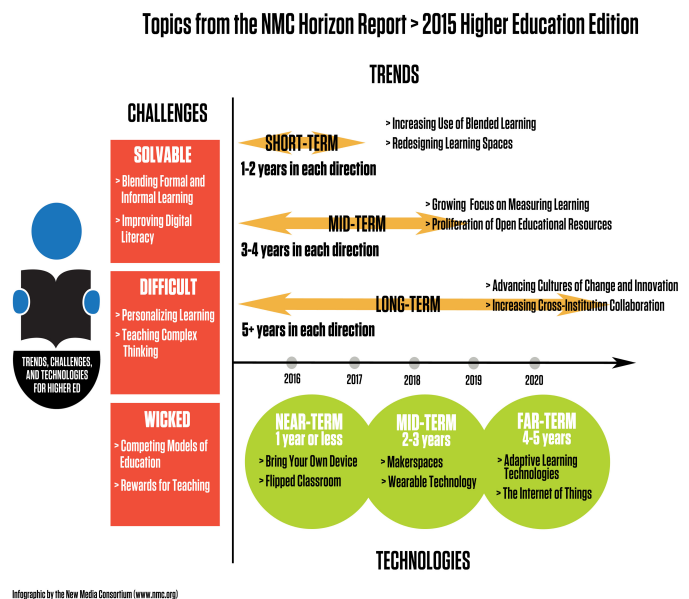


NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Higher Education Edition

Executive Summary of Trends for Higher Education

What is on the five-year horizon for higher education institutions? Which trends and technologies will drive educational change? What are the challenges that we consider as solvable or difficult to overcome, and how can we strategize effective solutions? These questions and similar inquiries regarding technology adoption and educational change steered the collaborative research and discussions of a body of 56 experts to produce the *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Higher Education Edition*. The *NMC Horizon Report* series charts the potential and likely impacts of emerging technologies in higher education across the globe. With more than 13 years of research and more than 50 published reports, the project is widely regarded as the world's longest-running exploration of emerging technology trends and uptake in education.

The six trends described in the 2015 Report were selected by the project's expert panel in a series of Delphi-based voting cycles, each accompanied by rounds of desktop research, discussions, and further refinements of the topics. These trends are sorted into three impact-related categories — high-impact trends that typically have already been impacting decision-making for some time, and will continue to be important for more than five years; moderate-impact trends that will likely continue to be a factor in decision-making for the next three to five years; and short-term impact trends that may be driving edtech adoption now, but will likely remain important for only one to two years, becoming commonplace or fading away in that time.



The NMC Horizon Project model employs three meta-dimensions to focus the discussions of important trends: policy, leadership, and practice. Policy, in this context, refers to the formal laws, regulations, rules, and guidelines that govern universities and colleges; leadership is the product of experts' visions of the future of learning, based on research and deep consideration; and practice is where new ideas and pedagogies take action, in universities and related settings.

Policy. While all of the identified trends had policy implications, two trends in particular are expected to have a strong impact on policy decisions in the next five years. The proliferation of open educational resources has emerged as a major topic of interest to national governments and universities, but will require effective policy to become mainstream in practice. Likewise, the movement toward measurement of learning through data-driven practice and assessment, currently on the rise in universities in the developed world, will continue to influence campus decision making for the next three to five years.

Leadership. While there are clear leadership implications for all the identified trends that are discussed in the report, two trends stand out as unique opportunities for vision and leadership. In the near term, the redesign of learning spaces will require creative leadership to imagine how the physical set-up of classrooms can better accommodate progressive teaching, but also how to share those ideas broadly. A longer-term, but potentially high-impact opportunity for leadership is the growth of collaboration between different higher education institutions. This trend reflects the notion that innovation can scale better when ideas are shared between institutions.

Practice. In the short term, the increase of blended learning has prompted a broad and very productive conversation around how best to use both face to face and online environments to their best effect. A slower moving, but potentially very high impact trend reflects how universities and colleges worldwide have been gradually rethinking how their organizations and infrastructures can be more agile and entrepreneurial.