

Repurposing Curriculum for Lifelong Learning: A Micro-Credential Initiative

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Sharing Today

- Presentation on the overall project
- Overview of the course
- Core design principles
- Our roles and the importance of the 'third space'

University of Manchester's Digital Trust and Security Project

- Series of four micro-credentials exploring the impact of digital technologies on trust, security, and privacy in society
- Repurpose of an existing course for undergraduates from UCIL (University College for Interdisciplinary Learning)
- Collaborative project between UCIL, the School of Social Sciences Department of Criminology, and the Lifelong Learning Team
- The University of Manchester's first entry to market for lifelong learning pathways

Digital Trust and Security Micro-credentials



Core Issues in Digital Society



Understanding Digital Society



Digital Markets and Trust



Online Harms

The first three micro-credentials are set to launch to market in September 2026

Micro-credential 1 piloted in 2025

1	Introduction to Core Issues in Digital Trust and Security	Key concepts to help understand the evolving challenges of digital trust and security.	5 hours of learning
2	Understanding Hyperconnectivity	How hyperconnectivity connects to digital trust and security.	5 hours of learning
3	How Did We Get Here?	How the development of computer networks informs digital trust and security today.	5 hours of learning
4	Trust and Security in a Hyperconnected World	Key concepts to help understand the evolving challenges of digital trust and security.	5 hours of learning
5	Introduction to Cybercrime	What cybercrime is, how it works, and why it's as serious as crime in the physical world.	5 hours of learning
6	How do Cybercriminals Operate?	Exploration of cybercriminal operations.	5 hours of learning
7	Putting it All Together. The Cyber Kill Chain	Investigation of three case studies to see how cyber attacks unfold in the real world.	5 hours of learning
8	Conclusion	Includes assessment preparation.	5 hours of learning
	Final assignment		10 hours

Pilot cohort feedback

Overall mark 4.7/5

On level: 'Good introduction to the subject that aims to level all participant with the minimum knowledge'; 'The level is just right for a non-specialist.'

On learning: 'I got to know more in-depth information about embracing cybersecurity awareness amongst ourselves and for the world'; 'The course strikes a strong balance between theory and practice. Its outcomes are immediately applicable and relevant across diverse settings. Importantly, it also encourages learners to think beyond individual roles, fostering a broader understanding of systemic impact and organisational context.'

On assessment: 'The assignment was very much relatable to my organisation where our IT team often send us awareness materials on cybersecurity quite often. And this knowledge helped me a lot to complete the assignment topic and tried use the course materials provided in this micro-credential more efficiently.'

Assessment Model

- Informed by Advisory Board feedback, emphasising reflective and work-based learning
- Assessment is based on a reflective journal and a final assignment

Reflective Journal

At the end of each module, learners respond to a question prompting them to apply their learning to real-world workplace contexts. These entries form the basis for the final assignment.

Final Assignment

Learners act as a digital trust champion, identifying a cybersecurity challenge within an organisation and creating a written resource to raise colleague awareness.



The course and its design principles

Self-reflection

Learners are encouraged to connect concepts to their own experiences through reflective activities and tasks. This promotes active learning.

Work-relevance

Real world case studies are used throughout to prompt learners to evaluate, reflect, and review their experience within their own professional and everyday contexts.

Inclusivity

The course is designed for learners of all backgrounds. Interactive activities leverage the cohort's diverse perspectives as a strength, while challenging non-inclusive language in cybersecurity.

Accessibility

The course is reviewed by an accessibility specialist, with checks including transcripts, image descriptions, and cross-device accessibility.

Informing institutional guidance through shared experience

Our Third-Space Approach to Course Design



Creating a Third Space

The third space as 'an emergent territory between academic and professional domains' (Whitchurch, 2008: iv),¹ where collaboration between academic and professional staff can lead to a curriculum design focused on cultivating 'authentic learning experiences, assessments, and research-connected teaching to further support student learning' (Murray, 2025: 2).²

Academic maps existing content, identifies topics, and redevelops high-level content for each week.

Step 1

Step 2

Learning developer reviews content, introduces interactives and assessments, and ensures content and language are appropriate for a non-expert cohort.

Academic and **learning developer** refine content based on discussions and develop activities collaboratively.

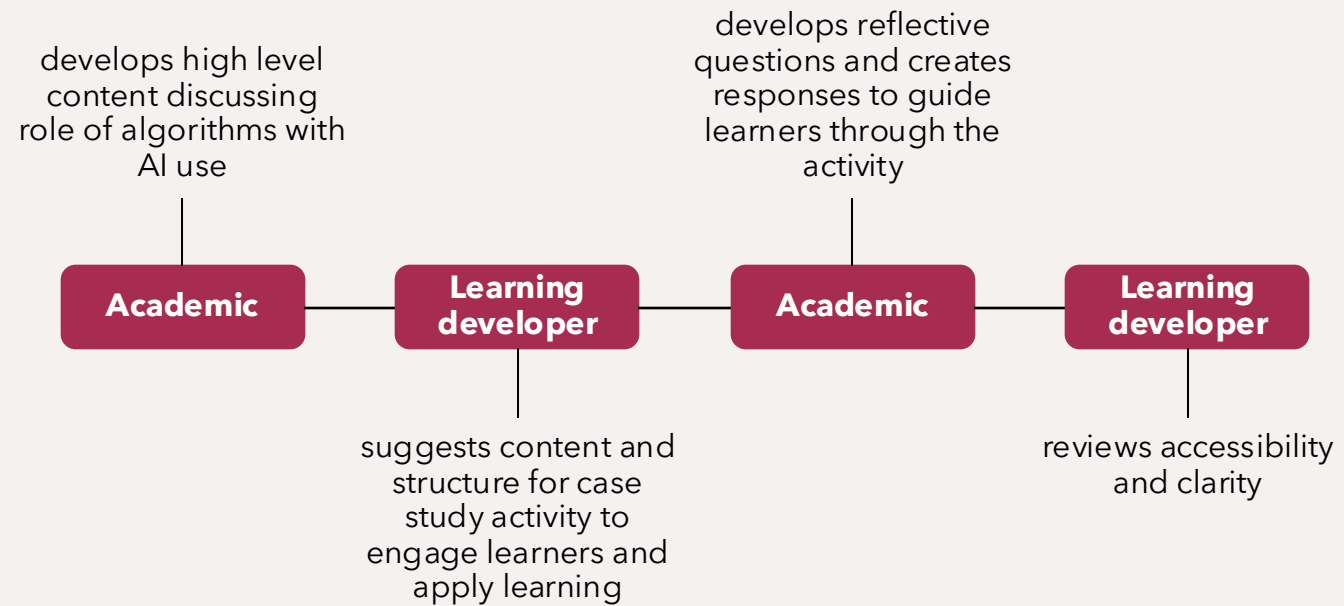
Step 3

¹Whitchurch, C. (2008) 'Shifting Identities and Blurring Boundaries: the Emergence of Third Space Professionals in UK Higher Education', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62: 377-396.

²Murray, K. (2025) 'The third space professional: cultivating authentic learning experiences through collaborative practice', *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, 33: 1-10.

Example in Practice:

AI Governance and Algorithms activity



Activity

Watch the short video below to learn more about this unique initiative and consider what it might mean for the future of decision-making and accountability in public office.



Albania unveils AI-generated 'minister'

► Show transcript

Answer the questions below:

- How might having an AI-generated minister change the public's trust in government and democratic processes?

Write your answer in the space provided.

I think that...

- If an AI system is given a government role, who should be accountable for its decisions: the developers, the government, or the AI itself?

Write your answer in the space provided.

I think that...

When you are ready, click here to see some of my suggestions

Assessing success: Why the Third Space works

- It is a back-and-forth process, with both formal and informal channels of communication in place.
- The time dedicated to the project is embedded within existing workloads.
- The learning developer connects the academic lead with wider project stakeholders.
- Having two perspectives involved ensured that content remained genuinely accessible.
- Effectiveness of this partnership also relied on shared understanding of our respective ways of working, both of which developed progressively throughout the project.

Conclusion

- It is a long-running project that generated valuable lessons in both content development and cross-team collaboration. This will feed into the evaluation report.
- Its success (with the pilot cohort and in terms of content development) highlights the critical role of the third space in delivering interdisciplinary and lifelong learning initiatives.
- The work continues, with further learning and development ahead!



**Thank you for
listening!**

Any questions?

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