

Campus AI Governance Question Guide

A Structured Diagnostic for Institutional Leaders,
Governance Committees, and Campus Stakeholders

Based on the Nine AI Governance Domains for Higher Education

Companion to: Understanding How AI Governance Works on Your Campus

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence is being adopted across every function of higher education: teaching, research, student services, enrollment management, campus operations, procurement, and institutional communications. Yet on most campuses, the people affected by AI governance decisions cannot find the policies, do not know who is responsible, and cannot explain how the system works. This is not because governance does not exist. It is because governance, where it does exist, is often invisible to the people it is supposed to serve.

This guide provides a structured diagnostic organized around the Nine AI Governance Domains for Higher Education. It contains over 80 questions across nine domains, grouped into three supercategories: Academic Core and Student Outcomes, Infrastructure Risk and Vendors, and People and Governance. The questions are designed to reveal where governance exists, where there are genuine gaps, and where governance may be in place but is not reaching the campus community.

The guide serves multiple audiences. For institutional leadership, it provides a comprehensive view of AI governance scope and a tool for assessing institutional risk posture. For governance committees and working groups, it provides a structured self-assessment. For divisional leaders, it provides domain-specific questions that can be used to evaluate readiness within their areas of responsibility.

Why This Matters for Institutional Leadership

AI governance is an institutional risk issue, a strategic positioning issue, and an accreditation readiness issue. Institutions that cannot explain their AI governance to their own people will struggle to explain it to accreditors, legislators, auditors, or the public. The questions in this guide surface exposure in areas that carry significant institutional consequence:

Regulatory and legal exposure. State and federal AI legislation is accelerating. Institutions without governance structures for algorithmic decision-making, data privacy, and procurement face compliance risk that grows with every new deployment.

Reputational risk. A biased algorithmic decision affecting financial aid or admissions, an AI-generated recruitment image that fabricates campus diversity, or a public-facing chatbot that provides inaccurate policy guidance can each generate significant reputational harm.

Accreditation readiness. Accreditors are increasingly asking how institutions govern AI in teaching, assessment, and student outcomes. Institutions without documented governance structures may face difficult conversations during review cycles.

Workforce and talent risk. Institutions that do not invest in employee AI competency and do not create clear acceptable use policies risk both talent attrition and unmanaged shadow AI adoption.

Financial sustainability. AI adoption carries real and growing costs: enterprise licenses, API consumption, infrastructure, and staffing. Without cost governance, these expenses can scale without oversight or accountability.

Strategic opportunity. Institutions that govern AI well are positioned to adopt AI faster, more responsibly, and with greater institutional confidence. Governance is not only a defensive function. It is an enabler of innovation when done correctly.

How to Use This Guide

This document is a companion to the summary article [Understanding How AI Governance Works on Your Campus](#). Where that article frames the problem and introduces the diagnostic approach, this guide provides the detailed questions.

What AI Governance Means

A shared definition is essential, because "AI governance" means different things to different people, and that ambiguity contributes directly to the communication gaps this guide is designed to address.

AI governance in higher education is the system of policies, standards, guidelines, structures, roles, and processes that an institution uses to direct, oversee, and account for how artificial intelligence is adopted, used, and managed across the campus. It answers the questions: Who decides how AI is used here? What rules apply? Who is accountable when something goes wrong? And how do we ensure that AI use aligns with our institutional mission, values, and obligations?

AI governance is not a single policy. It is not a committee. It is not a technology platform. It is the coordinated functioning of all of these elements across the institution. It spans academic policy, data security, procurement, workforce development, student rights, research integrity, and institutional strategy. It includes both the policies that mitigate harmful uses and the enablement mechanisms that support responsible and effective AI adoption.

Why This Guide Exists

AI governance in higher education is not a single function. As the Campus AI Framework illustrates, it is a complex institutional system involving mission alignment, principles, policies, governance and risk, engagement and collaboration, campus readiness, roles and responsibilities, and implementation and operations. Each of those dimensions involves different stakeholders, different decision-making processes, and different timelines. That complexity is real, and it is the reason no single person on campus can usually describe the full picture.

This guide uses the Nine AI Governance Domains for Higher Education as its organizing structure. The nine domains provide a comprehensive policy architecture that covers the full scope of institutional AI governance, organized into three supercategories: Academic Core and Student Outcomes (Domains 1 through 4), Infrastructure, Risk, and Vendors (Domains 5 through 7), and People and Governance (Domains 8 and 9). Each domain uses a five-part policy instrument taxonomy: policies, standards, guidelines, enablement mechanisms, and governance mechanisms.

The questions are designed to surface what governance exists, where there are gaps, and where governance may exist on paper but remains invisible to the people it is supposed to serve.

Intended Uses

Executive briefing: Use the Executive Summary and domain-level context paragraphs to understand the scope, risk landscape, and strategic significance of AI governance across the institution.

Governance self-assessment: Walk through each domain and document whether the institution has an answer, a partial answer, or no answer for each question.

Gap analysis: Identify which domains have the most unanswered questions. Those represent the institution's governance gaps.

Facilitation guide: Use individual domain sections to structure conversations with specific audiences (faculty senate, IT leadership, student affairs, HR, procurement, institutional leadership).

Communication audit: For every question where governance does exist, ask the follow-up: Do the people affected by this know about it? Can they find it? That follow-up is often more revealing than the governance question itself.

DOMAINS 1 THROUGH 4: ACADEMIC CORE AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Domain 1: Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Scope: Course-level instructional practice, academic integrity, assessment, and AI use in the classroom.

This is the most visible governance domain on any campus and often the first one accreditors ask about. Inconsistent AI expectations across courses erode student trust and create academic integrity vulnerabilities that can escalate quickly.

1. Do we have a course-level AI use expectations framework (such as a Green/Yellow/Red tier system), and does every syllabus include an explicit AI use statement aligned with it?
2. Do we have an AI academic integrity policy that is principles-based and technology-agnostic, designed to survive multiple generations of AI tools?
3. What is our policy on AI-assisted grading and feedback? Do students know when AI is involved in evaluating their work?
4. Do we have equitable assessment design guidance that addresses differential student access to AI tools?
5. Are there faculty innovation grants, course redesign incentives, or teaching-focused AI sandbox environments that support pedagogical experimentation?
6. Do any AI tools required for coursework meet institutional accessibility requirements, including Universal Design for Learning standards?
7. Where does the university library sit in this domain? The library has a direct role in AI literacy instruction and the evolution of information literacy in AI-prevalent environments. Is that role recognized and resourced?

8. Is there a faculty development pathway for AI in teaching, and is it connected to recognition and promotion pathways?
 9. Is there an annual review cycle for course-level AI expectations, and does the faculty senate or academic council have a defined role in AI teaching policy?
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Domain 2: Research and Scholarship

Scope: AI in research, intellectual property, disclosure, funder compliance, and research integrity.

Federal funders including NSF and NIH have established AI-specific requirements for disclosure and use. Institutions without clear policies in this domain risk grant compliance violations, IP disputes, and research integrity findings.

1. Do we have clear AI disclosure requirements for publications and grant applications, aligned with funder-specific restrictions from NSF, NIH, DOE, and other agencies?
 2. What is our IP ownership policy for AI-assisted scholarship and invention? Has technology transfer reviewed its implications?
 3. Do we have a prohibition on using AI to assist in peer review of confidential grant applications and manuscripts?
 4. What guidance exists on using proprietary AI tools with confidential research data? Do researchers know what they can and cannot input into commercial AI systems?
 5. Are there data provenance standards for AI-assisted analysis, so that the chain of data handling in AI-augmented research is documented?
 6. Does the IRB have AI-specific review protocols for human subjects research involving AI tools?
 7. Is the university library involved as a stakeholder in governing AI-enabled research discovery tools and academic database licensing, particularly regarding training data provisions and copyright implications?
 8. Are there institutional AI platforms, sandboxes, or research computing resources provisioned for research use?
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Domain 3: Institutional Algorithmic Decision-Making and Student Services

Scope: AI wherever it makes or informs consequential decisions about people, including students, employees, donors, alumni, and community members.

This domain carries the highest institutional liability. AI systems that influence admissions, financial aid, retention, or employment decisions without transparency, bias review, or appeals processes expose the institution to legal action, regulatory scrutiny, and significant reputational harm.

1. Are we governing AI in consequential decisions (admissions, financial aid, retention interventions, academic standing, employment, housing, disciplinary outcomes) with the same rigor we apply to other high-stakes institutional processes?
2. Does an individual subject to an AI-assisted consequential decision have the right to request human review or a human interaction pathway?
3. Do we have notification standards defining when and how individuals are told that AI is involved in decisions affecting them?
4. Are there bias review standards for AI systems affecting admissions, financial aid, retention, and academic standing?
5. What governance applies to AI in advancement, fundraising, and donor analytics? Are donor privacy and prospect research ethics addressed?
6. What standards apply to AI in external communications and recruitment marketing? Is there a disclosure requirement when AI-generated content is used in public-facing institutional communications? Are there prohibitions on fabricated representations of campus diversity, student experience, or institutional facilities in AI-generated imagery?
7. Are AI-powered public-facing chatbots classified under the institutional risk-tiering standard, with accuracy verification, hallucination mitigation, and escalation to human staff?
8. Is there a student appeals process for AI-influenced decisions, with developed communication templates?
9. What governance applies to AI use in student-led co-curricular contexts that affects other students?

Domain 4: Student AI Literacy, Career Readiness, and Workforce Preparation

Scope: Institution-level and program-level student outcomes for AI literacy, employability, and career readiness. Distinct from Domain 1, which governs what happens inside individual courses.

Employers increasingly expect AI competency from graduates. Institutions that do not address AI literacy at the program level risk producing graduates who are unprepared for the labor market, which directly affects enrollment, retention, and institutional reputation.

1. How are we distinguishing between course-level AI practices (Domain 1) and program-level AI literacy outcomes (Domain 4)? Are both being governed, or only one?
2. Do we have an AI literacy learning outcomes framework that defines what students should know and be able to do upon graduation, aligned with recognized external frameworks for portability and employer recognition?
3. Are AI competency integration standards embedded in career and workforce programs?
4. Are there student-facing AI labs, experimentation spaces, or sandbox environments?
5. Do partnerships with employers inform AI skills alignment in applied and technical programs?

6. Are curricular rapid-update pathways in place so that AI content can be integrated without waiting for full program review cycles?
7. Is the university library contributing AI literacy programming and resources as part of its information literacy mission?
8. Is there an employer advisory board or equivalent mechanism providing input on AI workforce readiness?

DOMAINS 5 THROUGH 7: INFRASTRUCTURE, RISK, AND VENDORS

Domain 5: Data, Security, Privacy, and AI-Enabled Systems

Scope: Institutional data practices, security posture, privacy compliance, shadow AI, application development, and campus operations AI.

This is the most urgent risk domain. Shadow AI, where employees and students use unapproved AI tools with institutional data, is already happening on every campus. Without discovery mechanisms, approved tool lists, and data governance standards, the institution has no visibility into where its data is going.

1. Do we have a shadow AI risk management policy, and does it extend to AI use by student organizations, residential life, and co-curricular programs operating on institutional data or infrastructure?
2. Have we published an approved AI tool list organized by data classification level, and is it a visible, searchable, actively maintained campus-facing resource rather than a document accessible only to those who already know where to look?
3. What are our standards for AI-assisted application development, including acceptable use and data exposure rules for tools such as Copilot, Claude Code, and AI pair programming environments?
4. Do we have code review and security standards specifically for AI-generated code?
5. Are there model selection and deployment standards for custom AI implementations, including open-source and locally hosted models?
6. Do we have agentic system development and deployment standards addressing human-in-the-loop requirements, action boundaries, escalation triggers, and agent-to-agent interaction controls?
7. For campus operations AI (smart building optimization, energy management, space utilization, security and surveillance, predictive maintenance), do we have standards with explicit privacy and civil liberties protections?
8. Is community consultation required before deployment of AI-enabled surveillance or security systems?
9. Do we have audit trail and logging standards for AI systems processing institutional data?

10. Is there a shadow AI discovery and remediation process, and is it connected to the procurement and governance oversight functions?
11. Is the institutional AI system inventory technically maintained by this domain, with inventory entries triggered during procurement and deployment approval?

Domain 6: Fairness, Transparency, Accountability, and Algorithmic Oversight

Scope: Impact assessments, bias audits, ethics, explainability, and accountability for AI-assisted decisions.

This domain operationalizes institutional values. Without algorithmic impact assessments, bias audits, and clear accountability assignments, the institution cannot demonstrate that its AI systems are fair, and it cannot respond effectively when they are not.

1. Do we have an algorithmic impact assessment standard required before deployment of consequential AI systems?
2. Are there bias audit requirements and schedules for consequential AI systems, and are those audits actually being conducted?
3. Do we have explainability standards for AI-assisted decisions?
4. Is there an accountability assignment framework that defines who is responsible when AI-assisted decisions cause harm?
5. Do we have human oversight requirements for AI-assisted consequential decisions?
6. Is there an AI transparency disclosure policy defining when AI must be disclosed to affected individuals?
7. Are there equity-centered design guidance and community feedback channels for AI deployments?
8. Is there a periodic bias audit and impact assessment review cycle?

Domain 7: Procurement, Vendors, and Legal

Scope: Vendor risk, contracts, compliance, rapid pilots, open-source AI, and IP provisions.

Every AI vendor relationship carries data governance, liability, and compliance implications. State and federal AI legislation is accelerating, and institutions without procurement standards for AI vendor contracts face growing legal exposure. This domain also determines whether governance enables or blocks responsible experimentation through rapid-cycle pilot processes.

1. For procurement, are we requiring vendors of consequential AI systems to supply their own algorithmic impact assessments and bias documentation as a condition of contract?
2. Do AI vendor contracts include provisions for training data provenance, model behavior, data use restrictions, indemnification, liability, and audit rights?

3. Do we have a rapid-cycle pilot approval process for low-risk AI tools that is distinct from full procurement review, with defined risk thresholds and time-limited approvals?
 4. Is there a pre-approved AI tool list that is maintained and updated regularly?
 5. Do we have an open-source AI model use policy?
 6. Are state and federal AI legislation compliance standards (CCPA/CPRA ADMT provisions, state AI bills, sector-specific regulations) tracked and incorporated into procurement and governance?
 7. Is the university library included as a procurement stakeholder for AI-enabled academic databases and discovery platforms, where licensing terms increasingly include AI training data provisions?
 8. Is there a cross-functional AI procurement review team that includes legal, IT security, privacy, academic governance, and library representation?
 9. Is shadow AI vendor remediation owned by this domain, with discovery coordinated through Domain 5 and escalation through Domain 9?
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DOMAINS 8 AND 9: PEOPLE AND GOVERNANCE

Domain 8: AI Literacy and Role-Based Competency (Employees)

Scope: Employee acceptable use, role-based competency, professional development, and AI in performance management.

The institution's workforce is adopting AI whether the institution has prepared them to do so. Without role-based competency frameworks, acceptable use policies, and dedicated professional development, the institution faces both productivity loss from under adoption and risk from uninformed use.

1. Do we have a role-based AI competency framework that defines expectations by job family and level, rather than a blanket aspiration that everyone should learn AI?
2. Is AI literacy integrated into new employee onboarding at the point of hire, with role-specific expectations defined from the start?
3. Is there dedicated time allocation for employees to build AI skills, or is the institution expecting competency development to happen outside of work responsibilities?
4. Are there employee-facing AI sandbox environments for experimentation and skill building?
5. Are peer learning communities and communities of practice organized by functional area?
6. What is our policy on AI in performance management? Are there guidelines on AI use in hiring, evaluation, and promotion processes?

7. Is the AI competency framework connected to institutional HR classification and compensation systems?
8. Are there guidance documents on AI-augmented work practices by functional area, and on workforce transition planning and reskilling?

Domain 9: Governance, Oversight, and Continuous Review

Scope: Governance charter, risk tiering, system inventory, agentic AI, incident response, review cycles, and financial sustainability.

This is the domain that holds everything together. Without a governance body with defined authority, a risk-tiering standard, an AI system inventory, and annual review processes, the institution has no mechanism for coordinating AI governance across all other domains. This domain also owns AI financial sustainability, including enterprise license management, API consumption tracking, and total cost of ownership analysis.

1. Is there a designated AI governance body with cross-functional membership, defined authority, a charter, and explicit student representation?
2. Does the governance body have a defined relationship to shared governance, with delegated authority to update standards and guidelines on defined review cycles?
3. Are we applying an institutional AI risk-tiering standard with three tiers (assistive/low-risk, operational/moderate-risk, consequential/high-risk) that calibrates governance requirements to actual risk?
4. Do we maintain an institutional AI system inventory, a comprehensive catalog of all approved and deployed AI systems capturing purpose, owner, vendor or model, data categories, affected populations, decision criticality, risk tier, human oversight point, audit schedule, and retirement owner?
5. Do we have an agentic AI governance standard addressing autonomous systems, agent-to-agent interactions, human-in-the-loop requirements, and escalation processes?
6. Is there an AI incident response policy?
7. Is there an annual AI policy review process?
8. Is there an innovation intake process, a mechanism for faculty, staff, and students to propose new AI use cases for governance review and approval?
9. Is there an emerging technology horizon scanning process that surfaces new tools and risks to the governance body before they are adopted informally?

Cross-Domain Coordination

These questions address governance concerns that span multiple domains. The Nine AI Governance Domains framework includes a cross-domain coordination map that explicitly assigns ownership for these shared concerns.

Cross-domain coordination is where governance most commonly breaks down. Shadow AI, algorithmic bias, vendor data security, and agentic AI do not belong to any single office. Without explicit ownership assignment, these concerns remain unmanaged, creating institutional risk that no one is accountable for.

1. When a governance concern spans multiple domains (shadow AI, algorithmic bias, data security in vendor relationships, agentic AI, campus operations, external communications), is ownership explicitly assigned, or do these concerns remain unaddressed because no single office owns them?
2. Is there an annual enablement adequacy assessment evaluating whether institutional AI platforms, approved tool lists, sandbox environments, and training are meeting demand?
3. Is there an annual equity resourcing assessment reporting to leadership on whether bias audits, community engagement, appeals processes, and equity-related governance activities are adequately funded and staffed?
4. Are we tracking AI financial sustainability: enterprise license management, token and API consumption, total cost of ownership, chargeback models, and budget integration for enablement mechanisms?
5. Is the governance body reporting annually to institutional leadership and the board on AI governance posture, emerging risks, policy adequacy, enablement adequacy, equity resourcing, and financial sustainability?
6. Have we differentiated our governance approach by institution type and context (community college versus regional comprehensive versus R1 versus minority-serving institution versus online/distance versus health sciences), or are we applying a one-size-fits-all model?
7. Do we have an institutional learning cycle for AI governance: assess, plan, track, reflect? Or do we create policies and never revisit whether they are working?

The Communication Test

For every question in this guide where the answer is yes, governance does exist, ask one more question:

Do the people affected by this know about it? Can they find it in under five minutes?

If governance exists but is invisible to the people it serves, then the institution does not have a governance gap. It has a communication gap. That distinction matters, because the solution for each is fundamentally different. One requires building a new policy. The other requires making existing policy findable, understandable, and connected to the people who need it.

Both problems are solvable. But only if they are named correctly.

About These Frameworks

This guide is organized using the Nine AI Governance Domains for Higher Education. The broader institutional context, including mission alignment, readiness assessment, roles and responsibilities, and implementation operations, is addressed by the Campus AI Framework and its AI Strategic Compass. Together, the two frameworks provide a comprehensive architecture for responsible AI governance in higher education.

The [Campus AI Framework](#) and the [Nine AI Governance Domains for Higher Education](#) were developed by Joe Sabado, drawing from experience in higher education IT leadership, AI governance at the campus and university system levels, and practitioner engagement across community colleges, R1 research universities, private universities, health sciences institutions, and national higher education technology communities.

Both frameworks are available at CampusAIExchange.com.

Note: The perspectives shared are personal and do not reflect official positions of my employer.

Joe Sabado | CampusAIExchange.com | March 2026