

IMPERIAL WORKSHOP · 3–4 JULY 2026

Conscious *Futures* in Higher Education

A high-level international forum on AI-led transformation, governance, integrity, and the future of the university

DATE	VENUE	DAY 1	DAY 2
3–4 July 2026 Friday – Saturday	Imperial College London Skempton Building, South Kensington	Public Lecture Complimentary · Registration required	Invitation-Only Roundtables · Chatham House Rule

ABOUT THIS EVENT

A policy-relevant forum where university leaders, academics, and quality assurance actors explore how higher education should respond to AI-led transformation — without weakening standards, public trust, or the broader educational mission of the university.

- Institutional renewal & public purpose
- Future readiness & graduate capability
- Imperial Statement on Conscious Futures
- AI governance by design
- Data and institutional trust
- Assessment and integrity

EVENT CHAIR Professor Ahmet Faruk Aysan

ORGANISER Cafer Deniz

ORGANISED BY



**SOCIAL HUMANITIES
BASIC SCIENCES
ACCREDITATION and
RATING ASSOCIATION**



PROGRAMME

Day 1 — Public Lecture

Venue: SKEM 164 · Skempton Building · Imperial College London | Friday, 3 July 2026

TIME	SESSION
14:30 – 15:00	Registration and networking
15:00 – 15:30	Welcome Remarks Prof Firat Güder · Director Güder Research Group, Imperial College London Dr İsmail Erkam Tüzgen · President Social Humanities Basic Sciences Accreditation & Rating Association (STAR) Prof Recep Senturk · Dean Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) Prof Atilla Arkan · President Ibn Haldun University (IHU)
15:30 – 15:45	Opening Remarks Abdullah Eren · President Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA)
15:45 – 16:30	Keynote Public Lecture <i>Reframing GenAI in Higher Education: From Performance Gains to Human–AI Teaming</i> Prof Mutlu Cukurova · UCL Knowledge Lab & UCL Centre for Artificial Intelligence, University College London
16:30 – 16:45	Coffee break
16:45 – 18:15	Panel Discussion <i>Conscious Futures in Higher Education: Future Readiness, AI Governance, and Institutional Trust</i> Emerita Prof Margaret Bell CBE · Newcastle University Alison Johns OBE · Founding CEO, Advance HE & Chair, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Oonagh McGirr FRSA · Inaugural Director, World Alliance for Microcredentials (WAM) Dr Cevat Giray Aksoy · King's College London · EBRD · CEPR Okan Kibaroğlu · Imperial College London · Panel Moderator
18:15 – 18:30	Closing remarks Prof Ahmet Faruk Aysan · Associate Dean Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)
19:00	Private Gala Dinner <i>Invitation only</i>
Note: Day 1 Public Lecture registration is complimentary but required. Registration fee is covered by the organising committee. Visa, travel, and accommodation are the responsibility of participants.	
A valid photo ID is required for entry to Imperial College London.	

PROGRAMME

Day 2 — Invitation-Only Roundtables & Imperial Statement

Venue: Imperial College London | Saturday, 4 July 2026

- All Day 2 discussions will operate under the Chatham House Rule.

TIME	SESSION
09:45 – 10:00	Welcome and objectives
10:00 – 12:30	Roundtable 1 How AI and future-readiness agendas are reshaping higher education?
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:30	Roundtable 2 AI and assessment redesign: How to protect academic integrity?
16:30 – 16:45	Closing remarks

KEY OUTPUT · DAY 2

Imperial Statement on Conscious Futures in Higher Education

A concise set of shared principles and minimum commitments on integrity, governance, and capability-building — co-developed by participants across UK, US, Europe, Türkiye, and international institutions.

WELCOME REMARKS · FRIDAY, 3 JULY · 15:00 – 15:30

Welcome Remarks



Professor Fırat Güder

Director, Güder Research Group, Imperial College London

Professor Fırat Güder leads the Güder Research Group at Imperial College London, focusing on the development of intelligent interfaces at the intersection of materials science, electronics, computing, biology and chemistry. His research aims to create impactful technologies addressing global challenges in health, food systems and the environment. Prior to joining Imperial, Professor Güder was a research fellow in the group of Professor George M. Whitesides at Harvard University. He holds a PhD in Microsystems Engineering (summa cum laude) from the University of Freiburg, Germany, and a BSc in Computer Engineering (First Division) from the University of New Brunswick, Canada.



Dr İsmail Erkam Tüzgen

President, Social Humanities Basic Sciences Accreditation & Rating Association (STAR)

İsmail Erkam Tüzgen is the President of STAR and General Manager of Bilişim Vadisi (Informatics Valley), one of Türkiye's leading technology development zones. Prior to these positions, he served as Secretary General of Ibn Haldun University and Secretary General of the Istanbul Development Agency, where he initiated over 200 projects, delivered Türkiye's first Social Impact Bond and led the first regional venture-fund programme among development agencies, investing public capital across ten funds in four countries. He served on the board of the European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA) from 2021 to 2023.



Professor Recep Şentürk

Dean, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)

Professor Recep Şentürk is the Dean of the College of Islamic Studies at HBKU. He was the Founding President of Ibn Haldun University in Istanbul (2017–2021). He holds a PhD from Columbia University's Department of Sociology and specialises in Civilisation Studies, Sociology and Islamic Studies, with a focus on social networks, human rights and modernisation in the Muslim world. He served as a researcher at the Centre for Islamic Studies (İSAM) in Istanbul and as Founding Director of the Alliance of Civilizations Institute. He is Head of the International Ibn Khaldun Society and sits on the editorial boards of several academic journals. He is listed among the world's 500 most influential Muslims in the annual publication The Muslim 500.



Professor Atilla Arkan

President & Rector, Ibn Haldun University (IHU)

Professor Atilla Arkan has served as President and Rector of Ibn Haldun University since 2021. He received his PhD in Islamic Philosophy from Marmara University's Institute of Social Sciences in 1999, and between 1996 and 1999 also studied at the Institute of Islamic Civilisation and Thought at the Islamic University of Malaysia for a second doctorate. He began his academic career at Sakarya University in 1994 and became a professor there in 2013, and from 2012 to 2014 was a visiting research lecturer at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Canada. Since 2017 he has also served as Director of Education and Social Policy Studies at SETA, in addition to lecturing in the Faculty of Theology at Sakarya University and heading its Department of Islamic Philosophy.

OPENING REMARKS · FRIDAY, 3 JULY · 15:30 – 15:45

Opening Remarks



Abdullah Eren

President, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA)

Abdullah Eren was born in İstanbul in 1984. He holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Boğaziçi University and a master's degree in Diplomatic Studies from the University of Westminster, London. After holding senior positions in the private sector, he served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Advisor to the Prime Minister, and subsequently as Chief Advisor to the President. As President of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) from 2018 to 2025, he led programmes for the Turkish diaspora abroad — a community of around seven million — together with kin and related communities across the Balkans, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and international students from around the world studying in Türkiye. He is also active in civil society, serving as a trustee of the Public Health Foundation (Cans Sağlığı Vakfı) and Chairman of the Culture and Civilization Foundation (Kültür ve Medeniyet Vakfı, KÜME), Türkiye.

KEYNOTE PUBLIC LECTURE · FRIDAY, 3 JULY · 15:45 – 16:30

The Keynote

Reframing GenAI in Higher Education: From Performance Gains to Human–AI Teaming



Professor Mutlu Cukurova

Professor of Learning and Artificial Intelligence
UCL Knowledge Lab & UCL Centre for Artificial Intelligence · University College London

Stanford Top 2% Scientists

UNESCO Expert

OECD Expert

European Commission

Editor-in-Chief, BJET

LAK 2026 Co-chair

Prof Cukurova's research focuses on human–AI complementarity in education. He directs the UCL AI in Education and Learning Analytics team and leads the Design and Use of AI in Education module. He is actively engaged in international policy-making as an external expert for UNESCO, the OECD, and the European Commission, and has authored several influential policy guidelines on AI in Education. He served as programme co-chair of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education (2020) and the ACM Learning Analytics and Knowledge Conference (LAK 2026). Prof Cukurova is listed in Stanford University's Top 2% of Scientists list in both Artificial Intelligence and Education fields, and serves as Editor-in-Chief of the British Journal of Educational Technology.

ABSTRACT

The rapid diffusion of GenAI is reshaping the foundations of higher education, challenging long-standing assumptions about what competencies matter, how learning should be organised, and how assessment can validly evidence human development. Drawing on recent international studies and his own research on human–AI complementarity, Prof Cukurova argues that the central question is no longer whether GenAI improves performance, but under what conditions it enhances — or undermines — learning, agency, and professional judgement.

The talk introduces a human–AI teaming perspective that reframes GenAI not as a replacement for human cognition, but as a partner whose educational value depends on intentional pedagogical design. It synthesises emerging evidence showing that unstructured GenAI use can displace cognitive effort and weaken metacognitive engagement, while well-designed human–AI teaming can support learning and improve teaching practices in higher education and beyond.

PANEL DISCUSSION · FRIDAY, 3 JULY · 16:45 – 18:15

The Panel

Conscious Futures in Higher Education: Future Readiness, AI Governance, and Institutional Trust



Emerita Professor Margaret Bell CBE

Newcastle University · UK

Emerita Professor Margaret Bell CBE is a transport engineer and environmental scientist whose career has transformed how cities monitor, model and manage air quality. At Nottingham University she pioneered research on traffic-related pollution, exposure and health impacts, and was instrumental in delivering the UK's first Instrumented City — capturing real-time data from the Leicester City traffic management system in 1986 and developing integrated low-cost roadside air-pollution monitoring in 1997. Her work bridges engineering, urban sustainability and public policy, including the demonstration and evaluation of traffic air-quality interventions and evidence given to the Transport Select Committee. Honoured CBE in 2006 for services to sustainable transport, her expertise in institutional innovation, data-driven urban systems and sustainable infrastructure brings a distinctive and grounded perspective to debates on responsible AI adoption in higher education.



Alison Johns OBE

Founding Chief Executive, Advance HE (2017–2025) · Chair, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges · UK

Alison Johns led Advance HE from its formation in 2017 until her retirement in 2025, a 34-year career spanning roles within universities and as a funder, regulator and national-body chief executive. As founding Chief Executive she brought together the Higher Education Academy, the Equality Challenge Unit and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education into a single agency serving universities worldwide. Under her leadership Advance HE advanced equality, diversity and inclusion, strengthened leadership and governance, and raised teaching quality — stewarding sector charters such as Athena SWAN and the professional recognition of educators through its Fellowship schemes. She has advised governments on higher education reform across more than 30 countries. She now chairs the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' Board of Trustees, is Deputy Chair of Court and Chancellor's Assessor at the University of St Andrews, sits on the board of the British University in Egypt, and is a Visiting Professor at the University of Staffordshire.



Oonagh McGirr FRSA

Inaugural Director, World Alliance for Microcredentials (WAM) Foundation · Netherlands

Oonagh McGirr is the inaugural Director of the World Alliance for Microcredentials (WAM) Foundation, leading global efforts to build trusted, interoperable credentialing systems that uphold institutional standards and equitable access. She led the sector pilot behind the world's first national microcredential framework, through the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Her three decades in tertiary education include senior roles at Otago Polytechnic and governance and quality-assurance work with the ILO/UN-ITC, the European Commission, and national authorities across the Gulf, Africa and Europe.



Dr Cevat Giray Aksoy

Associate Professor of Economics, King's College London · Lead Research Economist, EBRD · CEPR · Policy Adviser to the House of Lords · UK

Dr Cevat Giray Aksoy is Associate Professor of Economics at King's College London and Lead Research Economist at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). He serves as Policy Adviser to the House of Lords on the future of labour markets and is co-founder of the Global Survey of Working Arrangements — the largest cross-country study of remote work. His research on economic inclusion, trust and the future of work has been funded by the British Academy, the ESRC and the World Bank, and covered by the BBC, the Financial Times, The Economist and the New York Times.



Okan Kibaroglu

Director of Customer Success, Imperial College London · Panel Moderator · UK

Okan Kibaroglu's long experience across governance, operations, data infrastructure and digital services at Imperial College London highlights an important issue for higher education: AI transformation is not only an academic challenge but also an institutional and operational one. Discussions around AI governance, trust and future readiness increasingly require close collaboration between academic leadership, technical infrastructure and institutional management — a perspective he brings to the panel as moderator.

The Team



Professor Ahmet Faruk Aysan

Event Chair

Dr. Ahmet Faruk Aysan is a Professor and Associate Dean for Research at Hamad Bin Khalifa University and a full member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA). He previously served as a Board Member and Monetary Policy Committee Member at the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye. He has also consulted for prominent institutions, including the World Bank, Oxford Analytica, and the Central Bank of Türkiye. His research contributions have earned him multiple awards, including the Islamic Economics Research Award from IKAM, the Arab Fintech Forum's Fintech Researcher of the Year Award (2023), and HBKU's Research Excellence Award (2024). He is also a recipient of the Boğaziçi University Foundation's Publication and Academic Promotion Awards, as well as the prestigious Ibn Khaldun Prize. Dr. Aysan is a Research Associate at University College London's Centre for Blockchain Technologies (UCL CBT), a Research Fellow at the Economic Research Forum, and a Non-resident Fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs. He also chairs the MENA Chapter Academy of Sustainable Finance, Accounting, Accountability & Governance (ASFAAG). In 2020, Dr. Aysan was listed among the top influencers in Islamic banking and finance by an academic article published in the Pacific-Basin Finance Journal.



Cafer Deniz

Organiser

Cafer Deniz is an Associate Lecturer at Newcastle University, a Research Supervisor at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), and an independent consultant in higher education, quality assurance, ESG (European Standards and Guidelines), and data analysis, with international engagements including work for a Swiss client. His research centres on AI and on learning and teaching technologies for economics education, where he develops innovative pedagogical methods, and he is an associate of the Norway-based International Network for Educational Research on Mathematics in Economics (INERME). An Advance HE Fellow (FHEA) and accredited External Examiner, and a UN PRME-trained lecturer, he has taught across several departments at Newcastle, presented at leading international conferences, given invited talks, organised international events, and published with major academic publishers. His earlier experience spans the Istanbul Stock Exchange, Daily Sabah in Türkiye, the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford, and an NHS project at Northumbria University that resulted in a publication. His teaching has been widely recognised: nominated for The Education Awards for the fourth consecutive year (2023–2026), shortlisted for University Worker of the Year, and put forward by his department for a global award recognising exceptional teaching.

WHY THIS CONVENING, AND WHY NOW?

Purpose & Thematic Framework

Strategic context

Higher education is entering a structural transition. AI systems, learning analytics, hybrid delivery models, and digital credentials are moving from experimental initiatives into mainstream institutional practice. The central question is not whether universities will use AI, but how they will do so responsibly, credibly, and in a way that remains educationally meaningful.

Key strategic questions

- What should "future readiness" mean beyond generic employability claims?
- Which uses of AI genuinely strengthen learning and capability?
- What governance and QA safeguards are non-negotiable?
- How can institutions pilot responsibly without undermining standards?

Proposed outputs

- Imperial Statement on Conscious Futures in HE**
Shared principles and minimum commitments on integrity, governance, and capability-building.
- Partnership Roadmap Discussion**
An initial exploration of follow-on collaboration, knowledge exchange, and future joint activity.

Thematic pillars

THEME	FOCUS
Institutional renewal & public purpose	Reframing GenAI beyond performance gains; human-AI teaming and the evolving university.
Future readiness & graduate capability	Reframing preparedness to include adaptability, reflective practice, and lifelong learning.
Assessment and integrity	How assessment can remain valid, fair, and credible when AI generates sophisticated outputs.
AI governance by design	Embedding transparency, accountability, and documentation into AI-enabled processes.
Data and institutional trust	Addressing privacy, bias, access, and unequal impacts so innovation does not deepen disadvantage.

Why participate?

- High-level exchange on a strategically urgent topic at one of the world's leading universities
- A forum linking innovation to QA and public trust rather than treating technology in isolation
- International visibility through co-developed outputs with practical relevance across systems
- An opportunity to help shape an institutionally grounded understanding of future readiness

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BEFORE THE EVENT

Final Programme

The updated programme will be published on the STAR website ahead of the event — please check there for the latest schedule, speakers, and venue details.

Visit the STAR website:

star.org.tr

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Visa — UK visa applications may take a few weeks. Apply early to avoid disruption.

Registration — The workshop registration fee is covered by the organising committee. Visa, travel, accommodation, and all other expenses are the responsibility of participants. A confirmation will be sent following registration.

VENUE ADDRESS

Skempton Building
Imperial College Road
South Kensington
London
SW7 2BU
United Kingdom

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IN THE MEDIA

[Anadolu Agency](#) — Read the news feature →

We look forward to welcoming you to Imperial College London.

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