

Edtech: supercharging careers in accountancy

In this report, educational technology – or ‘edtech’ – is used as a catch-all term for the different technologies being used for educational purposes, ie in the process of learning, instruction, and assessment.



As such, edtech may range from video conferencing to artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled assessments, adaptive learning pathways, simulations, gamification, digital certification and augmented or virtual realities (AR/VR), including the metaverse.

Edtech has significant potential to support the achievement of learning outcomes at scale, and on a global basis, given the transnational nature of digital sharing of information.

Hence it is a part of the solution to the challenge of realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); in particular, SDG 4 on quality education, which seeks to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

This report examines the use of edtech in accountancy education. It concludes that it has the potential to supercharge career development, with the following **top tips for learners**.

Top tips for learners:

1. Leverage the potential of edtech to fit around one's life and circumstances.

- The most valuable quality of edtech, as reported by survey respondents, was flexibility (eg timing, access to experts, ability to access learning from a range of sources in one place), which was highlighted by almost three-quarters of learners.

2. Consider the blended option.

- A blended model combines asynchronous (online, on demand) and synchronous (live, whether in-person or online) instruction. Given four options, the highest proportion of those surveyed chose blended learning to describe their current use of edtech; the other three modes were online (live), online (on-demand) and in-person. The use of blended learning ranked favourably across use cases, which included content delivery (38%), individual/group learning activities (39%) and assessments (34%).

3. See edtech as an option regardless of stage of life or organisational size.

- Reliance on technology-enabled learning was quite stable across ages between 25 years and 65 years. For example, use of edtech in a blended learning way of delivering content by a teacher (eg course text, videos) was reported by 40% of those under 25 years, 39% for those between 25 and 35, 38% for those in the 36 to 50 age group and 38% in the 51 to 65 age group. The desire to engage with technology-enabled learning is not restricted to younger age groups.
- Comparisons between small and medium sized organisations (under 250 employees) and larger ones (over 250 employees) showed no significant differences in use or desire to use edtech in future to build accountancy-relevant capabilities. Across both, the proportion of respondents using edtech currently to build these capabilities is just over one-third, which jumps to almost two-thirds when asked if they want to use edtech in future to build their capabilities.

Key trends in edtech:

TREND 1: Bite-sized or short-content videos

More content providers and educators are presenting content in short videos ranging from 5 to 15-minutes long. However, it's worth noting, that in the survey, 91% of learners also reported using digital books for learning, suggesting an opportunity for deeper exploration of this trend in accountancy education.

TREND 2: Integrated learning and practice

With edtech, learning of content and application of learned content, such as the application of accounting software, is more interwoven in instruction rather than being presented in separate sessions of learning.

TREND 3: Role of AI and machine learning in learning and assessment

AI shows promise in informing the design of adaptive learning systems, in remote invigilation, adaptive assessments, and translation of assessment items.

TREND 4: Micro-credentials gain traction in professional learning and employment settings

Many employers value micro-credentials that demonstrate capability. Educators engaged in this study see micro-credentials as an easy and quick way of teaching new topics.

TREND 5: Gamification and simulation

Games are seen as engaging for learners and accounting tasks can be practised with fidelity using simulations. Learning through games/game play (ie gamification) is reported by 82% of respondents.

TREND 6: Augmented or virtual reality/Metaverse

Edtech's role in developing soft skills and the professional capabilities of communication, drive, and insight emerges in discussions on the metaverse. A majority of respondents (72%) had experienced digital simulations/scenario-based tasks (eg accessing software-based simulations); with augmented/virtual reality (eg immersive experiences in a digital environment) being reported by 53%. The metaverse is still in its infancy, but is envisioned as a possible avenue for training, competitions, global learning communities, and professional networking hubs.

FIGURE 1.1: Device use for learning and assessments

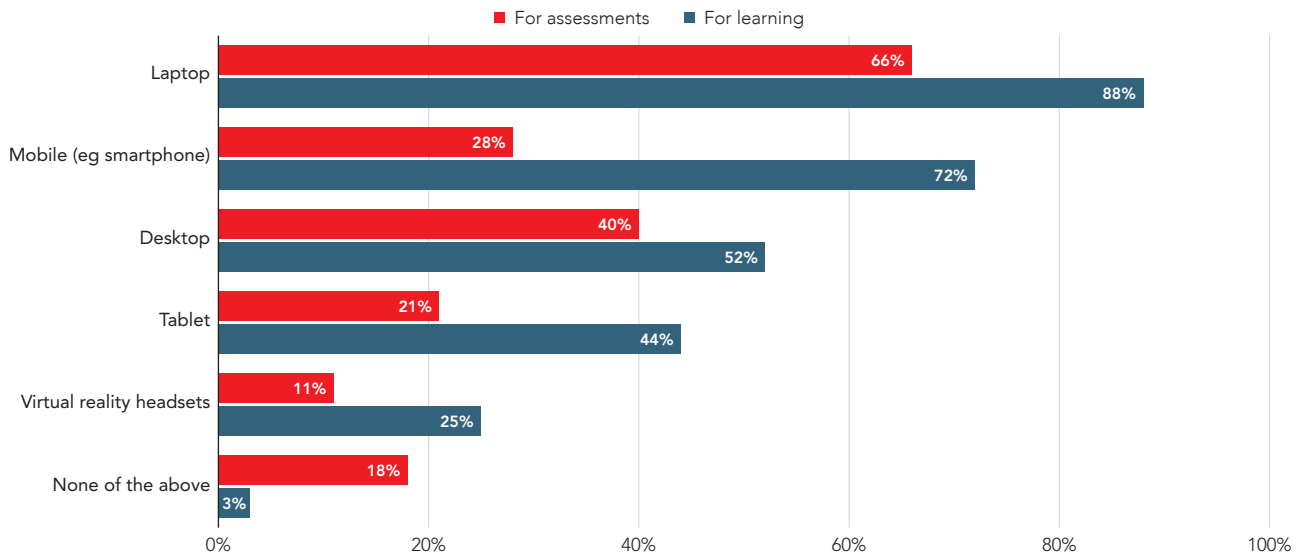
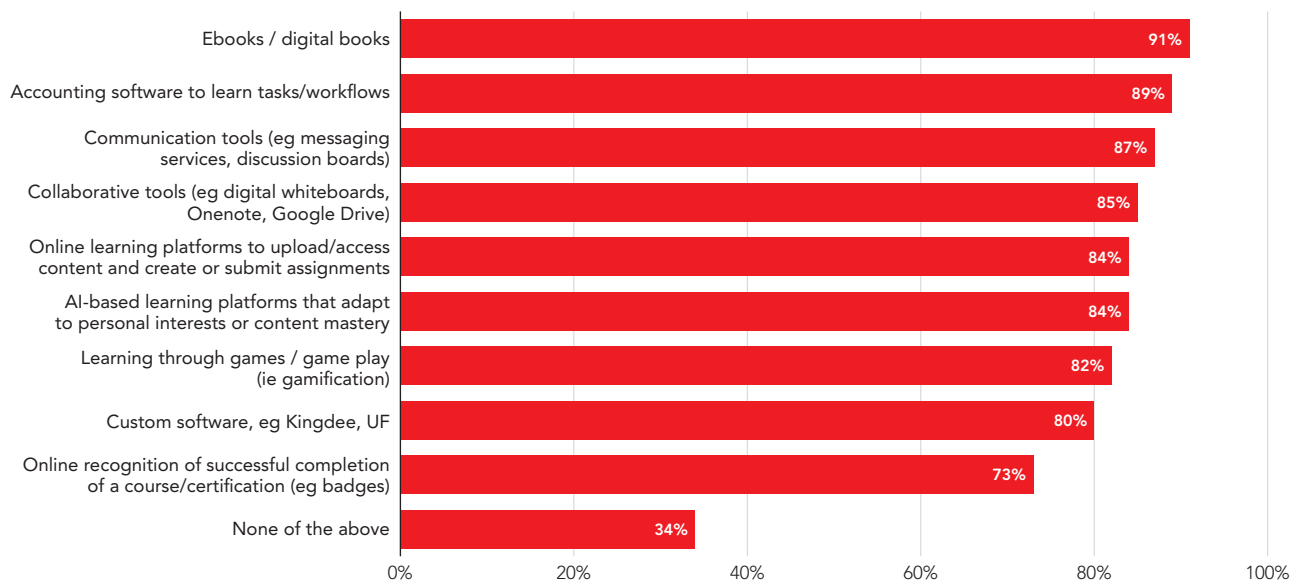


FIGURE 1.2: Use of digital tools for learning



Notes: 'Adaptive learning platforms' are those that personalise the learning experience using AI, often depending on capability, using just-in-time feedback, learning pathways, and resources. 'Ebooks' are digital versions of a textbook; they can be interactive but are not always. 'Collaboration tools' allow simultaneous working on a shared workspace. 'Communication tools' allow communication with learners or educators, such as messaging services, video conferencing, email, discussion boards, etc. 'Custom software' is subject-specific software for practice or engagement in 'Learning by doing' activities. LMS are specific platforms that host learning content, exercises, and assessments; may include elements of collaborative and communication tools. A 'digital badge' is a digital award that is a validated indicator of accomplishment or skill acquisition.

FIGURE 1.3: Use of edtech for content delivery by a teacher (eg course text, videos)

