INTRODUCING OUR NEW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) STRATEGY & VISION TO 2030

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HRUC have developed this AI strategy to complement and align with both the technology strategy and the wider organisational strategy. Recognising the increasing use of AI across the College group, this comprehensive strategy defines HRUC's approach and provides clear guidance for the future integration of AI.

AI has made remarkable advancements in recent years, transitioning from a niche technology into a mainstream tool with a diverse array of applications. The functionality of AI in software tools has grown exponentially, enabling smarter, more efficient systems across various sectors, with education being one of the most transformative industries.

From lesson planning and personalised learning experiences to marketing and student recruitment, AI is influencing the educational landscape at all levels. Its impact reaches beyond students, influencing teachers, academics and professional services staff by streamlining administrative tasks, improving efficiencies, enhancing teaching and pedagogy, and improving outcomes. When implemented responsibly, effectively, and with the proper infrastructure and governance, AI can support with ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity to excel academically and develop the skills necessary for success in life.

Our AI strategy is designed to support the entire College group, ensuring that AI is leveraged across all departments, not just within IT, to enhance and achieve our strategic objectives and core drivers. Acknowledging that enthusiasm for AI varies among individuals, we are committed to promoting its responsible use, while safeguarding ethics, upholding academic integrity and integrating sustainability considerations. The strategy outlines a long-term roadmap that demonstrates how AI will play a crucial role in realising our strategic goals, including positioning HRUC as a leader in innovation and the preferred choice for both students and staff. By integrating AI appropriately, we aim to foster an environment where technology drives progress, encourages collaboration, and enriches the experiences of everyone within the organisation.

OUR VISION

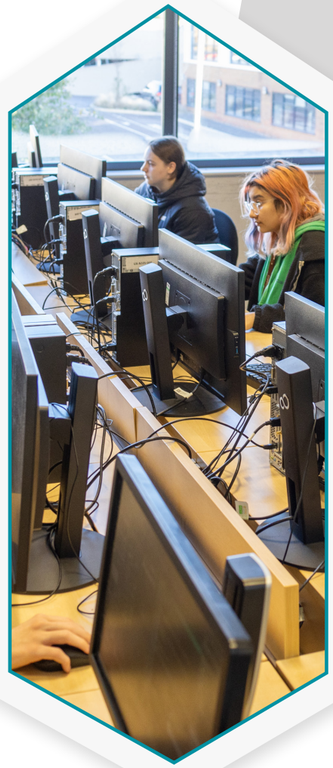
To be an outstanding College group that inspires, transforms lives, and creates futures, we will harness the power of Artificial Intelligence to enhance teaching and learning experiences, improve operational efficiencies, and foster innovation.

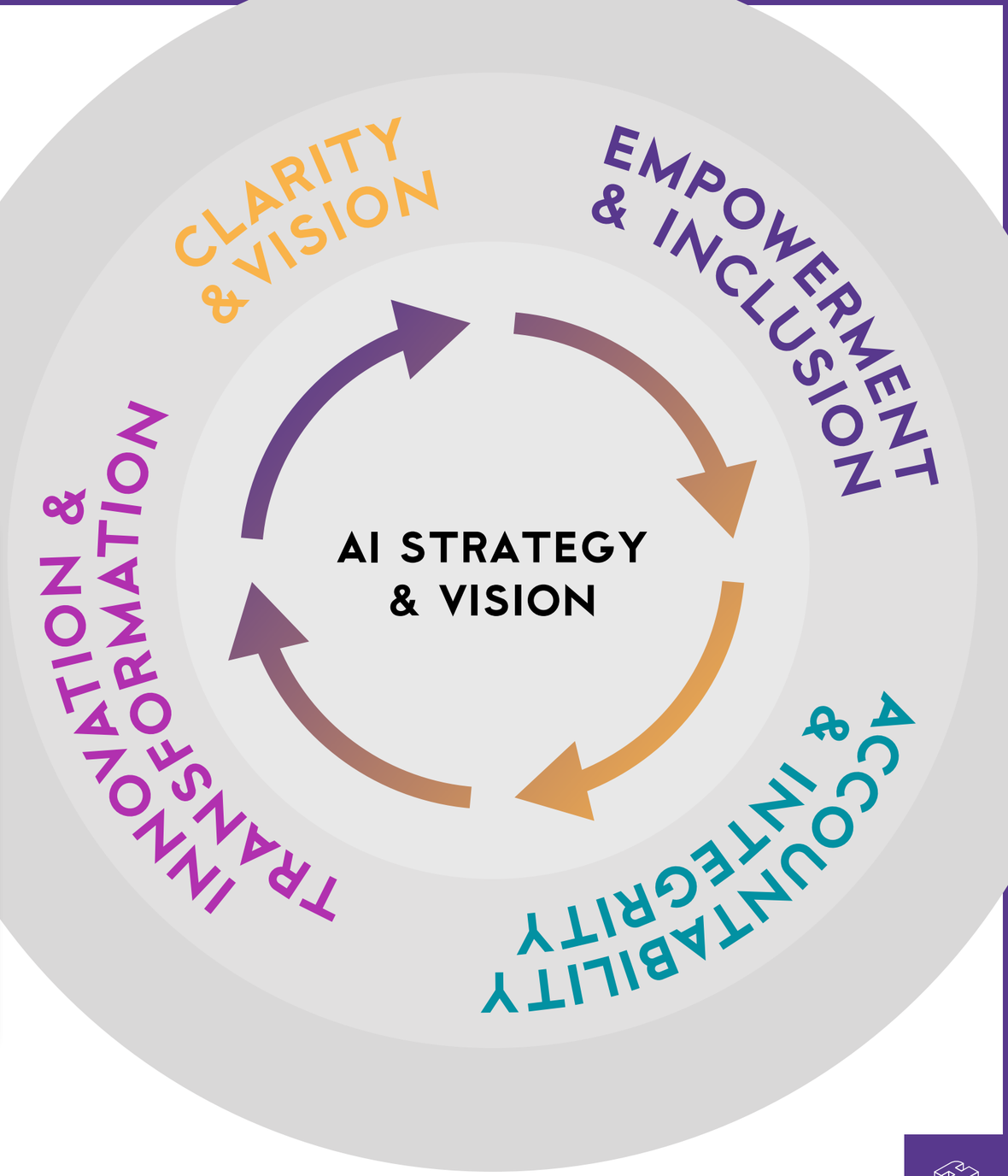
OUR MISSION

To create an exceptional student and staff experience, through AI-driven solutions, empowering our community to thrive in an ever-evolving, technology-driven world.

OUR PRINCIPLES

To enable the successful implementation of the AI strategy, we have established a set of guiding principles. These key principles are central to achieving our strategic objectives and are woven into every aspect of our approach, priorities, and initiatives. They underpin our AI governance framework and ensure responsible usage across all teaching, learning and operational activities.





OUR PRINCIPLES

CLARITY & VISION

- We are committed to ensuring transparency in student usage of AI by implementing clear AI acceptable use policies. Staff and students will receive mandatory training on AI ethics and responsible use. These policies and training initiatives will be integrated into both teaching practices and the curriculum to foster active participation and understanding.
- To ensure consistency and safeguard data privacy and cybersecurity, we will establish and openly communicate a standardised process for accessing new AI technologies. This approach will include thorough due diligence to address potential risks and promote responsible adoption.
- We will guide and support investments in AI systems that provide transparent, comprehensible explanations of their outputs, especially in decision-making processes that impact the student and staff experience.

EMPOWERMENT & INCLUSION

- We will upskill staff by providing them with the necessary tools and training opportunities to enhance the skills of those already using AI, while supporting and guiding those who are new to AI usage and adoption.
- We will support students to appropriately use AI, ensuring they are equipped with the technical skills needed for the future workforce. We will also bridge the student AI skills gap by providing targeted support for students with varying levels of proficiency, and ensure that AI is a core part of their career preparation.
- We will ensure where appropriate inclusive access to AI to benefit all students and staff equally, considering diverse needs and abilities, including tailored measures to support students with special educational needs.
- We will promote a balanced approach between the use of AI tools when appropriate and traditional pedagogy to support student development. This includes nurturing essential skills, such as critical thinking, that may be diminished by excessive reliance on AI. Within formative assessments, we will uphold equity by ensuring that the marking policy fairly recognises the efforts of both students who choose to use AI tools and those who do not.

ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY

- We will only implement AI technologies that have undergone rigorous testing and a thorough procurement process, ensuring full compliance with our existing policies, legal frameworks, data protection regulations, and privacy standards.
- We will ensure that both staff and students are well-informed about secure, safe and ethical AI usage. They will be equipped with best practices to safeguard data and minimise cyber risks effectively.
- We will prioritise e-safety and implement robust measures to detect, prevent, and address AI misuse, ensuring the well-being and safety of our staff and students.
- We will ensure that sustainability is a key consideration in the implementation of AI solutions, prioritising approaches that support our goals of reducing our carbon footprint and achieving net zero by 2030.
- We will uphold academic integrity and reduce the risk of plagiarism associated with AI by ensuring students adhere to ethical standards and submit work that appropriately utilises AI and is correctly referenced.

INNOVATION & TRANSFORMATION

- We will harness AI not just to enhance existing processes, but to reimagine how education is delivered, accessed, and experienced.
- We will prioritise the student and staff experience at the heart of our AI adoption journey.
- We will be innovative and forward-thinking in our AI initiatives, ensuring we remain at the forefront of technology and position HRUC as the top choice for students and staff.

AI USE CASES AT HRUC

The education sector offers a vast array of AI applications, spanning both teaching and operational functions. To ensure that we uphold ethical and responsible use of AI, we will adopt a strategic approach to prioritising future AI initiatives. This approach will enable us to identify and concentrate on the most impactful and feasible AI applications.

ALIGNMENT

- Does this use case align with our strategic priorities, core drivers and principles?

FEASIBILITY

- Is our data ready and available to support this AI initiative?
- Can we realistically implement this with our current resources and infrastructure, including access to the necessary expertise?
- Is this use-case scalable beyond an initial pilot?
- How quickly and easily will users adopt this use case?

IMPACT AND VALUE

- What measurable value will this create for students, staff and the College group?
- How quickly will we see results and return on investment?
- How will this use case differentiate us as education provider and for future opportunities?

ETHICS

- Does this use case meet our ethical and regulatory standards including upholding academic integrity?
- Will this use case have any implications for the staff and student experience?
- Does this use case impact our progression towards our sustainability goals?

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Does this use case pose any risks for HRUC?

AI USE CASES AT HRUC

In addition to utilising a prioritisation matrix for future AI use cases, HRUC will evaluate each use case against a feasibility-value quadrant. This approach will help us identify quick-win opportunities, plan for future implementations, and determine which use cases should not be prioritised. By systematically assessing the feasibility and value of each potential AI application, we can ensure that our efforts are focused on initiatives that offer the greatest impact and align with our strategic goals.

AI USE CASES AT HRUC

The use cases provided here are a product of engagement with a significant number of students, staff and parents/guardians across workshops and surveys in 2025. As new technologies emerge these use cases will be deployed and re-prioritised according to the needs of HRUC. The use cases we have identified include:

QUICK WINS

Automating enrolment processes to replace manual processes, such as more efficient application processing and ID document verification.

Lesson planning and content design to quickly generate engaging lesson ideas and interactive sessions.

Further automation of routine non-teaching tasks including AI productivity tools, human error reduction and use of Generative AI for content creation.

AI and VR tools and gamification to enhance the student learning experience, for example tools that promote creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration.

MEDIUM TERM

AI-powered virtual assistant to provide feedback to learners.

Website chatbots for student enquiries, enabling students to quickly resolve issues and receive initial support before needing to speak with a member of staff.

Student recruitment including automated personalised marketing and intelligent targeting and outreach.

AI-powered personalised learning, tailored to meet the unique needs of each student, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

FUTURE PLANS

Learner analytics to identify students at risk of falling behind their studies, enabling timely interventions, relevant pastoral care and personalised academic support.

AI Automated learner intervention model, to contact students not engaging with or completing their studies.

AI powered smart campuses to optimise resource utilisation including monitoring energy consumption, automating maintenance schedules, and enhancing space utilisation based on real-time data and predictive analytics.

AI to support decision-making processes include student number forecasting and deciding future investment opportunities.

The development team and the AI Oversight Committee (see Governance and Change Management section) will be actively collaborating with our partners to identify and implement quick wins over the next 6 to 12 months. This initiative will follow the due diligence procurement criteria outlined later in this strategy, ensuring that all actions are thoroughly vetted and aligned with our strategic goals.

DATA FOUNDATIONS TO ENABLE AI

HRUC is aware of the exciting opportunities afforded by AI adoption, however we will also focus on foundational activities which will allow staff and students to get the most out of AI tools and improve their overall College experience. Establishing the data building blocks will allow for future enhancements and open up further opportunities to use AI in innovative ways.

DATA PRINCIPLES:

We will work on a data specific strategy, aligned with the AI strategy and feeding into the Technology and overall College Group strategies. The data strategy will look at systems, processes and culture to bring together a plan to treat data as an asset and use it to make informed decisions.

We will mature our approach to data architecture, assessing and documenting the current systems and data flows in order to enhance them in future. By modelling the 'as is' situation, we can identify where there are gaps which may prohibit a joined up approach to data and AI.

As part of the data strategy, we will identify data stewards throughout HRUC who will have responsibility for the data within their area. The data stewards will work with the AI data stewards within the IT team to identify data quality issues and put in place processes for resolving those issues, so that data is of a sufficient quality to support AI and analytics use cases.

We will begin to feed data from our core systems into a centralised data repository such as a data warehouse. While work has already begun on bringing data together in this way into a data mart, we will continue this work to ensure that the data we collect is available to those who need it and it can be modelled for analysis in a safe and consistent manner. This should enable us to monitor aspects like student engagement and retention, ultimately progressing towards predictive analytics.

We will review current reporting mechanisms and put in place a plan via the data strategy to enhance centralised reporting. This will ensure that core reporting is standardised and will help identify opportunities for using AI to streamline reporting processes.

We will review integrations as part of the data strategy. We recognise that there are areas where data flows could be improved using automation and integration techniques, these will be prioritised for improvement going forward. These improvements will lead to increased accessibility of information and should remove the need for manual data input and/or duplication of effort, enabling staff to spend more time making data informed decisions and driving positive outcomes.

In light of the above commitments, we will also review in-house skills and capabilities to ensure that our teams are fully trained and partners identified where appropriate to deliver the improvements we have identified.

ENSURING CYBER RESILIENCE IN AI USE AT HRUC

Information security is essential to ensuring that AI technologies are used safely, ethically, and responsibly across HRUC. As AI tools become increasingly integrated into the College group's operational, teaching, and academic functions, it is essential to proactively address potential risks to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information and data.

Information security and cyber resilience will be integrated throughout the AI lifecycle, from initial acquisition to deployment and eventual retirement. HRUC will protect its digital infrastructure from evolving AI threats, and foster a culture where security and ethical awareness are part of the everyday.

OUR APPROACH TO AI

IT shall ensure AI tools are deployed within secure environments, with access controls, usage logging, and encryption where applicable. Security audits will be conducted to assess compliance and manage risk across the AI lifecycle.

We will develop secure processes for the approval, deployment, and monitoring of AI tools. This includes reviewing vendor security credentials, applying data classification policies, and ensuring that sensitive information is not shared with AI systems without appropriate controls in place.

We will build awareness and skills among staff and students to support responsible use of AI. Training will cover risks such as data leakage, misinformation, and bias, helping to embed a security-aware culture around AI usage.

We will ensure that AI systems are considered within incident response and business continuity planning. This will support a rapid and coordinated response if AI tools are misused, compromised, or cause unexpected outcomes

ENSURING CYBER RESILIENCE IN AI USE AT HRUC

Safe, ethical and responsible AI will also form part of our comprehensive information security programme, including the development of an Information Security Strategy. This strategy will also specifically address AI-related risks, including data protection, system vulnerabilities, and ethical use of AI technologies.

Our broader approach to information security and cyber resilience is further explained right:

We will assess our current information security posture by reviewing policies, controls, and risk management practices across the College; this will be against an agreed Security Framework such as ISO27001 or NCAC 10 Steps. This will include mapping existing security measures, identifying areas of vulnerability, and setting out a roadmap for maturing our cyber resilience through targeted improvements.

Through our findings, we will develop a dedicated information security strategy that aligns with the broader AI, data, technology, and College Group strategies. This strategy will set out a clear direction for safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our information assets, supporting a culture of shared responsibility for security across the organisation.

We will review the security of our infrastructure, networks, and systems to ensure that appropriate technical controls are in place (i.e. multi-factor authentication, endpoint protection, encryption, and secure configuration). Particular attention will be paid to safeguarding systems that store or transmit sensitive or personal data.

We will foster a 'Security First' culture where staff and students understand their shared responsibility in protecting college data and systems. We will work to raise awareness of information security through targeted training, regular communications and a robust policy suite.

AI AND SUSTAINABILITY

In alignment with HRUC's commitment to sustainability, the AI strategy also integrates principles of environmental responsibility and sustainable practices. We recognise the importance of reducing our carbon footprint when procuring AI solutions and promoting eco-friendly initiatives across the College group. This includes leveraging AI to optimise energy consumption, reduce waste, and support sustainable resource management. Our strategy also focuses on streamlining operations by implementing AI technologies that reduce inefficiencies and improve productivity.

By embedding sustainability considerations into our AI strategy, we aim to make a meaningful contribution to the future of our College.

GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

This strategy has been collaboratively designed with input from staff and students across HRUC. Following on from this engagement, HRUC acknowledges the varying levels of enthusiasm for AI and the diverse digital proficiencies among its staff and student groups. We recognise that AI can be exciting and innovative, exemplified by concepts like learning simulations and predictive analytics, and we also understand that many have valid concerns.

Therefore, strong governance is required to ensure responsible and ethical AI integration. Building on from our Governance Structure within HRUC's Technology Strategy, here we share the overall governance structure for AI initiatives, how we're going to manage AI projects and new ideas, and how this strategy will align with other strategies to ensure alignment across HRUC.

It forms a crucial part of our roadmap to enable the safe and ethical adoption of AI, providing clear communication and guidance on a responsible AI framework and outlining the future vision of AI.

GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

THE AI OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (AIOC):

- A cross-functional group to include members from IT, Legal, Ethics, Teaching and Learning, and the student body.
- AIOC will guide the strategic use of AI across HRUC.
- AIOC will be responsible for approving AI tools and vendors before use.
- AIOC will oversee compliance with legal, ethical, and security standards.
- AIOC will own and annually review the AI acceptable use of policy.
- AIOC will own and annually review training programmes to ensure staff and students are equipped to use AI effectively and responsibly.
- AIOC will own and annually review the Application Catalogue.
- AIOC will conduct annual risk assessments to address new and emerging threats.

THE AI DATA STEWARDSHIP GROUP:

- They will be based within the IT team at HRUC.
- The team will oversee data governance, system integration, and compliance with technical standards.
- Where appropriate, responsibilities may be shared with other departments if needed.

GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

AI POLICIES:

As part of this AI Strategy, an updated AI policy will be in place, covering both staff and students. All staff and students will be expected to use AI tools responsibly and in line with the College group's policy framework. It will include:

- AI tools that may only be used for approved teaching, educational, or operational purposes that align with existing academic and security policies.
- Only college approved and supported tools, listed in an AI Application Catalogue, are permitted for college-related work.
- AI must not be used to process personal data, student records, or sensitive research without prior authorisation.
- Users must comply with GDPR - The AIOC will carry out annual reviews.
- Prohibited uses include plagiarism, bias or discriminatory outputs, and generating misleading content.
- AI-generated work must be clearly cited.
- All staff and students must complete training on secure and ethical AI use.

There will be a wider promotion and visibility of the updated policy including its integration into teaching and the curriculum.

AI APPLICATION CATALOGUE:

The AI Application Catalogue will serve as a central, easily accessible resource listing all college-approved and supported AI tools for use by staff and students.

All applications and tools included in the AI Application Catalogue will undergo a rigorous due diligence and procurement process prior to approval and inclusion. This checklist includes:

- ☑ Does the tool align with HRUC's strategic priorities and student and staff experience goals?
- ☑ Does the tool adhere to our existing procurement and data policies?
- ☑ Is there a clear educational or operational benefit for staff, students, or the wider College Group?
- ☑ Is the tool a good fit for the intended user group?
- ☑ Is the AI tool free from harm, bias, discrimination?
- ☑ Are risks of bias, misinformation, or over-reliance assessed and mitigated?
- ☑ Is the tool accessible to all users, including those with special educational needs and disabilities?
- ☑ Is the vendor reputable, with a track record in education or responsible AI?
- ☑ Is the vendor committed to net zero and where possible, promotes the use of green apprenticeships within their own business.
- ☑ Are there mechanisms in place for ongoing review, feedback, and performance monitoring?

GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management will also be a key part of HRUC's AI strategy, to enable a smooth transition to increased AI adoption. AI adoption requires leadership, comprehensive training and cultural change, and this strategy addresses the need for these components to drive success. We will prepare the College to effectively manage the change brought about by AI, through a structured approach.

AWARENESS

EXPLORATION

ADOPTION AND PROFICIENCY

INNOVATION

GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

AWARENESS

The first step in our change management approach is to continue to build awareness about AI and its potential benefits within HRUC. This involves educating staff and students about what AI is, existing AI tools within the College group, how it can be used, and its benefits. This phase also involves communicating and raising awareness and adherence to our AI policies, ensuring ethical and responsible use of AI. We will conduct workshops and lunch and learn sessions to ensure everyone understands the basics of AI and its relevance to the success of our College.

EXPLORATION

Once awareness is established, we will move to the exploration phase. Here, we will encourage staff and students to explore existing AI tools and technologies such as Otter and the Policybot in an ethical and responsible way. This phase involves practical training sessions, pilot projects for new tools, and collaborative discussions to identify potential future use cases for AI.

ADOPTION AND PROFICIENCY

In this phase, the goal is to achieve proficiency in using AI tools and technologies. We will enable staff to integrate AI solutions in their day-to-day role where relevant, to improve operational efficiencies and support the delivery of the learner experience. It also involves supporting students with easy adoption and access to appropriate AI tools whilst maintaining academic integrity and student safety. We will provide advanced training sessions, create a community of AI champions, and offer ongoing support to ensure that staff and students become proficient in leveraging AI.

INNOVATION

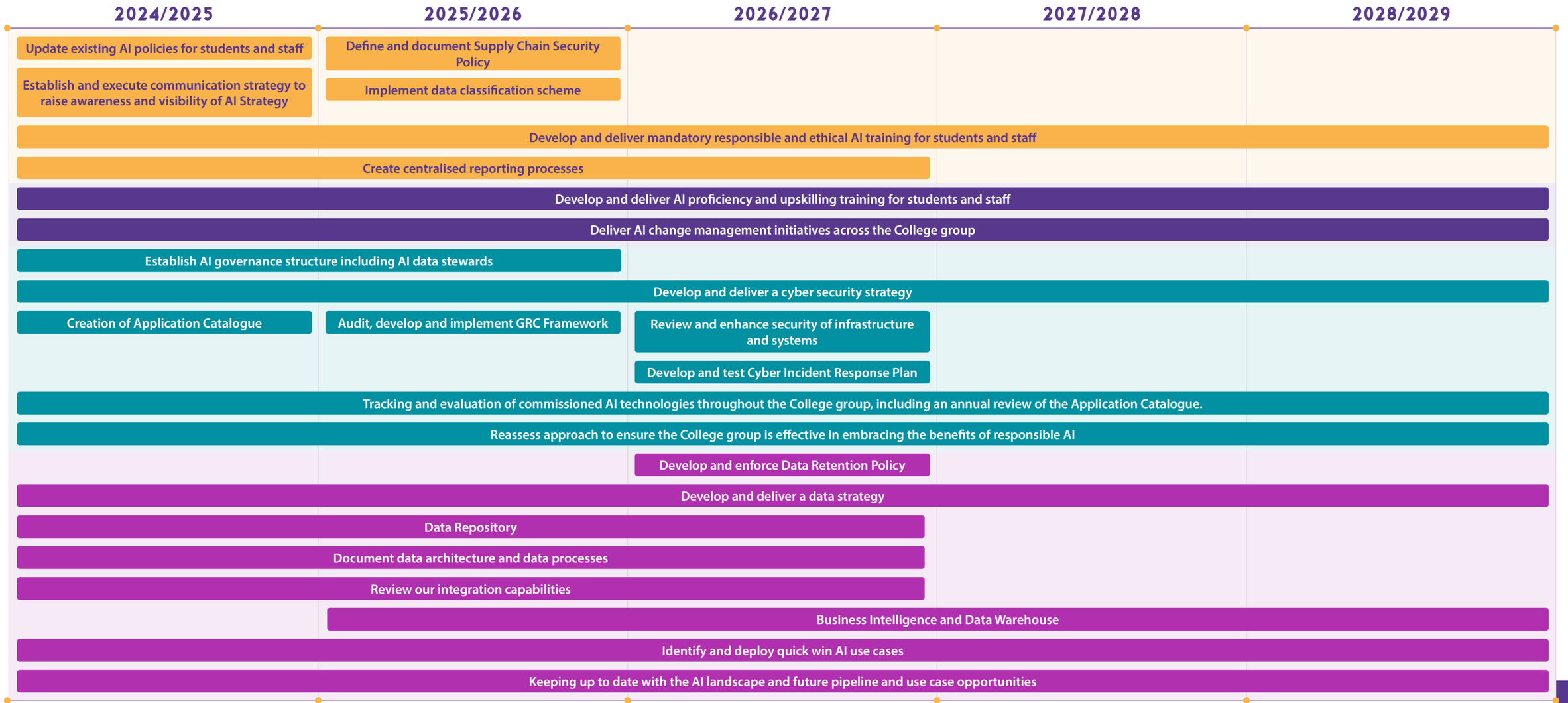
The final phase is innovation, where we aim to push the boundaries of what AI can achieve within our organisation. This phase can be established when the necessary cyber and data foundations are in place. It is about continuously improving and evolving our AI capabilities to stay ahead of the future of further education and drive success for our students, staff and organisation.

This process will function as a continuous feedback loop. As new AI technology tools are introduced to the College group and the AI landscape continues to evolve and mature, HRUC will respond accordingly, ensuring that its staff and students are well-prepared for managing and adapting to these changes. Our roadmap ensures that the perspectives of employers, academics, staff, parents, and students are considered in the co-creation of use cases. We are committed to a balanced approach that enhances the learner experience while improving operational efficiency. For instance, while AI can streamline many teaching and administrative processes, we recognise and acknowledge preferences such as face-to-face interactions to maintain the learner experience. Our roadmap is designed to respect and accommodate these preferences.

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

CLARITY AND VISION | EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION | ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY | INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

In order to deliver our AI strategy, we need to push forward projects and programmes of work, which we show below in our implementation roadmap. The roadmap is a living document and will be reviewed iteratively to ensure it aligns with our priorities.



EVALUATING SUCCESS

Ensuring the success of HRUC's AI strategy is crucial for continuing to deliver an outstanding experience for both staff and students through technological innovations. The effectiveness of this AI strategy will be evaluated based on several key criteria:

Successful procurement and deployment of AI tools that are safe, ethical, and uphold academic integrity.

Effective integration of AI technologies across the College group, enhancing operational efficiency, improving the student and staff experience, and providing value to the wider College community.

Engagement of staff and students with responsible and ethical AI training and policies, ensuring they are well-informed and capable of utilising AI tools effectively and safely.

Increased trust and adoption of AI tools by the College group, where appropriate, improving digital capabilities and enhancing operational efficiencies.

EVALUATING SUCCESS

The below KPIs will be assessed by the AI Oversight Committee on an annual basis to ensure that the delivery of the AI strategy is enabling success at HRUC:

90%+

of staff have undertaken responsible and ethical AI training.

99%+

of students have undertaken responsible and ethical AI training.

85%+

satisfaction rate amongst staff and students on the use of new AI tools.

75%+

of staff feel confident using AI tools in their teaching and operational roles.

This strategy aims to position HRUC as a pioneer in responsible AI deployment, driving innovation within the Further Education sector while adhering to the strategy's guiding principles.

LAILA'S JOURNEY: WHAT DOES THIS STRATEGY MEAN FOR OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF?

STUDENT RECRUITMENT & ENQUIRIES

Laila, who lives in West London and aspires to become an accountant, has consented to being contacted by HRUC via email. Consequently, she receives AI-enabled personalised emails promoting accounting courses at HRUC

Laila is now interested in studying at HRUC and has a question about the course she would like to study. She looks on the College website and is prompted to use the AI-powered chatbot.

The chatbot is able to answer her questions regarding what College site the course is held at and the entry requirements. When Laila asks the AI-powered chatbot if her non-standard qualification meets the entry requirements, the AI agent refers her on to a human agent.

ENROLMENT

With AI-powered analytics, staff can now identify patterns in applicant demographics, popular courses, and other trends. This enables more strategic recruitment efforts and supports data-driven decisions around enrolment forecasting.

As a result of this AI solution, staff no longer need to manually contact enroling students to resolve incorrect ID submissions.

Laila has received a successful offer to study at HRUC. At enrolment stage, Laila is asked to provide a proof of ID. Instead Laila submits a bank statement. The AI verification tool notifies Laila that the document she has uploaded is not a valid proof of ID, and instead prompts her submit a passport to progress with enrolment.

LAILA'S JOURNEY: WHAT DOES THIS STRATEGY MEAN FOR OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF?

NURTURING OUR STUDENTS AT HRUC	Laila's logins to the VLE have decreased, and she has also been absent from a lesson.	AI Learner analytics detect Laila's unusual absence and drop in engagement, prompting HRUC's AI intervention tool to automatically send her a WhatsApp message to follow up.	Laila shares that she's struggling with her mental health due to a recent family bereavement. Thanks to early intervention, she is quickly connected to wellbeing and pastoral support, providing her with the resources and care needed to improve her health and get back on track with her studies.
GUIDING OUR STUDENTS TO SUCCESS AT HRUC	Laila is in her final year at HRUC and is getting ready for her exams. She would like to book a room to hold a revision session with her friends.	Laila uses the room booking app to quickly find a suitable available space, with real-time data and predictive analytics helping her identify the best option for her needs.	As part of her studies at HRUC, Laila has learned about the ethical and responsible use of AI. She has gained hands-on experience with AI tools commonly used in the workplace, including those specific to her future career in accounting. Laila leaves HRUC equipped with both the digital proficiency and ethical understanding needed to succeed in the modern workforce.
STUDYING AT HRUC	Laila, now in her first year at HRUC has access to AI applications that complement her classroom learning by answering questions, explaining tricky concepts, and supporting her revision, alongside the guidance of her teachers.	Her lessons are interactive and incorporate AI-powered gamification tools, tailored to her course content and informed by her past performance. These tools help her focus on the areas where she needs the most support and keep her motivated as she works toward progressing to the next grade.	By using AI to support lesson planning and assessment, Laila's teachers save valuable time, allowing them to focus more on teaching and providing personalised support to meet students' individual needs.

BE EXTRAORDINARY

HRUC

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