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AI Researchers Project NEWSLETTER

AI RESEARCHERS: ETHICAL AI IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

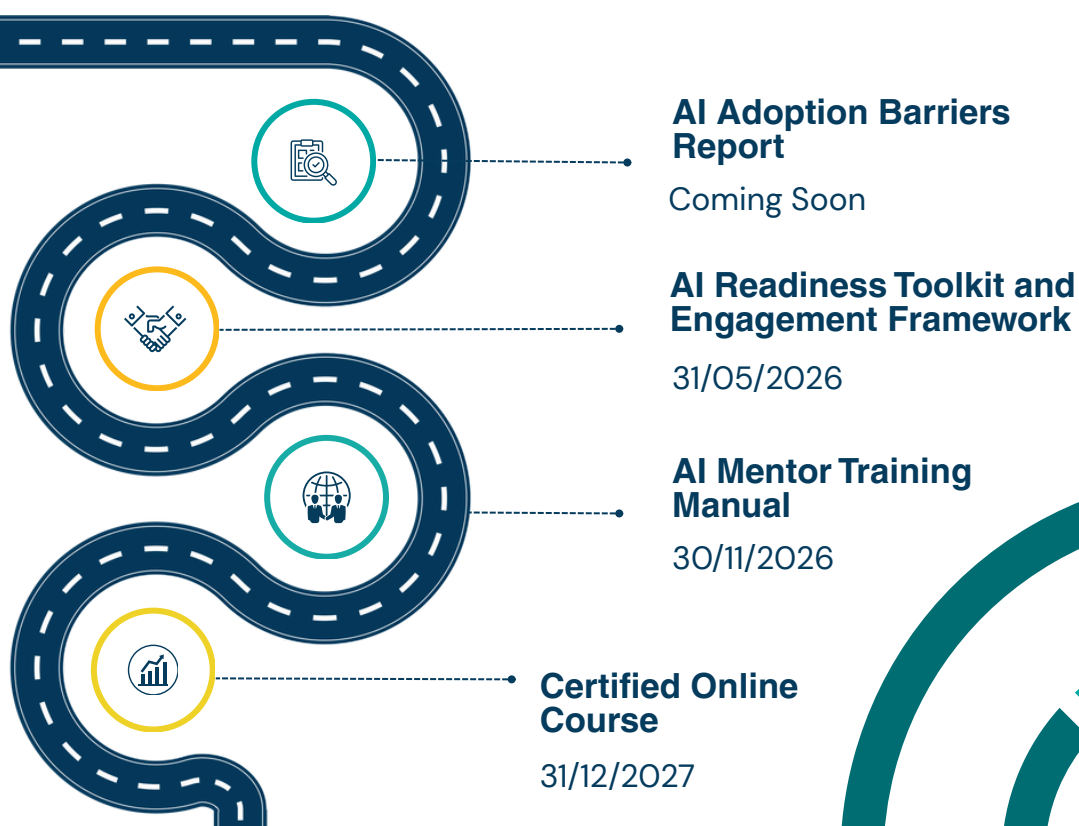
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AI Researchers: AI literacy in European higher education

What is *AI Researchers* about?

The AI Researchers Erasmus+ project is a 30-month initiative supporting academic supervisors, higher education leaders, and research organisations in moving from uncertainty to confident, ethical AI practice. Together, seven partners across six European countries are strengthening research quality, transparency, and trust by helping institutions use AI in credible and accountable ways.



COLLABORATIONS AND SYNERGIES

AI Researchers Meet for the First Time in Warsaw

A meeting of minds in the heart of Warsaw! On 10 March 2026, the AI Researchers consortium gathered for its first Transnational Project Meeting and strategic workshop, hosted by the NIPI. Bringing together partners from across Europe, the meeting marked an important step forward in a shared mission: embedding responsible AI literacy into research and doctoral training.

Building on ongoing research, partners exchanged early insights on the real challenges of AI adoption in academic research, from skills gaps to uncertainty in responsible use.

A key highlight was the co-creation of two central project outputs: the AI Engagement Framework and the AI Readiness Toolkit. These tools are designed to help higher education institutions move from intention to implementation to embedding responsible, ethical, and effective AI practices into everyday research environments.

Ideas challenged, perspectives shared, and solutions co-designed. Because building the future of AI in research isn't done alone, it's built together!



PHOTOS CREDIT: UOL

Meet The Partners

Team Behind AI Researchers



UNIVERSITY OF LODZ, POLAND

The Faculty of Management at the University of Lodz (UoL) is one of Central Europe's largest business schools, serving around 5,000 students. UoL organises hackathons focused on digital transformation and provides AI-related courses for both undergraduates and postgraduates.



**FACULTY OF
MANAGEMENT**
University of Lodz

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ACEEU
ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL &
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ACEEU, GERMANY

ACEEU is the only globally operating quality assurance body focusing on engagement and entrepreneurship in Higher Education. ACEEU was founded with the mission to increase the direct social, economic and environmental impacts that universities make in their ecosystems.

EUROPEAN E-LEARNING INSTITUTE, DENMARK

Founded in 2017, the European E-Learning Institute (EUEI) creates accessible, engaging, and inclusive digital learning experiences with a focus on innovation, ethical technology use, and lifelong learning. EUEI has delivered online courses to over 20,000 students across Europe!



European
E-Learning
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UNIVERSITY OF PORTO, PORTUGAL

School of Economics and Management of the University of Porto (FEP.UP) was created in 1953 and is a reference school in the areas of Economics and Management, gaining prominence in the main international academic and scientific rankings.

MOMENTUM, IRELAND

Founded in 2003, Irish company Momentum is a leading provider of education, innovation and empowerment services. It collaborates with 50+ European HEIs, supports 25,000 learners annually, develops inclusive curricula, advances research valorisation, and delivers impactful strategic communication and cross-sector education initiatives.



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NIPI, POLAND

The National Information Processing Institute – National Research Institute (OPI PIB) is a modern centre for information technologies and artificial intelligence. We support the implementation of government policy in science and higher education. We help shape an innovative, knowledge-driven economy.

UPF BARCELONA SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, SPAIN

The UPF Barcelona School of Management (UPF-BSM), established in 1990 and affiliated with Pompeu Fabra University, offers a broad portfolio of postgraduate programs across management disciplines. UPF-BSM fosters a strong culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.



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AI Adoption Barriers Report

Artificial intelligence is no longer a distant promise for academic researchers — it is already on their desktops. Yet the picture emerging from recent mixed-methods research is more nuanced than the headlines suggest. Adoption is growing, but it is driven by hard-headed pragmatism, not hype.

**AI IN ACADEMIA:
A USEFUL TOOL, BUT NOT
AN UNCONDITIONAL ONE**

Why do researchers actually adopt AI?

Contrary to popular belief, social pressure and the fear of being left behind are poor predictors of GenAI uptake. What genuinely matters is **perceived usefulness** — does the tool solve a real problem? — and **perceived compatibility** with the way a researcher already works. Ease of use matters too, but indirectly: a smoother interface simply accelerates the moment when a researcher discovers the tool's practical value for themselves.

Where does AI work best? And why does that matter globally?

Researchers describe GenAI primarily as a high-quality administrative assistant: a tool that handles repetitive, structured work — grant writing, project reports, large-scale data preprocessing — so that cognitive energy can be reserved for what only humans do well. Perhaps the most democratising effect, however, is linguistic: GenAI is quietly levelling the playing field for scholars whose first language is not English, helping them compete for publication in top-tier international journals on genuinely equal terms.

Where does trust break down? And why does it matter?

**RESEARCHERS ARE
EMBRACING GENERATIVE AI
— YET TRUST REMAINS LOW.**

Researchers are embracing generative AI, yet trust remains low. Despite genuine interest, overall trust in AI remains surprisingly low. The reasons are well known: hallucinations — plausible-sounding but factually wrong outputs — cut directly against science's core demand for reproducibility and rigor. Concerns about intellectual property and data leakage make researchers refuse to feed unpublished work into external systems.

And there is a subtler, structural worry — automating the '*grunt work*' that junior researchers have traditionally learned from risks hollowing out the very apprenticeship that builds the next generation of scientists. Some things, researchers insist, simply cannot be delegated: ethical judgement, peer assessment, mentoring, original thought, meaning-making. Accountability cannot be compiled into code.



AI Adoption Barriers Report

The leadership paradox

One of the study's sharpest findings concerns institutional leaders. Burdened by bureaucracy and grant management, they show the strongest enthusiasm for AI adoption — and, paradoxically, draw the hardest boundaries against it when core academic values are at stake. A broader view of what academia is for, it seems, generates both greater openness to efficiency gains and greater vigilance about what must not be optimised away.

ACCESS THE REPORT [HERE](#)



Three things institutions should do now:

- Training programmes need to shift from explaining the technicalities of the models to demonstrating how they integrate into specific research workflows.
- Institutions must negotiate **centrally licenced, secure access to advanced AI tools** — otherwise, the quality of a researcher's AI assistant will simply reflect the size of their personal budget.
- And, most urgently, academia needs clear, institution-wide **ethical and legal guidelines**: the current vacuum is breeding informal bans that fall hardest on the researchers who can least afford them — early-career scholars navigating an already precarious profession.



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