Charles Sturt University

AI Education and Research Strategy 2026-2028

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AI at Charles Sturt University

Charles Sturt University's engagement with artificial intelligence[1] (AI) is long-standing. It spans teaching and research, with established strengths in digital health, regional AgriTech, environmental data science, and resilient supply chains, and is supported by faculties, research institutes, and centres. Generative AI has changed the conditions in which universities teach, assess, research, support students, and prepare graduates. Charles Sturt is Australia's leading regional university. It will lead the nation in AI-enabled education and research by developing AI-capable graduates, assuring learning, advancing responsible research, upholding First Nations cultural authority, and translating its AI capability into public value for regional Australia.

Purpose

The AI Education and Research Strategy 2026-2028 is Charles Sturt's plan for education and research in an AI-enabled world. It aligns with our values and applies throughout academic life, including learning, teaching, assessment, research, student support, and academic decisions about students and researchers. It sets our direction for AI in education and research and the commitments that guide our policies, procedures, investments, and assurance.

Strategic alignment

This strategy aligns with the University's existing strategic commitments and extends them through specific commitments for education and research in an AI-enabled world. It supports the University Strategy 2020-2030, which commits Charles Sturt to preparing students with skills in AI and ethics, and the Education Strategy Vision 2030, which commits it to proactively harnessing emerging technologies in learning and teaching. The University's 2026-2028 Strategic Plan extends these commitments, names AI as an underlying enabler across all focus areas, and directs the University to explore its opportunities in research, teaching, student support, and operations. The Statement of Principles for the Use of Artificial Intelligence continues to guide institutional conduct, and a new AI Policy will define the University's expectations, limits, accountabilities, and approval requirements.

Pillars and themes

The AI Education and Research Strategy 2026-2028 is organised around three pillars of People, Processes, and Practice[2], each comprising four themes. Across these themes, the University will build AI capability, govern AI responsibly, uphold education and research standards, and translate AI into practical benefit for students, staff, partners, professions, and regional communities. Together, these pillars build on responsible adoption and move Charles Sturt towards national leadership in the use of AI for regional education and research.

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[1] As defined in OECD (2024). "Explanatory memorandum on the updated OECD definition of an AI system", *OECD Artificial Intelligence Papers*, No. 8, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/623da898-en

[2] Adapted from Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. (2024). *Gen AI strategies for Australian higher education: Emerging practice.* Australian Government. https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-11/Gen-AI-strategies-emerging-practice-toolkit.pdf

PEOPLE

The increasing presence of AI in work, study, and daily life places renewed value on distinctly human qualities. Human relationships will remain central to how people learn, research, work, and receive support at Charles Sturt. More than 80 per cent of Charles Sturt's regional graduates stay and work in their communities, and the University is one of the largest employers in the regions it serves[3]. Charles Sturt will be a leading source of AI capability for the workforces, services, professions, and communities of regional Australia.

Theme	*Commitment*
Students	Charles Sturt will make AI capability and human discernment defining features of a Charles Sturt education, preparing graduates to engage confidently and responsibly with AI in their professions and communities.
Staff	Charles Sturt will develop academic, research, and professional staff who lead AI-enabled practice in their fields and shape how AI changes their disciplines and professions.
Partners	Charles Sturt will help define the future of AI in professions and disciplines, in partnership with domestic and overseas delivery partners, industry, accreditation bodies, governments, communities, and research organisations.
Community	Charles Sturt will translate AI capability in education and research into practical benefit for the regional communities it serves. It will uphold First Nations cultural authority, consent, reciprocity, and benefit in all decisions involving First Nations cultural knowledge and the peoples to whom that knowledge belongs.

Students

The University will embed AI capability and human discernment across the curriculum and the student experience, through subject and course design, learning outcomes, assessment tasks, academic skills support, research training, workplace learning, and teaching practice. The University will deliberately develop this capability in every student, rather than leaving it to individual exposure or informal experimentation. Its development will be informed by discipline-specific expertise, aligned with Charles Sturt's values, and supported by clear expectations for responsible, ethical, and effective practice.

Charles Sturt will develop graduates who are compassionate, curious, creative, and collaborative, and who work inclusively across diverse communities. Graduates will have the courage to act in the face of uncertainty, the discernment to judge when AI can support their work, and the metacognitive capacity for lifelong learning.

[3] University Strategy 2020-2030. (2020). Charles Sturt University.

Staff



Academic, research, and professional staff will lead AI use in their fields and shape how it changes their disciplines, professions, and the regional communities the University serves. Leadership in AI is the responsibility of every leader at Charles Sturt. The University will develop leaders to build AI capability and responsible practice in their teams, and to model integrity and innovation.

The University will support academic and research staff in building the discipline-specific capabilities required for their teaching, research, and supervision, and will support professional staff in building the AI capabilities they need for the services and systems that support students, staff, communities, and the University's education and research. This capability will be developed through shared baseline training, role-specific development, and leadership practice. Staff whose work supports learning, teaching, research, and student support will complete baseline training focused on safe and responsible AI practice rather than on specific tools.

Charles Sturt will take a people-first approach, creating a culture in which staff engage with AI openly and with integrity, learn from one another, and feel trusted to explore emerging technologies. Charles Sturt will be an employer of choice for staff who want to shape how AI changes education, research, professions, and regional communities.

Partners



Charles Sturt will ensure professional education, research translation, and external partnerships remain current with changing expectations for AI-enabled practice. The University will represent the realities of regional, rural, remote, and distributed practice as professional bodies define the expectations, capabilities, and accountabilities that will shape AI in their fields.

Charles Sturt will contribute evidence and advocacy to accreditation bodies as professional standards are revised. The University and its research partners will build from its research strengths to provide evidence showing how AI is changing disciplines, professions, workplaces, and communities, so that industry, accreditors, professional bodies, and governments can act in an informed way.

Charles Sturt will work with its domestic delivery partners and with overseas partner universities to apply consistent AI expectations and assurance requirements across all delivery contexts.

Community



Charles Sturt walks alongside First Nations peoples in a relationship that is based on respect and reciprocity. First Nations students, staff, and communities will be supported to lead the use of AI that reflects First Nations ways of knowing, being, and doing. Charles Sturt will translate AI capability in education and research into practical benefit for the regional communities it serves. Charles Sturt will work with its partners to build and share AI capability with regional organisations, so communities can address the problems that matter most to them and shape the opportunities AI creates in their own contexts.

PROCESSES

AI is changing how Charles Sturt designs, delivers, assures, and improves education and research processes. Human authority, professional accountability, and established governance continue to guide these processes, alongside the responsibilities owed to students, staff, partners, and communities. Using AI well depends on enabling staff and students to innovate, test, and learn within a stated tolerance for risk, supported by oversight, risk management, coordinated adoption, and continuous improvement that protect academic standards, integrity, and trust.

Theme	*Commitment*
Governance	Charles Sturt will govern AI in education and research through clear lines of authority, accountability, and oversight within established academic, research, and institutional governance mechanisms.
Risk & assurance	Charles Sturt will enable responsible experimentation within stated risk limits, and identify, manage, monitor, and report on AI risks in proportion to their consequences, to protect the integrity, quality, and trustworthiness of education and research.
Innovation & improvement	Charles Sturt will support staff and students to develop new uses of AI in teaching, assessment, research, and support. It will scale effective improvements to education and research processes.
Coordination & alignment	Charles Sturt will coordinate AI initiatives across faculties, schools, institutes, centres, and divisions, aligning them with University strategies and with external regulatory, accreditation, and funding requirements.

Governance

Academic and research authority rests with people. AI may inform, augment, or support academic and research activity, but it cannot be given authority, exercise delegated power, or be accountable for outcomes. People with delegated authority will make decisions under the University's delegations framework and remain accountable for those decisions, including where AI has informed or supported the work.

Charles Sturt will develop and implement an AI Policy as the University's authoritative statement of expectations, limits, and accountabilities for AI in education and research. The University will set the frameworks and limits that apply across the institution, including any prohibitions, with the Statement of Principles for the Use of Artificial Intelligence remaining in effect.



Risk and assurance

Charles Sturt will identify and monitor AI risks and report on them through its existing risk and academic governance arrangements. It will enable staff and students to experiment with confidence, accepting a higher tolerance for risk in contained settings where the consequences are limited and reversible. It will apply a low tolerance where AI affects academic or research decisions, personal data, cultural knowledge, or safety. This will protect people, academic and research standards, institutional integrity, compliance, reputation, and trust.

Innovation and improvement

Charles Sturt will support staff and students in designing, testing, and refining new models for teaching, assessment, research, and student support. To do this, the University will support access and innovation for staff and students, student-staff partnership projects, AI pilots to trial new tools, and an expanded community of practice that connects this work across faculties, schools, institutes, and centres.

The University will scale the AI-enabled improvements that work, strengthening the quality, consistency, timeliness, and accessibility of education and research processes, including the services, systems, and administrative work that support students, academic staff, researchers, supervisors, and partners. Improvements will be scaled where they are evidence-informed, meet people's needs, and demonstrably improve practice or reduce unnecessary burden.

Coordination and alignment

Charles Sturt will coordinate AI initiatives so that education and research activities are visible, aligned, and mutually reinforcing. AI capabilities, tools, guidance, and assurance will be developed to reduce duplication, support local needs, and maintain a coherent institutional approach.

The University will align AI initiatives with its education, research, First Nations, technology, risk, and workforce strategies, as well as the requirements of regulators, accreditors, professional bodies, funders, and research partners. This alignment will support consistent expectations, responsible investment, and clear pathways for scaling local innovation into practice across the University.

PRACTICE

At Charles Sturt, the value of AI will be judged by whether it strengthens learning, advances research, improves support, expands access, creates public value, and extends engagement beyond the University. Charles Sturt's practices will remain grounded in human judgement, disciplinary expertise, academic and research standards, and its values and responsibility to serve its students, professions, and regional communities.

Theme	*Commitment*
Learning & teaching	Charles Sturt will lead the use of AI in learning, teaching, feedback, and academic support, and design assessments that assure learning and uphold academic integrity in an AI-enabled world. Students will know how AI is used in teaching, learning materials, and feedback, and whether and how they can use it in each assessment.
Research	Charles Sturt will use AI to strengthen research quality, capability, collaboration, and impact at every stage from design to publication. Authorship of research outputs and accountability for their integrity will remain with researchers, regardless of the role AI plays.
Student support	Charles Sturt will use AI in student support where it improves access, timeliness, consistency, and early intervention. Students will know when AI informs or supports University interactions, and human relationships will remain central to supporting students.
Engagement & service	Charles Sturt will translate AI capability into stronger external engagement with partners, professions, alumni, industry, government, and communities, and strengthen its contribution to the public good and the regions it serves.

Learning and teaching

Charles Sturt will take a deliberate approach to AI by leading its use across learning, teaching, academic support, and assessment. The University will redesign courses, subjects, and assessments to prepare students to work with AI.

The role AI plays in each assessment will be decided at the point of design, in line with the learning outcomes being assessed, and each assessment will be designed to assure those outcomes are achieved. Staff will use AI in teaching, learning materials, and feedback where it improves them, and students will be told how it has been used.

Judgement of student work, and accountability for it, will remain with academic staff. Each assessment will state whether and how students can use AI. Learning and teaching practice will prepare students for AI-enabled academic, professional, and community life while developing the human capabilities that remain central to professional judgement, creativity, communication, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

Research

AI will support rigorous inquiry, responsible methods, and impact in research, with decisions guided by the discipline, research context, and intended contribution. Researchers will make purposeful decisions about the role of AI in their work, guided by research integrity, ethical obligations, disciplinary standards, and the expectations of funders, publishers, partners, and communities. Authorship of research outputs and accountability for their integrity will remain with researchers, regardless of the role AI plays. Charles Sturt will build the capability of researchers and research students for critical, transparent, and responsible AI-enabled research practice.

Student support

Charles Sturt will use AI in student support where it improves access, timeliness, consistency, and early intervention. Students will know when AI informs or supports University interactions, what role it plays, and how to access human support.

Students will be supported through a combination of AI-enabled services and human engagement, with human relationships remaining central to student support. AI will strengthen those relationships by helping staff identify and respond to needs earlier and more consistently across the student experience. Student support interactions that use AI will be transparent, respectful, and accountable, with clear pathways to staff.

Engagement and service

AI will help Charles Sturt build stronger relationships, understand emerging needs, communicate more effectively, and extend the reach of its education and research. This includes collaboration with professions, industry, government, alumni, and community partners. Engagement will remain reciprocal, respectful, and grounded in human relationships.

External engagement will focus on practical contributions to the communities Charles Sturt serves. AI capability will help the University share knowledge, evidence, and practical support with regional Australia.

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