



SPGA Digital Education & Innovation Symposium

About the Symposium: The SPGA Digital Education & Innovation Symposium brings together leading academic voices and sector experts to explore the future of higher education in a digital-first world. This interactive event showcases cutting-edge teaching innovations from our School's Digital Champions and features high-level keynote insights on the impact of generative AI and strategic digital reform. Hosted by the School of Policy & Global Affairs in collaboration with the Finsbury Institute, the symposium provides a platform for staff to share practice, engage with senior leadership, and discuss the collective vision for scaling digital excellence.

Time: 9:00–18:00, 9th June, 2026

Room: B200, University Building, City St George's, University of London

Lead:

Prof. Charles Lees, Executive Dean, SPGA, City St George's

Prof. Diana Beech, Director of the Finsbury Institute, SPGA, City St George's

Dr. Xiaogang Che, Associate Dean (Innovation & Digital Transformation), SPGA, City St George's

Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to support for the Symposium to the Contingency funding of Digital Innovation and Transformation from the University, and colleagues across City St George's, and numerous speakers and participants from outside the University. Special thanks are due to Valerie Glasford, Elena Panteli Poulli, and Deirdre McDermott without whose organizational skills and experience this day would not have been possible!

PROGRAMME

09:15–10:00 | Arrival & Coffee

10:00–11:30 | Digital Champion Showcase: Teaching Innovations

4 short, practice-focused showcases (20 minutes each):

- **Speaker:** Economics DC: Dr. Panagiotis Giannarakis

Digital Innovation in Practice: Responsible AI for Dissertations and Smart Module Management

- **Speaker:** Economics DC: Dr. Camilo Calderon Morales

Future-Ready Teaching: X-Tutorial, Human-Led AI-Supported Reasoning Practice in Economics and Beyond

- **Speaker:** Sociology DC: Dr. Yoav Galai

Digital Pedagogy at the department for Sociology and Criminology

- **Speaker:** International Politics DC: Dr. Luis Vinha

Activating the Asynchronous: Interactive Video Lectures as a Catalyst for Experiential Learning

11:30–12:00 | SPGA Digital Reforms

Speaker: Prof. Charles Lees, Executive Dean, SPGA

SPGA Digital Reforms: Vision, Progress, and Next Steps

12:00–13:00 | Lunch & Networking

13:00–13:30 | Reflections on Digital Transformation from Jisc

Speaker: Sarah Knight, Director of Digital Leadership and Transformation, JISC

How to Approach Digital Transformation in Higher Education

13:30-13:50 | Presentation on the ‘Skills, Use and Attitudes towards AI in Europe’ report by the ESS

Speaker: Stefan Swift, Head of Communications, European Social Survey, City St George's, University of London

AI: Skills, use and attitudes in the UK (and 10 other countries)

13:50–14:10 | Presentation on the Student Generative AI Survey 2026

Speakers: Rose Stephenson, Director of Policy & Strategy, and Charlotte Armstrong, Policy Manager, Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI)

AI in teaching, learning and the student experience

14:10-14:30 | Q&A for ESS and HEPI

14:30–15:00 | Refreshment Break

15:00–16:00 | Leadership Panel: Scaling Digital Innovation in Higher Education

Chair: Prof. Diana Beech, Director of the Finsbury Institute, SPGA

Participants include:

- Prof. Emma McCoy, Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), LSE
 - Prof. Graham Wynn, Vice President (Education and Student Success), King's College London
 - Prof. Ruth Livesey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Royal Holloway University of London
 - Prof. Susannah Quinsee, Vice President (Digital and Student Experience), City St George's, University of London
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16:00–16:30 | A view from our President

Speaker: Prof. Elisabeth Hill: Deputy President and Provost of City St George's, University of London

16:30-16:35 | Closing Remarks & Next Steps

Speaker: Prof. Charles Lees, Executive Dean, SPGA

16:35–18:00 | Drinks Reception

Talks' Abstracts

Panagiotis Giannarakis (Dep of Economics, SPGA)

Title: “Digital Innovation in Practice: Responsible AI for Dissertations and Smart Module Management”

Summary: This presentation introduces two practical digital innovation projects designed to improve student support, academic workflows and programme-level oversight. The first is a controlled AI dissertation support environment, including a Personal AI Dissertation Assistant that helps students ask questions about dissertation planning, research design, methodology, academic writing and responsible use of Generative AI, while aligning with academic misconduct guidance. The second is a module management tool that enables module leaders to access tailored task lists for each module, including assessment, marking and moderation deadlines. Programme teams will also be able to monitor progress across modules, supporting better oversight of module delivery and helping to identify delays at programme level. Automated notifications will support timely completion, improve visibility of delays and strengthen consistency across module delivery.

Camilo Calderon Morales (Dep of Economics, SPGA)

Title: “Future-Ready Teaching: X-Tutorial, Human-Led AI-Supported Reasoning Practice in Economics and Beyond”

Summary: This presentation introduces X-Tutorial, a Quarto-based teaching innovation that uses AI to support structured reasoning practice in Economics. Students draft answers, receive formative AI feedback, revise their reasoning, and arrive at practicals better prepared for discussion. The model keeps the tutor at the centre: AI supports preparation and reflection, while human academic judgement guides conceptual clarification, assessment expectations, and deeper learning. The presentation shows how X-Tutorial can improve student engagement, make feedback more scalable, and offer a responsible model for AI-enhanced teaching across Economics and beyond.

Yoav Galai (Dep of Sociology, SPGA)

Title: ``Digital Pedagogy at the department for Sociology and Criminology”

Summary: The presentation will share the pedagogical approach to digital integration in Sociology and Criminology that range from assessment innovation to digital skill development. It will introduce projects that were used this year as well as projects that will be in use next year: shared mapping, the interactive textbook, graphic interface and a multiliteracy workshop.

Luis Da Vinha (Dep of International Politics, SPGA)

Title: ``Activating the Asynchronous: Interactive Video Lectures as a Catalyst for Experiential Learning”

Summary: This presentation examines how Interactive Video Lectures (IVLs) transform asynchronous content into active, experiential learning environments. By embedding quizzes, searchable hotspots, and feedback mechanisms, IVLs reposition students as active participants rather than passive recipients. This approach effectively "flips" the classroom, shifting foundational delivery to asynchronous spaces to prioritize in-class time for collaborative problem-solving and professional skill development. Drawing on student surveys and module data, the session evaluates the effectiveness of IVLs in enhancing engagement and preparedness, offering a scalable model for deeper learning across face-to-face, online, and blended contexts.

Charles Lees (Executive Dean, SPGA)

Title: ``SPGA Digital Reforms: Vision, Progress, and Next Steps”

Summary: This presentation outlines the strategic roadmap for digital reform across the School of Policy & Global Affairs. It reviews our current progress in modernizing curriculum delivery, highlights the vital role played by our Digital Champions network, and sets out our upcoming institutional priorities for navigating higher education in an AI-integrated world.

Sarah Knight (Jisc)

Title: “How to approach digital transformation in higher education”

Summary: From Jisc’s work across higher education, we have observed that successful digital transformation requires targeted investments, digitally aware leadership, robust and secure infrastructure, engaged stakeholders, uniform data practices, digitally proficient staff and students, and, perhaps most crucially, a cultural shift towards digital adoption. This session will share how higher education is approaching digital transformation and what further actions are needed to support the associated organisational change required.

Stefan Swift (ESS)

Title: “AI: Skills, use and attitudes in the UK (and 10 other countries)”

Summary: The European Social Survey (ESS), based in SPGA at City, is one of the world’s leading social surveys, measuring attitudes and behaviours in 39 countries since 2002/03. In recent years, the project has developed a self-completion panel survey to collect data more quickly and cover topics not necessarily included in the main survey. This presentation will include analysis of survey data collected from questions fielded via the panel survey about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 11 countries during 2025.

Stefan Swift is Head of Communications at the European Social Survey HQ (School of Policy and Global Affairs, City St George’s, University of London). Stefan has been the lead communicator of the project and its outputs (primarily high-quality survey data) for over a decade. His research interests are academic impact, the media, social media, communication, conspiracy theories and incel culture.

Rose Stephenson, (Director of Policy and Strategy, HEPI) and Charlotte Armstrong, (Policy Manager of the Higher Education Policy Institute, HEPI)

Title: “AI in teaching, learning and the student experience”

Summary: Rose and Charlotte will present the latest research on student use of generative AI in the UK, what this means for teaching and assessment approaches, and case studies from leading educators and institutions.