



Košice Manifesto on Making Higher Education Institutions Enablers of Smart Artificial Intelligence Dissemination for an Inclusive, Ethical, and Future-Ready Society

Inspired by the collective journey of the ASEFinnoLab6 Cohort
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Preamble

The **Košice Cohort of the 6th ASEF Higher Education Innovation Laboratory (ASEFinnoLab6)** gathered at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice from 2 to 5 December 2025 to deepen a shared inquiry: **How can Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) become enablers of smart artificial intelligence (AI) dissemination for an inclusive, ethical and future-ready society?**

This meeting builds upon a months-long process initiated in May 2025; an exploration of how AI is reshaping skills, learning, teaching, governance, societal readiness, and the very mission of HEIs.

Drawing inspiration from the many discussions, lectures, and joint research guiding this initiative, we reaffirm that:

- **AI is not the story itself.** The real story is *humanity's capacity* to harness it wisely.
- **HEIs must become catalysts of agency, wisdom, and collective problem-solving,** not merely adopters of tools.

In this spirit, we present **Ten Principles**: a synthesis of the cohort's reflections, research discussions, and peer exchanges intended as a call to inquiry and action for HEI academic leaders, programme directors, and heads of studies.

They reflect our belief that universities must guide accessible AI adoption in ways that uphold dignity, strengthen capability, and cultivate a society that is fair, creative, and resilient.

The Ten Principles

1. Define, Design and Build Ethical and Human-Centred AI Skills as the Foundation of AI Readiness.

AI skills development must begin with responsibility, inclusion, dignity, and human purpose.

Example: HEIs establish interdisciplinary AI spaces where students from engineering, psychology, law, business, and other disciplines co-design solutions addressing local community needs, ensure data transparency, and cultivate empathy and critical reflection.

2. Enable AI-Augmented, Not AI-Controlled, Educational Process

HEIs must provide opportunities on how to use AI thoughtfully rather than debating whether to use it. AI should enhance—not displace—human creativity and judgment.

Example: Educators receive training on blending AI tools into learning processes so students develop adaptable, future-proof skills.

3. Protect the Space for Human Cognitive Autonomy

AI should never collapse the human capacity for imagination, reflection, and independent reasoning.

Example: Students and faculty adopt a structured “pause before prompting” practice, allowing sufficient time for independent ideation and research before engaging AI tools to preserve creative and autonomous cognitive processes.

4. Empower Educators through Reflective, Peer-Based Learning, Inclusive and Ethical AI Capability Paradigms

Educators must be equipped not only technically but also ethically, pedagogically, and reflectively to redesign lifelong learning for the AI era.

Example: HEIs adopt AI literacy pathways that include “train-the-trainer” programmes, annual refresher courses, and cross-stakeholder reflection sessions with industry partners.

5. Create Psychological Safety for Experimentation

Innovation in AI-integrated education requires safe-to-fail spaces where experimentation, reflection, and shared learning are normalised. Make it a policy and internal culture to have a retroactive feedback cycle after experiments as a process of learning and teaching, so that future generations of innovators can build on the initiative as an update, despite the initial failure.

Example: Faculty members and staff join rotating facilitation circles and sprints to share failures and lessons learned, reducing hierarchy and fostering a culture of learning.

6. Transform HEIs into AI-Enabled Innovation Hubs

HEIs must become living ecosystems where all stakeholders-collaboratively build socially impactful AI solutions.

Example: Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary AI incubation centres bring together students, faculty, and industry mentors from different regions of the world to co-create solutions for societal impact.

7. Ensure Standardised, Understandable and Trustworthy AI Systems Across the Institution

Consistent standards and publicly communicated institutional positions are essential for trust and ethical practice.

Example: HEIs publish institution-wide AI guidelines detailing permissible uses, data protections, limitations of AI systems, and governance responsibilities, ensuring all departments operate with shared clarity and accountability.

8. Foster Transparent AI Governance Communication-and Decision-Making

HEI should provide clear, consistent communication on how AI-related decisions are made, ensuring that governance practices are understandable and visible to the entire academic community.

Example: HEIs create platforms for continuous two-way communication on AI-based decisions, ensuring transparency, accountability and the right to challenge algorithmic outcomes.

9. Innovate AI-Integrated Curricula Across Disciplines, Cultures and Communities

Curriculum innovation must anticipate societal needs and broaden AI readiness beyond STEM and beyond campus. Cooperation and dialogue with other countries and regions should be fostered to shape the contents of training and education material.

Example: HEIs offer culturally contextualised, free AI literacy programmes for HEIs and community members during evenings or weekends, strengthening societal preparedness for AI.

10. Build Institutional Capacity and Provide Resources to Orchestrate Learning Ecosystems

HEIs must evolve from content providers to ecosystem builders, connecting industry, communities, governments, and global partners to co-create a fair, sustainable AI future.

Example: HEIs support flexible and agile learning pathways, interdisciplinary hackathons, and communities of experts who co-create knowledge and align curriculum with culturally relevant and socially impactful needs.

Conclusion

The Košice Manifesto represents the collective insight of a cohort of 32 participants from 18 countries committed to shaping an AI-driven future where HEIs remain agents of human empowerment and architects of inclusive progress.

These ten principles are neither final nor exhaustive; they are a starting point. They invite educational leaders, researchers, and policymakers to continue the dialogue, test new models, and co-create evidence-based pathways that ensure AI serves the public good.

We offer this Manifesto as an invitation:

Let AI be the air, but let humans remain the breath.

See list of cohort members [here](#).

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