

Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:

Next steps for AI in higher education in the UK

Timing: Morning, Friday, 11th December 2026

Taking place online

Draft agenda subject to change



- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **AI in higher education - emerging practice and considerations for quality and standards**
Ciaran Donaghy, Lead Policy Officer, Devolved Nations, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Rebecca Robinson, Data Analyst, Higher Education Insight, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Next steps for AI use in teaching, learning and assessment - practice, integrity and the student experience**
pedagogical applications of AI, including feedback, tutoring and personalised learning | accessibility, inclusion and equality of opportunity | implications for disabled and neurodivergent students | assessment redesign and evaluating AI capability | academic standards, qualification credibility and confidence in awards | acceptable use and disclosure | limitations of AI detection and proportionate, evidence-based approaches to preserving integrity | consistency of institutional policies and practice | student involvement in developing institutional approaches
Robin Gibson, Director, External Affairs, Kortext
Professor Ruth Valentine, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education, Newcastle University
Senior representative, students
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.15 **Developing institutional capability for AI across higher education**
Sarah Knight, Director, Digital Transformation in Higher Education, Jisc
- 10.25 **Approaches to institution-wide adoption, governance and capability**
progressing from experimentation | institutional implementation planning | accountability and human oversight | regulatory options, guidance and respective roles of regulators, sector bodies and institutions | supporting innovation and opportunity while mitigating risk | staff confidence, capability, readiness and professional development | implications for workload, professional autonomy and organisational capacity | procurement, assurance and accountability for AI systems | auditability, supplier oversight and technological dependency | data protection and safeguarding, and cybersecurity | challenge and redress in relation to AI-supported decisions and processes
Professor Dirk Schaefer, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Head of College, and University AI Strategy Lead, University of Leicester
Senior representative, workforce
Senior commentator
- 10.40 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.05 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.10 Break
- 11.20 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.25 **Assessing the impact of AI on students and expectations of higher education providers**
Kathryn Harrison-Graves, Deputy Chief Executive, Advance HE
- 11.35 **Supporting responsible student use, AI literacy and graduate employability**
AI literacy in practice | responsible and effective student use | balancing AI capability with subject knowledge and independent judgement | graduate outcomes in an AI-enabled labour market, including changes in entry-level recruitment | employer expectations and future workforce requirements | applied learning, placements and industry engagement | TechFirst, TechLocal and related programmes | developing staff and student capability
Dr Leyanda Purchase, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education, The University of Law
Senior representative, employer
Senior representative, students
Senior representative, AI
- 11.55 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.20 **Developing AI research, innovation and capability**
priorities in UKRI's AI Research and Innovation Strategic Framework and AI for Science Strategy | funding priorities and responsible AI-enabled research | data, compute and expertise | access for institutions of different sizes and types | research data security and IP | collaboration with industry and public bodies | commercialisation, innovation and knowledge exchange | links with emerging AI Growth Zones and regional development | AI skills and talent pipelines | cost and sustainability, including infrastructure and energy requirements
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, research
Senior representative, combined authority
Senior representative, industry
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.00 **Policy priorities for AI in higher education - emerging evidence and next steps**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.25 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum