

CAUCE 2025

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Knowledge Knows No Boundaries



CAUCE

Canadian Association for
University Continuing Education



Fostering Innovation, Collaboration and Operational Excellence in Lifelong Learning Environments

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Shauna Cox

Editor-in-Chief
The EvoLLLution: A Modern
Campus Illumination



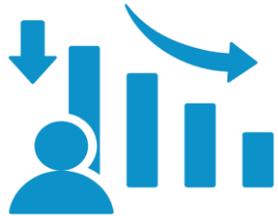
Elisabeth Rees-Johnstone

Executive Director of Continuing
Education and Professional Learning
at OISE,
University of Toronto

Mentimeter question: *Where are you coming from?*

Transformation in Continuing Education

Unpacking the Urgency



2.7% decrease in overall graduates of Canadian colleges and universities (2022)



Learners seek a fast, personalized educational journey enriched by authentic human connection and responsive support.



86% of students use AI in their studies, prompting institutions to accelerate digital transformation to enhance services and efficiency.

Transformation in Continuing Education

The Complexity Behind Meaningful Change



Institutional inertia
and legacy systems



Financial constraints
and resource allocation



Cross-departmental
collaboration

Mentimeter question: How prepared is your institution?"

CE in a Research-Intensive University

From Margin to Mandate: Reframing CE's Role in Research & Innovation

An innovation unit is an organizational structure whose core purpose is to design, pilot, and scale new or improved ways of achieving impact. It is not solely operational—it is generative. An innovation unit continuously integrates inquiry, feedback, and iteration into its offerings. It learns forward. It moves purposefully from idea to implementation—without expecting perfection in the early stages.

Education research seeks to generate **new knowledge** about educational practices and systems. **Education innovation** focuses on **applying that knowledge** in creative, often experimental ways to solve problems and drive improvements in teaching, learning, and education systems.

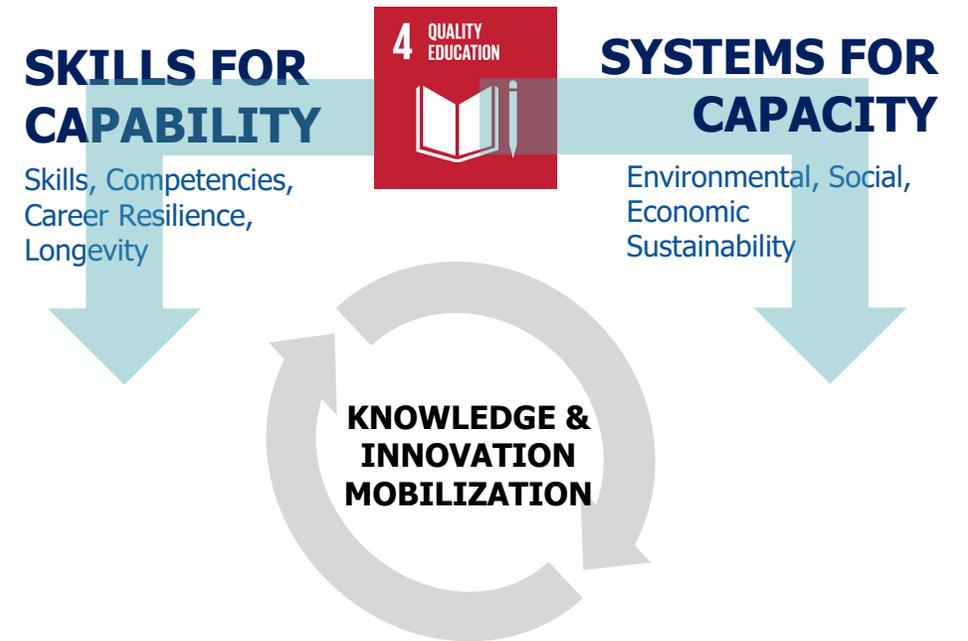
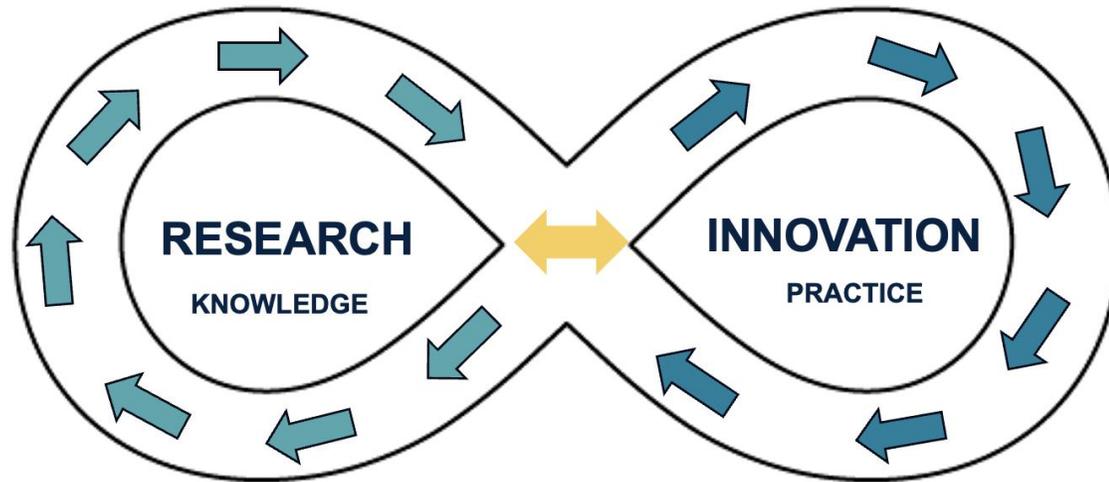
- Education Research

- **Focus:** Knowledge generation, theory development, evidence-based insights.
- **Methods:** Empirical studies, data analysis, experimental research, qualitative and quantitative methods.
- **Goal:** To provide a deep understanding of educational phenomena, inform policy decisions, and contribute to the body of knowledge that underpins educational practices.

- Education Innovation

- **Focus:** Practical application, transformation, problem-solving.
- **Methods:** Design thinking, pilot programs, prototyping, iterative testing, and scaling new approaches.
- **Goal:** To introduce new ways of teaching, learning, or managing education systems that improve efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusivity in real-world educational contexts.

Driving Innovation as *Research into Practice*



Continuing Education as *Strategic Infrastructure* for the University

| Translational CE turns academic research, discovery, and innovation into practical applications that serve real-world needs. | Systemic CE is embedded in the broader educational, economic, and social systems it serves, aligning with institutional priorities, public policy, and global challenges. | Impactful CE generates measurable, meaningful results—improving outcomes for individuals, institutions, and society at large. |
|--|---|---|
| Mobilizes academic research into practice | Integrates with institutional priorities and government policy | Delivers measurable outcomes for individuals, organizations, and society |
| Turns research findings into professional learning programs | Aligns CE programming with labour market strategy, SMAs, and performance metric | Advances equity, access, skilling, and innovation outcomes |
| Supports knowledge mobilization and innovation mandates | Bridges faculty research with community and workforce needs | Tracks and communicates learner success, career progression, and social return |
| Engages faculty, practitioners, and end-users in co-design | Scales initiatives across sectors and geographies | Builds institutional reputation, partnerships, and public trust |
| Translates discovery into practical tools, credentials, and policies | Creates feedback loops for continuous improvement | Supports lifelong learning and system capacity building |

Mentimeter question: *What is your institution's biggest untapped strength in CE?*

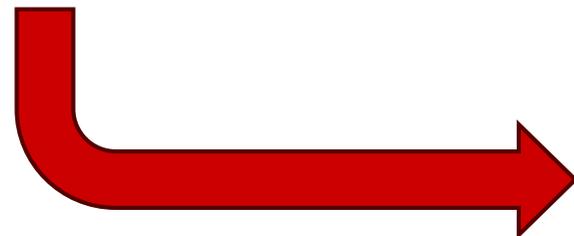
Pillars of Improvement

From Margin to Mandate: Reframing CE's Role in Research & Innovation



CE Fit with SMAs:

- ✓ Labour Market Resilience
- ✓ Credential Innovation
- ✓ Equity & Access
- ✓ Internationalization
- ✓ Innovation/Commercialization



2020-2025 Strategic Mandate Agreement: University of Toronto

Read the agreement between Ontario and University of Toronto to understand its unique role in the province's post-secondary education system.

On this page

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Performance-based funding](#)
3. [Priority areas and performance metrics](#)
4. [Skills and job outcomes](#)
5. [Economic and community impact](#)
6. [Productivity, accountability and transparency](#)
7. [Enrolment profile](#)
8. [Appendix: historical data, targets and results](#)

The screenshot shows the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities website. The header includes the Ontario logo and the text 'Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities'. Below the header is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for HOME, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, ABOUT THE MINISTRY, NEWSROOM, and CONNECT. The main content area features a 'Postsecondary Education Partners' Gateway' section with a dropdown menu containing links to Home, Audiences, Programs and Services, Degree Authority in Ontario, Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF), OSAP, and Publications. To the right of this menu is a large image of three students and a headline: 'POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PARTNERS' GATEWAY'. Below the image is a sub-headline: 'University Employment Outcomes, Graduation and Student Loan Default Rates'. The text below the sub-headline reads: 'Use Graduate Outcomes to Help Plan Your Future. How many students successfully graduate from university? Do university graduates find jobs? How many OSAP recipients received repayment assistance or defaulted? Reports compiled from the annual Ontario University Graduate Survey can help you choose a school, a major or a future career. Use the drop-down menu below to find out how students have done in programs and universities across Ontario. You can:'. A list of bullet points follows: 'choose from 26 types of university programs', 'link to charts showing students' graduation, employment and loan default rates', 'learn how many students in each type of program found part-time or full-time work', 'see the types of jobs they found', and 'see the average salaries they earned'.

SMA's are informed by critical domains

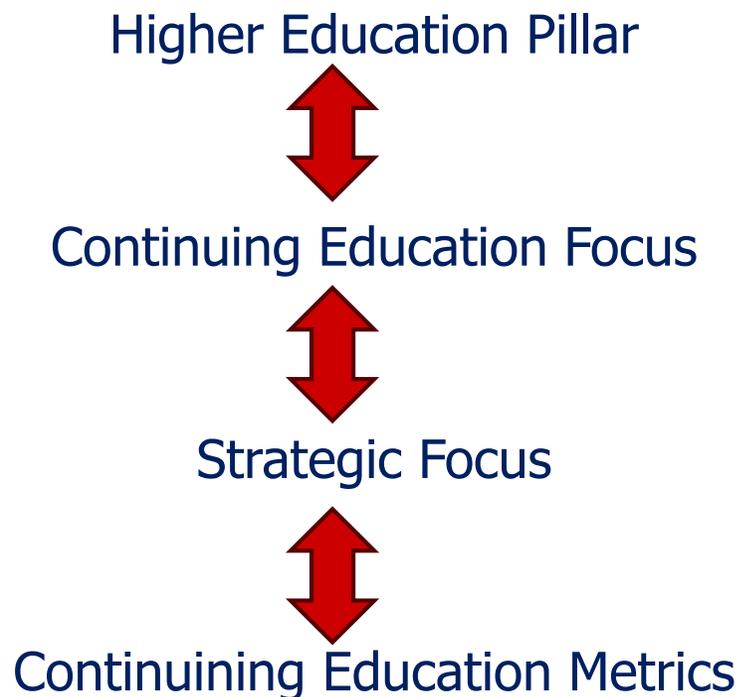
Higher Education Pillars of Improvement

| Access & Equity | Quality & Excellence | Research Innovation & Impact | Workforce Alignment & Lifelong Learning | Internationalization & Global Engagement |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Focuses on ensuring that higher education is inclusive, accessible, and equitable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) Underrepresented Group Participation Scholarship and Financial Aid Distribution | <p>Emphasizes the enhancement of academic standards, teaching quality, and institutional performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation Compliance Student Outcomes (Graduate Employability Rates) Research Outputs (Publications, Patents) | <p>Promotes a culture of innovation and ensures higher education contributes to national development and global competitiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Funding Utilization Collaboration Index (University-Industry Partnerships) Commercialization of Research University Contribution to GDP | <p>Aligns higher education programs with labor market needs and create pathways for continuous learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment with Labor Market Needs Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Outcomes Lifelong Learning Program Enrollment and Completion Rates | <p>Enhances the global standing of higher education institutions and increase cross-border collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Rankings Improvement International Student Mobility Collaborative Agreements with Foreign Universities |
| Governance & Institutional Efficiency | Digital Transformation & Technology Integration | Social Responsibility and Sustainability | Policy & Regulatory Excellence | Monitoring & Evaluation |
| <p>Strengthens leadership, autonomy, and operational effectiveness across institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Education Budget Utilization Institutional Autonomy Operational Efficiency | <p>Leverages technology to modernize learning, administration, and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Learning Access Technology Integration in Institutions Cybersecurity Readiness | <p>Ensures higher education institutions contribute positively to societal well-being and environmental sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Projects Sustainability Practices in Institutions Social Impact Metrics | <p>Develops and enforces policies that foster growth, innovation, and adaptability in the higher education sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Implementation Rate Stakeholder Satisfaction Surveys Legislative Updates for Higher Education | <p>Creates a robust system for tracking, assessing, and reporting progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Collection and Reporting Accuracy Benchmarking and International Comparisons Feedback Loop for Continuous Improvement |

Higher Education **Pillars of Continuous Improvement** address the critical domains of higher education.

By focusing on these interconnected areas, the framework ensures that higher education institutions remain responsive to societal needs, competitive on a global scale, and committed to fostering lifelong learning.

Integrating Higher Ed Domains with CE Practice

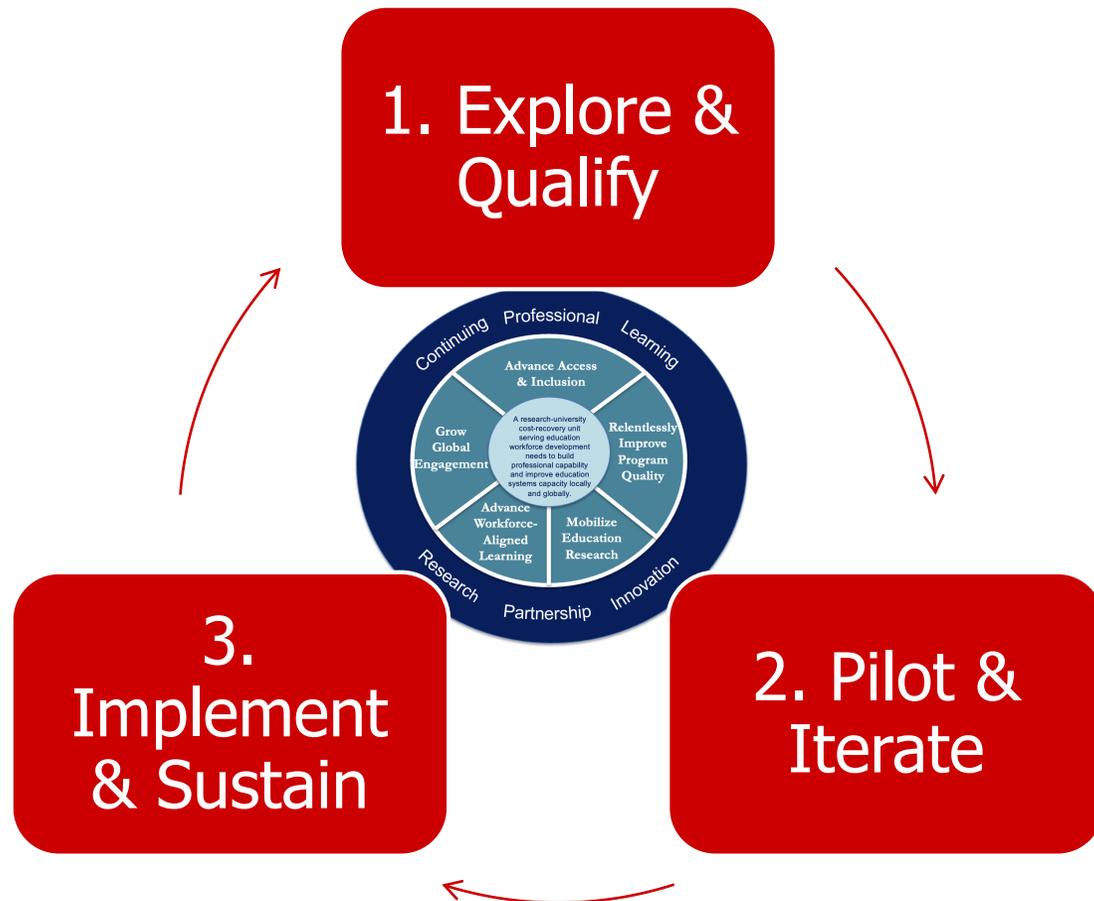


Mentimeter question: *Which pillar does your CE unit address most effectively?*

OISE Innovation Mobilization Framework

From Margin to Mandate: Reframing CE's Role in Research & Innovation

Innovation is a slow burn – paced, cyclical & grounded in inquiry



The **OISE Innovation Mobilization Framework** is the strategic and operational method by which OISE CPL moves ideas from insight to implementation.

It is not a planning spreadsheet—it is a mindset, an organizing principle, and a delivery system.

This framework integrates our purpose (why), our strategic learning architecture (how), and our offerings (what) into a cycle of continuous innovation and improvement.

Our Innovation Mobilization Framework is informed and enabled by three core components

Component 1

Why, How, What
Clarity

WHY, HOW, WHAT

WHY *we do what we do*

Thriving education systems form the bedrock of sustainable social, economic, and environmental well-being. We exist to empower educators and education organizations to excel in serving diverse stakeholders—including learners, partners, communities, and industries—and to strengthen the capacity of education systems for transformative outcomes.

HOW *we do it*

We leverage our research-intensive institute and university's expertise, uphold a commitment to continuous improvement, and apply proven methods in knowledge mobilization, learning, and innovation.

WHAT *we produce*

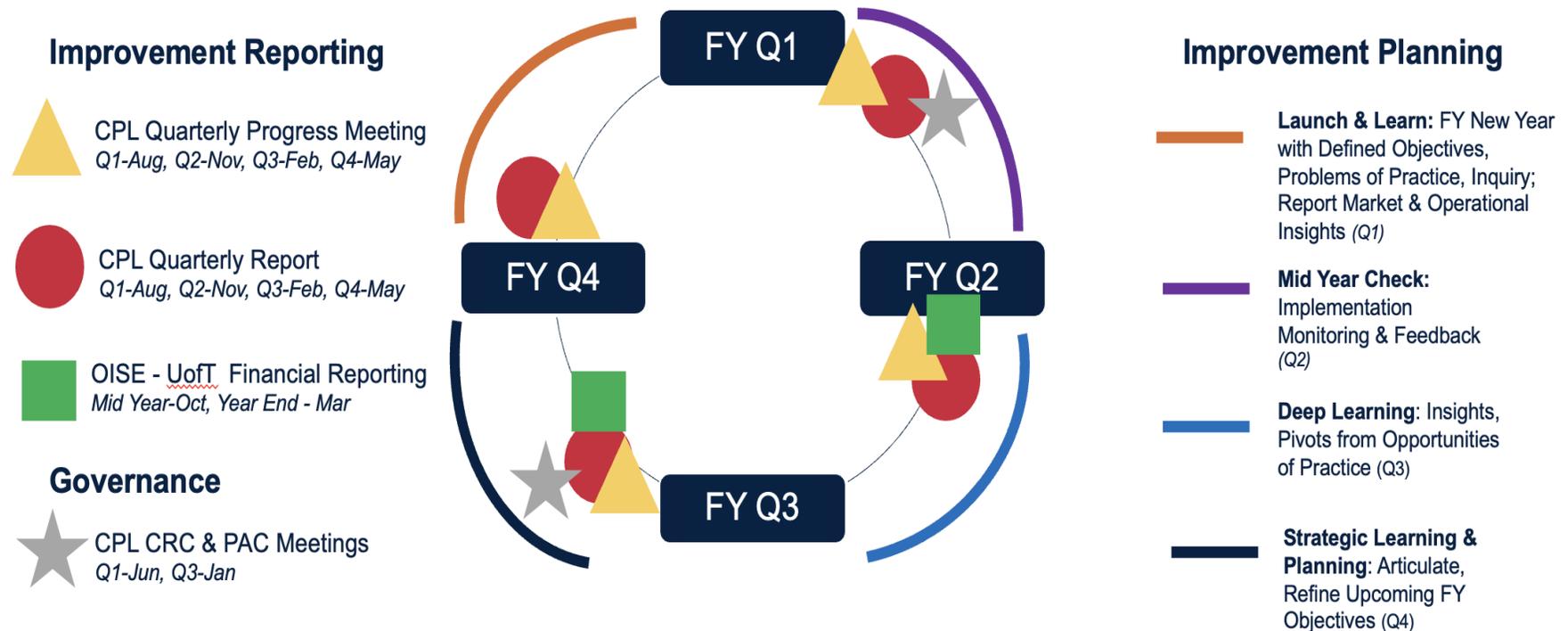
We develop and deliver evidence-informed professional and organizational learning programs, co-construct innovation and implementation initiatives, and collaborate with education stakeholders to build skills, strengthen competencies, and catalyze improvement in education.



Our Innovation Mobilization Framework is informed and enabled by three core components

Component 3

Clear Planning & Reporting Cycle

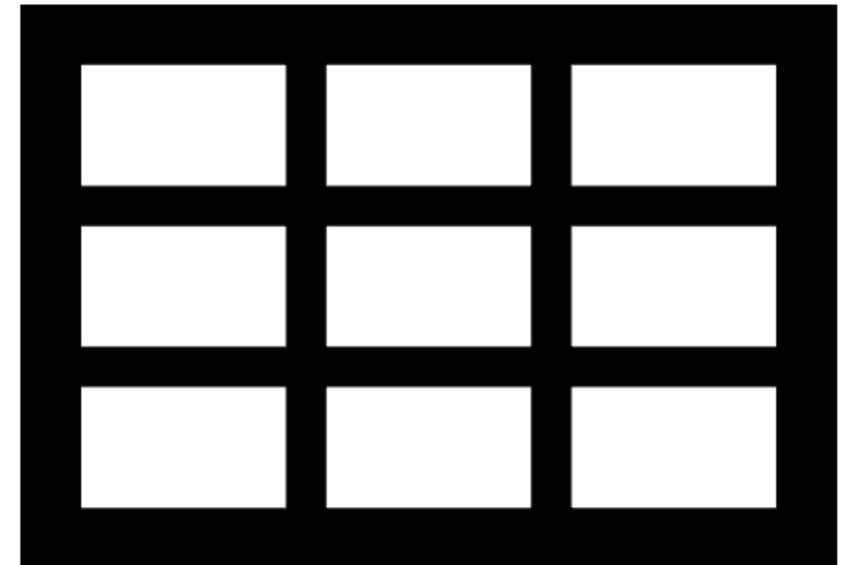


| Quarter | Focus | Phase 1 Explore & Qualify | Phase 2 Pilot & Iterate | Phase 3 Implement & Sustain |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Q1 May–July | Launch & Learn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface new ideas, write vision briefs, qualify leads. Conduct field scans, partner meetings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build pilot designs, frame testable ideas. Prepare draft schedules and trial concepts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver priority offerings. Gather early performance data. Launch flagship courses & services. |
| Q2 Aug–Oct | Mid-Year Check | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop or refine non-qualified ideas. Where feasible, move concepts to Phase 2 and/or pause, refocus. Develop next FY exploration plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run pilots and track client/learner experience. Refine models and delivery flow. Deliver next FY pilot plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate fidelity and impact of Q1 delivery; identify administrative adjustments for Q2. Deliver next FY implementation plan. |
| Q3 Nov–Jan | Deep Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassess partner strategy and gaps in market/partner interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep analysis of pilot feedback. Decide which iterative products and services move to scheduled implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin marketing prep. Optimize for Winter/Spring delivery. |
| Q4 Feb–Apr | Strategic Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify emerging trends and opportunities. Seed ideas for next fiscal year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document pilot outcomes. End-of-year debriefs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver final services. Complete evaluations. Align FY improvements with next FY planning. |



To "see the whole" and connect each activity to our strategy, we track, discuss, review through three coordinated workbooks

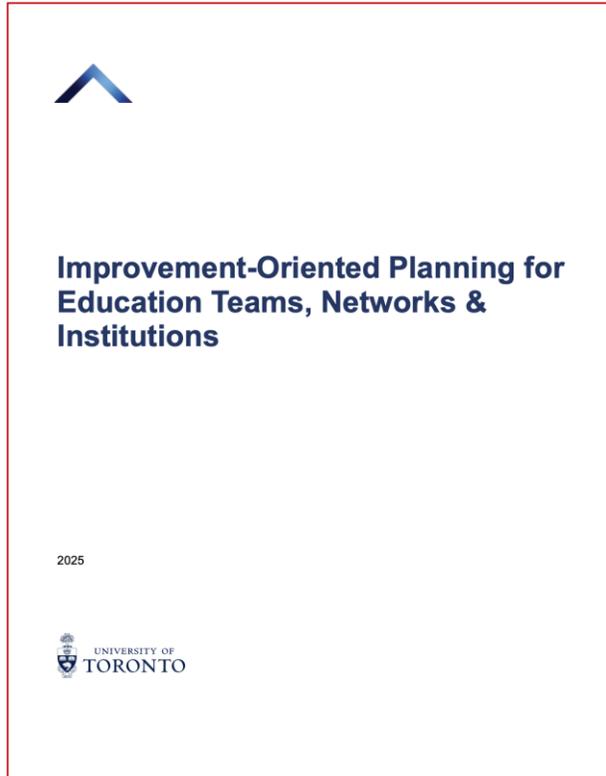
- 1. Workbook 1: Qualify & Explore**– Tracks ideas, briefs, potential partners, and innovation opportunities
- 2. Workbook 2: Pilots & Iteration** – Lists in-development offerings, their delivery plans, pilots, and iterations
- 3. Workbook 3A–C: Implement & Sustain**– Schedules for Open Enrolment (3A), Closed Enrolment (3B), Custom Services (3C)



Our framework enables space and tools that assist in navigating common University tensions while achieving on mandate

| Tension | Improvement |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Research Faculty Engagement & Time | <p>Explore & Qualify creates tangible space to engage, set expectations</p> <p>Design Labs enable connection</p> |
| Risk Aversion | <p>Pilot & Iterate pathways communicate the goal is imperfection</p> |
| Siloed Operations | <p>All teams/colleagues' expertise orient to the goods & services in the spirit of innovation thereby reducing silos</p> |
| Policy-Product Gaps | <p>Improved translation of Uni policy to CE operations</p> |

References & Tools to Share



Mentimeter question: *What's the biggest barrier to innovation?*

3 Things to Carry Forward

Key Takeaways



Innovation is relevance



Collaboration must be designed



Operational excellence enables learning

Transformation is not a project;
it's a system shift—and CE is central
to that transformation.

Mentimeter question: *What structural change will you explore? (open-ended)*

Thank You!

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