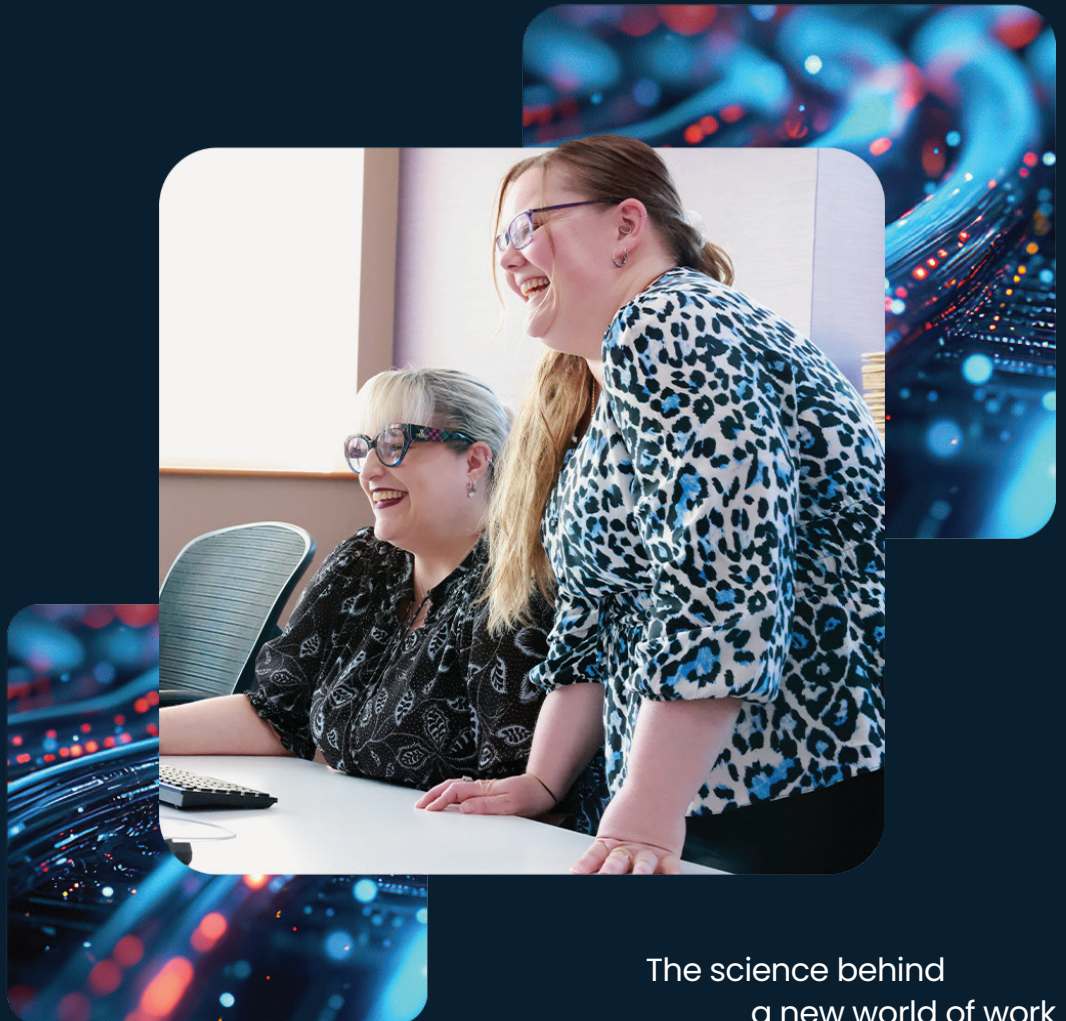




AI in HR: A scorecard for higher ed HR leaders

Build transparency, trust and compliance into every AI decision



The science behind
a new world of work



AI is moving fast — which makes it even more critical for higher ed institutions to move with intention, not reaction. Compliance, funding, accreditation and public trust depend on it.

This AI governance scorecard helps HR leaders assess where they stand and what comes next. Whether you're just starting or refining your approach, these focus areas ensure your use of AI is transparent, institutionally grounded and ready for what's next.

Lead with compliance and control

In higher ed, regulations run deep. Any AI-powered HR tool must stand up to scrutiny from funders, boards and public stakeholders.

- ☐ Are your AI tools reviewed regularly for compliance with ADA, union agreements and relevant state labor laws?
- ☐ Do you have clear audit trails and documentation for how AI impacts hiring, pay and promotions?
- ☐ Do your AI vendors provide documentation or controls that support fairness, data integrity and responsible use — such as blind shortlisting, DEI-informed prompts or configurable transparency settings?
- ☐ Are AI tools traceable and explainable, with documented outputs and decisions suitable for accreditation and leadership review?

Accountability to students, staff and stakeholders starts with systems built for compliance.

Who owns what? A sample RACI model

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	ACCOUNTABLE	CONSULTED	INFORMED
Define use case and success metrics	HR Ops	CHRO	Provost's office, IT Security, Legal/Compliance	Department chairs, Union reps
Data/privacy review	IT Security	CIO	Legal/Compliance, HR Ops	HRBPs
Pilot approval	HR steering committee	CHRO	Provost's office, Finance	Department admins
Training and comms	HR Ops	CHRO	DEI, Comms	Managers, Employees
Monitor KPIs	HR Analytics	CHRO	Legal/Compliance	Board/Audit committee (summary)



Build the committee and the accountability

A governance group is a must. But beyond forming one, higher ed leaders need to ensure it's trusted and transparent. The core group should include voices from HR, IT, DEI, faculty and staff — and operate with clear charters and oversight.

For institutions looking to strengthen trust and broaden buy-in, expanding the committee to include members of administration and even student representatives can be highly effective. Their perspectives help ensure AI governance is not just operationally sound but institutionally aligned and community informed.

- ☐ Have you established a cross-functional AI governance committee with a clear mandate?
- ☐ Is this group accountable to leadership, staff and campus stakeholders?
- ☐ Are decisions and policies about AI use shared openly with employees and unions?
- ☐ For represented employees, what are the potential impacts on scheduling, evaluation and workload for CBA implications and required notifications?

Shared governance models call for visible accountability not just internal approval loops.



Invite, don't ignore, shadow IT

Faculty and staff are already experimenting with AI. Instead of cracking down, HR can create pathways to understand and evaluate these tools while reducing risk and fostering innovation.

- ☐ Do you have a process for employees to surface third-party AI tools they're using?
- ☐ Is there a framework to assess those tools for compliance, privacy and relevance?
- ☐ Have you offered safe channels for staff to share AI use cases from previous roles?

Proactive governance turns shadow IT into shared innovation.

Align AI to your purpose

AI should enhance the work HR teams do to support faculty, staff and students. That means every AI initiative should tie back to institutional goals and values, not only efficiency.

- ☐ Are AI use cases connected to strategic goals like DEI, student success or research excellence?
- ☐ Grant-funded and restricted roles: ensure AI use respects eligibility/time limits and supports required funder reporting (e.g., effort reporting).
- ☐ Do tools support personalized development, mobility and retention?
- ☐ Are you using AI insights to inform workforce planning and succession?

Academically accountable HR doesn't just automate. It elevates people and purpose.

Pilot to scale decision framework

KPI	THRESHOLD	STATUS
Adoption	$\geq$ colleges/departments	☐ ☒
Error rate	$\downarrow$ X% vs. baseline	☐ ☒
Cycle time	$\downarrow$ Y% vs. baseline	☐ ☒
Bias incidents	0 over N weeks	☐ ☒
Decision	Scale when all four are ☒	
Rollback plan	Define steps if any KPI regresses	



Shift from pilot mode to standard practice

AI isn't just "on the horizon" — it's here. The challenge now isn't experimentation. It's adoption at scale. HR leaders are in the perfect position to help their institutions move from small pilots to strategic implementation.

- ☐ Have you identified where AI is already delivering ROI and where it's ready to scale?
- ☐ Is your governance structure built to evolve as tools become core to operations?
- ☐ Are you measuring adoption, outcomes and satisfaction with AI-powered workflows?

In higher ed, it's time to shift from experimenting and implementing to innovating.



About People First

People First, powered by MHR, is an all-in-one HCM platform built for lean HR teams. With modern AI-powered tools and pre-configured workflows, it helps higher ed institutions manage compliance, culture and everyday HR in one place.

Train for adoption, not only rollout

Getting buy-in for AI tools in higher ed means supporting understanding and building trust. Training needs to be practical, inclusive and ongoing.

- ☐ Have you provided clear, jargon-free training on how AI tools work and what they don't do?
- ☐ Are managers and employees supported in learning how AI shapes HR decisions?
- ☐ Have you addressed AI anxiety by clarifying that these tools augment, not replace, human roles?
- ☐ Does the training and communication explicitly include adjuncts, student workers and term-limited staff, not just full-time employees?

The more staff understand, use and interact with AI tools, the more likely they are to trust and adopt them.

Bring it all together

With the right guardrails in place, HR teams can scale what works, reduce institutional risk and earn the trust needed to move AI initiatives forward.

Ready to see how People First can transform campus HR operations?

Download our Reinventing HR eBook





About MHR

MHR has been driving innovation across the HRIS space for over 40 years. We don't just meet the industry standard, we exceed it. Engineered by the latest SaaS technology, our product, People First enables increased employee productivity and organizational growth with a demonstrable return on investment.

People First is guided by what our customers and the market demand in a rapidly changing world.

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