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# Progress towards building a Community of Practice for academic staff

**Progress, Lessons Learned and Strategic Next Steps  
Academic Career Reforms in Latvia – Taking Stock and Looking Ahead**

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# Artificial Intelligence in Latvian Higher Education: from Implementation to Management

**Date:** 7 November

**Venue:** Art Academy of Latvia, Riga

**Organisers:** Higher Education Council of Latvia (AIP) in cooperation with the Art Academy of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science, and OECD

The conference marked the launch of a national Community of Practice (CoP) dedicated to responsible AI integration in higher education.



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# Community of Practice Inauguration Conference

## Context and Strategic Rationale

The Community of Practice Inauguration Conference, held on **7 November 2025**, marked the formal launch of a national Community of Practice for academic staff in Latvia.

The initial focus was on the implementation of artificial intelligence in higher education.

The discussions revealed:

- Uneven institutional readiness across the sector
- Emerging governance and regulatory challenges
- Gaps in infrastructure, skills and strategic alignment
- The need for shared national frameworks
- The importance of coordinated capacity building
- The value of structured peer learning and knowledge exchange

This presentation reflects on the outcomes of the conference and outlines the next steps in building a sustainable Community of Practice.



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# Community of Practice Inauguration Conference

## Context and Strategic Rationale

The Community of Practice Inauguration Conference, held on **7 November 2025**, marked the formal launch of a national Community of Practice for academic staff in Latvia.

The initial focus was on the implementation of artificial intelligence in higher education.

## Objectives of the Conference

- Present the first national survey results on AI integration
- Share international policy perspectives (OECD)
- Discuss institutional challenges and ethical risks
- Identify strategic next steps
- Establish a collaborative Community of Practice

This presentation reflects on the outcomes of the conference and outlines the next steps in building a sustainable Community of Practice.



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# Participants – Institutional Profile & Representation

Broad national coverage across Latvian higher education institutions – 75 participants

## Institutional Representation (Top Registered Institutions)

- **Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte – 8**
- Latvijas Universitāte – 5
- Ekonomikas un kultūras augstskola – 4
- Rīgas Tehniskā universitāte – 3
- Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija – 3
- Multiple colleges and regional HE institutions (2–3 each)

## Participant Profile (Institutional Role)

- **Administrators: 44 (≈59%)**
- Academic staff: 15 (≈20%)
- Other staff: 11 (≈15%)
- Students: 5 (≈6%)

## Gender Distribution (Based on Registration Data, N = 75)

- **Female (estimated): 43 (~57%)**
- **Male (estimated): 32 (~43%)**



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# Programme Structure

## Morning Session

- Opening addresses (Art Academy Rector, Higher Education Council, Ministry, OECD)
- Keynote: **Dr. Mairéad Pratschke (OECD)** – *Strategic Alignment of AI and Higher Education: A Roadmap for Readiness*
- Elīna Lidere (Ministry of Education and Science) Report on the AI Think Tank established by the Ministry of Education and Science.
- Presentation of national survey results
- Līga Vēliņa (Art Academy of Latvia / CERS) “*Artificial Intelligence Tools in Art Education / Artistic Intelligence Tools*” Presentation on the integration of AI and artistic intelligence tools in art education.

## Curated Exhibition Visit

### Curator-led tour of the exhibition “TIME TOOLS”

## Afternoon Session

- Student panel: AI in studies and research
- Institutional panel: governance, ethics, implementation

Community next steps and working session with administrators



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# Roadmap for AI Implementation in Higher Education

Dr. Pratschke proposed a structured framework — a “**roadmap**” — based on four core principles:

- **Purpose** – Align AI use with institutional mission and strategic objectives
- **Policy** – Develop clear ethics, governance and accountability principles
- **Pedagogy** – Integrate AI tools into teaching and learning practices, testing new approaches
- **Practice** – Share best practices and embed them into quality assurance systems

These four directions form an implementation roadmap for higher education institutions:

- **“Your Roadmap – Aligning Purpose, Policy, Pedagogy and Practice.”**

The roadmap includes staged implementation:

- Q1 – Mapping current AI use and awareness
- Q2 – Developing policy and governance frameworks
- Q3 – Capacity building and pedagogical experimentation
- Q4 – Evaluation, consolidation and institutional embedding

Quoting Barbara Oakley (*The Memory Paradox*), Dr. Pratschke emphasized:

- *“The synergy of human cognition and machine capability will define successful education. Storing key information in human memory is a pillar of cognitive function.”*



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# AI Think Tank for Higher Education

## **Elīna Lidere (Ministry of Education and Science)**

presented the Ministry's initiative to establish a national AI Think Tank dedicated to higher education.

### **Key Messages**

- The Think Tank will serve as a strategic coordination platform for AI development in the sector.
- It aims to align institutional initiatives with national policy and EU regulatory frameworks.
- Focus areas include governance, ethics, capacity building and long-term strategy development.
- Universities and colleges are invited to actively participate in shaping the framework.

### **Call for Collaboration**

- The Ministry invited higher education institutions to engage in structured cooperation, contribute expertise, and jointly develop a coherent national approach to AI implementation.



# Līga Vēliņa (Art Academy of Latvia)

## Reproduction of Artistic Handwriting: AI as a Tool for Optimising Creative Processes

### Research Focus

- Can AI model training reproduce an artist's unique stylistic identity?
- How does working with generative AI reshape perceptions of authorship and creativity?
- What is the pedagogical value of AI integration in art education?

### Key Findings

- AI-generated works were recognised as original only ~55% of the time (near random recognition level).
- Students perceived AI as a *co-creative partner*, not a replacement.
- Strong awareness of shared authorship.
- Significant increase in AI literacy and critical thinking.

### Conceptual Insight

- AI does not replace creativity.  
It mirrors, extends and challenges artistic identity.
- When embedded in a structured pedagogical framework, generative AI becomes:
  - A tool for experimentation
  - A catalyst for meta-cognitive reflection
  - A means of strengthening artistic autonomy



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# Survey Overview – National Landscape

**The survey reveals significant divergence in AI integration stages across Latvian institutions:**

- 48.7% experimenting without strategy
- 38.5% developing strategy
- 17.9% without policy
- Only 5.1% have implemented strategy

**Strategy status:**

- **In development:** A significant proportion of respondents indicate that a strategy is being developed, with "2026-2027" often cited as the planned completion date.
- **No strategy:** Several respondents, admit that they "have no policy or strategy."
- **Strategy implemented:** Only two respondents representing science universities indicate that "the strategy has been developed and is being implemented," while several respondents from the same universities indicate that they are currently "experimenting with AI, but without a defined strategy," which shows that not all parties involved within a single university are always involved or informed about planning and change processes.



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# 1. Strategy and Management

Main obstacles: The most frequently mentioned obstacles to strategy implementation are:

- **Regulatory uncertainties (EU AI Act, copyright)**
- **Lack of funding**
- **Lack of expertise**

**Priority:**

**AI as a strategic priority (on a scale of 1–5) is most often rated 3 or 4, indicating moderate importance.**



## 2. Ethical Risks and Oversight

There is almost unanimous agreement on the main ethical risks.

**The most frequently mentioned risks are:**

- **Copyright and authorship issues**
- **Misinformation and erroneous results**
- **Data privacy and security**

**Oversight:** Most respondents acknowledge that their institutions have no (answer: **"No"**) or only **"Partially"** established a structure to oversee the ethics of AI use.



## 3. Skills and Training

Skill levels are rated as low to moderate, and training has not yet become a systematic practice.

### **Skill assessment (on a scale of 1–5):**

- **Students:** Mostly **2** and **3**.
- **Teachers:** Mostly **2** and **3**.
- **Administrative staff:** Mostly **2** and **3** (some ratings also **1**).
- **Researchers:** Ratings are higher, often reaching **3** and **4**, and in some cases even **5**.

**Training:** Training takes place in many places, but it is often fragmented – targeted at "teachers" or "students." Only a few institutions (e.g., RSU) indicate training for "all groups."

**Ethics in training:** Most respondents who describe the training offered indicate that ethical and critical thinking is included in it "**Partially**" or "**Yes.**"



## 4. Infrastructure and Tools

Infrastructure availability is a significant challenge, and publicly available tools are mostly used.

- **Infrastructure:** Most respondents acknowledge that specialized AI infrastructure (GPUs, cloud solutions) is only "**Partially**" or "**Not**" available. Respondents' assessment of institutional infrastructure (on a scale of 1–5) is very low, with **1**, **2**, and **3** dominating.
- **Paid tools:** The overwhelming majority **do not provide** centralized access to paid tools (e.g., ChatGPT Plus) or provide them only to specific groups, such as "Academic staff only." RSU and RTU are exceptions that provide broader access (e.g., Microsoft Copilot).
- **Tools used:** The most frequently mentioned language models are **OpenAI** (ChatGPT) and **Microsoft / Copilot**. Google / Gemini and the local solution Tilde are also mentioned.



## 5. Readiness for the EU AI Act

Knowledge and readiness for the implementation of the EU Artificial Intelligence Act are at a very low level.

- **Knowledge of the Act:** The rating (on a scale of 1–5) for knowledge is very low, mostly **1** and **2**.
- **Preparation:** Most respondents indicate that preparation **has "not started"** or is **"being planned."**

Only two institutional respondents (from RTU and another science university) confirm that "Yes, there is an EU Artificial Intelligence Act implementation plan."



## 6. Key Benefits and Challenges on AI in HE

### Benefits

- **Efficiency and time savings:** Process automation, faster information selection and processing
- **Improved learning process:** Personalized learning, support in developing study materials, generation of new content
- **Research support:** Faster literature analysis and data processing

### Challenges

- **Academic integrity:** Plagiarism and difficulties in determining students' independent work
- **Information quality:** Incorrect information, misinformation, and AI "hallucinations"
- **Skill degradation:** Decline in critical thinking and over-reliance on technology
- **Data security and copyright:** Risk of data leaks and unresolved intellectual property issues



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## 7. Necessary Support

In order to strengthen the use of AI, institutions point to the need for:

### **Funding**

- For infrastructure acquisition, subscription to fee-based tools, and human resources

### **Uniform guidelines and regulations**

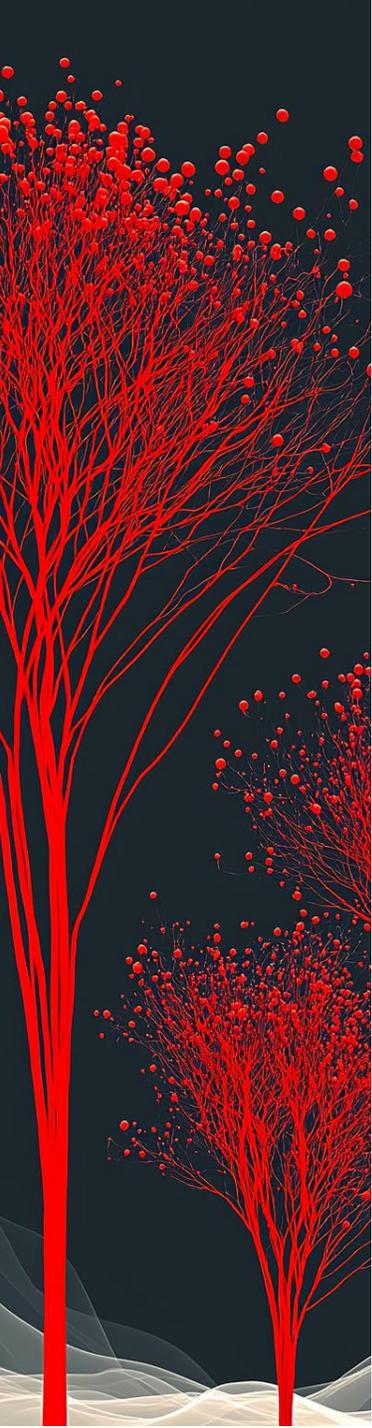
- Clear national or EU-level frameworks and recommendations

### **Training and skills development**

- Centralized training for both staff and students

### **Resources and localized tools**

- Particular emphasis on the need for MI tools adapted to the Latvian language and guaranteeing data security



# Institutional Landscape – “Two-Speed System”

The national survey reveals a structurally uneven AI integration landscape across Latvian higher education.

## Leading Institutions

- A small group of research-intensive universities have moved toward structured AI governance. They are developing or implementing formal strategies, expanding infrastructure, and assigning responsibility for oversight.

## Transitional Institutions

- Several universities of art and applied sciences are experimenting with AI while drafting policies. Implementation is active but not yet systemically embedded.

## Early-Stage Institutions

- Most colleges remain at the early experimentation stage.

## Core Pattern

- AI tool adoption is advancing faster than institutional governance. Infrastructure, expertise, and regulatory preparedness vary significantly across the sector.

## Strategic Implication

- Without coordinated national frameworks and shared capacity-building mechanisms, disparities may deepen.
- The Community of Practice serves as a bridging mechanism between institutional speeds.



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# Panel I – Student Representatives

## **Students and Artificial Intelligence**

- The discussion highlighted how students actively use AI across multiple domains:
- AI in coursework and assignments
- AI in creative projects
- AI in research support and drafting
- Questions of authorship, originality and responsibility

## **Emerging Tension Identified**

Students who are already employed — particularly in the IT sector — described a structural paradox:

- In the workplace, they are encouraged and even expected to use AI tools to increase productivity and efficiency.
- In university settings, they are often instructed to limit or avoid AI use in academic work.

This creates:

- Normative inconsistency between academia and industry
- Confusion about ethical boundaries
- Mixed signals regarding digital competence



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## Panel II – Universities, Colleges and Artificial Intelligence

### **Panelists:**

- Ph.D. Evija Mirķe (RTU, Institute of Digital Humanities)
- Nauris Pauliņš (LBTU, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies)
- Līga Vēliņa (Art Academy of Latvia)
- Rūdolfs Aleksandrs Strods (Latvian Students' Union)

### **Moderator:**

- Dr.art. Andris Teikmanis (Art Academy of Latvia / Higher Education Council)

### **Discussion focused on:**

- Governance structures
- Ethical oversight
- Institutional responsibility
- Strategic AI integration



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# Recommendations for AI Implementation – I

## National Framework

Survey results identified:

- Regulatory uncertainty (especially regarding the EU AI Act)
- Resource shortages
- Fragmented institutional responses
- These challenges cannot be solved individually by each institution.

Recommended actions:

- Develop **national AI guidelines** for higher education
- Provide clear interpretation of academic integrity, data privacy and EU AI Act obligations
- Respect institutional autonomy and sector-specific needs (e.g., arts and culture institutions)
- Create centralized or consortium-based procurement mechanisms for AI tools



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# Recommendations – II

## **Institutional Framework**

- Define clear responsibility for AI governance in each institution
- Establish a designated AI officer or working group
- Begin with a “minimal AI policy” rather than complex long-term strategies
- Shift focus from AI prohibition to meaningful integration in studies



## **Resources, Infrastructure and Skills**

- Provide targeted funding for critical infrastructure (e.g., GPU clusters at national or regional level)
- Integrate mandatory AI literacy into study programmes
- Include technical skills, ethics, critical evaluation and copyright awareness
- Promote knowledge transfer from institutional leaders (e.g., RSU, RTU)
- Strengthen Community of Practice mechanisms for peer learning



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# Community of Practice – The Way Forward

## Why the Community of Practice Remains Necessary

The inauguration conference demonstrated:

- Uneven institutional AI readiness
- Governance gaps across the sector
- A need for shared frameworks and coordinated capacity building
- Demand for peer learning and structured dialogue

The Community of Practice was conceived as a **bridging mechanism** — connecting institutions operating at different levels of AI maturity.



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# Emerging Institutional Uncertainty

As of **1 September 2026**, the institutional architecture of higher education governance will change.

The future allocation of responsibilities currently held by the Higher Education Council (AIP) remains under discussion.

## Strategic Question

- Who will assume responsibility for sector-wide coordination of AI governance in higher education?
- Without a clearly designated coordinating body, fragmentation risks increasing.

## Strategic Position

The Community of Practice should evolve into:

- A stable inter-institutional coordination platform
- A knowledge and governance network
- A long-term mechanism for sector resilience
- Regardless of institutional restructuring, the need for coordinated AI governance in Latvian higher education remains.

Thank You for Your Attention !  
*The future of AI governance  
in higher education depends  
on coordinated action*

**Community of Practice**

Building Responsible AI Governance  
in Latvian Higher Education

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Higher Education Council of Latvia

