



Opportunities for Digital Transformation in **Higher Education**

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Colleges and universities have embraced digital workflows, with more than 70% of respondents to a Center for Digital Education (CDE) survey reporting key processes at their institutions are now mostly or fully digital.¹

However, higher education still faces long-standing challenges to digital transformation, including budget constraints, staffing shortages, and the complexity and volume of data.

Intelligent document management and managed services can address these challenges and accelerate workflow automation.

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TRANSFORMING KEY PROCESSES

Fewer than 1% of respondents to the CDE survey reported their institutions remain fully or mostly paper based. Nearly one-quarter (23%), meanwhile, say their workflows and processes are now fully digital.

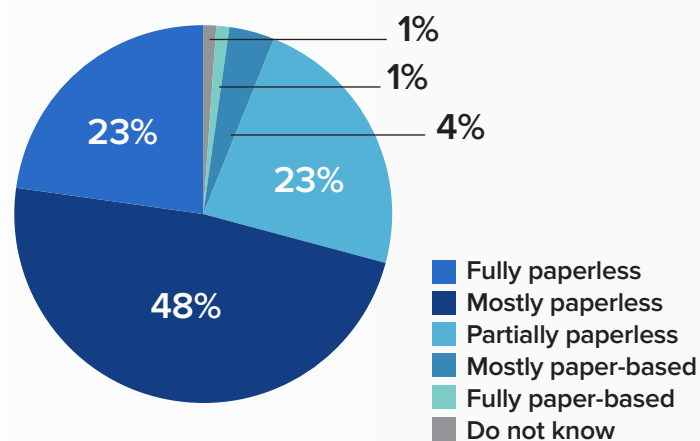
Still, despite the widespread move toward digital transformation, key workflows remain paper-based at many institutions. One-quarter or more of respondents say research grant applications and management (30%), alumni relations and fundraising (29%), and student admissions and enrollment (28%) are still reliant on paper.

At the same time, colleges and universities face barriers to going paperless. Tight budgets, high volumes of documents, staffing and time constraints, difficulties identifying suitable tools and software, the complexity of integrating legacy systems, and regulatory and compliance issues were cited by many survey respondents.

The same repetitive, time-consuming tasks that contribute to burnout can often be taken over by automation, freeing staff to manage more important and fulfilling responsibilities.

“Struggles with staffing are driving the desire for digitization and promoting doing as much to eliminate manual processes as possible,” says Mark Sinanian, vice president of marketing for Canon U.S.A.

To what extent are your institution’s workflows or processes conducted paperless?



VALUABLE PARTNERSHIPS

By leveraging third-party expertise to address these barriers, colleges and universities can accelerate digital transformation. Fewer than 5% of survey respondents say their institutions do not outsource any functions to third-party providers, which provide support across a range of functions.

Outsourcing is currently the most prevalent in IT. One-third or more of survey respondents report their institutions already receive third-party support with cybersecurity (39%), IT infrastructure management (38%), cloud solutions and processes (37%), help desk services (34%), and website development and maintenance (33%).

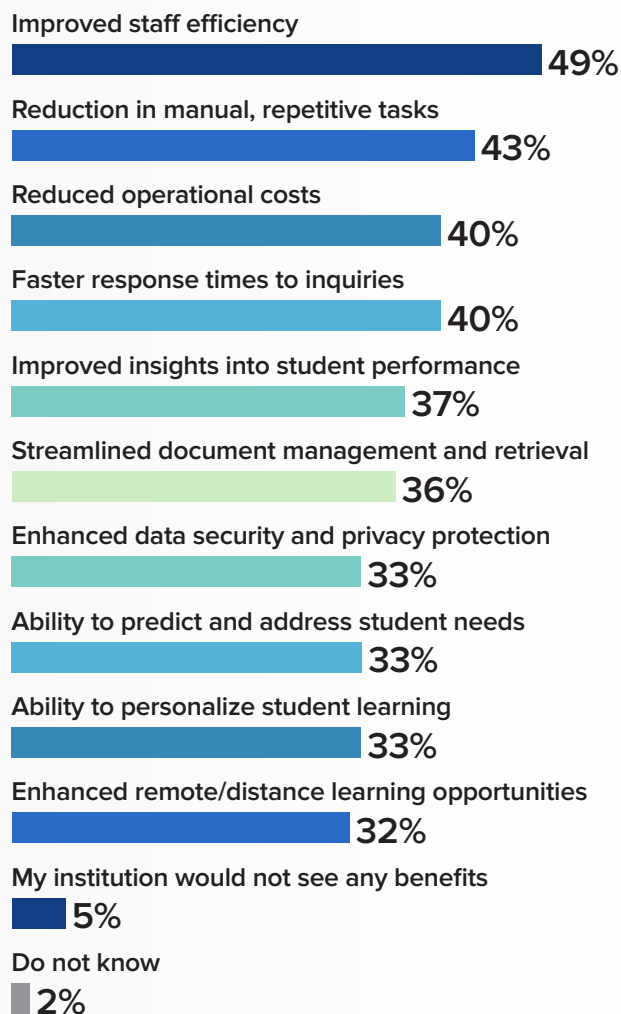
The CDE survey demonstrates opportunities to digitize and outsource a wide range of other processes. Classroom technology integration, data analysis and reporting, payroll and human resources functions, document management and storage, and managed print services are among functions currently outsourced by 20% or more of respondents. Managed print and document management services are an essential part of digitizing critical workflows. Together, these services can leverage intelligent data processing to automate document scanning, routing and storage. They can also include authentication and access controls to manage the access, printing and sharing of documents.

Supporting the college or university throughout digital transformation requires careful change management strategies. Leaders must implement data governance structures to establish rules for document access, storage and retention to ensure security and compliance, all while ensuring information is available to staff and students.

Managed services partners can support change management with impact assessments and roadmaps to guide implementation, marketing and training.

“A savvy institution can minimize challenges, increase adoption and drive better outcomes by implementing a solid change management plan,” Sinanian says.

What benefits do you believe your institution could realize by using AI to help enhance your digitized workflows and processes? Select all that apply.



POSITIONED FOR THE FUTURE

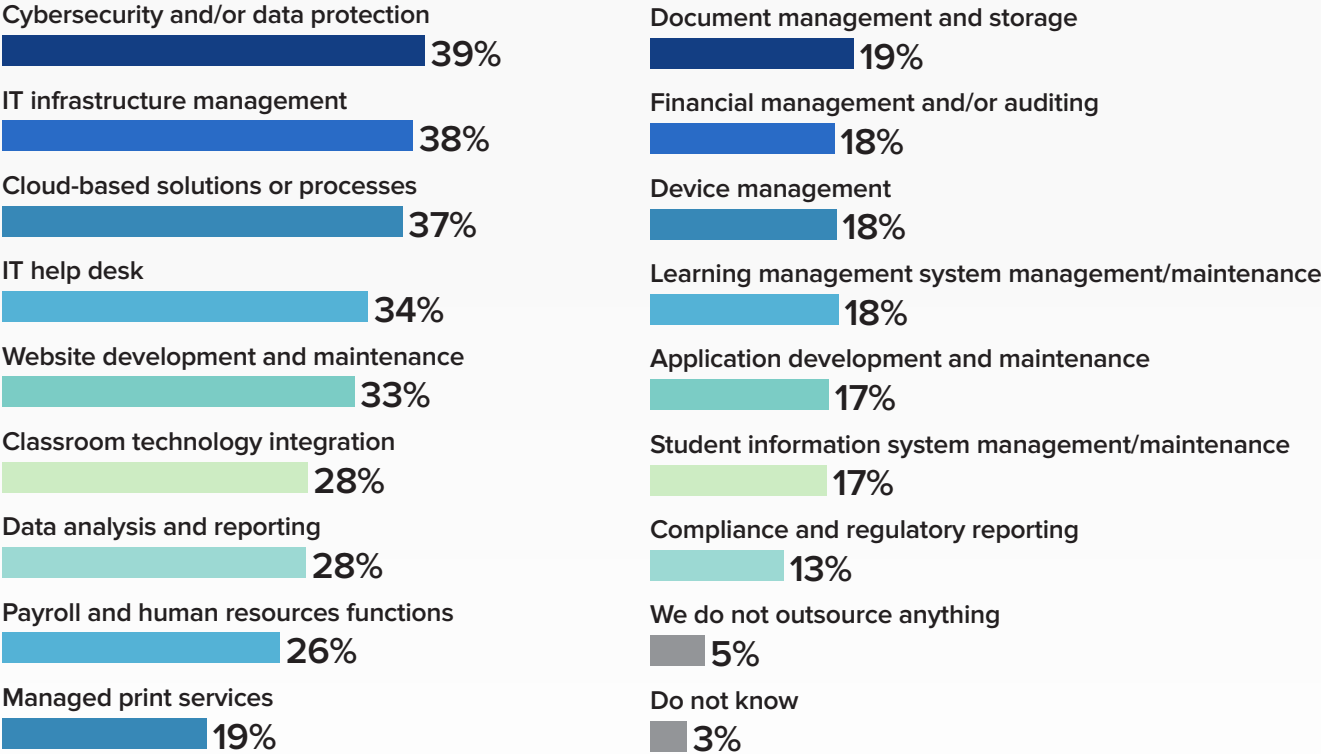
As digital transformation continues to accelerate, AI will play a growing role in higher education. Survey respondents highlight a range of ways they believe AI will help their organizations, including improved staff efficiency, reduced manual tasks, faster response times, reduced operational costs, improved insights into student performance, and streamlined document management and retrieval.

AI will also more directly support the changing institutional mission, with survey respondents citing its ability to personalize student learning, predict and address student needs, and enhance remote and hybrid learning opportunities.

To leverage the benefits of AI, digitization and intelligent document management, institutional leaders will have to collaborate with partners to ensure data sources fit the use cases they plan to use to benefit students and staff, as well as support the change management required to make them successful.

By planning ahead and keeping the institution’s overall mission in mind, colleges and universities can expand their digitization efforts now and position themselves for future enhancements.

Which of the following services does your institution currently outsource to a third party? Select all that apply.



1. All charts and graphs represent information collected by the Center for Digital Education during a national survey of 120 college and university leaders in November 2024. Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

This piece was written and produced by the Digital Education Content Studio, with information and input from Canon.



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