiers and escalation, build bridges between the technical and the pedagogical, and make pedagogical support visible.
Level 3	Develop proactive support, monitor quality beyond volume, check accessibility of all channels and evaluate AI tools regularly.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
1st response	**Median ≤ 8h; ≥ 90% < 24h**
KB freshness (incl. AI sheets)	**≥ 90% < 12 months**
Clinic appointment delay	**Median ≤ 7d; ≥ 80% < 10d**
False-positive procedure (plagiarism / AI)	**Published, with appeal route**
Overall support NPS	**NPS > 0; CSAT ≥ 4/5**

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DOMAIN 6 · P6

6 Projects and innovation

Mature innovation is counted in practices that have become permanent and that outlast the departure of their pioneers.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

An institution that stops experimenting condemns itself to repetition. Projects and innovation is the domain through which an institution renews its practices and adapts to a fast-moving environment, as generative AI has shown. Without this capacity to explore, the institution ends up undergoing change rather than leading it.

Innovation is fragile. Promising pilots die because they were never evaluated or made permanent; grassroots initiatives vanish when the person who carried them leaves. The task is to turn a diffuse capacity for tinkering into an organised capacity for innovation, with a framework that authorises and supports initiatives and ties them to a strategic direction.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Horizon scanning of what is done elsewhere and what is emerging
- Experimentation through small-scale pilots
- Project management over time
- Evaluation that decides what happens to an experiment next
- Scaling up, when a local success becomes a lasting practice

THE SCALE APPLIED

0 Innovation is absent or purely individual, unknown to the institution.

1 Isolated pilots carried by enthusiasts, neither evaluated nor made permanent.

2 Some horizon scanning and supported projects, but rare scaling up and weak evaluation.

3 A framework links initiatives to strategy; pilots are evaluated with clear decisions to continue or stop.

4 Continuous, balanced innovation; successes outlast their initiators and failures feed collective learning.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Do you have organised horizon scanning of what is being done elsewhere and what is emerging?*
- *Are you able to stop a pilot that is not delivering on its promises, without making a drama of it?*
- *Would your innovations outlast the departure of those who carry them?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- A horizon-scanning arrangement
- A framework for launching and evaluating a pilot
- A project portfolio
- Criteria and a process for scaling up
- A space and a right to experiment
- An ethical framing of experimentation

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **Pilotitis.** Pilots multiply and none is made permanent. Think about scaling up from the start and decide clearly on the fate of each pilot.
- **Innovation theatre.** Projects are put on display with no real intention of transforming practices. Judge innovation by its real effects.
- **The race for the shiny tool.** The latest fashionable tool is tried out without starting from a need. Anchor each project in a real pedagogical need.
- **Experimentation without ethics.** Tests run on students without informing them or protecting their data. Build ethics in from the design stage.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

Innovation is neither the monopoly of a directorate nor the private business of a few enthusiasts. A light framework supports grassroots initiatives and links them to a strategic direction. Pilots are run with method, evaluated honestly, and their fate is decided without indulgence. Scaling up is considered from the start. The right to make mistakes is real, AI is explored rigorously, and students are never guinea pigs.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Make existing initiatives visible, organise shared horizon scanning and offer a light framework for proposing a pilot, with an explicit right to make mistakes.
Level 2	Give yourselves simple criteria for evaluating pilots and deciding their fate, think about scaling up from the design stage, and link the portfolio to the strategy.
Level 3	Maintain the balance between exploring and consolidating, cultivate the memory of failures and refine the exploration of AI.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
Pilot contracts signed	**100%**
Evaluation plans complete	**100% of projects**
Go/No-go within 30d post-report	**≥ 90%**
Reusable deliverables produced	**≥ 2 per project (guides, OERs, sheets)**
DPIAs for AI cases	**100% of at-risk projects**

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7

DOMAIN 7 · P7

Valorisation and recognition

Mature recognition reaches careers, values the work as much as the people, and does not forget quiet commitment.

WHY THIS DOMAIN MATTERS

This last domain is often the most neglected, and it determines whether all the others last. People who commit themselves to digital teaching and innovation often do so out of conviction, but nobody can carry indefinitely an effort that is neither recognised nor valued. Recognition keeps the energy of the whole alive.

The domain suffers from a structural obstacle: the prestige gap between research and teaching. Tackling it means confronting an implicit hierarchy of values, which goes well beyond adding a few prizes or badges.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Recognition of people: careers, time and status
- Symbolic and community recognition: awards, visibility, peers
- Valorisation of achievements: dissemination, ideally under an open licence
- The link between the individual and the institutional
- Fairness of recognition, including quiet commitment

THE SCALE APPLIED

0 Digital engagement rests entirely on conviction, with nothing in return; achievements remain invisible.

1 A one-off prize or moment in the spotlight; recognition does not reach careers.

2 Symbolic schemes and a few badges, but no weight in careers and a weak link with valorisation.

3 Engagement counts in career criteria, achievements are disseminated, fairness is taken into account.

4 Recognition written into careers and culture, a virtuous circle between the individual and the institutional.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *Does commitment to teaching and to digital practice count in promotion criteria?*
- *Are these criteria really applied in decisions, or only displayed?*
- *Have you named the prestige gap between research and teaching, and begun to reduce it?*

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EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Career criteria that include digital engagement
- A scheme for symbolic and community recognition
- A well-considered system of badges or micro-credentials
- A scheme for valorisation and dissemination
- A framework linking the individual and the institutional
- A framework for fairness of recognition

ANTI-PATTERNS

- **Token recognition.** Prizes are multiplied without ever touching careers. Act on career criteria as well, the only thing capable of sending an unambiguous signal.
- **Worthless badges.** Badges handed out in abundance end up meaning nothing. Reserve them for substantial forms of recognition, backed by standards.
- **Always the same people.** Recognition goes to the most visible while quiet commitment is ignored. Actively seek out silent contributions.
- **Institutional appropriation.** The institution takes the credit without recognising those who produced the work. Always name the people in every act of valorisation.

WHAT MATURE PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

Commitment to teaching and to digital practice really counts in careers, beyond the speeches. Symbolic recognition supports inner motivation rather than replacing it. Badges, where they exist, rest on credible standards. Achievements are disseminated, often under an open licence. Recognising people strengthens the institution, and valorising the work honours its authors. Recognition also reaches quiet commitment, and no longer depends on the goodwill of a few managers.

WHERE TO START

STARTING POINT	FIRST ACTION
Level 0 or 1	Make existing achievements visible and disseminate them, establish sincere symbolic recognition, and begin to reflect on how digital engagement counts in careers.
Level 2	Build digital engagement into career criteria in stages, link recognition of people and valorisation of achievements, and introduce badges rigorously.
Level 3	Consolidate the place of digital engagement in careers, check that recognition supports motivation, and keep up open dissemination and fairness.

FIVE KEY INDICATORS

INDICATOR	TARGET
Editorial rhythm	**≥4 publications/ month (articles, videos, testimonials)**
Recognition recorded in the career file	**100%**
OERs deposited	**+20%/year; reuse rising**
GDPR/ethics compliance of SoTL studies	**100% of validated dossiers**
AI declaration on valorised productions	**100% (when relevant)**

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Setting COMPASS in motion

The seven domains are bound up with one another. A strategy without competencies remains a dead letter, tools without support disappoint, innovation without recognition runs out of steam. COMPASS invites you to read them together, looking for imbalances as much as for strengths, with the three cross-cutting requirements as the ethical condition of every domain.

A compass differs from a map: it gives a direction without pointing to a single route. An institution does not have to be mature everywhere in the same way, nor aim indiscriminately for the top level in every domain. What matters is to understand where you are, to choose where you want to go, and to progress consistently with your values and your means. Technology is a means, never an end.

Four threads run through the model: durability, real use, equity and human judgement in the face of AI. Keeping them in mind is worth more than remembering every detail. And the map is not the territory: the reference points on offer must serve discernment without ever replacing it.

Digital maturity is built with people. Buy-in, competence and commitment cannot be decreed. Presented as an audit, COMPASS makes people tense; presented as a support for conversation, it changes everything. A self-assessment experienced as a dialogue engages people, where an audit endured divides them.

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Going further

The full book

Detailed explanations of each domain, the catalogue of 297 indicators and the survey templates.

ialliance.ch/compass

The online review

61 questions to place your institution, a profile per domain and an assistant.

ialliance.ch/compass/bilan

The project kit

The practice workbook, the A3 canvas and the online tool to apply COMPASS to a project.

ialliance.ch/compass/projet

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