Case study

Sector Education
Service Business Consulting

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HRUC's Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Vision to 2030 – In Partnership with Waterstons

Following a referral from an existing client, HRUC engaged Waterstons to develop an AI strategy - the first of its kind for the organisation.

Harrow, Richmond, and Uxbridge Colleges (HRUC) form one of the largest further education groups in England. Recognised as a high-performing further education provider in London, HRUC offers an extensive range of high-quality courses, apprenticeships, and training programmes to a diverse range of learners.

Objective

HRUC recognised the growing use of AI across its campuses and sought to develop a comprehensive AI strategy aligned with its evolving technology strategy. The goal was to define a clear organisational approach to AI, ensuring readiness, governance, and ethical integration across academic and operational domains.

Results at a glance

HRUC now has an actionable and considered AI strategy that:

- Establishes a strategic framework for AI adoption tailored to HRUC's unique context
- Embeds governance and ethical standards for AI use
- Enables both quick wins and long-term transformation through a clear roadmap
- Enhances stakeholder alignment and organisational readiness for AI integration.

You can read the full HRUC strategy document here.

> “Partnering with Waterstons enabled us to translate ambition into a practical AI strategy that is already enhancing the student and staff experience at HRUC. Waterston's blend of sector expertise and technical rigour made them a true partner rather than a supplier. I look forward to further advancing digital transformation across the College Group and building on this work”. **Alex Denley, Chief Technology Officer, HRUC**

Project approach

To deliver this strategy, the project was structured into four key stages:

Stage 1: Organisational and technology landscape review

The project began with a comprehensive review of existing documentation, including an assessment of HRUC’s organisational and technology landscape to understand its maturity and readiness for AI. This included a review of the organisational and technology strategies to ensure future alignment.

We also examined AI related activities undertaken to date, including current policies, processes, and capabilities. In parallel, the team examined HRUC’s data maturity to gauge data accessibility and capability, and reviewed IT infrastructure assessments to understand scalability, security, and integration with existing systems.

These insights informed the development of a stakeholder engagement plan and shaped the design of tailored workshops and surveys.

Stage 2: Stakeholder engagement

Building on the initial review, we launched a broad engagement initiative involving students, staff, and parents and guardians. Over 500 individuals responded to surveys designed to capture a wide range of perspectives on AI usage, opportunities, and risks. Alongside the surveys, we also facilitated 19 workshops with senior stakeholders and leadership teams across the college group.

Specialist consultants led workshops with the college’s cyber and data teams, ensuring robust recommendations around cybersecurity and data governance, laying the foundation for a strategy that is both secure and sustainable.

Stage 3: AI readiness assessment

Drawing on the findings from the engagement and documentation review, our experts conducted a comprehensive AI readiness assessment. This evaluation considered HRUC’s existing processes, policies, infrastructure, and foundational capabilities in data and cybersecurity. The resulting report provided a clear view of HRUC’s current position and future potential, offering actionable recommendations to guide the next steps in its AI journey. The assessment was designed to support HRUC in advancing its AI initiatives as part of a broader strategic roadmap.

Stage 4: Strategy development

Following the initial three stages, we developed a bespoke AI strategy aligned with HRUC’s organisational vision and technology goals. The strategy articulated guiding principles that balanced innovation with governance, and mapped out AI use cases across student services, teaching, and professional functions. It addressed ethical considerations, change management, data and cybersecurity factors, and included a detailed roadmap for implementation and adoption, ensuring the strategy is relevant and actionable.

Presenting at UCISA PACED25:

We were delighted to showcase our partnership with HRUC at UCISA PACED 25, highlighting a bold strategy and vision designed to transform teaching, learning, and the wider student experience across further education.

The session demonstrated how HRUC is embedding AI responsibly and ethically, supported by a clear roadmap for adoption and governance. Practical examples brought this to life, showing AI already in action across the colleges. The strategy also underscored HRUC's commitment to preparing staff and students for an AI-enabled future through targeted training and meaningful cultural change initiatives.