Digital Experience Policy

Supporting better digital experiences for all people and business

Version 1.0

Digital Transformation Agency

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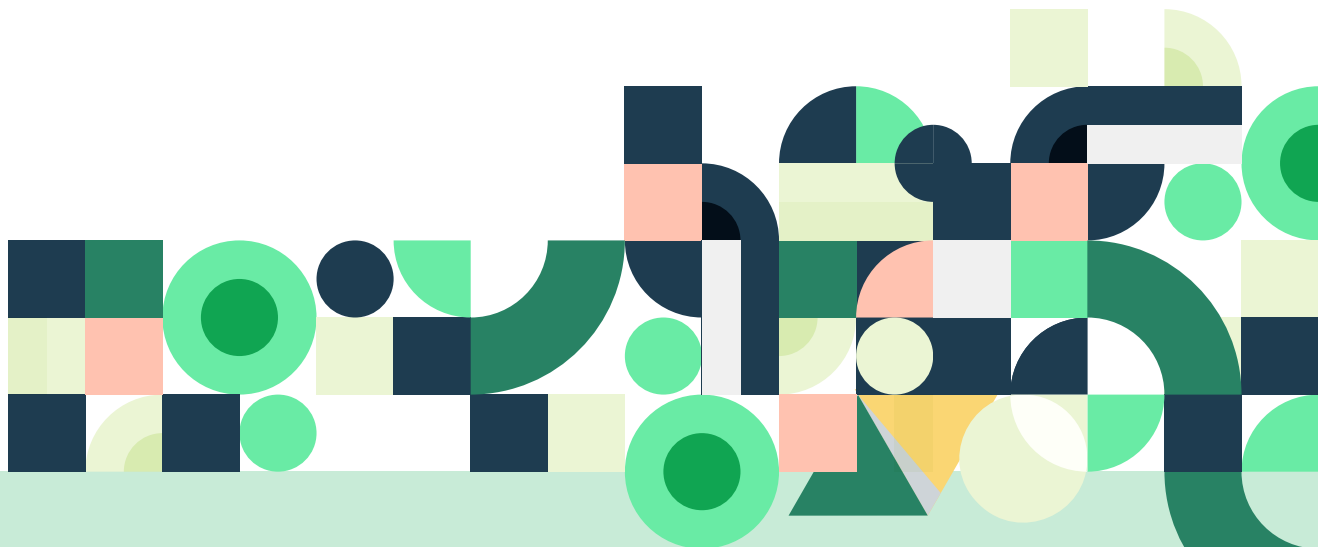
Contents

Introducing the Digital Experience Policy

The policy sets agreed benchmarks for the performance of digital services and supports agencies to design and deliver better experiences by considering the broader digital service ecosystem.

The Digital Experience Policy (DX Policy) supports a whole-of-government focus on improving the experience for people and business interacting digitally with government information and services, setting a benchmark for good digital services and integrating data based on real-world use.

This will strengthen the government's Investment Oversight Framework (IOF), further assuring that investments deliver on their commitments and are aligned to whole-of-government strategic objectives.

The policy includes a suite of standards and guidance that support agencies to deliver more cohesive and consistent digital experiences, aligned to the Data and Digital Government Strategy.

This policy is relevant for anyone involved in:

- developing digital and ICT proposals
- designing, delivering and operating digital government services
- improving existing government digital government services.
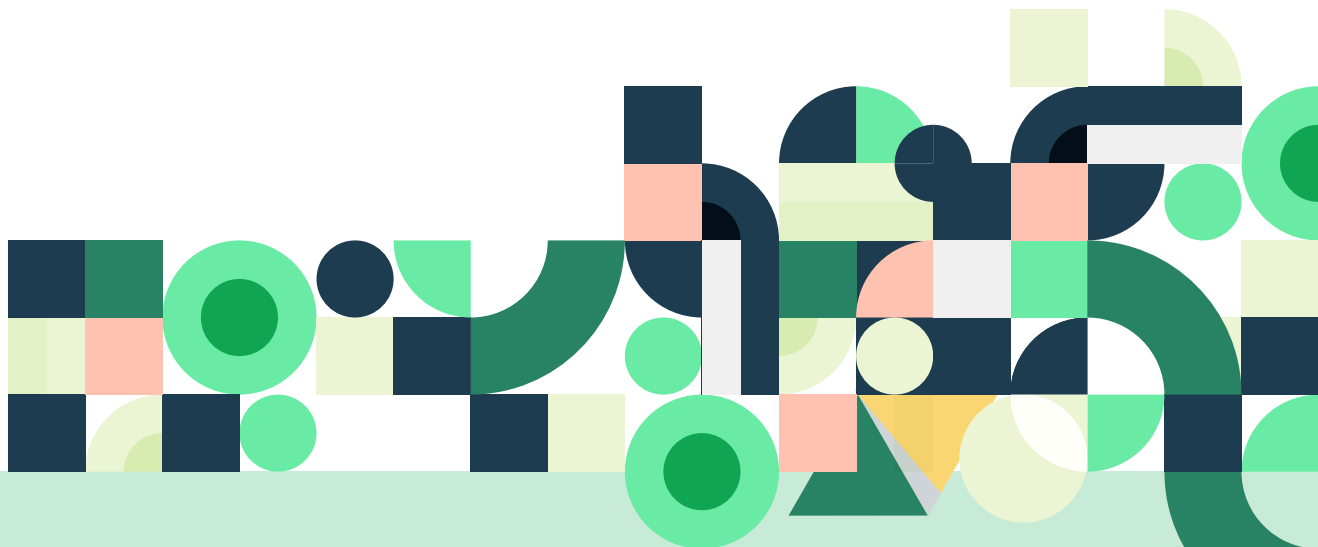
Benefits of a Digital Experience Policy

Government's digital service offerings have significantly expanded in the past decade. Delivering simple, secure and connected digital government services is critical to achieving successful outcomes in an environment driven by user expectations and a rapidly evolving technologies landscape.

To deliver high quality and effective digital services to people and business, cross-government collaboration and planning is required. While improvements have been made in this domain, a history of siloed service delivery approaches and varied levels of digital uplift has led to a complex digital ecosystem and disparity in the quality of digital experiences.

Consistent, simple and inclusive digital experiences benefit all users but particularly vulnerable or marginalised people who are most likely to experience digital exclusion and most need to be able to access support. Research has found that those individuals who already experience social disadvantage, or other challenges, despite their access to the internet, are more likely to have a digital experience that does not fully exploit the possibilities that technology can offer. This reinforces their disadvantage, in what is referred to as the 'inequality-loop'.[1]

Focusing on the digital experience also creates opportunity to reduce duplication of effort and resources and improve government's ability to make investment decisions backed by data and insights, feeding back into the broader Investment Oversight Framework – see 'Policy Application and Compliance' for more detail.

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1 Ragnedda, Ruiu, and Addeo, 'The Self-Reinforcing Effect of Digital and Social Exclusion' (2022).

Policy application and compliance

The DX Policy primarily applies to new digital service investments being considered under the Digital and ICT Investment Oversight Framework (IOF), with the exception of the Digital Service Standard and the Digital Inclusion Standard, which apply more broadly.

To minimise additional administrative burden on agencies administration and compliance activities will be integrated within existing processes under the IOF such as the Digital Capability Assessment Process (DCAP) and Approved Programs Collection (referred to as Wave).

Compliance refers to an Agency meeting the requirements as set out in the DX Policy and accompanying standards. Compliance is mandatory for services considered in scope of the DX Policy, unless services are granted a full or partial exemption by the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA). Where an exemption has been granted, services should comply to the maximum extent possible.

The DTA will undertake regular evaluation of the policy and standards, including compliance mechanisms, in consultation with impacted agencies to ensure they remain fit for purpose and effective.

Each standard sets out the touchpoints throughout each state of the IOF to assist agencies with their planning and design.

IOF states ▶		1 Strategic planning	2 Prioritisation	3 Contestability	4 Assurance	5 Digital Sourcing	6 Operations
Digital Experience Policy	Digital Service Standard	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑
	Digital Inclusion Standard	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑
	Digital Access Standard		☑	☑	☑		☑
	Digital Performance Standard	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑

Further guidance for agencies on compliance and alignment to the IOF can be found in the Compliance and Reporting Framework and Digital Experience Toolkit.

Digital Service Standard

The Digital Service Standard establishes the requirements for designing and delivering digital government services. The Standard puts people and business at the centre of government digital service delivery. It guides digital teams to create and maintain digital services that are user-friendly, inclusive, adaptable and measurable.

IOF Touchpoints:

State 1 Strategic Planning

Data on compliance with the Digital Service Standard will indicate which systems or areas require uplift.

State 3 Contestability

Assessment will be undertaken to determine if proposals have a plan to meet the Digital Service Standard requirements.

State 4 Assurance

Monitoring and assurance will be undertaken to understand if the service is being delivered in line with the Digital Service Standard as planned.

State 5 Digital Sourcing

Digital Service Standard requirements should be considered throughout procurement practices.

State 6 Operations

Compliance data will drive continuous improvement, targeted insights and a feedback loop to support strategic planning and prioritisation.

Digital Inclusion Standard

The Digital Inclusion Standard establishes specific requirements for designing and delivering inclusive and accessible digital government services through best practice principles, building on the criteria set out by the Digital Service Standard.

IOF Touchpoints:

State 1 Strategic Planning

Data on compliance with the Digital Inclusion Standard will indicate which systems or areas require uplift.

State 3 Contestability

Assessment will be undertaken to determine if proposals have a plan to meet minimum inclusion requirements, as set out in the Digital Inclusion Standard.

State 4 Assurance

Monitoring and assurance activities will determine if the service is being delivered in line with the Digital Inclusion Standard as planned.

State 5 Digital Sourcing

Digital Inclusion Standard requirements should be considered throughout procurement practices.

State 6 Operations

Monitoring and reporting will determine agency compliance with inclusion requirements, using existing mechanisms such as the digital and ICT Approved Programs Collection, also referred to as Wave.

Digital Access Standard

The Digital Access Standard requires agencies to make more informed investment decisions and reduce the duplication of digital 'front doors', wallets and other government digital services to provide people and business with a more unified experience when interacting with Australian Government.

Performance of the Digital Access Standard will be monitored and managed through a Digital Register that will track current digital service access points.

IOF Touchpoints:

State 2 Prioritisation

Assessment to understand if a proposed new access point has been considered or planned for integration with an existing access point (including in any indicative or high-level costs provided during this IOF state).

State 3 Contestability

Assessment to ensure proposals have considered and planned for integration with existing access points and that solutions will be interoperable, in line with the requirements of the Digital Access Standard.

State 4 Assurance

Monitoring and assurance to understand if the service is being delivered in line with planned integration to access points, in line with the requirements in the Digital Access Standard.

State 6 Operations

Ongoing monitoring of digital access points to track agency compliance and progress in simplifying the digital service ecosystem, using existing mechanisms such as the digital and ICT Approved Programs Collection (referred to as Wave).

Digital Performance Standard

The Digital Performance Standard builds upon the Digital Service Standard Criteria 9 – Monitor your service and establishes the requirements for monitoring and reporting the performance of government digital services. Providing a greater focus on the performance of digital services, the Digital Performance Standard supports the Data and Digital Government Strategy's mission to put people and business at the centre of government digital services.

It sets an approach to monitor digital performance across components of digital government services and supports data-driven digital and ICT investment decisions. It will provide the ability to monitor digital services to make sure they are:

- available
- accessible
- meeting customer needs.

It will provide additional data to assist in assuring benefits are realised under the Benefits Management Policy (where benefits intersect with included metrics).

IOF Touchpoints:

State 1 Strategic Planning

Performance data will support and monitor the digital ecosystem and the identification of exemplary services, or those requiring uplift.

State 2 Prioritisation

Performance data will enable evidence-based decision making to support prioritisation of new investment proposals, and understand their potential impact on user experience.

State 3 Contestability

Assessment will ensure that proposals have planned for and will be able to comply with minimum performance monitoring requirements, as set out in the Digital Performance Standard.

State 4 Assurance

Monitoring and assurance activities will determine if the service is being delivered in line with the Digital Performance Standard as planned.

State 5 Digital Sourcing

Consideration of the need to measure service performance throughout ICT procurement practices.

State 6 Operations

Data will provide validation and increased certainty to government to assist decision making, including where metrics intersect with identified benefits. Existing mechanisms such as the digital and ICT Approved Programs Collection (referred to as Wave) will be used.

The scope of the DX Policy

The DX Policy will be effective from 1 January 2025 and applies to Corporate and Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entities, as defined by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Services delivered after this date will be subject to requirements under the DX Policy. Compliance and processes will also commence from this date.

Agencies in scope of the DX Policy are expected to review and understand each Standard to determine which services are in scope of the requirements.

Services not covered by the DX Policy, for example state and territory services, may still choose to apply the DX Policy and standards to improve a quality digital experience for their users.

Note: The previously mandated Digital Service Standard will retain its effective date of 1 July 2024. However, from 1 January 2025 it will be aligned to the Digital Experience Policy suite of standards.

Services covered by the Digital Experience Policy

The Digital Experience Policy covers the digital components of government services, noting that many services include both digital and non-digital channels designed to work together. Informational, transactional and staff-facing services have been defined below to assist agencies to determine if this policy applies to their digital services.

Informational services

Informational services provide information to users, such as reports, fact sheets or videos, to users. They may include:

- government agency websites
- smart answers and virtual assistants
- e-learning
- publications
- multimedia.

Transactional services

Transactional services lead to a change in government-held records, typically involving an exchange of information, money, licences or goods.

Examples of transactional services include:

- submitting a claim
- registering a business
- updating contact details
- lodging a tax return.

Staff-facing services

Staff-facing services provide information to government employees or support employee transactions. They may include:

- intranets
- learning management systems
- records management systems
- case/client management systems
- decision-making systems.

Access points

Access points are the online entry points or 'front doors' where users go to find and interact with government digital services. Access points for digital services typically take the form of:

- informational websites
- web applications accessed from a web browser
- online portals
- mobile apps.

Policy requirements

To comply with this policy, agencies must consider the impact to the holistic experience of people and business when interacting with government. This includes when designing, developing, implementing and operating digital services.

To support this, agencies must:

- Design and deliver services that are user-friendly, inclusive, adaptable and measurable.
- Consider existing digital access points when developing a new digital service in consultation with the DTA.
- Design and build new digital services to be able to integrate with primary digital access points such as myGov (where appropriate).
- Implement all 5 Digital Performance Standard criteria as part of any in scope ICT investment deliverables.
- Engage with the DTA through relevant IOF touchpoints, providing the required information to assess compliance with the policy.
- Contact the DTA if unsure how to comply with the DX Policy, if the digital investment or service is in scope of the DX Policy, or to apply for an exemption.

Governance approach

The Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) is the product owner of the policy and accompanying standards. This includes:

- the ongoing day-to-day operation of the policy and standards
- developing guidance to support agencies to apply the standards
- the collection and analysis of data related to agency compliance
- assessment of services through the IOF process
- reporting outcomes and compliance to Secretaries' Data and Digital Committee (SDDC) and other interested parties
- review and assessment of exemption requests received by agencies.

Agencies with services in scope of the policy will be responsible for:

- ensuring services meet the requirements set out in the standards
- the ongoing application of the standards against all services
- reporting to the DTA in line with the timeframes set in the supporting materials.

Changes to the standards will be governed and approved through the SDDC and the Digital Leadership Committee (DLC). This approach will make sure the policies and standards remain relevant and current, while considering the diverse needs of agencies across government.

The proposed exemption process and monitoring frameworks will be agreed through the SDDC and the DLC prior to implementation across agencies.

Exemptions

The DTA acknowledge that some agencies may be unable to meet one or more of the criteria set out by the standards mandated by the policy due to a range of circumstances. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- where an agency is unable to meet requirements due to legacy technology barriers that cannot be overcome
- where changing a service to meet the requirements would cause substantial financial burden on the service agency.

Exemptions will not apply at a 'whole of policy' level. This means your service will not be made exempt from complying with the Digital Experience Policy in its entirety. Instead, exemptions may be granted for one or more of the criteria set out in the standards mandated by the policy, depending on the circumstances. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be formally applied for through the DTA.

Further information can be found in the **Digital Experience Policy Exemption Guide**.

Where to go for further support

For additional support and resources, please see the link below, or reach out to: standard@dta.gov.au.

Digital Experience Toolkit