



Education Strategy Forum

11th, 12th February & 13th March 2024

Interim Client Research Report

Total Delegate Group: **122**



This interim report is based on survey findings of the 122 delegates who have confirmed their attendance at the upcoming Education Strategy Forum on the 11th, 12th and 13th March 2024, which will rise to over 150 vice-chancellors, directors and heads of departments from UK higher education institutions.

To deepen our insights, we interviewed the highest decision-makers in video and telephone interviews to discuss the trends and issues being tackled in their organisations.

16

Chiefs &
Pro-Vice
Chancellors

47

Directors

32

Heads of
Department

27

Deans &
Leads



MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

With students having greater choices and access to resources, the educational landscape has grown increasingly competitive. In this environment, student experience has taken on heightened significance, playing a crucial role in attracting prospective students and retaining existing ones. It's now recognised that student experience encompasses more than just academic results. Organisations are adapting by implementing platforms and technologies that facilitate robust social and personal development, exposure to innovative technology, as well as guidance and opportunities for employment.



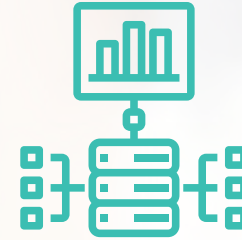
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI opens doors to personalised learning experiences, the integration of virtual assistants and tutors, and the adoption of automated grading and assessment systems. These advancements collectively enhance the efficiency of staff resources within educational settings. Furthermore, students exposed to such technology gain a competitive edge in employability. With AI dominating the contemporary workplace, future jobs are expected to demand a profound understanding of this technology, making it a valuable asset for those entering the workforce.



OPTIMISING STUDENT DATA

Organisations manage extensive amounts of data daily. To better optimise this data, the implementation of advanced platforms can be instrumental in sorting, predicting, and managing information. These systems provide a comprehensive and reliable overview of student demographics, academic performance, and engagement which all facilitate informed decision-making based on real-time data. Analysis of student data allows for potential problems to be identified and solutions to be quickly implemented which in turn can improve the student experience and therefore boost the reputation of an organisation.



MODERNISATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Upgrading the infrastructure of organisations holds significant appeal for prospective students. The heightened emphasis on integrating technological tools and digital solutions to enhance the student experience is a substantial investment within the group. Modernised infrastructure not only fosters a more seamless student journey but also exposes students to technologies relevant to their future careers, providing them with valuable hands-on experience.

The challenges being prioritised by the Faculty Pro Vice Chancellor for Manchester Metropolitan University:

- High-value grants provided by third parties
- Recruitment of senior leaders within the faculty
- International student recruitment

The key issues being tackled by the Founder and Director of Swansea University, Energy Safety Research Institute.

- Adaption of AI in education and research
- Security issues around data use and IP
- Using AI to generate outreach

COMBINED SPENDING POWER OF GROUP

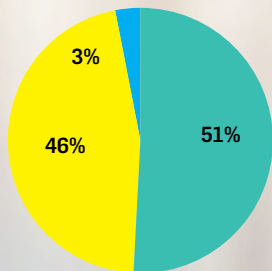
£867 million+



BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY PER PERSON

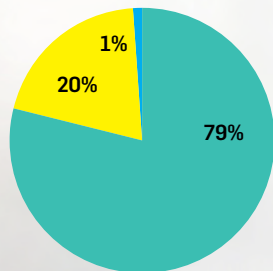
SPEND MAPPING

CLOUD SOLUTIONS



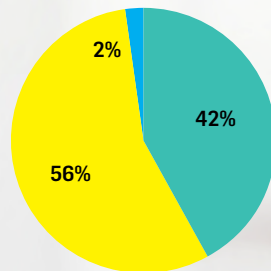
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● Decrease

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



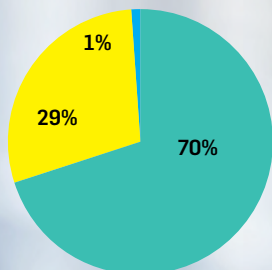
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MOBILITY SOLUTIONS



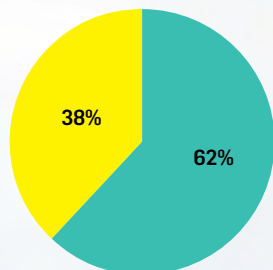
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ANALYTICS & BIG DATA SOLUTIONS



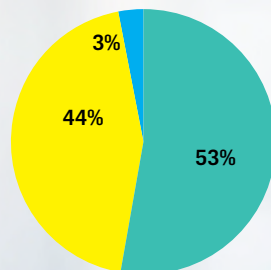
● Increase ● Stay the same
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DIGITAL SECURITY



● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

VIRTUAL/AUGMENTED REALITY



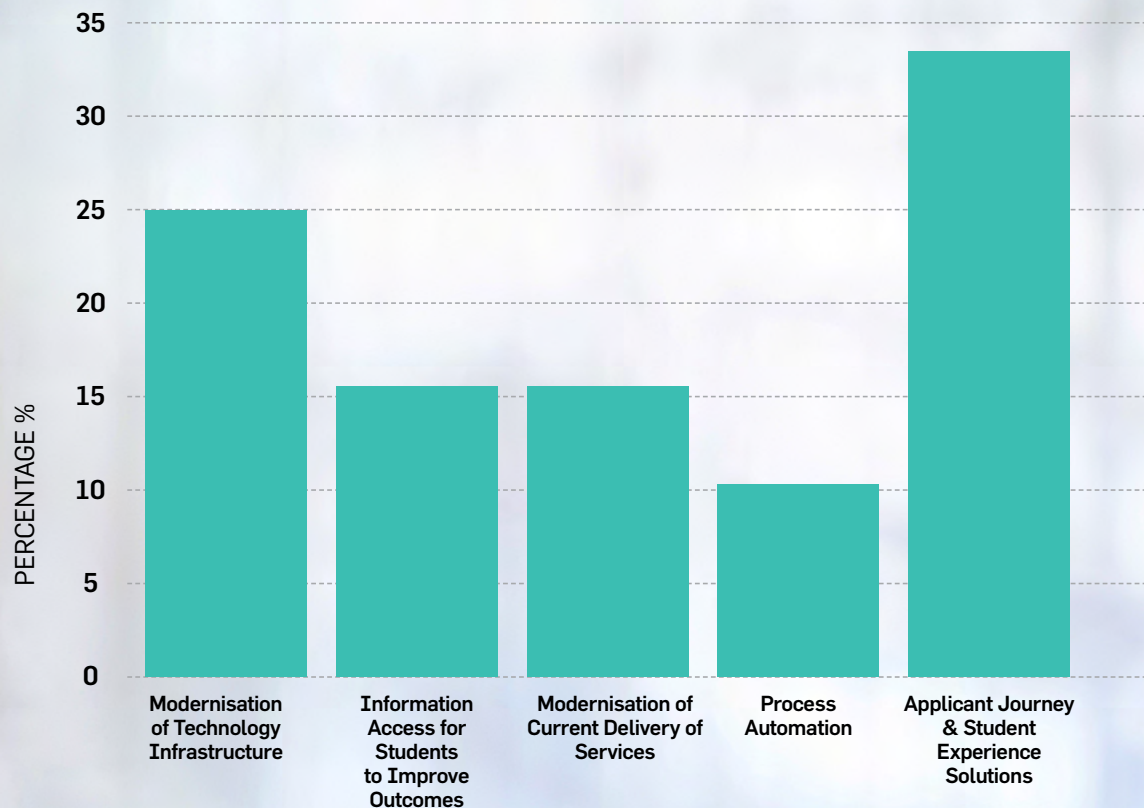
● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

The allocation of budgets for AI in education is on the rise, driven by the promise it holds to individualise the learning experience and enhance student engagement. AI not only facilitates personalised learning but also is starting to bring chatbots into the classroom acting as a virtual tutor, making education more accessible. Organisations embracing AI in education are particularly attractive to digital-native students, providing them with valuable experience in a technology that mirrors what they will encounter in their future professional lives.

Higher education organisations are starting to use big data in day-to-day practices to ensure optimal performance within the organisation and better predict and identify areas in need of improvement. This helps both students and staff to track and predict data, and helps analyse positives in the institutions, but also identify areas of improvement so these areas can be adjusted.

Given the invaluable role that big data and analytics plays in the operations of organisations, ensuring robust security measures has become imperative. As these entities store highly sensitive data, they have become prime targets for breaches. So making sure digital security is tight is a key priority.

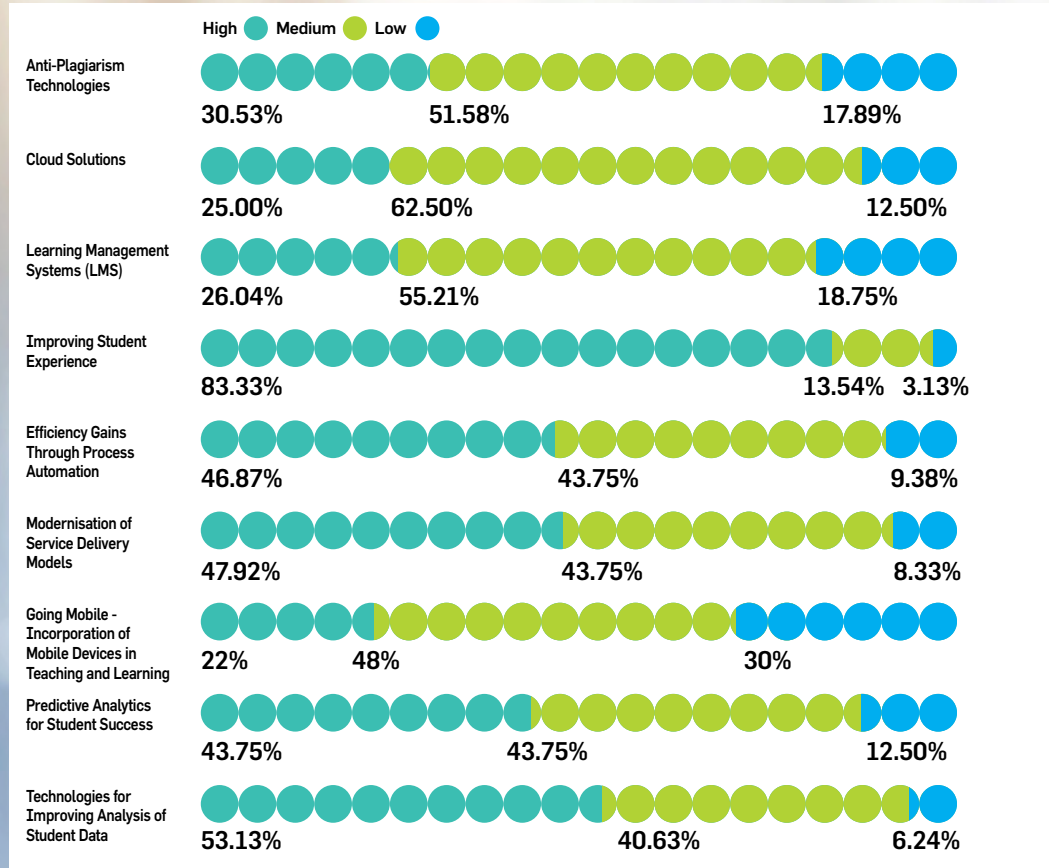
TOP TRANSFORMATIONAL INITIATIVES



Among the attending group 'Applicant Journey & Student Experience Solutions' was highlighted as the top transformational change. Organisations are increasingly channelling investments into self-sufficient technologies like self-service portals to enhance the accessibility of learning. The application process serves as the initial impression of the institution, thereby emphasising the importance of crafting a user-friendly journey for applicants.

In the digital age, data should be accessible to everyone, everywhere. By modernising the technology infrastructure, such as adopting cloud databases to share content and data to help staff and students have more access. These new platforms can also help speed up day to day tasks. Cloud systems can also help schools store vast amounts of data in one place. Replacing dated systems, that are old and unreliable and will have more secure systems which is valuable to institutions who under high risk for security breaches.

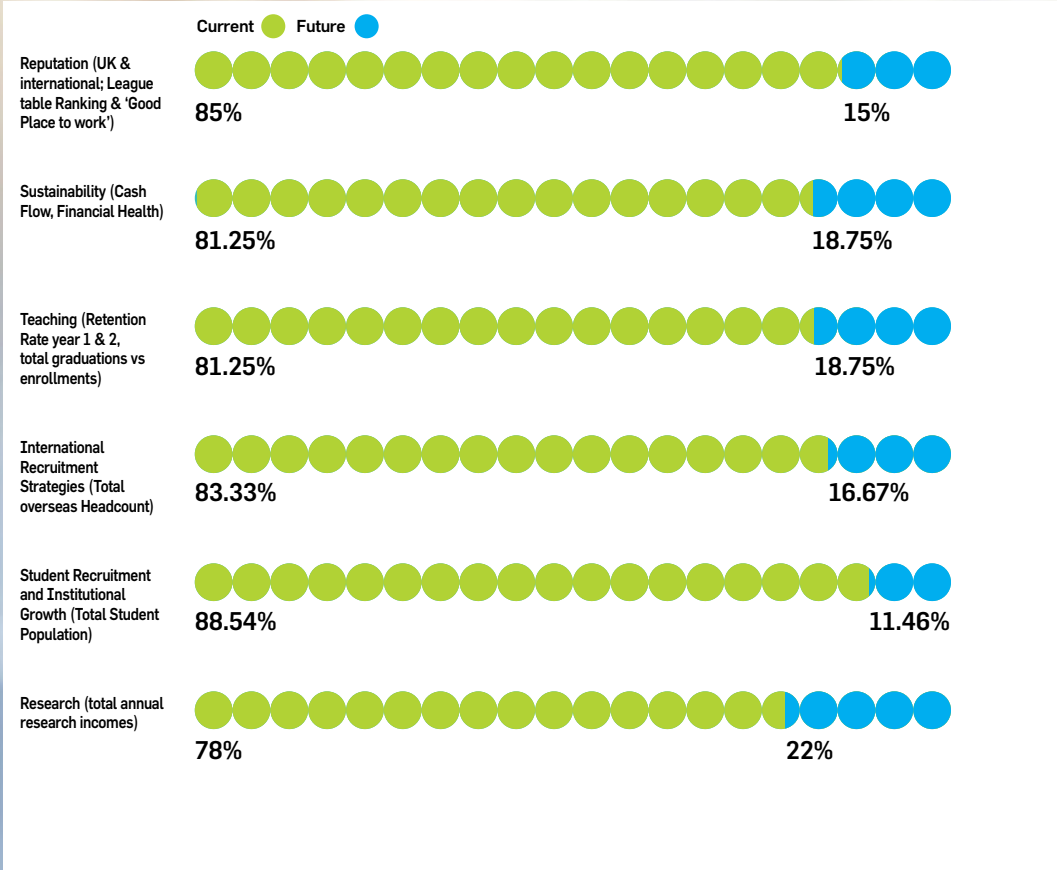
RANKING OF TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS



Enhancing student experience emerges as a top priority for the majority of attendees, recognising its potential to provide a competitive edge in the educational landscape. Students have the potential to give institutions more visibility if they share positive experiences, however they have just as much power in creating a bad reputation too, so tracking and providing a good student journey is vital.

Furthermore, there is a notable focus on investing in technologies to enhance the analysis of student data and provide more personalised learning experiences. Successfully utilising student data empowers universities to make data-driven decisions, fostering a more responsive, adaptive, and student-centric learning environment while optimising their operational efficiency and effectiveness.

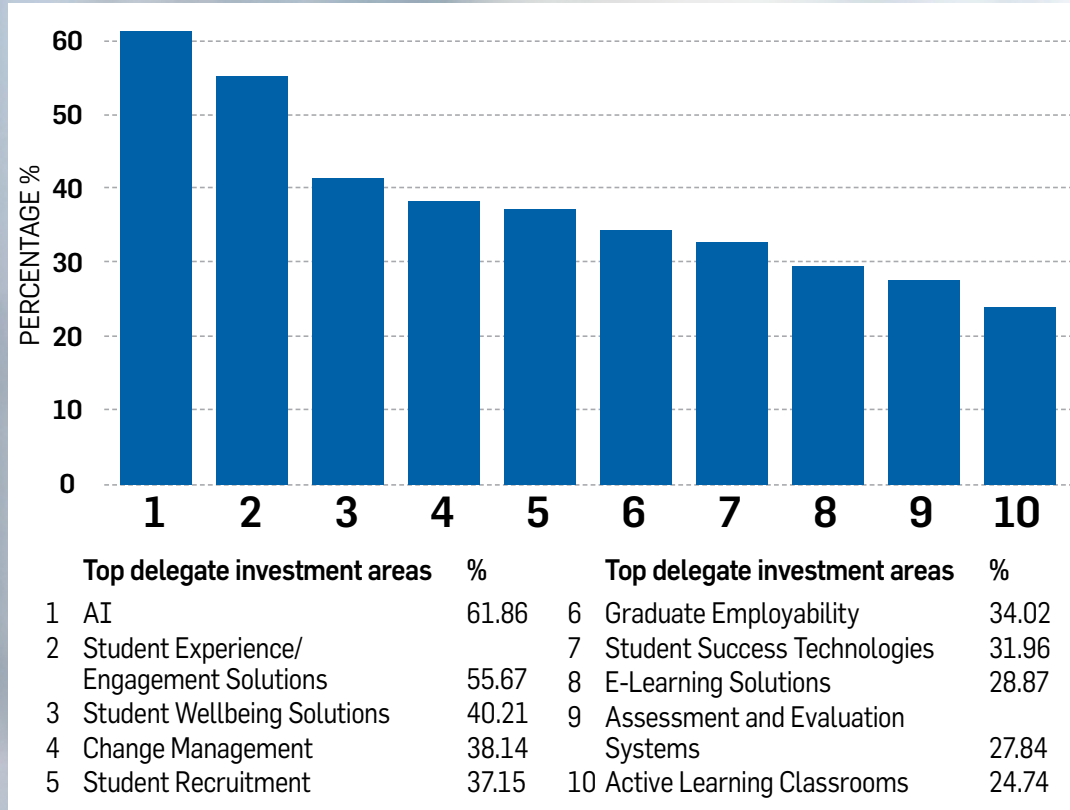
CURRENT OR FUTURE FOCUS AREAS



In today's interconnected world, factors like globalisation, digitisation, and social media have heightened the vulnerability of reputation. University selection, a substantial investment for students, now involves considerations beyond academic grades, encompassing factors such as facilities, pastoral care, career opportunities, and provided platforms.

To spotlight their unique student experiences, organisations are implementing recruitment strategies to expand their reach and influence. These institutions are also casting a global net to attract international students. The recruitment of students from different corners of the globe not only introduces diverse perspectives but also broadens alumni networks, ultimately contributing to improved global rankings and heightened visibility for universities.

DELEGATE INVESTMENT AREAS



62% of educators have identified Artificial Intelligence as their top priority, signalling a growing desire to integrate AI into educational systems. The adoption of AI presents opportunities for personalised learning experiences, the utilisation of virtual assistants and tutors, and the implementation of automated grading and assessment, all contributing to more efficient use of staff resources. Furthermore, students will encounter AI extensively in their future careers, making familiarity with this technology crucial for enhancing their employability.

An additional 55% of the group have emphasised student experience and engagement solutions as their primary focus. With a heightened awareness of mental health, institutions bear the responsibility of ensuring students are content not only with their educational requirements but also with their personal and social needs. Recognising that these softer aspects significantly influence the overall student experience, they hold substantial sway in shaping a university's reputation.



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Deep understanding and clever tech connecting smart people in smooth interactions. Goodbye static conferences, hello evolution.

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