



Reimagine Education Awards & Conference 2024

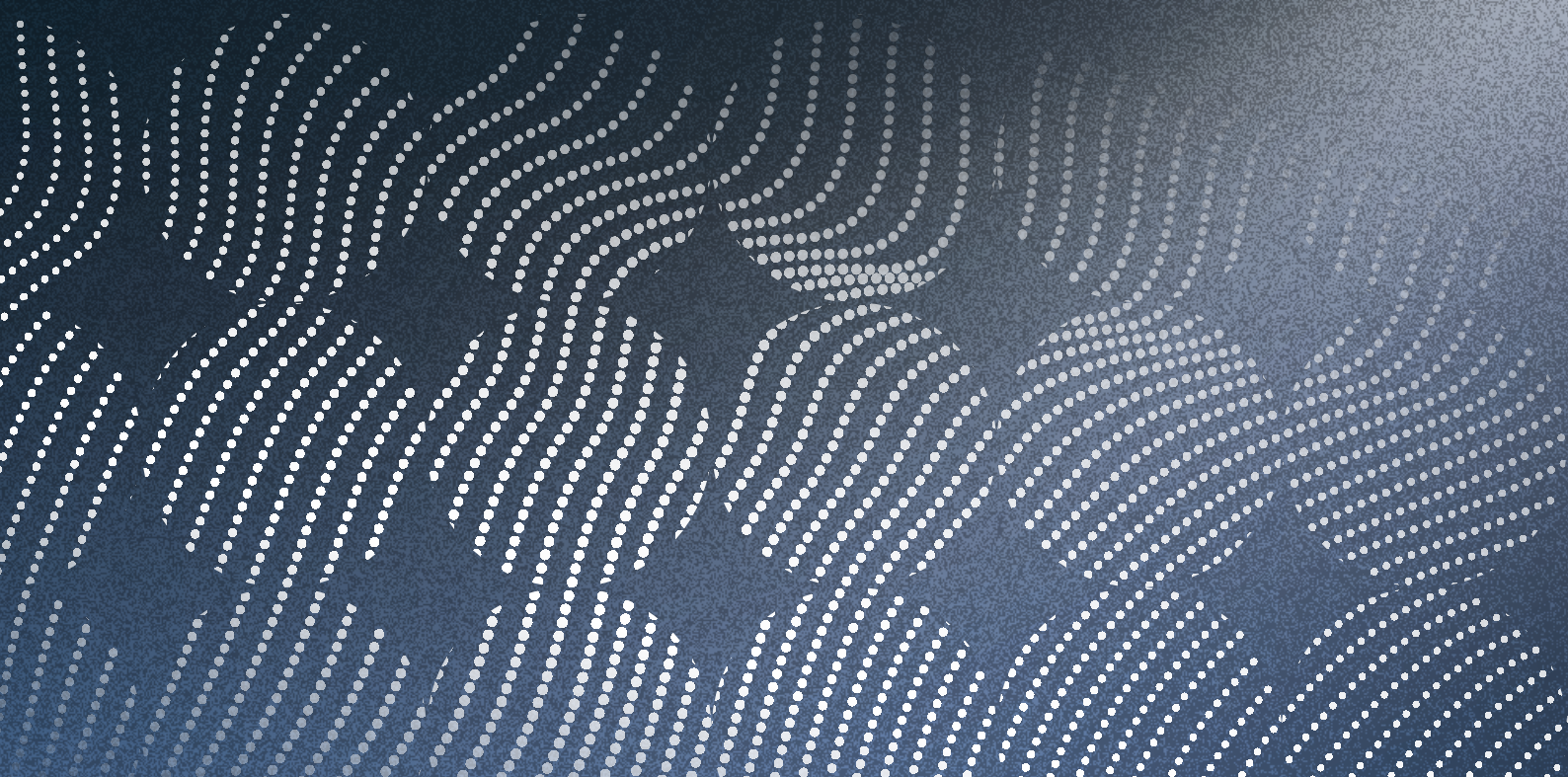
The role of higher education in a changing world

Digital transformation & AI

Skills, jobs and the future of work

Sustainability

QS Reimagine Education Awards



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QS Reimagine Education Awards

Foreword

This report is a comprehensive reference and reflection (with support from AI) of the QS Reimagine Education Conference 2024 held on 9-11 December in London. In its 11th edition, the QS Reimagine Awards & Conference showcased the evolving challenges and transformative opportunities in education, technology, and workforce development.

The QS Reimagine Education initiative continues to be a global platform for advancing educational innovation and improving learning outcomes. Through three days of keynotes, panels, and networking sessions, this year's discussions spotlighted groundbreaking ideas and emerging trends, offering actionable insights to enhance education systems worldwide and enable innovation at pace and scale.



Nunzio Quacquarelli
President and Founder
QS Quacquarelli Symonds



Dr Maria Spies
Chief Innovation Officer
QS Quacquarelli Symonds

This year's conference brought together 860 delegates from 76 countries and territories – all united and inspired by the QS mission to enable motivated people anywhere in the world to fulfil their potential through educational achievement, international mobility and career development.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all delegates, speakers, judges and partners whose contributions made this initiative possible. Together, we are fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation to build a more inclusive, impactful, and sustainable future for education.

Thank you for joining us on this journey and the role you play in shaping the future of education.

QS Reimagine Education Awards & Conference 2024

QS Reimagine Education is the premium forum for higher education and edtech innovators. The award and conference scheme have been central to the formation of key global partnerships by bringing together a variety of communities – university chancellors, business

school deans, chief learning officers, employers, policymakers, edtech innovators, investors, non-profits, and sustainability champions – motivated to shape the future of education, the future of work and the future of universities.

QS Reimagine Education Awards & Conference 2024 in numbers

3
overall award winners

21
regional winners

54
category winners

1,330
judges completed
1,224 hours of judging

1,323
award submissions

86
expert speakers across
the three-day event

860
delegates welcomed
in-person and virtually

76
locations
represented

We would like to thank our partners and sponsors for your generous support

Host

Gold Plus

Overall Awards

Global Education Award

Global Ed Tech Award



Silver



Panel Sponsor

Bronze



Sustainability Education Award

AI in Education Award

Partners



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SECTION 1

The role of higher education in a changing world

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Power and policy: Key drivers redefining higher education

Higher education is central to economic and social prosperity. The research, conversations and innovations created on campuses are what drive society forward. At QS Reimagine Education 2024, experts explored what external and internal factors are impacting universities, and how our sector can continue to innovate in the face of complex, global challenges.



KEYNOTE

Opening keynote

“Educators are in the business of helping people to be the best that they can be”

Baroness Helena Kennedy of the Shaws LT KC
Director
International Bar Association Human Rights Institute

Member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom

At QS Reimagine Education 2024, Baroness Helena Kennedy, a leading advocate for education and human rights, highlighted the transformative power of education in fostering opportunity, equity, and societal progress. Drawing from personal experiences, she illustrated how education has profoundly shaped her life, leading to her work in law, human rights, and global policy. Using education's Latin root, "educare," she highlighted its purpose of drawing out potential, stimulating curiosity, and fostering empathy and ethical values.

Baroness Kennedy critiqued outdated rote-learning methods and advocated for approaches that build collaboration, critical thinking, and adaptability. Education, she argued, is vital for regenerating economies, fostering innovation, and preparing individuals to

navigate technological advances and ethical challenges. The pandemic accelerated technological integration, revealing the value of hybrid learning, but also the irreplaceable human connection in education.

As a legal expert, she connected education to justice, urging institutions to instil a more discerning approach to addressing misinformation and bias. She emphasised inclusivity, particularly for women and marginalised groups, advocating for leadership opportunities and fairness. Reflecting on global crises, such as war and climate change, she stressed the need for education to equip future generations with resilience and problem-solving skills. Ultimately, she championed education as a cornerstone of a just, equitable, and innovative society.

“Employers are going to want universities to tell them: ‘what skills are you delivering to me?’”

Dr Maria Spies
Chief Innovation
Officer
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Dr Spies highlighted how geopolitical power dynamics, economic transitions, demographic disparities, and urbanisation impact education systems globally. Growing youth populations in Africa and Asia contrast sharply with other regions’ ageing and declining populations, demanding region-specific solutions to address disparities in resources and access to resources.

After a dormant period, governments are reinvesting in vocational systems to address skills gaps. The blurring boundaries between traditional universities, industry accreditation, and emerging online platforms highlight a competitive, but potentially collaborative ecosystem.

Microcredentials, apprenticeships, internships, and work-integrated learning are increasingly vital in post-secondary education, reflecting a shift toward flexible, skill-based credentials.

Higher education institutions are focusing on personalised learning, interoperability, and

outcome measurement to enhance the student experiences.

“AI is also becoming a national priority,” Dr Spies said. The technology is being embedded across education, from curriculum design to personalised learning and workforce training. Governments are keen to ensure that people in their country deeply understand AI to ensure ethical development and capability. Using HolonIQ data, we see countries like India, China, Canada and South Korea are all heavily investing in AI research and development.

Institutions must adapt to AI’s growing influence, not only for efficiency but also to attract students and align with industry demands. Challenges like data security, equitable access, and algorithmic transparency are critical considerations.

Addressing these changes and leveraging technology will be key for institutions to remain competitive and relevant in the evolving educational landscape.

KEYNOTE

2025 global education outlook

KEYNOTE

How to disagree well

“It’s not our job to tell you what to think but it is our job to create an environment in which you can have constructive conversations.”

Dr Michael Spence
President and Provost
UCL

In his address, Dr Michael Spence, reflected on the pivotal role that universities play in cultivating and fostering an environment of constructive disagreement. He argued that universities ought to serve as sanctuaries for a diverse range of perspectives and rigorous, evidence-based debate. This, he asserted, necessitates the establishment and implementation of clear guidelines for managing dissent within the academic community.

Dr Spence emphasised that disagreement should be constructive and contribute to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, rather than merely being agreeable for the sake of maintaining social harmony. Disagreement should be rooted in epistemic virtues such as attentive listening, respect for differing viewpoints, and intellectual humility, he argued.

Dr Spence said that he envisions universities as spaces where individuals are equipped with the skills and dispositions necessary to navigate a world characterised by radical disagreement on a multitude of issues. In this regard, he emphasised the responsibility of academic institutions to model constructive disagreement for their students and the broader community.

By advocating for these principles, Dr Spence challenged universities to embrace their role as incubators of intellectual discourse. He posited that constructive disagreement is not only essential for academic advancement and the generation of new knowledge but also for preparing students to engage effectively and respectfully in a complex and contentious world.

PANEL

The future of universities

Moderator:
Jessica Turner
CEO
QS Quacquarelli
Symonds

Dr Michael Spence
President and Provost
UCL

Dr Claude Catala
Chairman of the
Academic Senate
Paris PSL

Professor Tim Quine
Vice-President and
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Education and Student
Experience
University of Exeter

The discussion highlighted key insights into the future of universities:

Universities currently face unprecedented challenges, including financial constraints and competition from alternative education models, which test a university's traditional structures and operations.

Dr Spence discussed the resilience of universities, saying that adaptability is a hallmark of the sector as they have a long history of successfully balancing their dual missions of teaching and research. To maintain relevance, he also reflected on the importance of students nurturing critical thinking skills for the future workforce. He said providing opportunities for students to partake in an interdisciplinary education would be effective.

Professor Catala said that adapting to alternative education providers will be crucial if universities are to remain relevant. While emphasising the strength of

public universities – with their broader disciplinary coverage and high-risk research – Professor Catala suggested collaboration with alternative providers may effectively combine innovation with academic rigour. Universities must also continue to demonstrate a clear return on investment, and show the skills gained during a degree.

Panellists agreed that technology will play an important role in the future of universities, but its use should go beyond basic adoption, focusing instead on enhancing learning and teaching experiences while preserving the 'human' interaction and engagement which is vital in positive educational experiences.

The societal importance of universities remains paramount. Universities must find ways to evolve in response to changing circumstances while upholding their commitment to high-quality education and groundbreaking research.





Reimagine Education

9 - 11 December

Celebrating over a decade

QS

PANEL

A world without universities

Moderator:
Viggo Stacey
PR Specialist
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Nikolaz Foucaud
Managing Director EMEA
Coursera

Paul Kett
Senior Adviser and
Global Director
Education and Skills
PwC

**Professor John
Quelch**
Executive Vice
Chancellor
**Duke Kunshan
University**

Our panellists explored the implications and challenges of a world where traditional universities no longer exist. Nikolaz Foucaud highlighted the role of universities in improving accessibility and employability. He acknowledged, however, that while digital platforms – like Coursera – enhance access, universities must evolve to address societal divides and improve employability through more innovative course offerings, including microcredentials.

Paul Kett emphasised the broader societal impact which universities bring, including research, economic growth, and cultural development. He pointed out the need for universities to adapt to technological advancements and address student concerns about value and employability.

Professor Quelch noted the resilience and diversity of universities, highlighting their crucial role in fostering long-term knowledge creation and interdisciplinary education. He highlighted their importance in cultivating human skills amid the rise of artificial intelligence.

The panel also debated the rising costs of higher education and declining public confidence, citing affordability, employability, and value as key concerns. The growing role of industry-led education and microcredentials was acknowledged as both a challenge and a partnership opportunity for universities.

While the panellists affirmed the enduring value of universities, they stressed the need for adaptation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and stronger connections with industry to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

PANEL

Inspiring the citizens of tomorrow

Moderator:
Professor Jerry Wind
The Lauder Professor Emeritus and Professor of Marketing
The Wharton School

Professor Ian Fenwick
Director
Sasin School of Management

Professor Sasha Roseneil
Vice-Chancellor
University of Sussex

Dr Lin Zhou
Vice President and Chief Information Officer
Texas Tech University

The session, chaired by Professor Wind, co-founder of QS Reimagine Education Awards & Conference, focused on the important role of universities in preparing students to be citizens of tomorrow, not just employees.

Dr Zhou emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary education, global perspectives, and promoting kindness in education. He highlighted the similarities and differences between humans and AI, emphasising the unique human qualities of love, passion, and kindness. Zhou also stressed the need to prepare students for an uncertain future and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Stressing the importance of inspiration, curiosity, and lifelong learning, Professor Fenwick argued that the layout and structure of teaching facilities should be more inspiring and interactive. He also encouraged connecting with people who hold different views.

Professor Roseneil discussed the University's new strategy, Sussex 2025, which focuses on environmental sustainability, and digital and data futures. She highlighted the University's history of interdisciplinarity and global outlook and emphasised the importance of a virtuous circle of inspiration between students and staff.





PANEL

Power and policy: Key drivers redefining higher education

Moderator:
Nick Hillman
Director
HEPI

Joan Concannon
Director of External
Relations
University of York

Hon Phil Honeywood
CEO
International Education
Association of Australia

Gabriel Miller
President and CEO
Universities Canada

Jill Allen Murray
Deputy Executive
Director of Public Policy
NAFSA

The discussion highlighted the significant impact of government policies and regulations on the international education landscape. International students are an important part of national economies, but policy shifts cause uncertainty for prospective students.

Joan Concannon discussed the University of York's focus on local and global impact through regional economic development and world-class research to drive economic growth. She acknowledged the financial challenges facing UK universities but highlighted York's proactive response through diversification of income streams and reshaping their business model.

Bringing in a US perspective, Jill Allen Murray explored the impact of the nation's political climate on international education, expecting both opportunities and challenges from the Trump administration. She said the sector must highlight the economic

contributions of international students and build coalitions with business to advocate for supportive policies.

Phil Honeywood discussed the challenges faced by Australian universities due to government policy and student visa changes, including the introduction and subsequent failure of legislation to implement enrolment caps for international students. He noted the impact of these changes on student behaviour and the financial sustainability of universities.

Gabriel Miller highlighted the impact of reduced international student enrolment on Canadian universities and the country's economy due to changes in policies and regulations. He said Canada must repair its reputation as a destination for international students, innovate programme offerings, and create sustainable funding models.

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Digital transformation and AI

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Accelerating digital transformation in higher education

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QS AI Competency Framework

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AI frontiers: Transforming how we learn and earn

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Responsible AI Consortium

Higher education is at the forefront of technological innovation – many of the products, devices, and technologies we use have their roots in higher education’s research labs. But implementing technological change in any large and complex organisation is a challenge. In London, experts discussed how they’re driving digital transformation and governance. QS launched two new innovation-focused initiatives: the QS AI Competency Framework and the Responsible AI Consortium.

PANEL

Accelerating digital transformation in higher education

Moderator:
Andrew Proctor
Executive Lead -
UK Education
Amazon Web Services

Carla Aerts
Education Innovation &
Futuring Strategic
Advisor
Erasmus X

**Michael Charles
Borrelli**
Director
AI & Partners

Dr Shadi Hijazi
Principal Consultant
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Marine Rabeyrin
EMEA Education
Segment Director
Lenovo

**Professor Borja
Santos Porras**
Vice-Dean, School of
Politics, Economics and
Global Affairs
IE University

This panel discussion explored the transformative potential of AI, cloud computing, and virtual platforms in reshaping education. Industry leaders and education experts highlighted how these technologies enhance learning experiences, foster innovation, and improve operational efficiency. They emphasised that digital transformation transcends technological adoption, requiring a cultural and strategic shift supported by stakeholder collaboration, robust infrastructure, and scalable strategies.

Key themes included personalised learning and AI's role in advancing research. The panelists discussed how digital tools enhance course creation, engagement, feedback, and evaluation. Cultural readiness emerged as critical, necessitating faculty training and incentivisation to embrace AI's potential. Additionally, digital transformation was lauded for its ability to expand global access, inclusivity, and creativity while enabling resilience in education systems.

The discussion also addressed Generative AI's societal challenges: Andrew Proctor emphasised higher education's dual role in leveraging AI and solving its challenges, cautioning against using AI for novelty rather than genuine problem-solving.

Ethical concerns featured prominently, with panelists warning against automation bias and over-reliance on AI, which could undermine critical thinking. They advocated for AI literacy, ethical frameworks, and governance to mitigate biases and ensure inclusivity. The session concluded with a call for ongoing adaptation, agile regulatory compliance, and collaborative approaches, underscoring the need for ethical, cultural, and strategic considerations in digital transformation. Institutions were urged to empower students and faculty to embrace AI while balancing innovation with appropriate safeguards, checks and governance.





PANEL

AI Frontiers: Transforming how we learn and earn

Moderator:
Dr Maria Spies
Chief Innovation Officer
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Dr Shadi Hijazi
Principal Consultant
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Greg Marschall
Co-Founder and CEO
LearnWise AI

Nic Newman
Partner
Emerge Education

This panel showcased the transformative potential of AI in reshaping teaching, learning, and workforce integration. AI has the potential to enhance operational efficiency and enable dynamic content creation, marking a pivotal shift in the pace and scalability of transformation plans. Nic Newman said AI could expand the education market to US\$1.5 trillion by driving innovations in recruitment, personalised learning, and student experiences.

Greg Marschall elaborated on the practical applications of AI, such as automating repetitive administrative tasks and utilising data-driven systems to proactively address student needs. He highlighted AI's capacity to enhance student engagement by offering seamless experiences across platforms. The emphasis on real-time insights and holistic support reflects AI's growing role in creating student-centred solutions.

Dr Hijazi addressed critical challenges, including skill gaps among educators and staff, as well as cultural barriers to AI adoption. He proposed initiatives like deploying "digital squads" to accelerate institutional adaptability and foster a culture of innovation. Hijazi also stressed the importance of strategic planning, scalable governance, and robust infrastructure to ensure successful AI integration.

Looking ahead, the panel envisioned a future where AI redefines the student journey, offering personalised tutors, robust mental health support, and career-integrated learning pathways. The discussion circled back to the need for interoperability, collaboration, and comprehensive strategies to harness AI's full potential. The panel noted a marked shift from curiosity to actionable, real-world applications of AI, setting the stage for its transformative role in education systems globally.

Introducing the QS AI Competency Framework

Supporting universities in developing and tracking their AI roadmap

Higher education institutions worldwide are increasingly leveraging AI to achieve a diverse range of intersecting goals across the entire learner lifecycle. However, there appears to be a lack of comprehensive awareness within institutions regarding the aggregate use of AI. Despite this, AI is evolving beyond administrative functions and is being integrated into core learning processes, including content creation, assessment, and retention support.

The advent of generative AI has unlocked new possibilities, particularly in areas such as assessment design, curriculum development, and learner-generated content. This emerging technology holds transformative potential for reshaping education, enabling more personalised, scalable, and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Thousands of AI-driven tools empower higher education

Today, institutions benefit from thousands of AI-driven tools, applications, and technologies designed to support various objectives, such as learning and teaching, student recruitment, academic advising, and operational management. This ecosystem of AI solutions offers significant opportunities for institutions to enhance their impact.

The integration of AI into higher education is increasingly recognised as essential.

The QS Generative AI Pulse Survey 2023 indicated that two-thirds of academics believe it is critical for universities to incorporate generative AI into the curriculum. Furthermore, AI's growing influence extends beyond faculty perceptions—at least one-third of students report that AI has influenced their decisions regarding course selection, university choice, and career aspirations (QS Generative AI Pulse Survey 2023).

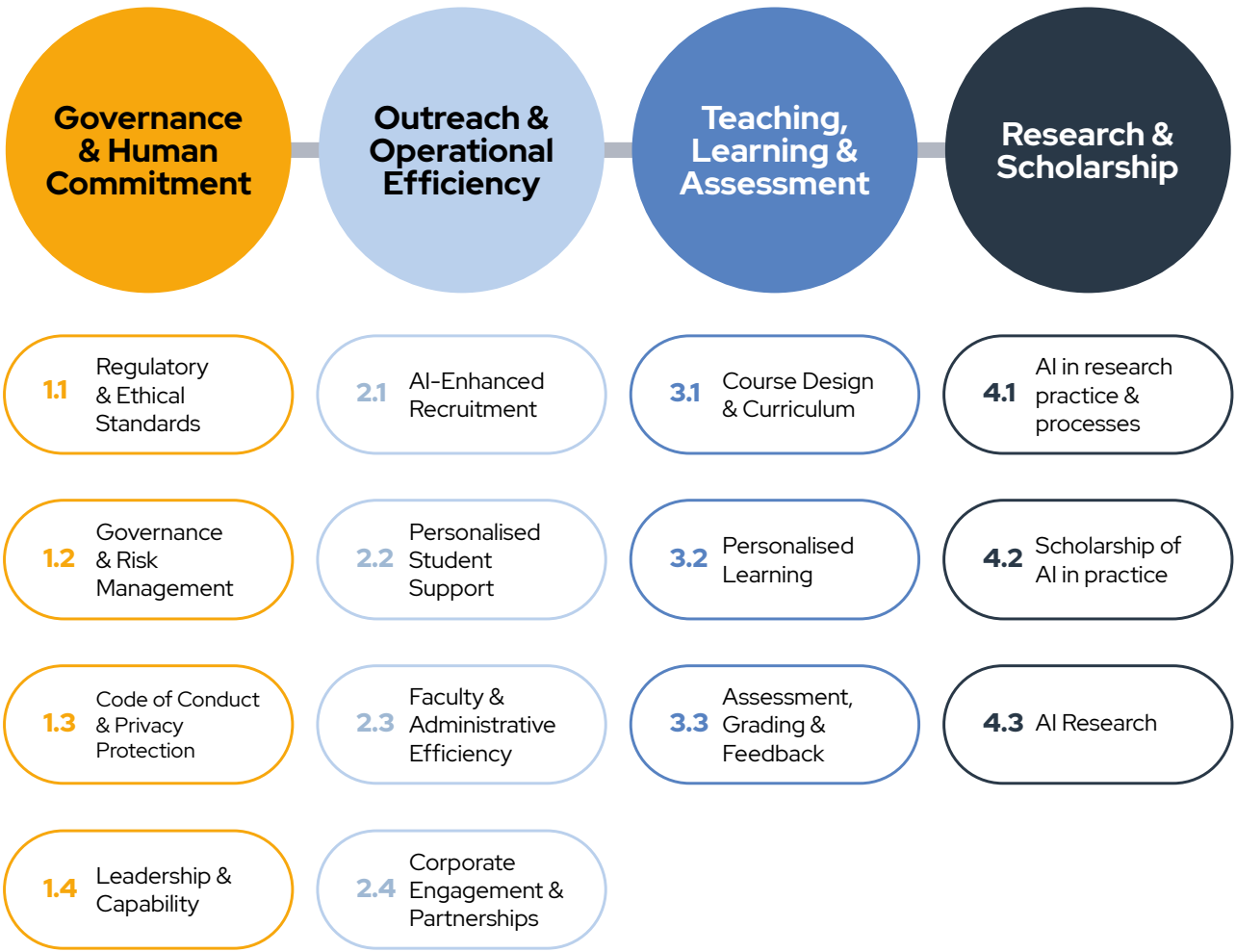
Variations in AI adoption and the need for strategic direction

While AI adoption varies across institutions, there is often limited visibility into the activities, challenges, or successes associated with its implementation. This lack of a cohesive approach evidences the need for tools that help institutions develop clear strategies for integrating AI responsibly and effectively.

The QS AI Competency Framework

In response to these challenges, the **QS AI Competency Framework** was developed with input from policymakers, technology companies, industry leaders, employers, and academic institutions. This comprehensive framework is designed to help universities build, evaluate, and refine their AI roadmaps, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and emerging opportunities.

The framework is structured around four key pillars, segmented into 14 categories, and incorporates over 30 indicators to assess institutional capabilities. These pillars are:



The AI Competency Framework provides universities with a structured tool to guide AI adoption and track progress toward their strategic objectives. By focusing on these four pillars, institutions can enhance their AI readiness, improve educational outcomes, and remain at the forefront of innovation in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Learn more about the QS AI Competency Framework



Responsible AI Consortium

Launched at QS Reimagine Education 2024

QS, along with other founding members EDHEC Business School, Imperial College Business School and Luiss Business School were proud to launch the Responsible AI Consortium at the QS Reimagine Awards and Conference 2024 in London.

The Responsible AI Consortium (RAIC) is a global network of forward-thinking institutions dedicated to promoting the responsible use of AI. It serves as a platform for collaboration among universities and business schools worldwide, fostering thought leadership, practice-sharing, and research on AI integration in higher education.

Through project-based learning opportunities, pilot programmes for AI-driven technologies, and collaborative initiatives, the Consortium aims to support the ethical and effective adoption of AI in academia.

The RAIC was formed by a group of leading higher education experts with a common objective of creating opportunities for global collaboration, and supporting universities and business schools in adopting AI technologies in ways that prioritise ethics, equity, and long-term societal impact.



Members of the RAIC will engage in a dynamic and collaborative ecosystem that emphasises both contributing to and benefitting from the collective expertise of fellow members. Through a shared commitment to advancing the field of artificial intelligence responsibly, members co-create and actively participate in cutting-edge research initiatives, practical implementation projects, and thought leadership efforts. All activities undertaken by the Consortium are firmly anchored in the principle of responsible development, deployment, and use of AI technologies, ensuring that ethical considerations, transparency, and societal impact remain at the forefront. By working together, members not only contribute to shaping the future of AI but also ensure its alignment with shared values and long-term benefits for society.

The RAIC is designed to provide a collaborative framework for achieving responsible AI implementation across higher education. By fostering a spirit of cooperation, the Consortium enables institutions to learn from each other through joint projects, shared research, and best practice dissemination. It builds on higher education's strengths in scholarship, innovation, and collaboration, helping members develop effective strategies for AI integration.

The Consortium's activities span a range of areas, from leveraging AI tools to improve operational efficiency and enhance student experiences, to embedding AI literacy into the curriculum. By creating opportunities for global collaboration, RAIC aims to support universities and business schools in adopting AI technologies in ways that prioritise ethics, equity, and long-term societal impact.

[Learn more about the Consortium and register your interest](#)

“Together, we will establish a roadmap for best practices in institutional AI integration, maintaining a steadfast commitment to human development, ethical innovation, and empowerment.”

Michelle Sisto, AI Center Director, EDHEC Business School

“By joining forces with other leading business schools and universities, we will deepen our understanding of AI and its transformative impact on higher education.”

Leila Guerra, Vice Dean (Education), Imperial College Business School

SECTION 3

Skills, jobs & the future of work

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Shaping lifelong learning journeys

The world of work is changing - how can higher education stay at the centre of workforce transformation? Governments and businesses will need universities to teach new skills and help reskill the current workforce in the face of workplace transformation. Bridging the skills gap, classroom innovations and new ways to measure future readiness will be key.



The QS World Future Skills Index

The QS World Future Skills Index evaluates how well countries are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the international job market. It aims to empower governments to align education and skills with future demand, fostering innovation, sustainable global competition and talent development.

Employers today require a workforce with skillsets that didn't exist 20 years ago – AI, digital and green skills have all come to the fore.

The future generation needs new skills, current workers need to upskill or retrain, and governments must activate their higher education institutions to enable future economic growth and help this transformation through targeted workforce reskilling. The unprecedented pace of technological advancement has accelerated the need for a dynamic response from governments in tandem with their higher education institutions.

McKinsey's 'Jobs lost, jobs gained' report estimated that, by 2030, up to 375m, or 14% of the global workforce, would need to switch occupational categories due to automation, digital disruption and industrial change.

The findings of the QS World Future Skills Index are clear – innovation in a country's higher education system and ensuring the sector's long-term sustainability is fundamental to a growing national economy. It's an important time for governments and higher education institutions to recognise that a huge disruption to workforce norms is on the horizon.

[Download the full briefing paper](#)

PANEL

Driving skills-led economic transformation locally and internationally

Moderator:
Jacques de Champchesnel
Head of Consulting and Insights
QS Quacquarelli Symonds

Patrick Brothers
Executive Director
QS Quacquarelli Symonds

Uzma Khan
Vice Principal for Economic Development and Innovation and Deputy Chief Operating Officer
University of Glasgow

Professor Frank Wiengarten
Professor Department of Operations, Innovation and Data Sciences
Esade

Yalin Zhao
Senior Manager, Skills Based Workforce Transformation
PwC UK

The rapid pace of economic transformation has placed a premium on skills as the driving force behind growth and innovation. A pressing concern for employers globally, the escalating skills shortage is a direct consequence of these shifts.

Panellists agreed that a shift towards a skills-first approach is underway to address the challenge. Prioritising demonstrable skills over traditional qualifications and experience has the potential to significantly upskill the workforce and more effectively empower organisations. By recognising and valuing skills, regardless of their origin, employers can unlock a wealth of untapped potential and foster a more inclusive and agile workforce.

Universities and educational providers are pivotal in this revolution, and drive economic growth and social mobility. They must evolve their programmes and curricula to align with the dynamic needs of the industry, placing a strong emphasis on skills development and lifelong learning. This may involve reimagining traditional degree

programmes, integrating work-based learning opportunities, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and upskilling.

Collaboration and partnerships among employers, educational institutions and policymakers are essential for navigating this landscape. By working together, these stakeholders can identify emerging skills needs, develop industry-aligned training programmes, and create a more responsive and inclusive education and employment ecosystem through the sharing of best practice, and developing industry-recognised credentials.

Soft skills are also required for success in the future workforce. Sometimes overlooked in traditional education and hiring practices, soft skills are increasingly sought after by employers. By fostering these skills, educational institutions can cultivate a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also resilient, adaptable, and capable of thriving in a rapidly changing world.





PANEL

Learning by doing: The power of experiential education

Moderator:
Zoya Zaitseva
Manager of Innovation
and Head of Partnerships
(QS ImpACT)
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Professor Colin Bailey
President and Principal
**Queen Mary University
of London**

Andrew Connors
Head of Sector and
Region
Lloyds Banking Group

Sarah Toms
Chief Innovation Officer
IMD

Natasha Traynor
Chief Marketing Officer
**The African Leadership
University**

The panel addressed the evolving relationship between education, skills, and employability, with a focus on bridging gaps between theoretical learning and practical application. Panellists emphasised the urgent need for universities to adapt curricula and pedagogy to align with rapidly changing job market demands and global challenges like sustainability.

Natasha Traynor highlighted her institution's mission-driven education model, integrating internships and experiential learning to address Africa's job scarcity and empower students to tackle the most pressing challenges. Sarah Toms emphasised holistic human development, advocating for pedagogy that balances performance with transformation while fostering ethical use of AI. She also stressed the importance of democratising education and engaging students with real-world issues through collaboration.

Professor Bailey underscored the importance of embedding adaptable skills like critical thinking and communication into curricula. He called for stronger partnerships between universities, businesses, and schools to foster lifelong learning. He also highlighted the necessity of embracing AI and fostering ethical considerations in education.

Andrew Connors stressed the need for industry-university collaboration to meet evolving skill demands. He shared Lloyds' efforts to upskill employees in ESG and sustainability, while also seeking more diverse and digitally skilled graduates.

The discussion explored experiential programmes like cross-continental collaborations, which equip students with real-world problem-solving and intercultural communication skills. Panellists agreed on the value of storytelling by alumni, accessible organisational structures, and instilling resilience to prepare students for success in an unpredictable future.

PANEL

Shaping lifelong learning journeys

Moderator:
Leila Guerra
Vice Dean (Education)
Imperial College
Business School

Dr Roger Wong
Vice Dean, Education,
Faculty of Medicine
University of British
Columbia

Professor Joanne Wright
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Education
University of Sydney

The panel explored the evolving role of universities in providing lifelong education. Professor Wright shared insights on the challenges and opportunities in lifelong learning, while Dr Wong highlighted the need for lifelong learning to address societal needs through contextualised and competency-based education. He said that universities should serve as enablers, facilitating personalised learning pathways. Drawing on examples from medical education, he stressed the importance of partnerships with government and industry, particularly in designing micro-credentials and leveraging technology to reach underserved populations.

Professor Wright acknowledged the challenges of integrating lifelong learning into traditional university models, saying that strong leadership, cultural alignment, and incentivising faculty

through recognition and workload models was key for lifelong learning to succeed within an institution. She shared examples of the University of Sydney's co-designed programmes with industry, such as AI and sustainability sprints, which address specific skill gaps for professionals.

The panellists agreed on the crucial role of collaboration with industry and government to design accessible, impactful programmes. They stressed the importance of aligning lifelong learning with universities' social missions while maintaining quality standards to preserve community confidence.

The session concluded with a call to action: universities must innovate, share learnings, and foster a culture that supports lifelong learning as an integral part of their mission, balancing revenue generation with societal impact.



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Shaping sustainability leaders

Sustainable development is central to many university strategies. It is a research imperative and is increasingly important to students. How do we measure sustainability performance? How can we nurture the skills necessary for the next generation to be sustainability leaders?

PANEL

Sparking sustainable futures

Moderator:
Leigh Kamolins
Director of Analytics &
Evaluation
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

**Jean-Christophe
Carteron**
Senior Advisor and
Co-Chair
**UN Higher Education
Sustainability Initiative
(HESI)**

**Professor Petra
Molthan-Hill**
Co-Chair UN PRME
Working Group on
Climate Change & the
Environment and Lead
CLT-ECOS
**Nottingham Business
School**

**Professor Nalin
Thakkar**
Vice-President for Social
Responsibility
**The University of
Manchester**

The panel discussion explored the evolving role of universities in promoting sustainability and advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Panellists emphasised the increasing responsibility of higher education institutions to integrate sustainability into their curricula and drive meaningful societal change.

Jean-Christophe Carteron outlined the progress made over the past 15 years, pointing to the growing inclusion of sustainability in academic programmes and the adoption of assessment frameworks to measure impact. He argued that sustainability should not be confined to specialised programmes but integrated across all disciplines, with universities leveraging frameworks to reshape curricula and measure progress through comparable assessments.

Professor Molthan-Hill highlighted the significance of experiential learning, where universities partner with organisations and communities to address real-world sustainability challenges. She

provided examples from Nottingham Business School, where students engage with businesses to reduce carbon emissions.

Professor Thakkar discussed the expanding focus on socio-economic sustainability, stressing the importance of universities as hubs of knowledge, policy influencers, and educators of critical thinkers and change-makers. He noted that sustainability efforts must go beyond environmental concerns, addressing broader societal issues. Thakkar emphasised the importance of international collaborations, particularly with the Global South, and the need for context-based learning that reflects local realities.

The panellists concluded that universities must accelerate their efforts to embed sustainability across all aspects of university life. Stronger leadership, enhanced collaboration, and the holistic integration of sustainability are essential to achieving the SDGs, and meeting student demand for environmental sustainability.

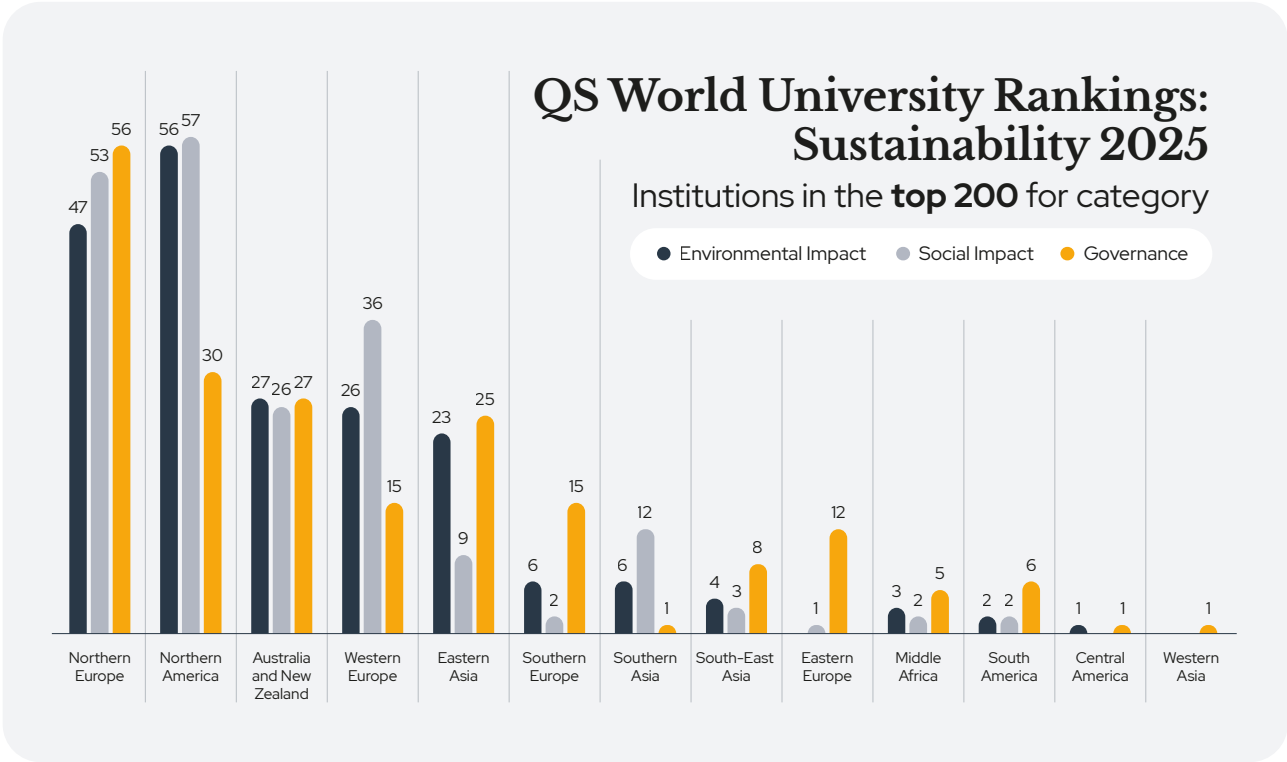


QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025

The University of Toronto maintains its number one place in the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability. However, there has been considerable movement among the top 20 with five new entrants. Only two of the institutions in the top 10 have not moved rank since the previous edition.

The QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 top 10	
1	University of Toronto, Canada
2	ETH Zürich, Switzerland
=3	Lund University, Sweden
=3	University of California, Berkeley, US
=5	University College London, UK
=5	University of British Columbia, Canada
=7	Imperial College London, UK
=7	The University of Edinburgh, UK
=9	The University of Manchester, UK
=9	The University of Melbourne, Australia

The Global North leads



The Global North’s universities are leading the way in sustainability performance. Until the University of Cape Town ranked in 45th position, all universities in the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 are in the Global North.

If we look at data globally, the picture is stark: Most of the top 200 placements across our three categories are taken up by institutions in North America, Europe, and Australia and New Zealand.

New entrants

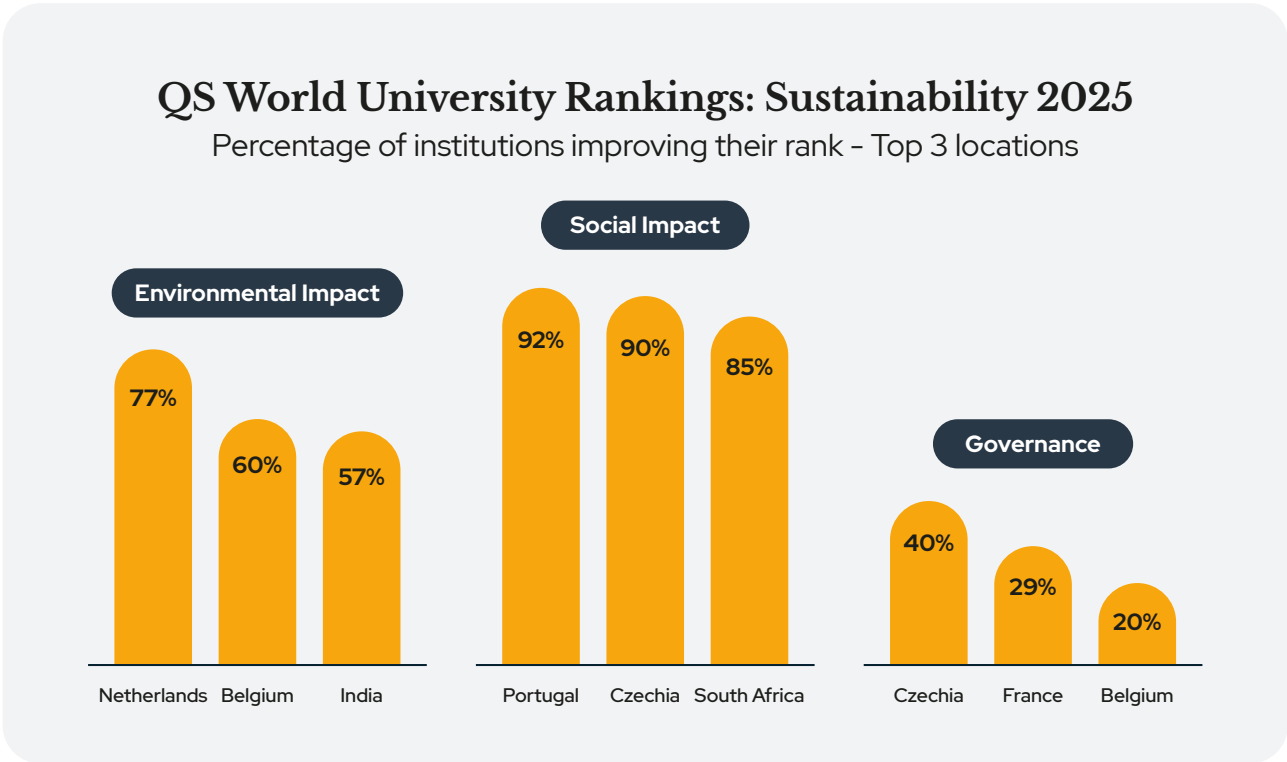
There are five new entrants in the top 20.

University	2025 rank
University College London	=5
King’s College London	14
University of Helsinki	18
Pennsylvania State University	=19
Stanford University	=19

There are 17 new entrants in the top 100.

University
UCL
Stanford University
KU Leuven
Johns Hopkins University
Université Paris-Saclay
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
University of Colorado Boulder
Queen’s University Belfast
Sorbonne University
University of Basel
Technische Universität Dresden
Université PSL
Yonsei University
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
North Carolina State University
Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn
Tufts University

Nations improving across ESG metrics



With 78 universities ranked, and 57% of them improving their Environmental Impact score, Indian higher education has seen real improvement nationally. However, while they are improving, only six Indian institutions are in the top 200 for Environmental Impact.

An astonishing 92% of Portuguese institutions improved their Social Impact performance. The main driver of this was improvement in the Knowledge Exchange lens and the indicators of Staff Perception and Policy Citations, meaning Portuguese institutions have completed research in relevant areas, and staff’s perceptions of their institution’s impact on society has also improved year-on-year.

Sustainability in higher education will be a key element of the agenda at QS Higher Ed Summit: Europe 2025, which will be hosted in Porto, Portugal.

PANEL

Growing sustainably

Moderator:

Matteo Quacquarelli
Vice President,
Strategy and Analytics
QS Quacquarelli
Symonds

Martyn Edwards
Director External
Relations
University of Leicester

Julie Mercer
Principal
Nous Group

Isobel Rossiter
Vice President, University
Branded Services
QS Quacquarelli
Symonds

Dr Julian Westwood
Director
S Squared Insights

The panel on sustainable growth in higher education focused on the financial and operational challenges universities face, particularly in the UK, where many institutions are grappling with a broken and unsustainable business model. Julie Mercer and Isobel Rossiter stressed that sustainability in higher education must extend beyond financial considerations, incorporating academic rigour, student success, community impact, and addressing global challenges. Mercer pointed out that the traditional funding model, which heavily relies on international student fees, is not sustainable. She called for universities to rethink their core offerings and consider alternative approaches, such as flexible, part-time degree models aimed at adult learners.

Dr Westwood critiqued the overreliance on increasing international student numbers, arguing for a shift towards more dynamic pricing strategies that cater to emerging markets. He suggested offering region-specific discounts and multiple price points for

different programmes to optimise revenue. Rossiter supported this idea by highlighting the importance of operational changes, such as embracing AI and automation, to enhance efficiency and meet the evolving needs of modern students. She advocated for universities to reassess their internal systems and deliver programmes and programme content that resonates with industry trends.

Martyn Edwards added that universities must evolve to cater to changing workforce demographics, regional growth, and shifting student needs, particularly from the Global South. He emphasised the importance of lifelong learning and creating flexible, inclusive offerings. Edwards also proposed a more integrated approach to supporting international students, including enhanced employability services and tailored support, to ensure long-term sustainability and remain competitive on the global stage. The panel concluded that innovation, flexibility, and a reimaged business model are essential for universities' future viability.





PANEL

Shaping sustainability leaders

Moderator:
Laura Lightfinch
Strategic Content
Manager
**QS Quacquarelli
Symonds**

Jamie Agombar
Executive Director
**Students Organising for
Sustainability (SOS-UK)**

Martin Baxter
Deputy CEO
**Institute of
Environmental
Management and
Assessment**

Chaseley Cameron
Manager
**International
Universities Climate
Alliance (IUCA)**

The panel discussion on shaping sustainability leaders emphasised the crucial role of higher education in equipping students to address global sustainability challenges.

The conversation began by acknowledging the growing demand for sustainability in education, with 88% of prospective international students saying sustainability is moderately, very or extremely important to them (QS International Student Survey 2024), though progress in integrating it into curricula has been slow. The panel stressed the importance of equipping students with key skills, such as systems thinking, critical thinking, and the ability to collaborate across disciplines to tackle complex global problems.

The speakers emphasised that sustainability education should be integrated into all aspects of university programmes, not just in specialised courses. Chaseley Cameron highlighted the need for climate-literate leadership, noting that many current leaders lack an understanding of climate change's urgency. Martin Baxter underscored the

importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration, urging universities to foster environments where students from diverse fields work together. Jamie Agombar called for a shift in mindset, focusing on creating solutions rather than just reducing harm, and stressed the importance of involving students in shaping sustainability initiatives, such as climate action plans.

The panel also discussed the increasing demand for green skills in the workforce and the need for universities to align curricula with evolving job market needs. Martin Baxter highlighted the importance of soft skills like collaboration, communication, and leadership. The discussion concluded with a call for universities to prioritise sustainability, empower students, and break down disciplinary silos to foster the interdisciplinary collaboration needed to address sustainability challenges. The panellists agreed that universities are uniquely positioned to create the sustainable leaders of the future.

SECTION 5

QS Reimagine Education Awards

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Overview

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Overall winners

Our suite of awards is a core part of QS Reimagine Education. Throughout our three-day conference, we announced overall, category and regional winners of the QS Reimagine Education Awards 2024.

Register your interest for Reimagine
Education 2025

#QSReimagine

QS Reimagine Education Awards 2024

18

award categories

1,300+

innovative submissions

1,300+

international judges

50

Grand Jury members

In the 11th edition of this highly contested global competition, we continue to honour pioneering pedagogical approaches that boost learning outcomes and employability, as well as effective methods of teaching sustainability, with a vision to equip over a billion learners worldwide for their future endeavours.



Global Education Award

Sponsored by



Joint winners: FACENS and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

FACENS' Smart Forests unites students from four Brazilian universities across three regions in Brazil to develop sustainable solutions that protect forests and conserve biodiversity in the Amazon and Atlantic Forests.

“Winning the Global Education Award is a transformative milestone for our project, which bridges students and local communities to promote sustainable development and protect the environment and its biodiversity. We hope this prestigious recognition will attract more partners, enabling us to expand the project, improve the lives of Amazon River communities, and empower more students to become changemakers and champions of sustainability.”

Vitor Belota

Head of Sustainability
FACENS University

Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Engage, Empower, Excel: PolyU's Smart Campus Innovation, is an omnichannel solution to enhance learning and teaching. By integrating existing digital resources with innovative tools like generative AI for real-time feedback and RFID Smart Tags for personalised, immersive experiences, the solution addresses students' expectations for instant feedback, visual engagement, and multitasking support.

“As educators, our primary focus is our students. Through this project, we strive to enhance collaboration with them to co-create an inclusive and impactful learning experience that drives strong learning outcomes. We deeply appreciate the recognition from QS and are immensely grateful to our students for the insights and inspiration they continuously offer.”

Dr Wai Chi Rodney Chu

Senior Lecturer
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University



Global EdTech Award

Sponsored by



Winner: ZNotes

ZNotes levels the playing field through its community-driven online platform. Offering free access to high-quality learning resources and peer-learning support, ZNotes has reached six million students worldwide. By addressing inequalities in high-stakes exams, the platform provides open-access digital tools that enhance K-12 learning, resources to upskill educators, and opportunities for high-achieving students to engage and contribute globally. With a thriving global community of over 45,000 members, ZNotes is fostering collaboration and empowerment in education on a global scale.

“I am deeply honoured to receive this prestigious award. This milestone would not have been possible without my incredible team, mentors, and advisors who have been an integral part of this decade-long journey. To the millions of students who are at the heart of ZNotes, your belief in us inspires and drives our mission every day. Together, we strive to create a meaningful impact and make the world a better place.”

Zubair Junjuna

Founder
ZNotes

QS Reimagine Education Awards 2024

Award tier	Business or institution name	Country/territory	Project name
Access, Diversity & Inclusion			
Gold	Strathmore University	Kenya	Zerobionic
Silver	Science and Technology for Autism Remediation (STAR) Limited Company	Hong Kong	Robot for Autism and Behavioral Intervention (RABI) Strathmore Universiy
Bronze	k2i (kindergarten to industry) academy, Lassonde School of Engineering, York University	Canada	k2i (kindergarten to industry) academy - Bringing STEM to Life
AI in Education Award			
Gold	Explorance	Canada	Explorance MLY: AI-Powered Qualitative Analysis
Silver	Squirrel Ai Learning	China	Personalized AI-Driven Learning for Global Educational Equity
Bronze	Abu Dhabi University	United Arab Emirates	AI4All: AI-Powered Reimagination of AI as a Universal Early Skill
Bronze	Turnitin	United States	Turnitin's AI Writing Detection Tool
Best use of Generative AI			
Gold	The University of Sydney	Australia	Cogniti: Putting teachers in the driver's seat of AI
Silver	WordUp	United Kingdom	WordUp AI Vocabulary Builder
Bronze	Purdue University	United States	Purdue University's Variate, an AI-Powered STEM Problem Creator
Blended and Presence Learning Award			
Gold	Tecnológico de Monterrey	Mexico	AGORA Ecosystem of spaces
Silver	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Hong Kong	Future-Ready Educators: Pioneering Immersive Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Training
Bronze	Berlin School of Business and Innovation	Germany	Integrating Metaverse, Online and AI Focused Robot for Flexible and Effective Learning
Developing Emerging Skills and Competencies Award			
Gold	Stemuli	United States	Stemuli: We Put School in a Video Game
Gold	Queensland University of Technology	Australia	Driving Digital Health Futures
Silver	TBS Education	France	Mixed Reality Design Sprint: A Multidisciplinary Loop Building Intrapreneurial Mindset
Bronze	Monash University	Australia	Monash University Research, Experimentation and Discovery (RED) program

E-Learning Award			
Gold	ZNotes	United Kingdom	ZNotes
Silver	Monash University	Australia	FLoRA - An Adaptive Tool to Support Human-AI Coregulated Learning
Bronze	Deakin University	Australia	Envirocare: cultural Intelligence and First Nation science Caring for Country
Immersive Experiential Learning Award			
Gold	International Institute for Management Development IMD	Switzerland	IMD's XR 360 AR Learning Theater Experience - SpheriCO2
Silver	UNSW Sydney	Australia	AI Conversation Sim
Bronze	Northwestern University in Qatar	Qatar	Plague of Athens VR A Quantum Leap in Experiential History Education
Innovation in Business Education Award			
Gold	Singapore Management University	Singapore	Integrating Industry Partnerships and Innovation for Transformative Business Education Excellence
Silver	emlyon business school	France	Prototype at the emlyon makers' lab
Learning Assessment Award			
Gold	SULITEST IMPACT	France	TASK - The Assessment of Sustainability Knowledge
Silver	Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University	Netherlands	Grading and Simultaneously Providing High-information Feedback: The Harmonized Appraisal Assessment Methodology
Silver	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	Malaysia	Pioneering Resilient Innovative Marketable Engineers for Communities' Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusivity (PRIME-CSDI)
Bronze	Tecnológico de Monterrey	Mexico	TecDrone: Assessment of STEM Competencies using VR & AI
Lifelong Learning Award			
Gold	Tecnológico de Monterrey	Mexico	Cultivating Complex Reasoning Skills to Empower Lifelong Learners
Silver	Delft University of Technology	Netherlands	Circularity in Action – Empowering Professionals for a Sustainable Future
Bronze	NTU Entrepreneurship Academy	Singapore	Not Just Courses, but a Future-Ready Community
Neuroscience of Learning Award			
Gold	Gamitar Inc.	United States	Evivve
Silver	Università IULM	Italy	Neuroretail Lab: the Sustainability of food choice of Z generation
Bronze	BehaveNeu	India	Enhancing Cognitive Development in Children through Brain-Computer Interface Games

Nurturing Employability Award			
Gold	VinUniversity	Vietnam	Vietnamese student employability nurtured by AI-enabled Career Development Guidebook
Silver	Monash University	Australia	ATLAS: Authentic Teaching & Learning Application Simulations
Bronze	Nanyang Technological University Singapore	Singapore	Welcome to NTUniverse: Shaping Student Success Through Career Gamification
Nurturing Values and Ethics Award			
Gold	Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage	Switzerland	Olympic Values Education Programme
Silver	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong	HEROCARE: Empowering Compassionate Healthcare and Medical Education for Future Professionals
Bronze	The Day	United Kingdom	The Day
Nurturing Wellbeing and Purpose Award			
Gold	The University of Warwick	United Kingdom	Thrive Personal Development Programme Building Students’ Confidence, Agency and Resilience
Silver	Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)	United Kingdom	The Art of Curating Flourishing Spaces; Higher Education and Beyond
Bronze	Nanyang Technological University Singapore	Singapore	“Everyone a Wellbeing Change-Maker” through Wellbeing Development Pathways (WDP) Framework
Smart Omnichannel Campus Award			
Gold	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong	Engage, Empower, Excel: PolyU’s Smart Campus Innovation
Sustainability Education Action Award			
Gold	FACENS	Brazil	Smart Forests
Silver	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)	Hong Kong	Habitat Green: A HongKong-African Collaboration in Sustainability Education and Action
Bronze	LightEd	Nigeria	Avatar Station
Sustainability Education Literacy Award			
Gold	NEOMA Business School	France	NEOMACT Initiative: Empowering Students for Sustainability Transition
Silver	Tecnológico de Monterrey, International Islamic University Malaysia, Srinakharinwirot University, The University of Hong Kong	Multi-country	Cross-Cultural Classroom (3C): Empowering Future Leaders with Sustainable Citizenship
Bronze	IE University - IE School of Politics, Economics and Global Affairs	Spain	Gamifying Education with the Good Goal App

The Power of Partnerships Award			
Gold	University of Exeter	United Kingdom	The Centre for Degree Partnerships – Co-creating curriculum with employers for degree apprenticeship, providing access and success for all
Silver	TeachStart	United States	TeachStart: Building Partnerships to Open Access to Teaching
Bronze	The Education University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Scaling Up Quality Teaching and Learning Innovations in Cambodian Universities

Regional Awards

Award tier	Business or institution name	Country/territory	Project name
Asia			
Gold	Universiti Sains Malaysia	Malaysia	VR & UAV Photogrammetry for Educational Rock Slope Analysis
Silver	XJTLU Liverpool University	China	Brain-driven Entrepreneurial Learning, the WNYLE Method
Bronze	WWF-India	India	Echo-Building Environment Conservation Heroes
Oceania			
Gold	UNSW Sydney	Australia	Academic Success Monitor
Silver	University of Auckland	New Zealand	AI-Powered Marketing Education
Bronze	Swinburne University of Technology & Deakin University	Australia	Empowering Future Business Leaders
Europe			
Gold	Quizzability	Portugal	Quizzes for Sustainability
Silver	Spacebuzz Hungary Education Support	Hungary	Be also an Astronaut!
Bronze	Cogniphant	Spain	Cogniphant
Africa			
Gold	WAVE – West Africa Vocational Education	Nigeria	Employability Skills Training
Silver	University of Johannesburg	South Africa	Logistics Students Innovating with Blockchain Technology
Bronze	e-Mentor	Cameroon	e-Mentor

Middle East			
Gold	Ajman University	UEA	Greening Communities: Mangrove Planting Project
Silver	Qatar University Young Scientists Center	Qatar	Sustainable STEM Education: Developing a Novel Research Cognitive Theory
Bronze	KFUPM	Saudi Arabia	The Irshad Platform
USA & Canada			
Gold	Wilfrid Laurier University	Canada	Reciprocity in Education
Silver	World Possible	United States	Bridging the Digital Divide Asynchronously
Bronze	Ed Machina	United States	Risk Detector: AI-Driven Student Success Predictor
Latin America			
Gold	Budly	Mexico	Amplifying Learning with AI
Silver	Universidad de las Americas (UDLA)	Ecuador	Edutrackr
Bronze	Institucion Educativa Agricola de Guadalajara Buga	Colombia	Urban Conservation Experience

The inaugural Outstanding Contribution to Education Award

Winner	Professor Jerry Wind
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Join us in London for QS Reimagine Education Awards & Conference 2025

[Register here](#)