

LearnWise

The Higher Education AI Readiness & Implementation Guide

LearnWise Guide



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Assess your AI readiness. Build your implementation plan.

Reading the Room: Institutional Sentiment & Strategy

Most universities have started exploring AI. Far fewer have a plan that actually works. This framework helps you assess where your institution stands today - and gives you a clear, actionable path to implement AI responsibly across teaching, operations, and student support.

This AI Readiness Diagnostic walks you through five AI readiness pillars:

- Governance & Policy
- Data & Infrastructure
- Faculty & Staff Enablement
- Student AI Literacy
- Ethics, Equity & Compliance

We know the three biggest challenges to scaling AI across institutions are:

- Lack of alignment between leadership vision and operational execution
- Inconsistent procurement and implementation strategies
- Insufficient infrastructure to support institution-wide deployment

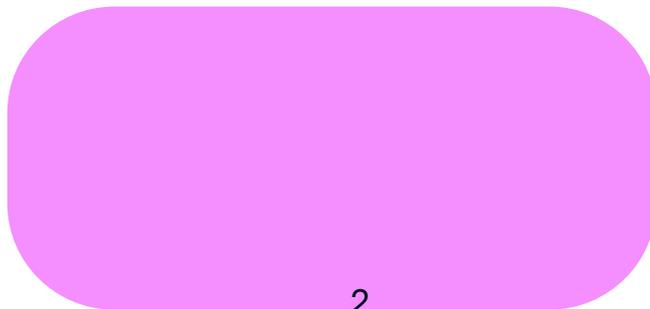
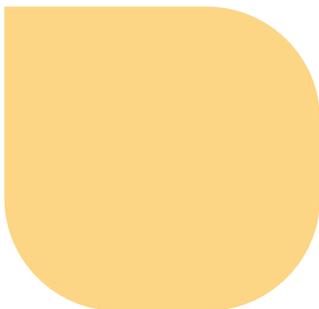


To address these challenges, institutions must move from AI experimentation to orchestration. Successful implementations start with a shared strategy: a vision co-owned by academic affairs, IT leadership, teaching and learning centers, and student support teams. The AI Readiness Diagnostic will explore each pillar, along with key considerations, to assess your institutional readiness and build an adoption plan.

Assess your AI readiness. Build your implementation plan.

AI readiness in education is not about choosing a vendor - it is about making AI policy and enabling an institutional plan, rather than a fragmented initiative.

- **89% of HE leaders say AI is a strategic priority** - but fewer than 1 in 3 have a formal implementation plan in place. EDUCAUSE Landscape Study 2024
- **The five pillars** governance, infrastructure, faculty enablement, student literacy, and compliance, must be assessed and actioned together for success.
- **Regional considerations: U.S. - U.K. - EU** implementation guidance is mapped to the U.S. Dept. of Education, Jisc, QAA, and the EU AI Act.



The Framework: Readiness and implementation aren't two separate projects.

The institutions that succeed with AI don't treat readiness as a prerequisite and implementation as a future phase. They run them in parallel - diagnosing gaps while building the governance, infrastructure, and capability to close them. LearnWise AI's 5-pillar framework is designed to do exactly that: give you a clear picture of where you are today, and a structured path to where you need to be.

Pillar 1: Governance & Policy

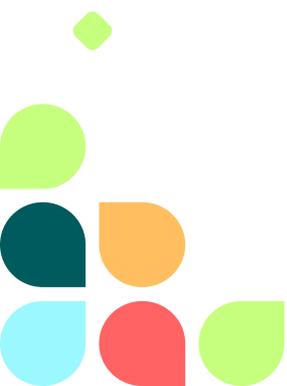
AI governance is the foundation everything else is built on. Without it, institutions end up with inconsistent practice across departments, compliance exposure, and an erosion of community trust. This pillar covers how you set the rules for AI use, and how you make them stick as the technology evolves.

Key Considerations

- Does your institution have a formal AI use policy covering staff, students, and third-party vendors?
- Is there a named owner or committee with real authority over AI governance decisions?
- Are your policies reviewed on a regular cycle - not just updated reactively?

Implementation Actions

- Establish a cross-functional AI governance committee (IT, legal, academic leadership, student voice)
- Develop a tiered policy structure: institution-wide principles → departmental guidance → course-level rules
- Build a vendor approval process that all AI tool procurement must pass through
- Set a 6-month policy review cadence from day one — AI moves faster than annual cycles



How LearnWise AI helps

LearnWise AI ships with configurable content guardrails, full usage logging, and role-based access controls - so your governance policy has technical enforcement built in, not bolted on. Our customer success team helps you define the right configuration for your institution before you go live.

External Resources

- [EDUCAUSE AI Governance Toolkit](#)
- [QAA: Using AI Tools in Education](#)
- [U.S. Dept. of Education AI Report 2023](#)

Pillar 2: Data & Infrastructure

AI is only as trustworthy as the infrastructure it runs on. Before you deploy at scale, you need confidence that your data environment - storage, access controls, LMS integrations, and hosting - can support responsible AI without introducing new risk vectors.

Key Considerations

- Do you know where student and staff data lives and who can access it?
- Are your AI tools compliant with FERPA, GDPR, or the UK Data Protection Act as applicable?
- Have you completed or requested a HECVAT for each AI vendor in your stack?

Implementation Actions

- Conduct a data mapping exercise before any new AI tool enters procurement
- Require all AI vendors to complete a HECVAT and document their sub-processors
- Define data residency requirements — and verify vendors can meet them — before contracts are signed
- Build a quarterly data audit process to catch scope creep as AI tools expand across departments

How LearnWise AI helps

LearnWise AI is SOC 2 Type II certified and ISO 27001 aligned. We're FERPA and GDPR compliant, support regional data hosting in the U.S., UK, and EU, and provide a pre-completed HECVAT on request. We never train our models on your institutional data — and that's contractually guaranteed, not just a privacy policy clause.

External Resources

- [Jisc: AI in Higher Education — Infrastructure Guidance](#)
- [EDUCAUSE HECVAT Resources](#)
- [EU AI Act — Obligations for High-Risk AI Systems](#)





External Resources

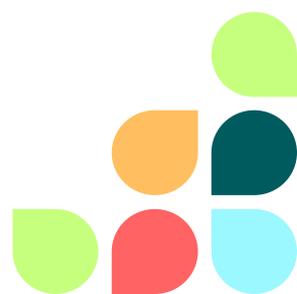
- [Advance HE: AI in Teaching and Learning](#)
- [EDUCAUSE: Building AI Fluency in Faculty](#)
- [Alan Turing Institute: AI Education Resources](#)

Pillar 4: Student AI Literacy

Students are already using AI - in their coursework, job applications, and daily lives. The question isn't whether to address it. It's whether your institution is equipping them to use it responsibly and critically, rather than leaving that gap for them to fill on their own.

Key Considerations

- Do students receive structured guidance on responsible AI use as part of their induction?
- Are your academic integrity policies updated to reflect generative AI, and do students actually know what they say?
- Are you actively preparing graduates for AI-native workplaces, not just managing misuse?





Implementation Actions

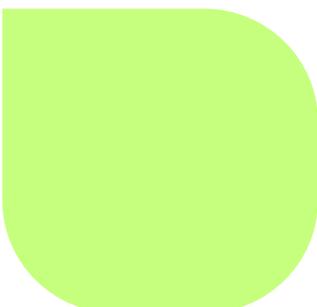
- Embed a short AI literacy module into first-year induction: what AI is, what it isn't, and how it applies to their program.
- Update academic integrity policies and require acknowledgement at enrollment and again at assessed submission
- Work with programme leaders to define course-level AI use permissions: clarity for students reduces violations
- Partner with careers services to develop graduate AI competency frameworks tied to industry expectations

How LearnWise AI helps

LearnWise AI's student-facing tools include built-in transparency features — students see when they're interacting with AI and what it's drawing on. Educators can set course-level AI permissions directly in the platform, giving you institution-wide consistency without losing flexibility at the course level. [See how we support students.](#)

External Resources

- [UNESCO: AI Competency Framework for Students](#)
- [QAA: Academic Integrity and AI](#)
- [ACE: AI and Academic Integrity](#)



Pillar 5: Ethics, Equity & Compliance

Compliance is the floor, not the ceiling. Responsible AI implementation means going beyond regulatory obligations to ensure your tools don't disadvantage underserved students, introduce opaque decision-making, or erode the human relationships that define higher education.

Key Considerations

- Have you assessed your AI tools for potential bias or disparate impact across student subgroups?
- Do your AI tools meet accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 AA or equivalent)?
- Are you monitoring compliance with the EU AI Act, UK GDPR, or FERPA on an ongoing basis, not just at procurement?

Implementation Actions

- Require bias impact assessments as part of AI vendor evaluation; annually, not just at selection
- Include students with disabilities in AI tool pilots, with explicit accessibility criteria in your evaluation rubric
- Appoint a responsible AI lead who owns ethics review, incident response, and regulatory monitoring
- Document your human oversight mechanisms before any high-stakes use case goes live: who can review, override, or escalate AI-driven decisions



How LearnWise AI Helps

LearnWise AI is designed for human oversight by default. Our platform provides full audit logs, administrator override controls at every level, and transparent AI reasoning where applicable. We actively monitor EU AI Act alignment as the regulatory environment evolves, so your implementation stays compliant without you having to track every legislative update.

External Resources

- [EDPB: Guidelines on AI and Data Protection](#)
- [Office for Students: Equality of Opportunity](#)
- [UNESCO Recommendation on AI Ethics](#)

Interactive Assessment: Our free interactive tool

Where does your institution stand today?

Answer 15 questions across the 5 pillars and get an instant readiness score — broken down by pillar, so you know exactly where to focus your implementation effort first. We'll email you a personalised report with prioritised recommendations based on your results.

Your results are private. We'll email your personalized report and never share your data without your consent.

Access it here.



How LearnWise AI Implements with you

Implementation isn't a handover. It's a partnership.

Most AI vendors sell you a platform and step back. We stay in. Every LearnWise AI deployment is supported by a structured implementation program - from your first pilot to full institution-wide rollout - with dedicated resources at every stage.

Start with a focused pilot, not a big bang.

The institutions that scale AI fastest start small and intentional. We work with you to identify the 1–2 use cases that will deliver the clearest early results for your context, whether that's reducing Tier-1 support load, improving LMS adoption, or enabling 24/7 student support across a single faculty. We build the pilot around measurable KPIs from day one so you have evidence to expand with.

Institutions piloting with LearnWise AI see an average 47% reduction in Tier-1 support tickets within the first 90 days.

Connect to your existing stack without IT headaches.

LearnWise integrates natively with Canvas, Blackboard, Moodle, Brightspace, and 400+ EdTech tools. Our integration team manages the technical setup. Your IT team doesn't need to build anything - they just need to approve the connection. Data flows through your existing infrastructure, not around it.

[See all integrations.](#)

Measure what matters from day one.

AI implementation is only successful if you can demonstrate it. LearnWise AI's Insights dashboard gives administrators real-time visibility into resolution rates, escalation trends, student engagement patterns, and query volume by department, so you can show your leadership team the impact in their language, not ours.

[Explore Insights](#)



Scale with confidence, not risk.

Scaling AI across an institution introduces new governance, compliance, and change management challenges. Our customer success team works with you to update governance frameworks as scope expands, manage stakeholder communication across departments, and ensure your compliance posture stays current as regulations evolve. You're never scaling blind.

Tools and resources for every stage of your AI journey

The Higher Education AI Readiness & Implementation Guide

- A practical, 40-page guide covering all 5 pillars, real-world implementation examples from global universities, and a customizable action plan template your working group can use immediately.

[Get the Guide](#)

AI Assessment Checklist

- A two-page checklist covering readiness and implementation milestones for each pillar, built to share with your governance committee or senior leadership team.

[Get the checklist](#)



Regional Compliance Snapshot

Navigating regional AI compliance

The compliance landscape for AI in higher education differs significantly by region. Here's what your institution needs to have in place - and how LearnWise AI helps you meet it.

United States

- Key frameworks: FERPA • U.S. Dept. of Education AI Report • EDUCAUSE
- What's required: AI vendors must meet FERPA's student data protection standards. Institutions should document AI use policies aligned with the 2023 DoE guidance. HECVAT completion is increasingly required by institutional procurement.
- LearnWise: FERPA-compliant • HECVAT available on request • U.S. data hosting

United Kingdom

- Key frameworks: UK GDPR • QAA • Jisc • Office for Students
- What's required: A DPIA is required before deploying new AI tools. AI use must align with QAA expectations on academic integrity. Institutions must demonstrate transparency to students on how AI is used in their education.
- LearnWise: UK GDPR-compliant • UK data hosting • Jisc framework-aligned

European Union

- Key frameworks: EU AI Act • GDPR • EDPB AI Guidelines
- What's required: AI systems in education may be classified as high-risk under the EU AI Act, requiring conformity assessments, transparency obligations, and human oversight. GDPR requires lawful basis for all data processing.
- LearnWise: EU AI Act-aligned • GDPR-compliant • EU data hosting • Audit logs and human oversight built in

Frequently Asked Questions

What is AI readiness in higher education?

AI readiness is an institution's capacity to deploy AI tools responsibly, effectively, and sustainably across teaching, operations, and student support. It covers governance, infrastructure, people, compliance, and ethics, not just whether you have a tool license.

What's the difference between AI readiness and AI implementation?

Readiness is your starting point — the conditions, capabilities, and governance you need before you deploy. Implementation is the active process of deploying, embedding, and scaling AI across your institution. The most successful institutions work on both simultaneously, not sequentially.

Where do most universities struggle with AI implementation?

The most common failures come from governance gaps (no clear policy before tools go live), faculty resistance (staff who weren't consulted or trained), and compliance uncertainty (deploying before FERPA or GDPR obligations are understood). Our framework addresses all three before they become problems.

How long does AI implementation take in a higher education institution?

Pilot implementations can go live in 6–8 weeks. Institution-wide rollouts typically take 6–18 months depending on size, existing infrastructure, and governance maturity. Your assessment results will include a realistic estimate for your specific context.

Is LearnWise AI compliant with FERPA, GDPR, and the EU AI Act?

Yes. LearnWise AI is FERPA-compliant and GDPR-compliant, with regional data hosting in the U.S., UK, and EU. We are SOC 2 Type II certified and ISO 27001 aligned. We actively monitor EU AI Act requirements and maintain human oversight mechanisms by design. A completed HECVAT is available on request.



Do you support institutions that are just starting their AI journey?

Absolutely. Institutions that engage a structured implementation partner early move faster and avoid the expensive mistakes that come from ad hoc adoption. Our assessment shows you where to start, and our implementation team works with you from there. [Book a demo](#) to see what that looks like in practice.



Whether you're starting, or ready to scale.

Take the assessment to get your personalized readiness score and implementation report, or book a demo to see how LearnWise AI supports the full journey, from first pilot to institution-wide deployment.

[Book a demo](#)