Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Report

ACFIPS ITAB

Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project Report

Identifying skills gaps, trends and emerging technologies across seven key industries

Prepared by the ACFIPS ITAB
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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this project has been developed and delivered. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

ACFIPS also extends its sincere appreciation to all stakeholders, industry partners, educators, and survey participants who contributed their insights, time and knowledge to this cross-industry project.

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Table of Contents

About this report

This report presents a synthesis of primary and secondary research, with a focus on industry-specific digital skill needs, gaps in training delivery, and future predictions for digital capability development. Findings are organised by industry and include statistical insights, course data, emerging trends, and recommendations.

This report synthesises extensive research, consultation, and analysis conducted throughout the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project. It has been designed to offer clear insights into how digital disruption is influencing training and employment in seven vocational industries. Each section presents key findings relevant to a specific sector, highlighting digital skill gaps, technology adoption trends, and curriculum recommendations.

The report draws on multiple data sources, including:

- Hundreds of survey responses from individuals across all sectors
- Industry expert interviews and focus group sessions
- Analysis of enrolment data and digital content within existing training packages
- Research on emerging technologies and workforce trends

Each industry-specific chapter includes:

- Percentage of digital skills embedded in courses
- Foundation and assessable digital skills
- Identified emerging technologies and digital tools
- Stakeholder recommendations
- Impacts on future workforce

This report is intended to guide RTOs, policymakers, educators, and employers in shaping effective, future-proof training solutions across NSW and beyond.

Executive Summary

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project investigated the evolving digital skill needs across seven key vocational education sectors in New South Wales: Property Services, Creative Arts and Culture, Asset Maintenance and Surveying, Financial Services, Business Services, Information Technology and Telecommunications, and Printing and Graphic Arts. Through extensive research, surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder consultations, the project identified critical digital skill gaps, emerging technology trends, and the future workforce requirements shaping these industries.

A clear and urgent theme emerged: digital fluency is no longer optional — it is essential.

Survey findings revealed that 94% of respondents believe jobs now demand more digital skills than just two years ago, yet over 93% reported a significant gap between industry requirements and current training offerings. Foundational digital competencies such as cyber security, cloud computing, data analysis, and effective digital communication are now baseline expectations across all sectors.

There were 10 cross-industry digital foundation skills that were consistently identified as critical to workforce readiness:

1. Digital literacy (ICT use and navigation)
2. Online communication and collaboration
3. Cyber security awareness
4. Data entry and digital record-keeping
5. Use of workplace-specific software
6. Problem solving with digital tools
7. Online customer service etiquette
8. Digital scheduling and time management tools
9. Remote work protocols and virtual meetings
10. Social media and content creation for business use

These skills support not only individual employability but also organisational resilience and adaptability in an increasingly digital economy.

The project also uncovered key emerging technologies reshaping industry practices. These include artificial intelligence (AI), cloud-based collaboration tools, cyber security protocols, data analytics, automation, and immersive technologies such as virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR). These technologies are becoming embedded in roles beyond IT, influencing operations, service delivery, and customer engagement across all job functions.

However, the report highlights several challenges:

- Widespread resistance to adopting new technologies, especially in legacy systems
- A lack of confidence and access to current digital tools among parts of the workforce
- Misalignment between training content and real-world digital systems used in industry

Insights from focus groups echoed these findings, with participants calling for more relevant, hands-on training using current workplace platforms, and greater emphasis on soft digital skills such as communication, adaptability, and ethical digital practice.

To bridge these gaps, respondents prioritised:

- Digital communication and collaboration training
- Proficiency in handling digital documents and platforms
- Cyber security, ethics, and data privacy awareness
- Applied skills in AI, automation, and data analytics

This report advocates for a strategic shift in vocational education — embedding both foundational and advanced digital skills across all qualifications. It provides a roadmap for educators, training providers, and policymakers to ensure that vocational training remains agile, industry-relevant, and capable of preparing a digitally confident workforce for the future of work.

Introduction

In response to the evolving needs of the modern workforce, the ACFIPS Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project was launched to identify priority digital skill gaps, understand emerging technology trends, and provide actionable recommendations to better align training and industry outcomes.

Digital transformation is fundamentally reshaping how industries operate, interact, and deliver value to clients and communities. As the fourth industrial revolution accelerates the integration of technology into nearly every facet of work, it has become clear that digital capability is no longer an optional skill-set but a foundational requirement for sustainable employment and business growth.

Recognising this shift, the ACFIPS Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project was established to investigate how digital skills are currently represented in training delivery, how they align with real-world industry needs, and where gaps and opportunities lie across a range of vocational sectors. This initiative brings together seven diverse industries — Property Services, Creative Arts and Culture, Asset Maintenance and Surveying, Financial Services, Business Services, Information Technology and Telecommunications, and Printing and Graphic Arts — to identify shared challenges and unique demands in their digital transitions.

This project was undertaken with the understanding that while each industry operates within its own context, there are significant overlaps in the digital tools, platforms, and behaviours required to function effectively in the modern economy. With growing expectations around remote work, online collaboration, cyber security, and data-driven decision-making, the ability to embed adaptable digital skills into workforce training is essential to resilience and competitiveness.

The introduction of AI, automation, and advanced communication platforms is transforming traditional job roles, influencing recruitment trends, and requiring training systems to be more agile and future-focused. As a result, vocational education must expand foundational digital literacy to include intermediate, advanced, and industry-specific digital competencies.

This report presents a forward-looking view of digital technology needs across sectors and offers evidence-based insights to inform educational program design, policy development, and industry engagement strategies. It is a call to action for collaborative solutions that bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that learners and workers are equipped with the skills to thrive in the digital future.

About the Project

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project was launched as a strategic initiative under the direction of ACFIPS to evaluate the state of digital capabilities across seven vocational industries and recommend pathways for future-focused skills development. The goal was to explore the intersection between technological change and workforce readiness, enabling more targeted training and education planning at both industry and government levels.

Each selected industry brings its own context and set of challenges, but the increasing reliance on digital platforms, systems, and tools is a shared reality. This project aimed to clarify which digital skills are critical across all sectors, where the training gaps exist, and how future roles are likely to evolve as digital technologies continue to transform workplaces.

Key Objectives

1. **Identify essential digital and foundation skills common to all sectors**

Determine the foundational and advanced digital skills that are essential across multiple vocational industries to support workforce readiness.

2. **Assess alignment between training and industry needs**

Evaluate how well current vocational education and training (VET) programs incorporate the digital competencies required in modern workplaces.

3. **Explore emerging technologies and their influence on job roles**

Investigate the impact of technologies such as AI, cloud computing, cyber security, data analytics, and digital collaboration tools across diverse sectors.

4. **Understand industry-specific challenges**

Gather qualitative insights through focus groups and consultations to identify sector-specific digital skill gaps, barriers to technology adoption, and future workforce trends.

5. **Support curriculum modernisation**

Provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance VET curricula, ensuring it reflects real-world digital demands and emerging role expectations.

6. **Promote workforce resilience and adaptability**

Advocate for digital up-skilling and re-skilling to help both existing workers and new entrants adapt to evolving technological landscapes.

7. **Encourage cross-sector collaboration**

Foster engagement between industry experts, industry leaders, and policymakers to develop shared strategies for digital capability development.

Project Methodology and Phases

To achieve its objectives, the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project was delivered across five sequential phases, incorporating planning, validation, data analysis, and final reporting. Each phase built upon the last to ensure a collaborative and evidence-based approach.

Phase 1 — Commencement (18 March – 18 September 2024)
The initial phase focused on establishing a strong foundation for the project. During this period, ACFIPS developed the project brief, defined scope and objectives, and initiated early-stage data collection. These activities set the groundwork for all future validation and research stages.

Phase 2 — Validation Round 1 (19 September 2024 – 14 March 2025)
This phase marked the beginning of targeted industry engagement. Industry stakeholders were consulted through networking sessions and structured focus groups to validate initial assumptions and begin identifying digital skill gaps. Feedback gathered during this phase helped shape an early understanding of sector-specific needs, challenges, and opportunities for digital transformation. Summaries of the discussions informed the planning of deeper inquiry in subsequent phases.

Phase 2.1 — Validation Round 2 (15 March – 24 May 2025)
Phase 2.1 continued the validation process, providing an opportunity to test emerging insights and collect more detailed feedback from across the sectors. Additional focus groups and networking sessions allowed for further sector-specific analysis and strengthened the alignment between stakeholder experiences and initial findings. This stage helped refine the key themes and ensured that the evolving conclusions were grounded in real-world practice and expectations.

Phase 2.2 — Validation Round 3 and Pre-Launch (25 May – 20 June 2025)
In the final validation phase, a comprehensive industry survey was distributed, gathering over 150 responses from professionals and educators. This round of validation triangulated findings from earlier engagement and confirmed the consistency of observed trends across industries. In parallel, planning for the public launch began, and preparations for final reporting and deliverables were set in motion.

Phase 3 — Completion and Launch (20 June – 26 June 2025)
The final phase brought the project to its official 'launch'. During this time, the consolidated data and insights were released to stakeholders, and the formal project launch event was hosted. A dynamic Power BI dashboard was developed to enable interactive access to findings. Additionally, final reports were published, offering actionable recommendations for training providers, policy leaders, and industry stakeholders to enhance digital capability across the vocational education landscape.

The project provides a critical foundation for future work in skills forecasting and training reform. Its findings are intended to support collaborative planning between industries, TAFE, RTOs, government agencies, and workforce development bodies as they prepare to meet the digital demands of tomorrow's economy.

Validation Overview

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project was initiated in response to the urgent need for digital capability uplift across vocational education sectors. As industries continue to evolve in the digital age, employers are increasingly seeking graduates who are not only technically competent, but also digitally fluent, adaptable, and ready to engage with emerging technologies.

This report synthesises extensive research including national enrolment data, course content audits, employer consultations, surveys and targeted focus groups. These engagements provided a comprehensive snapshot of digital skill gaps, future role predictions, and sector-specific challenges across seven ACFIPS industries.

A key component of the research was the implementation of industry-specific focus groups, which allowed for in-depth exploration of workplace realities, training effectiveness, and barriers to digital skill adoption. These sessions revealed widespread concerns that training content often lags behind technology and workplace needs. Employers noted gaps in digital communication, collaborative technology use, data literacy, and adaptive learning approaches. In particular, they emphasised the demand for work-ready graduates who can confidently navigate platforms such as Customer Relationship Management (CRMs}, virtual conferencing tools, and industry-specific applications.

Despite differences across industries, participants consistently identified the need for greater alignment between digital technologies in use and the training delivered. Many focus groups called for flexible, modular courses that keep pace with rapid digital change and emphasised hands-on learning with real-world tools. A recurring theme was the importance of developing not just technical digital skills, but also digital resilience — the confidence and mindset to keep up with constant change.

Furthermore, survey findings provided the following insights.

Importance of Digital Skills

- A significant 94.57% of respondents agreed that current jobs require more digital skills than they did just two years ago.
- Nearly all participants ranked digital skills as highly valued within their respective industries, underscoring the urgency to integrate digital literacy and tools into vocational training.

Current Use of Digital Tools

The most commonly used digital skills across roles included:

- Digital communication (Zoom, Teams, email) — 68.82%
- Data analysis (Excel, Power BI) — 62.37%
- Cloud computing (Google Drive, Dropbox) — 55.91%
- AI tools (ChatGPT, CoPilot) — 62.37%
- Cyber security tools — 41.94%

These reflect a workforce reliant on practical, cross-platform collaboration, data handling, and secure online operations.

Gaps in Training Alignment

- 93.55% of participants identified a gap between required digital skills and the current training/ education offered.
- Feedback indicated that while some formal qualifications touch on digital tools, they do not sufficiently prepare learners for actual technology use in industry contexts, particularly for cloud-based tools, automation, AI integration, and real-time collaboration platforms.

Emerging Technologies Impacting Industries

The most impactful technologies cited included:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) — 63.04%
- Digital collaboration tools — 44.57%
- Cloud computing — 39.13%
- Automation — 35.87%
- Machine Learning (ML) — 26.09%

These technologies are shifting workflows, automating traditional roles, and raising the need for digital adaptability at every level.

Challenges Identified

Resistance to Adoption:

- Participants noted moderate but clear resistance to adopting new technologies, particularly generative AI. This was more common in industries with older workforce demographics or where compliance and risk aversion dominate operations.

Up-skilling Barrier

Many respondents flagged ongoing up-skilling challenges, particularly:

- A lack of digital confidence among workers.
- Insufficient time or resources to undertake training.
- Outdated training models that don't reflect current workplace technology.

Misalignment in Course Design

Respondents called for:

- More scenario-based and role-specific training.
- Stronger integration of cyber security, data analytics, and collaboration tools.
- Inclusion of digital ethics, privacy, and AI responsibility as standard elements.

Future Priorities for Training

When asked to identify the digital skills that should be prioritised moving forward, respondents highlighted:

- Digital communication and collaboration — 70.65%
- Working with digital documents and platforms — 71.74%
- Cyber security, ethics, and data protection — 66.30%
- AI and automation — 53.26%
- Data analytics and visualisation — 56.52%
- Software proficiency and cloud tools — 64.13%

These results confirm that foundational digital fluency is critical, but also point to a shift toward higher-order digital capabilities like analysis, automation, and strategic platform use.

The survey paints a clear picture: digital skills are essential across all sectors, but there is a mismatch between current vocational training and real-world needs. Emerging technologies are already altering industry expectations, yet educators and training providers are struggling to keep pace.

To close this gap, the report recommends:

- Embedding core, intermediate, and advanced digital skills in all qualifications.
- Strengthening collaboration between industry and education.
- Embracing modular, flexible digital micro-credentials.
- Supporting educators to keep up with digital trends.

Unpacking findings for each sector

Focusing specifically on each sector, this phase of the project aimed to identify which digital competencies are currently covered in training packages, and to what extent these match the digital tools and technologies being used by property professionals today and into the future.

At the heart of the project is the ambition to 'close the digital skills gap'. This involves evaluating current qualifications, understanding industry expectations, and mapping digital skills to emerging technologies and trends. With the rapid digitisation of services — such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cyber security — the need for digitally fluent workers has become urgent. The project, therefore, seeks to future-proof training and better prepare learners to meet both existing and emerging workplace challenges.

Foundation skills are the essential capabilities required for effective participation in the workforce. According to Australian VET standards, these include both core skills (such as reading, writing, numeracy, oral communication, and learning) and employability skills (such as teamwork, planning, digital literacy, initiative, self-management, and technology use). In the context all sectors, digital versions of these skills are now considered fundamental.

In addition to foundation skills, assessable skills are those competencies that can be explicitly measured through formal evaluation methods. These methods include practical demonstrations, simulations, written assessments, or direct observation, and they are built into the structure of VET training packages.

This section of the report will unpack all the findings discovered throughout the projects journey which included qualification auditing, focus groups, and surveys. They are only summary findings for this report as more detailed reports specific to each sector will be released shortly in more detail.

Key Findings: Property Services

An audit of the Property Services training package (CIB-702) revealed encouraging results regarding the presence of digital skills. Of the 133 units reviewed, all core units across the qualifications included digital skills, resulting in 98.5% of the training package demonstrating digital integration. This reflects a strong sector-wide acknowledgment of the increasing reliance on digital tools in property-related job roles, from real estate and valuation to facilities and strata management.

As digital transformation accelerates across industries, the Property Services sector has recognised the need to equip its workforce with up-to-date digital capabilities. Whether working with automated contract systems, digital appraisal tools, or CRM platforms, property professionals must now be fluent in the technologies driving client engagement, compliance, and operational efficiency.

In the Property Services industry, **digital foundation skills** are vital. These include:

- Word processing and professional report writing
- Spreadsheet and financial tracking
- Presentation, research, and documentation tools
- Digital communication platforms and customer service tools
- Basic cyber security and data handling protocols
- Scheduling software, asset management, and audit tracking systems

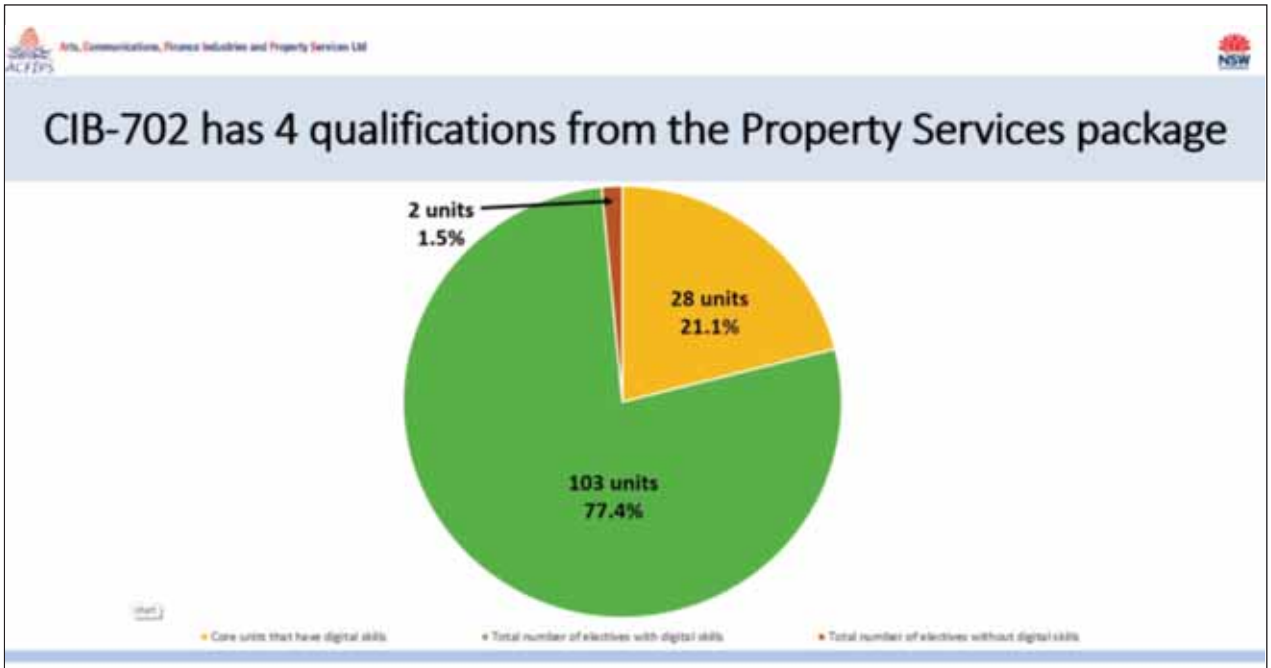
Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are critical for ensuring job readiness and workplace competency. These include:

- Contract generation and valuation software use
- Troubleshooting and digital installation/testing systems
- Database management and graphic communication tools
- Appraisal software, digital promotion platforms, and listing tools
- 2D/3D digital drawing tools for planning and presentation purposes

These findings suggest a robust commitment to digital learning outcomes across the sector. However, while digital elements are embedded, the depth and contextual relevance of these skills vary across qualifications. As new technologies emerge — such as AI-powered valuation tools, blockchain-enabled transactions, and immersive virtual inspections — there is an urgent need to continuously assess and refresh training materials.

Industry Context and Emerging Digital Trends

The Property Services industry is being reshaped by a range of emerging digital technologies. These include Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), data analytics, automated property marketing, and



All core units have digital skills, however, 1.5% of electives do not.

cloud-based collaboration tools. These technologies are redefining not only how properties are valued, managed, and promoted but also how client relationships are built and maintained.

Professionals in real estate, strata, and asset management now use:

- CRM platforms (eg, PropertyMe, VaultRE) for client and property tracking
- AI-driven appraisal tools to automate market comparisons
- Digital forms and e-signature software (eg, DocuSign, Adobe Sign) to streamline transactions
- Virtual tour platforms and augmented reality to present property walk-throughs remotely
- Chatbots and automation tools for customer inquiries and lead generation

With digital platforms central to property marketing, communications, and compliance, today's property professionals must be equipped not just to use these tools, but to use them effectively and securely in high-pressure, client-facing environments.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sector Insights

A series of focus groups, surveys, and collaborative discussions were conducted across the property sector with participation from RTOs, trainers, recruiters, property managers, real estate agents, facility coordinators, and peak industry bodies. Stakeholders identified a growing digital divide, especially for workers returning to the industry or transitioning from older administrative systems.

Key sector insights included the need to:

- Increase access to digital simulations of property sales, inspections, and reporting
- Provide hands-on practice with real estate software platforms and compliance systems
- Strengthen knowledge of data privacy, cyber security, and digital file security
- Expand skills in digital marketing, social media campaigns, and content scheduling
- Integrate AI and automation training into property administration and communication tasks

Stakeholders also emphasised the need for flexible and industry-informed content, recognising that property professionals operate in a fast-paced, mobile-first environment where time, responsiveness, and digital efficiency are key to success.

Recommendations

The Property Services sector confirms the importance of modernising training content to meet the demands of a rapidly digitising workforce. Foundation and assessable digital skills must be treated as core competencies across all property qualifications.

To ensure the training system remains aligned with real-world needs, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Update training packages to reflect digital transformation, especially in property transactions, inspections, and marketing
- Embed core digital skills (eg, spreadsheets, CRM use, cloud-based document management) in all relevant units
- Introduce micro-credentials for AI-enabled systems, digital appraisal tools, and mobile-first property applications
- Prioritise cyber security and digital compliance training, particularly in areas of client privacy and data retention
- Expand training in hybrid client management tools, such as e-signature software, virtual meetings, and online forms
- Simulate real-world digital workflows including remote inspections, digital contracts, and virtual marketing campaigns
- Include performance-based assessments using property management or marketing software
- Align curriculum with current platforms used in real estate and property businesses

Furthermore, the project reinforces the need to:

- Collaborate with industry bodies and software vendors to ensure content currency
- Support trainers with access to modern tools and ongoing digital professional development
- Encourage learner confidence through scenario-based tasks and industry placements
- Promote inclusive access to digital learning resources for regional and remote learners

Summary

The Property Services sector has made significant progress in embedding digital skills into its qualifications, but ongoing adaptation and industry alignment are essential to stay ahead of emerging trends. Digital literacy is no longer optional — it is central to professional practice in this client-driven, fast-evolving industry.

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project confirms that by embedding practical, current, and assessable digital skills, the VET system can continue to prepare graduates who are job-ready, tech-savvy, and confident in delivering services across digital platforms. Through industry collaboration and continued content evolution, Australia's property workforce can remain competitive, responsive, and future-ready.

Key Findings: Creative Arts and Culture

An audit of the Creative Arts and Culture training package revealed a high degree of digital skills integration across qualifications. Of the 1335 units reviewed, 75.8% incorporated digital competencies, with core units in particular showcasing strong alignment with industry practice in areas such as digital content creation, virtual event design, and creative project management. The few units with limited digital focus primarily addressed niche or legacy disciplines, suggesting opportunities for updates to reflect emerging technologies and creative platforms.

As the creative sector continues to be reshaped by digital innovation, it is critical that training packages evolve to equip learners with the tools, techniques, and platforms shaping the future of the arts. From immersive performance design to AI-enhanced content creation, digital proficiency is now fundamental for professionals in music, visual arts, design, screen media, live production, and cultural development roles.

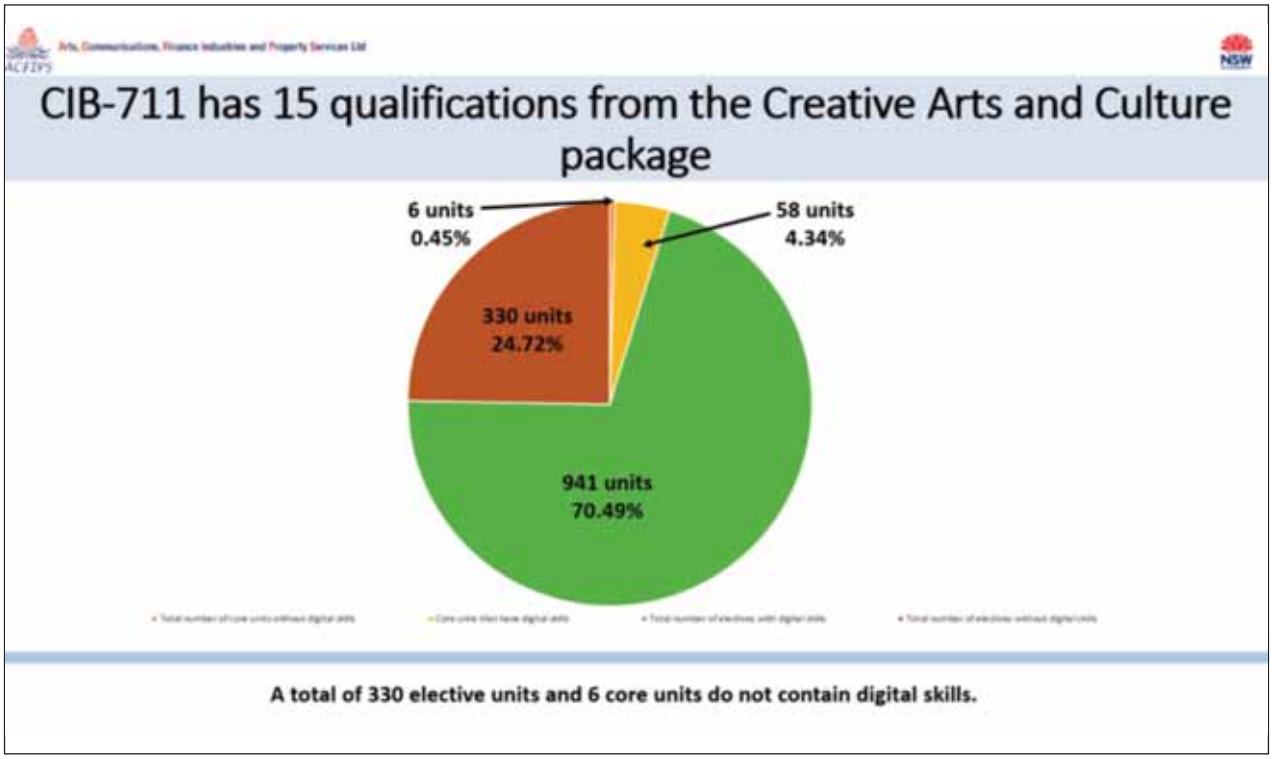
In the Creative Arts and Culture industry, **digital foundation skills** are essential for artistic expression, audience engagement, and sustainable practice. These include:

- Audio editing and video production using platforms like Audacity, Premiere Pro, and DaVinci Resolve
- Graphic design and digital imaging with tools such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and Krita
- Content creation and publishing using CMS platforms (eg, WordPress, Squarespace)
- Digital collaboration and project management (eg, Trello, Asana, Microsoft Teams)
- Cyber security awareness and digital rights management for artists and content creators
- Research, archiving, and information organisation using generative AI and cloud tools

Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are crucial for demonstrating creative proficiency and ensuring learners can meet contemporary industry standards. These include:

- Producing, editing, and publishing multimedia content
- Designing promotional materials for digital campaigns and social media platforms
- Planning and delivering hybrid or virtual arts events
- Creating and managing digital portfolios and online exhibition spaces
- Using 3D modelling tools (eg, Blender, Autodesk Maya) for game design, animation, and immersive experiences
- Incorporating AR/VR tools into live or recorded creative outputs

The audit highlights a positive trend toward embedding digital skills across creative qualifications. However, with the rise of AI-generated content, immersive technologies, digital streaming, and cross-platform storytelling, there is a need to continue strengthening training delivery so learners gain real-world experience using the same tools and workflows they will encounter in the industry.



Industry Context and Emerging Digital Trends

The Creative Arts and Culture sector is at the forefront of digital experimentation and transformation. Artists, performers, and producers are using technology not only to enhance creativity but also to expand reach, reduce costs, and collaborate across borders. As the demand for immersive installations, online galleries, digital theatre, virtual performances, and interactive storytelling grows, the skills required of creative professionals are shifting rapidly.

Key trends shaping the sector include:

- Generative AI tools for content ideation, design, and audio-visual enhancement (eg, DALL·E, Runway ML, Adobe Firefly)
- Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) for immersive performances, exhibitions, and interactive installations
- 3D printing and digital fabrication in visual arts, costume design, and set production
- Streaming services and video-on-demand platforms for distributing creative content
- Cloud-based collaborative tools for remote creation, rehearsal, and production
- Social media integration and digital marketing strategies to engage audiences and monetise creative output

Professionals working in this space must be equipped with not only creative intuition, but also the digital literacy to operate platforms, troubleshoot technical issues, and analyse digital audience engagement data to inform their practice.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sector Insights

Extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken across the creative sector, including focus groups, educator feedback sessions, and national surveys. Participants included RTOs, freelance artists, creative directors, cultural institutions, event producers, software providers, and industry peak bodies. The discussions highlighted the need for:

- More hands-on training in contemporary digital tools and production workflows
- Greater exposure to real-world platforms used in creative business models (eg, Patreon, Spotify for Artists, Behance)
- Expanded content on virtual performance design and audience analytics
- Increased support for regional and remote learners to access digital infrastructure
- Recognition of AI as both a creative collaborator and a disruptive force requiring ethical awareness and experimentation

These insights supported the need for flexible, applied training that allows learners to develop and showcase their digital skills in meaningful, creative contexts.

Recommendations

The Creative Arts and Culture component of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project demonstrates that while digital skills are embedded, the speed of innovation requires continuous evolution of training content. The following recommendations are provided to ensure qualifications remain relevant and forward-looking:

- Integrate digital creation tools like Adobe Creative Cloud, Blender, Unity, and Canva across multiple units
- Provide hands-on training in multimedia production, including podcasting, vlogging, and digital storytelling
- Include AR/VR production modules to support immersive performance and exhibition work
- Embed digital portfolio and content management platforms into assessments (eg, websites, YouTube, Behance)
- Introduce short-form content creation and social media campaign planning using tools like Hootsuite and Buffer
- Teach use of AI tools in creative workflows, including ethical considerations and creative experimentation
- Expand training in hybrid event planning, including ticketing, audience engagement, and post-production delivery
- Ensure cyber security and digital IP management are core competencies in all qualifications

- Offer micro-credentials for niche skills, such as generative design, digital projection mapping, and 3D fabrication
- Align assessments with real-world scenarios, such as developing a digital launch, running a virtual event, or creating a cross-platform arts campaign

Training providers are also encouraged to:

- Collaborate with artists, producers, and digital content platforms to ensure contemporary relevance
- Facilitate internships, live briefs, and digital commissions to give learners authentic creative opportunities
- Support trainers with access to current technologies, professional development, and cross-industry collaboration
- Design flexible, modular learning that supports self-paced exploration of digital tools and practices

Summary

The Creative Arts and Culture sector is dynamic, innovative, and digitally driven. The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project confirms that the sector's training needs are evolving rapidly in line with technology trends, and that qualifications must respond with agility, creativity, and relevance.

By embedding practical, assessable, and forward-thinking digital competencies into training packages, the VET system can prepare learners to succeed not only in traditional creative roles but also in emerging digital-first and hybrid artistic practices. Through strong industry partnerships, micro-credentials, and immersive training design, learners can be empowered to thrive in a globally connected creative economy.

Key Findings: Asset Maintenance and Surveying

An audit of the Asset Maintenance and Surveying training packages revealed a strong presence of embedded digital skills across qualifications. Of the 354 units reviewed, digital components were identified in the majority of both core and elective units. In particular, all core units examined featured some form of digital competency, with only a small fraction of electives lacking digital integration. This reflects a 94.6% inclusion rate of digital skills across the qualifications, highlighting a sector that recognises the growing influence of technology in maintaining infrastructure, managing assets, and surveying environments.

In the Asset Maintenance and Surveying industry, **digital foundation skills** are essential for operational efficiency, compliance, and service delivery. These include:

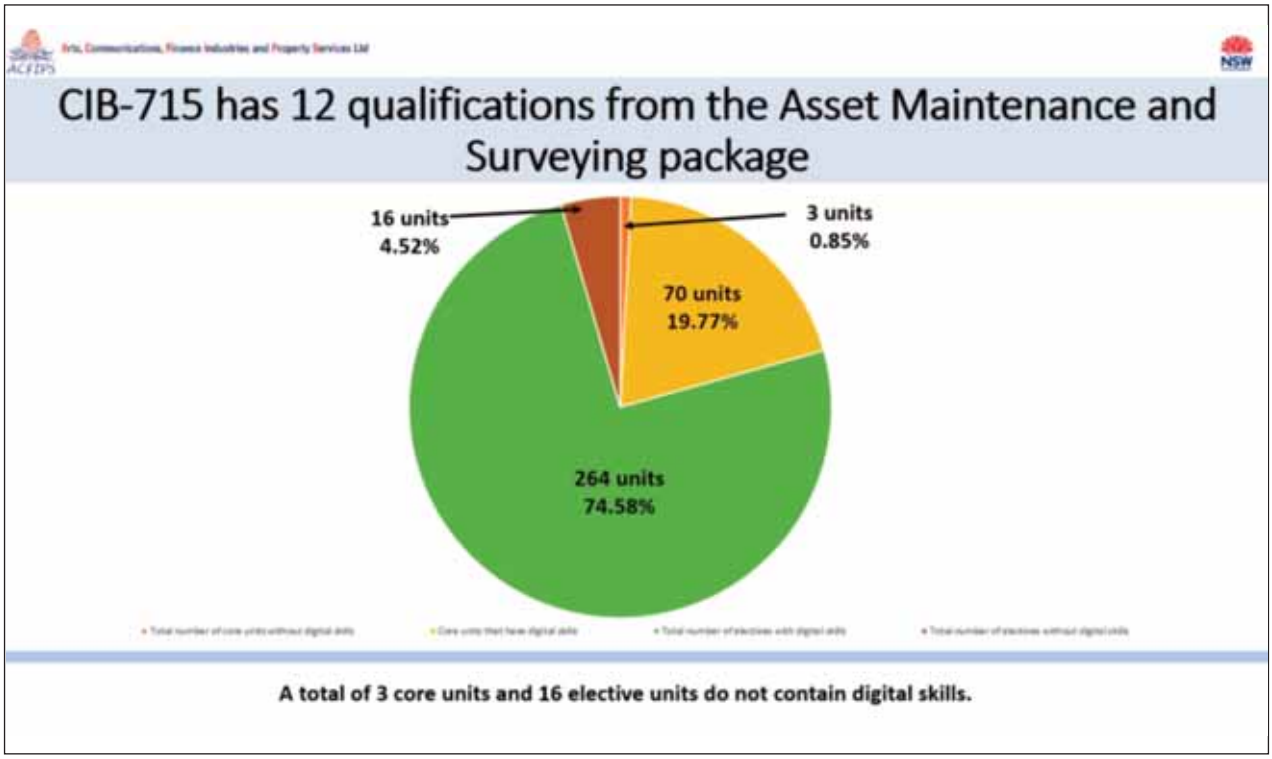
- Word processing and maintenance reporting
- Spreadsheet skills for inspection logs, budgeting, and maintenance scheduling
- Digital documentation and research skills, including equipment manuals and standards
- Digital communication and workflow tracking via cloud-based tools
- Awareness of cyber security protocols for handling site data
- Use of digital platforms for project management, asset tracking, and audits

Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are critical for ensuring job readiness, safety compliance, and technological adaptability. These include:

- Digital inspection and condition-monitoring tools (eg, tablet-based forms, QR-coded maintenance systems)
- Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and asset mapping platforms
- Drones and digital photography for site and infrastructure surveying
- Scheduling software and automated service logging
- Data entry, analysis, and reporting in Computerised Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS)
- Use of augmented reality (AR) tools for building diagnostics and remote site assessments

This data indicates a significant and growing commitment to digital capability within the asset maintenance and surveying sector. However, it also highlights areas for refinement. While many units acknowledge digital practices, the depth, contextual relevance, and practical application of these skills can vary. As the industry embraces more remote monitoring, predictive maintenance, and automated asset systems, VET training must evolve to prepare learners for increasingly sophisticated digital roles.

The Asset Maintenance and Surveying sector is experiencing a wave of digital transformation. AI-powered inspection systems, drone-based data collection, and real-time asset analytics are rapidly becoming standard practices. There is increasing demand for professionals who can interpret



complex data sets, operate digital tools confidently on-site, and apply smart technologies to improve infrastructure lifecycle management. Workers must be fluent not only in using digital tools but also in understanding their implications for sustainability, safety, and compliance.

Emerging digital technologies such as IoT-enabled devices, mobile-first maintenance apps, cloud-based project systems, and digital twin simulations are influencing how infrastructure is monitored and serviced. As asset registers and inspection protocols move online, there is a growing need for staff who can manage digital workflows and ensure the accuracy of cloud-stored records. Training packages must therefore equip learners with the technical and analytical skills required to operate in this increasingly digitised and automated environment.

Stakeholder consultation has been a critical part of this project. ACFIPS facilitated a series of focus groups, surveys, and interviews with RTOs, maintenance contractors, surveyors, industry specialists, and technology providers. These engagements provided valuable insights into the tools currently in use and highlighted where training falls short in preparing learners for tech-driven asset roles. Key themes included a need for more hands-on digital simulations, cloud-based reporting practice, and exposure to emerging field technologies.

Recommendations

The Asset Maintenance and Surveying component of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project reveals a strong foundation of digital integration but also a need for further alignment with advanced and emerging tools. Foundation and assessable digital skills must be embedded across all relevant qualifications in ways that reflect current field practices and future expectations.

To future-proof qualifications, the project recommends alignment with the following digital technologies and trends in the asset maintenance and surveying industry:

- Generative AI and predictive maintenance analytics
- Cyber security and cloud-based data protection
- IoT-enabled sensors and mobile diagnostics tools
- Drone mapping and digital surveying
- CMMS platforms and remote logging systems
- AR/VR for building inspection, maintenance planning, and training
- GIS and BIM (Building Information Modelling) integration
- Mobile-first asset tracking and scheduling apps
- Data visualisation and reporting dashboards (eg, Power BI, Tableau)
- Use of digital twins for infrastructure planning and testing

Furthermore, the project highlights the need to:

- Update training packages to reflect the adoption of smart asset management tools
- Embed digital skills explicitly across both core and elective units
- Train learners in remote work protocols and mobile field reporting
- Increase focus on cybersecurity, compliance logging, and data integrity
- Introduce simulated digital maintenance environments within training delivery
- Collaborate with industry to provide access to emerging platforms and equipment
- Develop micro-credentials or skill sets for specific digital tools such as drone operations, CMMS, GIS, and IoT integration

Summary

Continued stakeholder collaboration and industry-aligned research will ensure that VET qualifications remain effective, current, and capable of producing a skilled workforce equipped to support Australia's infrastructure and asset systems in a digital future.

Key Findings: Financial Services

An audit of the Financial Services training packages revealed a strong and increasing integration of digital skills across qualifications. Of the 386 units reviewed across multiple qualifications, 100% were found to embed digital components. These digital inclusions reflect the industry's shift towards automation, cloud-based operations, and data-driven decision-making. The few units without digital references were electives focused on legacy content or traditional administrative processes, indicating room for targeted updates to ensure full alignment with current practices.

In the Financial Services industry, **digital foundation skills** are essential for compliance, accuracy, client communication, and operational efficiency. These include:

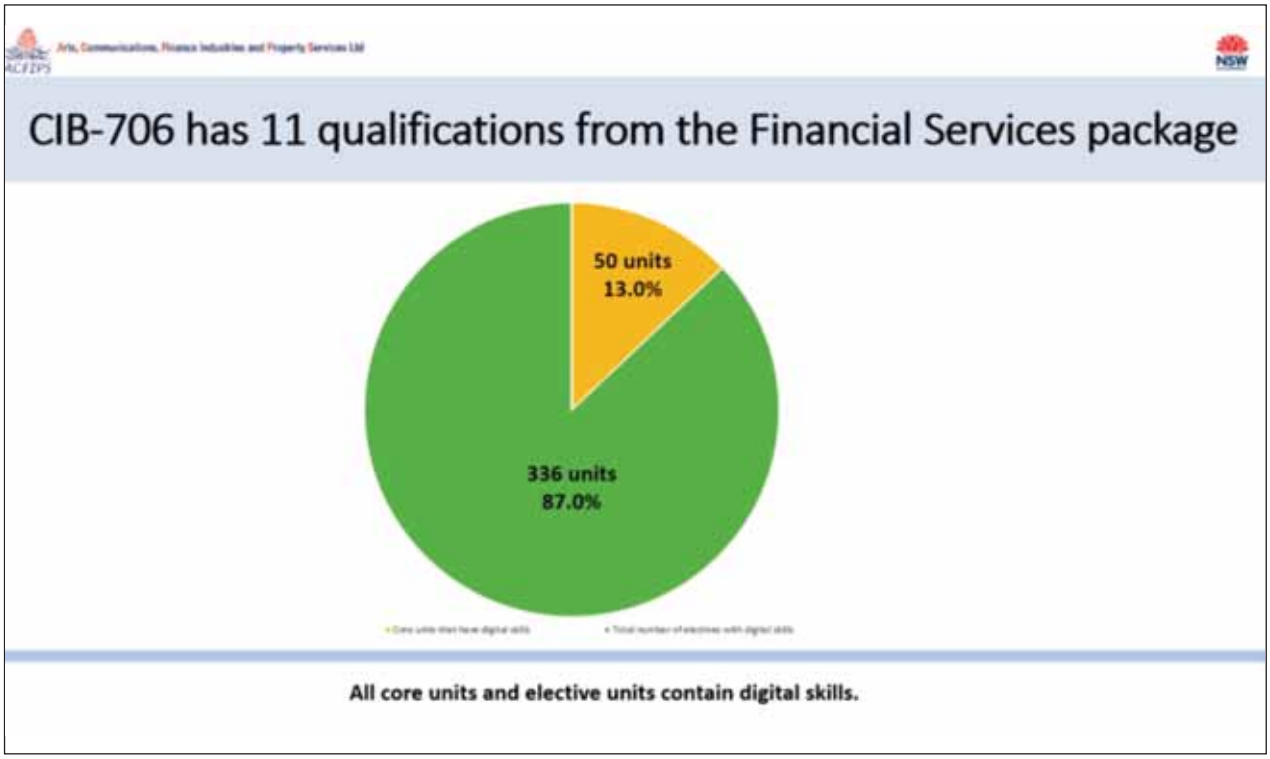
- Word processing and professional communication
- Spreadsheet and financial modelling skills
- Report writing, digital documentation, and data entry
- Cyber security awareness and data confidentiality protocols
- Online communication, virtual meeting tools, and client management systems
- Digital literacy in using financial platforms, regulatory tools, and online portals

Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are critical for job readiness and ensuring graduates meet industry expectations. These include:

- Financial software proficiency (eg, Xero, MYOB, QuickBooks)
- Online regulatory compliance tools and reporting platforms (eg, ASIC Connect, AUSTRAC portals)
- Use of CRM systems for client onboarding and relationship management
- Secure handling and digital transmission of sensitive financial data
- Data analysis and dashboarding with Excel, Power BI, or Google Data Studio
- Online risk assessment and fraud detection tools

This data suggests a well-developed commitment to embedding digital skills across Financial Services qualifications. However, the rapid evolution of fintech, AI, and regulatory technology (RegTech) means there is a continuing need to reassess the depth, relevance, and real-world applicability of these digital skills. Learners must not only be able to navigate basic software but also demonstrate fluency with advanced systems that underpin digital finance, cyber security, and customer insights.

The Financial Services industry is undergoing transformative digital change. The rise of digital wallets, automated financial advice platforms (robo-advisors), real-time transaction monitoring, and blockchain is altering traditional job roles. Professionals must understand how to operate securely in cloud environments, manage risk using predictive analytics, and maintain compliance with increasingly



digital regulatory frameworks. This transformation calls for a workforce that is not only digitally literate but capable of adapting to emerging tools and client expectations.

Digital transformation in finance also encompasses mobile-first services, open banking systems, and API-driven financial integrations. This means that the future financial professional must be comfortable with managing customer data through secure online platforms, navigating global digital ecosystems, and participating in fully remote service delivery. Training packages must therefore ensure digital competencies are embedded not just in theory, but in assessable, applied learning activities that reflect real-world digital finance environments.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sector Insights

To inform these findings, extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted across the financial services sector. This included focus groups and surveys involving RTOs, finance educators, banking and superannuation representatives, fintech experts, compliance managers, and technology vendors. These conversations provided rich insights into both current digital practices and emerging industry needs.

Notably, stakeholders emphasised the increasing demand for:

- Real-time financial tracking tools
- AI-powered client profiling and risk scoring systems
- Remote auditing platforms
- Strong cyber security training, particularly in identity verification and data protection

This feedback reinforced the importance of equipping learners with practical, transferable digital competencies that go beyond foundational skills and are aligned with regulatory expectations and client trust requirements.

Recommendations

The Financial Services component of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project highlights a sector that is already well-progressed in digital adaptation, but which requires further refinement to keep pace with innovation and risk-based digital regulation.

To ensure qualifications remain relevant and forward-facing, the following recommendations are proposed for the Financial Services sector:

- Integrate training on AI-driven financial platforms and digital advice tools
- Include modules on cyber security awareness, focusing on identity theft, phishing, and data breaches
- Embed cloud accounting platforms such as Xero, MYOB, and QuickBooks in both foundation and advanced units
- Teach regulatory compliance tools and reporting portals such as ASIC, ATO, and AUSTRAC systems
- Develop digital fluency in dashboarding, automation macros, and financial modelling using Excel or Google Sheets
- Include training in mobile banking apps and digital payment platforms (eg, Stripe, PayPal, Apple Pay)
- Introduce open banking frameworks, API literacy, and understanding of fintech ecosystems
- Embed CRM systems and client data management (eg, Salesforce, Zoho) for client engagement and retention
- Create simulations for remote financial service delivery, including virtual client meetings, e-signatures, and online compliance
- Introduce micro-credentials for specialised digital skills (eg, blockchain fundamentals, RegTech, robo-advice tools)

Additionally, the project recommends that training providers:

- Ensure digital components are clearly assessable and mapped to real-world software
- Update elective units to reflect new and emerging technologies
- Collaborate with fintech organisations and compliance bodies to inform content relevance
- Develop scenario-based assessments simulating remote audits, fraud investigations, or digital portfolio reviews
- Build capacity for VET educators through digital up-skilling programs and partnerships with technology vendors

Summary

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project confirms that the Financial Services sector is digitally active and future-focused. However, as digital innovation accelerates, training must move beyond basic proficiency to build confidence, adaptability, and fluency in real-world digital environments.

Through ongoing consultation, curriculum reform, and industry-aligned content, the VET system can continue to produce professionals ready to support a sector where digital security, speed, and precision are paramount. By embedding robust, assessable digital skills and prioritising emerging technologies, training packages can empower learners to succeed in both traditional and cutting-edge financial roles.

Key Findings: Business Services

An audit of the Business Services training package revealed a broad integration of digital skills across qualifications and units. Of the 702 units reviewed, 99.7% demonstrated the inclusion of digital competencies, particularly within core business administration, leadership, and management units. Elective units with lower digital presence were often focused on traditional or outdated content areas. However, the findings overall indicate strong alignment between training content and the real-world digital expectations of business roles in the modern economy.

In the Business Services industry, **digital foundation skills** are essential for day-to-day efficiency, data handling, and effective communication. These include:

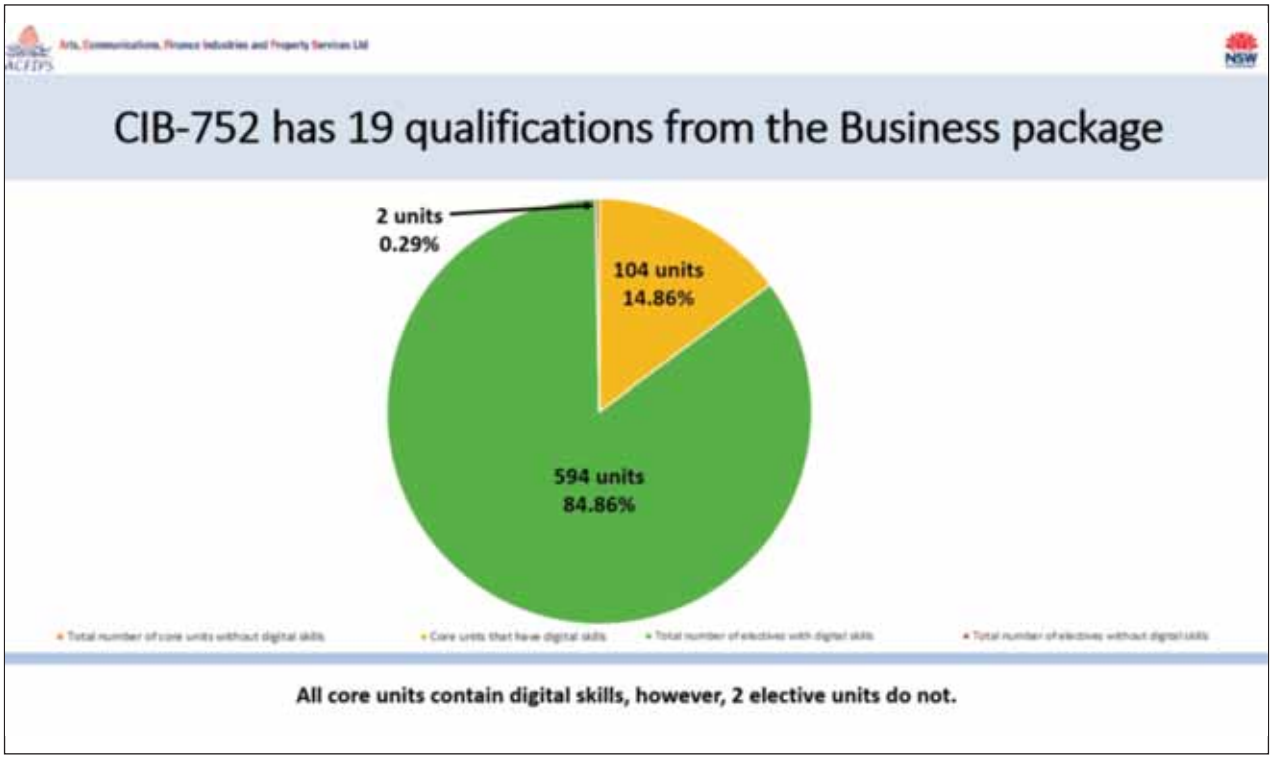
- Word processing and document formatting
- Spreadsheet and data entry skills
- Presentation, report writing, and digital collaboration
- Online communication tools and CRM usage
- Cyber security awareness and digital file management
- Workflow tracking and basic project coordination tools

Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are critical for ensuring learners are prepared to enter digitally enabled business environments. These include:

- Competent use of business software platforms such as Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace, and Teams (dependant on the AQF level)
- CRM systems and client database management (eg, Salesforce, HubSpot)
- Online project management and task tracking (eg, Asana, Monday.com, Trello)
- Social media scheduling and content creation for business communication
- Data visualisation using Excel, Power BI, or Google Data Studio
- Conducting virtual meetings and using cloud-based file sharing platforms

The data suggests a well-established digital skill presence across business qualifications. However, as business environments become more integrated with technology — especially through automation, digital compliance, and hybrid work practices — training packages must evolve to maintain relevance. It's not enough for learners to have basic familiarity with digital tools; they must now develop fluency and adaptability in applying these tools to solve business problems, communicate professionally, and streamline operations.

The Business Services industry continues to be significantly shaped by digital transformation. Trends such as automated workflows, data-driven decision making, remote collaboration, and AI-assisted



customer support are reshaping how work is performed and managed. Business professionals must be equipped to navigate systems that facilitate real-time reporting, digital communication, customer engagement, and continuous data tracking. As business becomes increasingly decentralised and reliant on digital platforms, training must provide the digital confidence to operate in agile and hybrid environments.

Digital business practices also include the use of PDF documentation with e-signature features, chatbots, mobile-first tools, and automated document generation. Business professionals must know how to handle client data securely, create digital marketing assets, and collaborate on documents in real-time across platforms. With small businesses, start-ups, and corporations alike embracing digital ecosystems, the need for tech-savvy staff is universal. This makes digital skill development a non-negotiable focus for future training.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sector Insights

As part of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project, the business sector was engaged through focus groups, whiteboard sessions, and a national survey involving RTOs, business trainers, administrative staff, HR professionals, operations managers, and digital transformation consultants. Participants were asked to identify the digital skills most in demand and to evaluate the relevance of existing training content.

Key insights included a strong call for greater focus on:

- Digital project coordination
- Business data literacy
- Cloud-based task and document management
- CRM platform integration
- Professional use of AI writing and scheduling tools
- Cyber security protocols in administrative settings

These contributions reinforced the need for business qualifications to move beyond software familiarity and towards intentional, assessable skill-building in real workplace scenarios.

Recommendations

The Business Sector component of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project highlights an industry already immersed in digital practices but facing rapid technological change. To ensure that VET qualifications remain aligned with workplace needs and future trends, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Integrate workflow automation tools (eg, Zapier, Microsoft Power Automate) into practical tasks
- Include training in cloud-based platforms for project, document, and file management
- Introduce data analytics and visualisation tools such as Power BI and Excel dashboards
- Embed CRM systems and client database skills across relevant business units
- Teach social media scheduling and content tools like Hootsuite, Canva, and Buffer
- Introduce professional communication tools including Slack, Zoom, and MS Teams
- Include scenario-based digital business communication training
- Provide exposure to AI-enabled writing, planning, and reporting tools (eg, ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot)
- Offer micro-credentials in niche areas such as digital customer service, cyber safety in business, and hybrid team management
- Ensure all digital skills are assessable, with practical outputs like reports, dashboards, calendars, and communication plans

The project also recommends:

- Updating business electives to reflect contemporary tools and hybrid work requirements
- Embedding training on e-signatures, online forms, and digital approval systems
- Developing workplace simulations to replicate remote onboarding, digital file sharing, and workflow co-ordination
- Collaborating with software providers and industry mentors to ensure authentic content
- Encouraging lifelong learning through stackable credentials that reflect real-time digital up-skilling needs

Summary

The Business Sector shows a strong foundation in digital skill adoption across qualifications. However, to meet the growing expectations of modern employers, VET training must continuously evolve to include newer platforms, remote work norms, and data-informed decision-making tools.

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project affirms the importance of future-proofing business qualifications by embedding meaningful, relevant, and assessable digital competencies. By embracing emerging trends and prioritising digital fluency, the VET sector can ensure business graduates are confident, capable, and ready for the demands of a connected and increasingly digital workplace.

Key Findings: Information Technology and Telecommunications

An audit of the Information Technology and Telecommunications training package revealed a comprehensive integration of digital competencies across the qualifications reviewed. As expected, given the nature of the sector, 100% (876 units) of core and elective units embed digital skills — ranging from foundational IT knowledge to advanced system development, cyber security, and telecommunications infrastructure. All core units demonstrated explicit digital applications, and the remaining electives focused on specific technologies or industry practices.

The audit confirms that digital skill development is not only inherent but also central to all qualifications within this sector. However, due to the rapid pace of technological change, there remains a critical need to ensure that qualifications are not only digitally embedded, but routinely updated to reflect the latest advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cyber security, and software development methodologies.

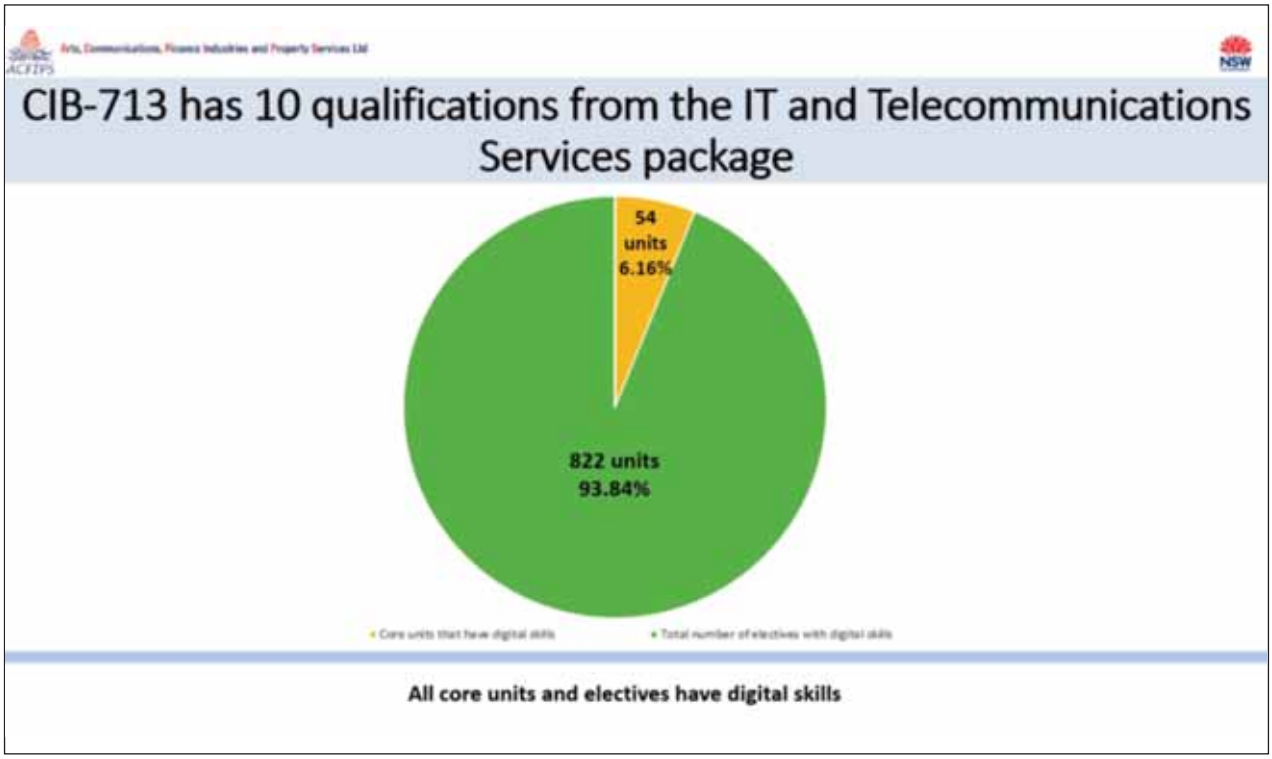
In the Information Technology and Telecommunications industry, **digital foundation skills** are deeply embedded but must still be reinforced across all training contexts. These include:

- Programming, scripting, and coding fundamentals
- Use of development environments and version control (eg, Git, GitHub)
- Troubleshooting and diagnostic techniques
- Digital communication and technical documentation
- Cyber security awareness and secure information handling
- Collaboration through digital project management and DevOps tools

Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are vital in ensuring job readiness and technical competence. These include:

- Network configuration and infrastructure planning
- Cloud services deployment and administration (eg, AWS, Azure, Google Cloud)
- Software design, testing, and deployment using Continuous Integration and delivery (CI/CD) pipelines
- Database management and data security
- API integration and web service development
- Implementation of virtualisation and containerisation technologies (eg, Docker, Kubernetes)
- Real-time threat detection and response using cyber security tools

The audit highlights that while digital skills are present, curriculum updates are essential to keep pace with emerging technologies. Learners need hands-on, scenario-based learning that goes beyond technical theory and allows them to simulate real-world deployments, solve complex



problems, and demonstrate readiness for roles across IT support, cyber security, development, and telecommunications engineering.

Industry Context and Emerging Digital Trends

The IT and telecommunications sector is at the forefront of digital innovation across all industries. Technologies such as Generative AI, 5G, edge computing, blockchain, machine learning, and quantum computing are redefining the capabilities of modern systems. Roles across software engineering, data analytics, technical support, cloud architecture, and network management now demand continuous up-skilling and fluency in rapidly evolving digital ecosystems.

Employers are increasingly seeking professionals who can implement secure cloud infrastructure, design automated deployment pipelines, and integrate Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) models into service delivery platforms. With the rise of Internet of Things (IoT), smart cities, and remote-first systems, telecommunications technicians and IT specialists must be equipped to design, deploy, and maintain systems that are distributed, scalable, and secure.

The digital-first nature of the industry also requires that workers understand data privacy legislation, manage cross-platform compatibility, and adapt to software-defined networking environments. This makes the case for training that supports continuous digital literacy, critical thinking, and adaptability across all specialisations within the field.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sector Insights

Through industry consultations, ACFIPS conducted targeted focus groups and a national survey involving RTOs, educators, network engineers, developers, cyber security analysts, cloud consultants, and telco providers. The insights confirmed the need for training to:

- Keep pace with open-source and proprietary tech stacks
- Provide flexible, modular content delivery for emerging tech skills
- Expand hands-on exposure to infrastructure-as-code, ethical hacking, and digital forensics
- Focus more on applied learning via labs, simulations, and real-time cloud environments

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the importance of micro-skills, stackable certifications, and collaborative projects to prepare learners for hybrid work environments and specialised roles in a fast-moving sector.

Recommendations

The Information Technology and Telecommunications component of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project confirms that while digital training is embedded by default, qualifications must evolve at the speed of innovation to remain truly relevant.

To ensure future readiness and maintain global competitiveness, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Regularly update units of competency to reflect evolving technologies (eg, AI, DevOps, cyber security, and cloud computing)
- Embed hands-on assessment through virtual labs, sandbox environments, and live infrastructure projects
- Incorporate cyber security frameworks and ethical hacking skills, including incident response simulations
- Provide training in automation tools, such as Ansible, Terraform, or Jenkins
- Expand cloud-based certification pathways, including AWS, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud skill sets
- Introduce real-time collaboration tools (eg, GitHub Projects, Jira, MS DevOps) for team-based learning
- Embed data analytics, machine learning, and data engineering units using tools like Python, SQL, R, and Power BI
- Strengthen telco-specific training, including fibre optics, mobile infrastructure (5G), and smart networks
- Offer micro-credentials in AI implementation, blockchain development, and IoT system design
- Ensure assessments are practical, performance-based, and reflect contemporary digital workflows

Additional steps include:

- Collaborating with tech employers and vendors to inform training updates
- Including stackable credentials and elective modules for rapid tech onboarding
- Building in remote access simulations for students in regional or hybrid environments
- Supporting trainers with access to real-time industry tools, APIs, and case studies

Summary

The Information Technology and Telecommunications sector is a benchmark for digital integration within vocational training. However, its rapid evolution requires constant refinement of qualifications and delivery models to ensure graduates are not just competent but digitally fluent, adaptable, and industry ready.

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project supports this goal by identifying training gaps, aligning qualifications with industry tools, and advocating for a VET system that evolves in tandem with the global digital economy. Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders, real-time curriculum review, and a focus on practical, future-proof digital capabilities will ensure that Australian IT and telecommunications professionals continue to lead in innovation, security, and service delivery.

Key Findings: Printing and Graphic Arts

An audit of the Printing and Graphic Arts training package revealed a strong presence of digital skill integration across qualifications. Out of 436 units reviewed, 98.4% include digital content, particularly in core units focusing on design, pre-press operations, digital printing, and production workflows. While a small number of elective units still reflect traditional print processes, the training package overall demonstrates a growing shift toward digital-first technologies, aligning with industry practice and modern production environments.

The audit confirms that digital competencies are widely recognised as essential in the sector, especially given the convergence of design, print, and digital media. However, the pace of change — driven by automation, digital publishing, and smart printing technologies — necessitates ongoing updates to training content to ensure graduates are equipped for both current and emerging job roles.

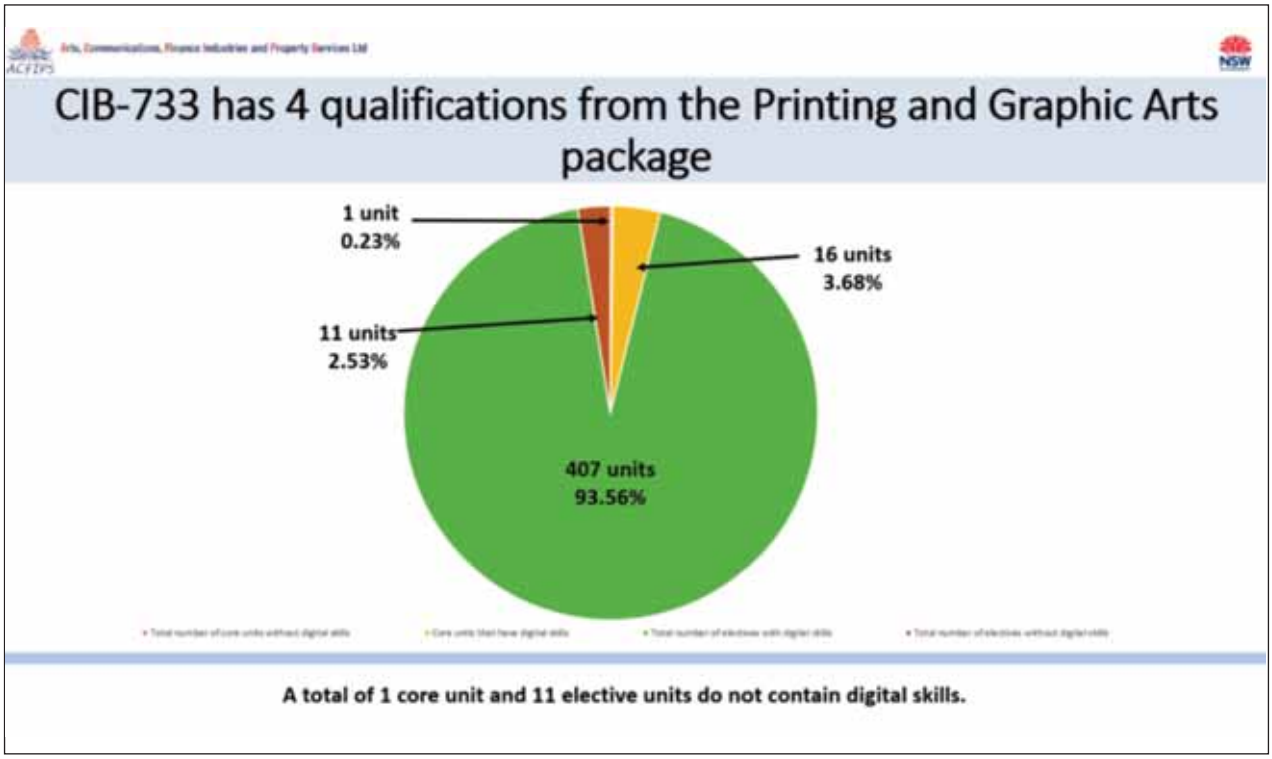
In the Printing and Graphic Arts industry, **digital foundation skills** are now core to most roles, from design to delivery. These include:

- Digital layout and typesetting using tools such as Adobe InDesign
- Graphic design and image editing using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator
- Pre-press preparation and file management for digital and offset print
- Digital communication and collaboration using project platforms (eg, Trello, Slack)
- Basic cyber security awareness in handling customer files and intellectual property
- Job tracking and project scheduling using digital production systems

Similarly, **assessable digital skills** are vital to ensuring workplace readiness and proficiency in modern design and production environments. These include:

- Colour management and calibration using digital spectrophotometers and RIP software
- Operating digital print systems, including large-format and variable data printers
- File preparation and quality assurance using industry-standard formats (eg, PDFs, EPS, AI)
- Using web-to-print platforms and e-commerce integrations
- Digital proofing and imposition workflows
- Design for cross-media publishing (print, online, interactive)

These findings reflect a sector actively transitioning from analogue to digital production environments. While digital tools are already central to graphic design and pre-press functions, the increasing use of automated workflows, data-driven printing, and remote collaboration platforms requires training to continually adapt. There is a growing expectation for professionals to move fluidly between print and digital design contexts, manage production from cloud-based systems, and understand client-facing digital tools.



Industry Context and Emerging Digital Trends

The Printing and Graphic Arts sector is evolving rapidly, influenced by trends such as personalised digital printing, on-demand publishing, sustainable production technologies, and design-to-print automation. As the industry embraces faster, smarter, and greener ways to deliver products, workers must develop skills that extend beyond traditional design or print operation.

Digital transformation in this sector includes widespread use of:

- AI-powered design tools (eg, Adobe Firefly, Canva Magic Design)
- Cloud-based workflow systems for client approvals, job ticketing, and asset storage
- Print automation and variable data printing for targeted marketing materials
- Web-to-print storefronts integrated with CRM and e-commerce platforms
- Interactive and Augmented Reality (AR) enabled print media

Professionals must be capable of creating content for both physical and digital channels, understanding file specifications for multiple output formats, and managing projects across increasingly digitised production lines. These technological advancements are driving demand for a workforce with adaptable digital expertise, creative problem-solving ability, and a strong grasp of production technologies.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sector Insights

To guide these insights, ACFIPS conducted focus groups, whiteboard sessions, and surveys involving RTOs, design studios, commercial printers, packaging firms, software vendors, and industry mentors. Stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of:

- Strengthening real-world experience in pre-press and digital printing environments
- Providing hands-on training in design tools and automation platforms
- Increasing exposure to cross-media publishing and client briefing workflows
- Building fluency in digital file standards, colour workflows, and output simulation
- Integrating online collaboration and remote design tools

Many also advocated for expanding micro-credentials and short courses to reflect the ever-changing tools used in design and print production, including AI-assisted design, cloud printing platforms, and AR/VR-enhanced publishing.

Recommendations

The Printing and Graphic Arts component of the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project shows a sector in transition — grounded in design principles but increasingly reliant on digital technologies and flexible production workflows.

To future-proof training and maintain industry alignment, the following recommendations are made:

- Embed design tools such as Adobe Creative Suite and Canva across foundational and advanced units
- Include digital print workflow software (eg, EFI Fiery, Heidelberg Prinect) in assessment tasks
- Provide practical exposure to web-to-print and e-commerce platforms
- Strengthen training in digital file formats, colour management, and quality assurance protocols
- Incorporate cloud-based collaboration tools and project platforms used in real studios
- Offer micro-credentials in AI-assisted design, automated imposition, and AR-enhanced media
- Introduce sustainability modules focused on digital asset management and environmentally responsible production
- Expand training for interactive and cross-platform publishing (eg, print-to-digital magazines, mobile-friendly layouts)
- Ensure all digital competencies are assessable, through practical design projects, mock production jobs, and simulated client briefs

Additionally, training providers should:

- Collaborate with print equipment manufacturers, design software vendors, and industry clients
- Update electives regularly to reflect platform and workflow changes
- Simulate real-world studio environments through live briefs, internships, and digital portfolios
- Support trainers with ongoing access to new technologies and professional development opportunities

Summary

The Printing and Graphic Arts sector is blending creative design with cutting-edge digital production. The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project confirms that while digital skills are well embedded, continuous review and innovation in training are needed to keep pace with new technologies, workflows, and market demands.

By embedding work-based learning models with practical, assessable, and forward-looking digital skills into training packages, the VET system can empower learners to become confident, capable contributors in both traditional print and modern media environments. Through industry collaboration, flexible delivery models, and investment in future skills, the sector can continue to thrive in an increasingly digital and dynamic creative economy.

Overall summary across all sectors

Across all industries, there is a clear trend toward greater digital integration in day-to-day operations. While IT and Business sectors show stronger alignment between training and digital workforce expectations, industries like Property Services and Creative Arts face challenges in up-skilling at pace. Cross-industry collaboration and continuous professional development will be crucial in future-proofing the workforce.

This cross-industry project highlights a growing urgency to embed digital fluency across all vocational education sectors. While each industry has unique challenges, a consistent theme has emerged: foundational digital skills are now essential, not optional. These include online communication, data security, collaboration tools, and an ability to adapt to new technologies.

Survey findings, curriculum analysis, and industry interviews confirm that current training packages do not fully reflect the pace or scope of technological change. To future-proof NSW's vocational workforce, immediate and sustained curriculum reform is needed.

Through training package audits, stakeholder engagement, surveys, and industry consultations, the project mapped existing digital skill coverage, identified gaps, and developed future-focused recommendations to ensure Australia's VET system remains relevant, agile, and digitally capable.

Sector Summaries — Key Findings

Property Services

- 98.5% of reviewed units include digital skills, especially in CRM use, virtual property tools, and digital contract platforms.
- Strong uptake of digital marketing and appraisal systems, but depth of integration varies.
- Need for micro-credentials in AI tools, AR/VR property tours, and cyber security.

Creative Arts and Culture

- 75.8% of units incorporate digital tools, including video/audio editing, content platforms, and social media.
- Demand for immersive media skills (AR/VR), AI-generated content, and cloud-based collaboration.
- Increasing need for hybrid event production and cross-platform storytelling training.

Asset Maintenance and Surveying

- 94.6% of units contain digital skills such as CMMS, GIS, and drone data capture.
- Strong alignment with IoT, mobile-first inspections, and remote reporting systems.
- Further development needed in real-time analytics, digital twin modelling, and cyber security.

Summary of digital skills across all industries

CIB	Qualifications	Total amount of units	Units without Digital skills	% overall digital skills
CIB-702 Property Service	4 courses	133 units	2	98.5%
CIB-711 Creative Arts and Culture	15 courses	1335 units	323	75.8%
CIB-715 Asset Maintenance and Surveying	12 courses	354 units	19	94.6%
CIB-706 Financial Services	11 courses	386 units	0	100%
CIB-752 Business	19 courses	702 units	2	99.7%
CIB-713 IT and Telecommunications	10 courses	876 units	0	100%
CIB-733 Printing and Graphic Arts	4 courses	436 units	7	98.4%
	Total: 75	Total: 4333		

'Close the gap with digital skills'

Financial Services

- 100% of units include digital integration, especially in accounting platforms (Xero, MYOB), compliance portals, and CRM tools.
- Fintech innovation driving demand for open banking, mobile payments, and data security.
- Priority for AI-based risk assessment, automation, and blockchain knowledge.

Business Services

- 99.7% of units contain digital skills across office software, digital communication, and CRM platforms.
- Employers seek automation, dashboarding, and hybrid work fluency.
- Emphasis on up-skilling in AI-driven writing, social media scheduling, and workflow platforms.

Information Technology and Telecommunications

- 100% digital integration, with deep coverage of software, network, and cyber security domains.
- Fast-evolving sector requires real-time curriculum updates for cloud platforms, DevOps, AI/ML, and blockchain.
- Demand for immersive simulations, performance-based assessments, and cross-functional digital literacy.

Printing and Graphic Arts

- 98.4% of units include digital components, especially in design software and pre-press workflows.
- Transition from traditional print to digital-first design and production.
- Need to expand training in web-to-print platforms, digital proofing, and AR-enhanced media.

Cross-Sector Themes and Insights

Digital Foundation Skills

Across all sectors, digital foundation skills were consistently identified as critical. These include:

- Word processing, spreadsheets, documentation, and digital communication
- Digital collaboration tools (eg, Teams, Slack, Trello)
- Online research and data management
- Basic cyber security and digital ethics

Assessable Digital Skills

Assessable digital competencies ensure learners are job-ready. Examples include:

- CRM operation and data handling
- Design, editing, and publishing tools
- Scheduling, analytics, and dashboarding
- Cloud service usage and virtual collaboration
- Practical knowledge of industry-specific platforms (eg, CMMS, MYOB, Salesforce, Blender)

Key Points for Future Qualification Design

AI and Automation Integration

- Prepare learners for AI-assisted work environments by embedding automation tools into units of competency.
- Address AI ethics, digital bias, and decision-making transparency.

Cyber security and Data Privacy

- Make basic cyber security a core requirement across all industries.
- Include training on secure data handling, risk mitigation, and regulatory compliance.

Immersive Technology (AR/VR/XR-Extended Reality)

- Incorporate modules that explore the use of immersive technology in communication, design, and operations.

Sustainability and Digital Efficiency

- Reflect digital sustainability practices such as paperless processes, energy-efficient technologies, and responsible digital consumption.

Cross-Disciplinary Digital Fluency

- Ensure learners can collaborate across platforms, roles, and sectors using shared digital tools.

Conclusion

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project has confirmed that digital skills are now central to workforce participation across all industries. While foundational progress has been made, future-ready qualifications must do more than embed digital tools — they must immerse learners in real-world digital practice, reflect industry innovation, and build agility for future disruption.

By modernising training packages, introducing micro-credentials, and aligning more closely with industry platforms, the VET system can ensure that graduates are confident, capable, and competitive in a digitally transforming economy.

Final Recommendations

Modernise Training Packages

- Ensure all units are reviewed for currency, with regular digital updates embedded.
- Replace legacy electives with content reflecting industry-standard tools and platforms.
- Incorporate cloud-based systems, automation, AI, and mobile-first workflows.

Introduce Micro-Credentials and Stackable Skills

- Develop short courses or micro-credentials in:
  - AI tools (eg, ChatGPT, DALL·E, Adobe Firefly)
  - CRM and compliance platforms
  - Cybersecurity fundamentals
  - Data visualisation and reporting
  - Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) production and immersive design
  - Cloud computing, DevOps, and fintech APIs

Embed Performance-Based Assessment

- Shift toward simulation-based and scenario-driven assessments.
- Use real-world tasks such as generating a digital report, running a virtual meeting, or designing a hybrid event.
- Encourage student-generated digital portfolios across sectors.

Align with Industry Platforms and Workflows

- Collaborate with software vendors and employers to identify which tools are actively used.
- Ensure learners engage with practical tools (eg, Canva, Zoom, Xero, Matterport, Salesforce).
- Provide educators with training and access to current industry platforms.

Strengthen Trainer Capability

- Fund professional development for VET trainers to build confidence using AI tools, virtual environments, and digital assessment systems.
- Create sector-specific digital literacy guides for trainers.

Build Equitable Access

- Address regional, remote, and disadvantaged learner access to digital infrastructure.
- Provide mobile-friendly, cloud-accessible training resources.

Future phases of the Project

While this report presents a detailed snapshot of current digital skill integration across key industries, the Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project is far from a static data exercise — it is a living, evolving initiative. This project has laid a strong foundation by identifying where digital skills currently exist, what those skills are, how they align with real industry needs, and how they are embedded within qualifications as both foundation and assessable components. However, this is just the beginning.

The next phases of the project will focus on turning insights into action — building on the data gathered to continuously refine, update, and help modernise vocational qualifications across all ACFIPS sectors. At the core of this future-focused approach is an interactive digital dashboard, powered by live datasets, cloud infrastructure, and assistive technologies. This dashboard allows for real-time tracking of digital skill mapping, emerging technologies, and the alignment of units of competency with industry demands. It is designed to evolve with the workforce and adapt to new technologies, making the project a perpetually responsive ecosystem, not a one-off report.

The use of cloud-based tools and AI-driven analytics enables training providers, curriculum developers, and stakeholders to stay current as digital trends shift. As new tools enter the market — whether it's generative AI in creative arts, predictive maintenance in surveying, or blockchain in financial services — the system will be updated to reflect their relevance and required competencies. This approach ensures qualifications remain agile, and learners are equipped not just with today's tools, but with the mindset and flexibility to adapt to tomorrow's innovations.

Furthermore, future phases will incorporate ongoing consultation with industry and educators, allowing for iterative updates to skills mapping, training delivery, and assessment practices. Micro-credentials, short courses, and specialised training pathways will be identified and recommended as gaps are discovered in real time. This positions the project as not just a research initiative, but a national digital skills intelligence platform — supporting a VET sector that is dynamic, inclusive, and built for a digital-first economy.

In essence, this project is not concluding — it is entering its most impactful phase. By embracing digital agility, continuous learning, and real-world alignment, it sets the stage for a vocational education system that is both future-proof and transformational.

Final note

The Digital Technology Cross-Industry Sector Project has highlighted a decisive shift in the Australian workforce — where digital skills are no longer optional but essential across every sector. From real estate and finance to creative industries, asset maintenance, and telecommunications, technology is transforming how work is performed, how services are delivered, and how learners must be trained.

While encouraging levels of digital integration were identified across all reviewed training packages, the project has made clear that the pace of digital change requires a more agile, future-focused VET system. Qualifications must go beyond embedding digital concepts; they must enable learners to confidently apply these tools in dynamic, real-world settings.

Ongoing collaboration with industry is critical. Only by maintaining strong links with employers, software vendors, educators, and emerging technology providers can the VET sector ensure training remains relevant, responsive, and reflective of future workforce needs. There is also a growing imperative to support trainer capability, enhance assessment practices, and expand equitable access to digital resources — particularly for remote, regional, and disadvantaged learners.

The future of work is digital, and the future of training must be equally ambitious. By implementing the recommendations from this project — including curriculum updates, micro-credentials, industry-aligned content, and immersive digital learning environments — the NSW VET system and indeed all of Australia's will be positioned to develop a workforce that is not only job-ready but future-ready.

The momentum built through this project must now lead to action: a national commitment to digital excellence in vocational education, so that learners across every industry have the skills, confidence, and creativity to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

ACFIPS as a NSW ITAB stands ready to support this transformation through ongoing engagement, future skills projects, and innovative workforce solutions.

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Should you wish to discuss more about the data collected,
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