

AI Strategy

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-26

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence is reshaping education and the workforce at an unprecedented pace. With a mandate to graduate workplace-ready students and to adopt AI to enhance operations and research while remaining competitive in the post-secondary AI sphere, RRC Polytech responded in 2025-26 by moving from exploration to intentional AI adoption through governance development, website launches, curriculum integration, AI use case pilots and expanded AI literacy initiatives.

A significant milestone was the establishment of an AI governance structure that included oversight by the Executive Sponsors group, an AI Steering Committee and five cross-functional working groups involving 72 staff and faculty members.

The strategy advanced responsible AI through the development of AI Commitments and Principles, and the drafting of AI policy and procedures in collaboration with Information Technology Solutions (ITS), Legal and other stakeholders. Working groups supported priorities such as AI literacy, curriculum and assessment innovation, student support, responsible AI use, departmental readiness, Indigenous data sovereignty, sustainability and exploration of an AI Centre. Additional achievements included broad training and engagement efforts, curriculum enhancements, AI use case development and strengthened external partnerships that reinforced RRC Polytech's leadership in responsible, workforce-focused AI adoption.

Looking ahead to 2026-27, the AI Strategy will focus on strengthening governance, change management, academic innovation, student engagement, Indigenous partnerships, sustainability, industry collaboration and the measurable implementation of priority AI initiatives.



RRC Polytech's AI Vision

AI is rapidly evolving, impacting both education and the workplace in precedent-setting ways. With RRC Polytech's connection to industry, applied research and workforce preparedness, the Polytech has a responsibility to adopt AI to ensure students graduate AI-ready. Through the Strategic Plan, RRC Polytech is committed to transforming our learning model to meet emerging needs; engaging in equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and Truth and Reconciliation in everything we do; and deepening partnerships with industry.

Driven by these commitments, our AI strategy aims to position us as leaders in the educational community by integrating AI across the institution, graduating students who are AI-ready for the workforce and building strong partnerships with industry to grow AI capacity in Manitoba. Our strategic commitments also guide the research and conversations we are undertaking to understand the ethical impact of AI, including areas such as accessibility, environmental impact, AI and human creativity, AI human-in-the-loop, AI bias with under-represented groups and Indigenous data sovereignty.

FROM EXPLORATION TO INTENTIONAL ADOPTION

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how people work, learn and interact with technology. The [Future Skills report](#) highlights this shift, with 70 per cent of surveyed employers identifying AI-related skills as important in the workplace and 57 per cent of jobs showing a high degree of AI exposure.

To recognize this impact, RRC Polytech was among the first institutions in Manitoba to embrace GenAI, developing guidelines in 2024 to support staff and faculty. These guidelines provide practical direction on how to use generative AI in teaching, learning and day-to-day work.

Building on this early foundation, RRC Polytech launched its AI Strategy in 2025-26 to help prepare graduates for an AI-enabled workforce while leveraging AI to strengthen operations, advance research and support institutional competitiveness. During the year, the institution moved from exploration to implementation by establishing governance, creating practical resources, integrating AI into teaching and learning, supporting pilot projects and increasing AI awareness across the Polytech community. Together, these efforts support a coordinated approach to enhancing student success and institutional effectiveness through AI.

To provide leadership and accountability for this work, RRC Polytech established the Senior Strategic Advisor, AI Initiative role to guide strategy execution and coordinate institution-wide priorities. Oversight is provided through the Executive Sponsors group with support from the AI Steering Committee, while cross-functional working groups advance projects and recommendations across key focus areas.

A strong emphasis on responsible AI underpins all activities. During the year, the institution developed AI Commitments and Principles and advanced policy and procedural drafts to support safe, ethical and effective AI use across the Polytech community.

AI Governance Structure

The AI Governance structure is designed to provide grassroots perspectives to inform AI adoption from cross-functional participation with the following components:

Executive Sponsors Group

The Executive Sponsors group provides high-level strategic oversight, approving institutional AI activities and expenditures and ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and academic areas.

AI Steering Committee

The AI Steering Committee, chaired by the Senior Strategic Advisor, guides the execution of the institution's AI strategy and coordinates with the working groups for collaboration on activities.

AI Working Groups

The AI working groups, composed of cross-functional members, are responsible for recommending and planning AI activities within their strategic domain.

- Teaching and Learning AI Working Group
- Student Experience AI Working Group
- Academic Programming AI Working Group
- Research AI Working Group
- Operations AI Working Group

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STAFF AND FACULTY
PARTICIPANTS IN
THE AI STRATEGY



RRC Polytech's Commitment to Responsible AI

Gen AI Guidelines

Acting responsibly with AI has been a focus for RRC Polytech. The Polytech was among the first institutions in Manitoba to embrace GenAI, developing Gen AI Guidelines to support staff and faculty in 2024.

SARA Software Review

As interest in AI tools continues to grow across the institution, the Software Application Review and Approval (SARA) process provides a structured pathway for assessing and approving new technologies. By bringing together expertise from ITS, Information Protection and Security, Legal and other stakeholders, SARA helps enable innovation while ensuring AI solutions align with institutional standards, security requirements and legal obligations.

Cybersecurity

RRC Polytech leverages AI to enhance cybersecurity by improving the detection of potential threats and unusual activity while strengthening the protection of institutional systems and data through responsible AI practices and appropriate oversight.

AI Commitments and Principles

RRC Polytech's well-established values, purpose and commitments shaped the development of the AI Commitments and Principles.

Aligned with global standards, the AI Commitments and Principles guide the Polytech community in making responsible decisions about AI.

COMMITMENTS

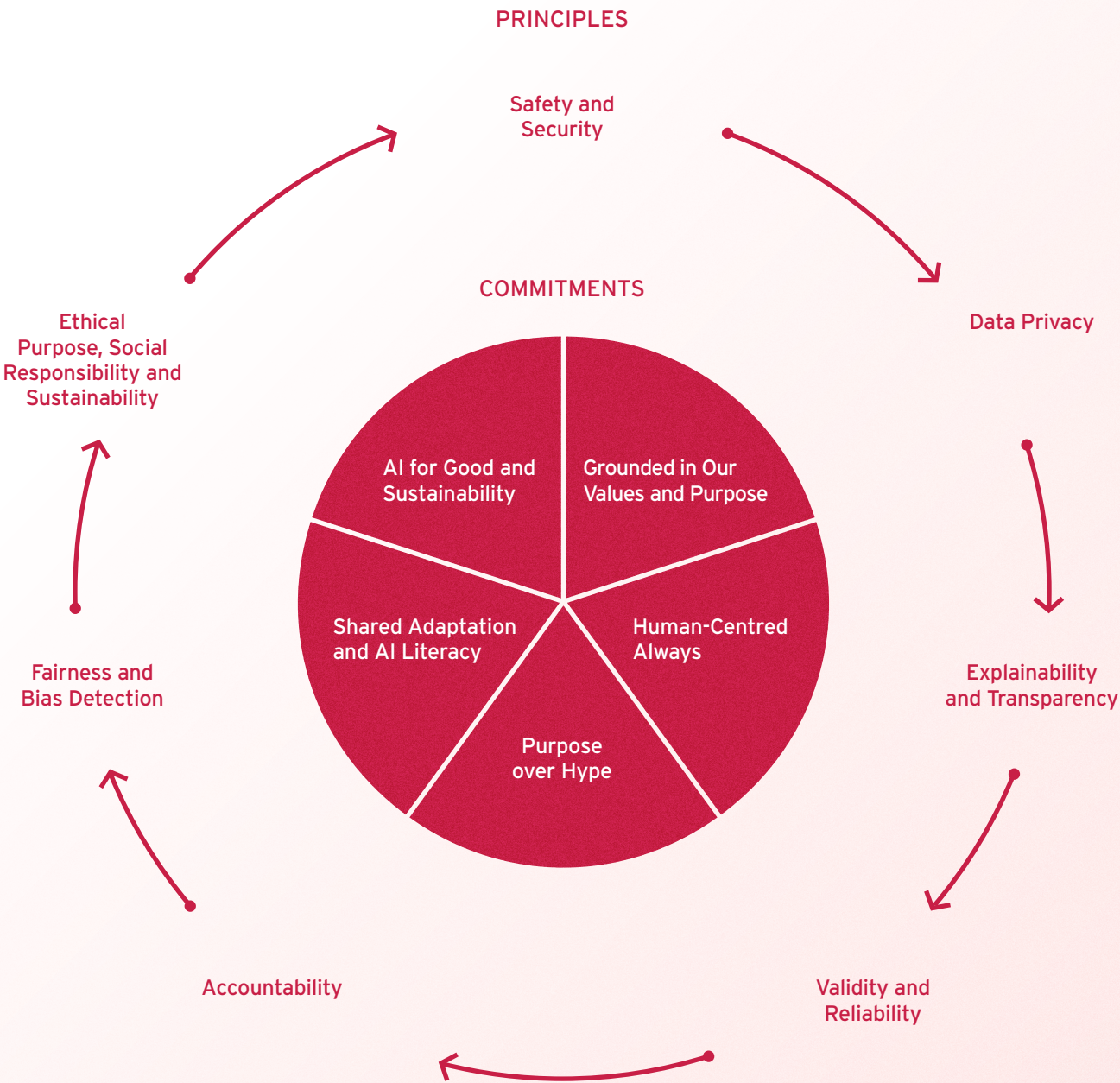
- Grounded in Our Values and Purpose
- Human-Centred Always
- Purpose Over Hype
- Shared Adaptation and AI Literacy
- AI for Good and Sustainability

PRINCIPLES

- Safety and Security
- Data Privacy
- Explainability and Transparency
- Validity and Reliability
- Accountability
- Fairness and Bias Detection
- Ethical Purpose, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

AI Policy and Procedures

Led by the Operations AI working group, with oversight from the Executive Sponsors group and Legal, the AI policy and procedures are being drafted with robust consultation with Info-Tech Research Group, the AI Steering Committee, ITS and other relevant interest-holders.





AI Working Group Initiatives

AI initiatives focus on creating the conditions that enable successful AI adoption across the Polytech through training, AI readiness, enablement and student, staff and faculty support. Ideas for initiatives emerged through AI Working Group discussions, staff, faculty and student surveys, and consultations with interest-holders across the institution. The Working groups advanced the initiatives to build AI knowledge, strengthen organizational readiness, support responsible AI use and help the Polytech adapt to the opportunities and challenges of AI.

Teaching and Learning

- **Staff and Faculty AI Literacy** - Piloted and rolled out training to help employees act responsibly with AI.
- **Assessment Re-Design Lab** - Piloted Training for faculty on redesigning assessments to reduce academic integrity concerns.
- **Indigenous Sovereignty and AI** - Explored the impact of AI use on Indigenous data Sovereignty.

Academic Programming

- **AI Readiness in Academic Programs** - Updating curriculum in programs so students graduate with industry-specific AI skills.
- **Student AI Competencies** - Piloted foundational AI Skills that all students need to be workforce ready.

Student Experience

- **Student AI Literacy** - Piloted and rolled out training to ensure students act responsibly with AI.
- **Student AI Community of Practice** - Ran sessions to build relationship while discussing AI topics.

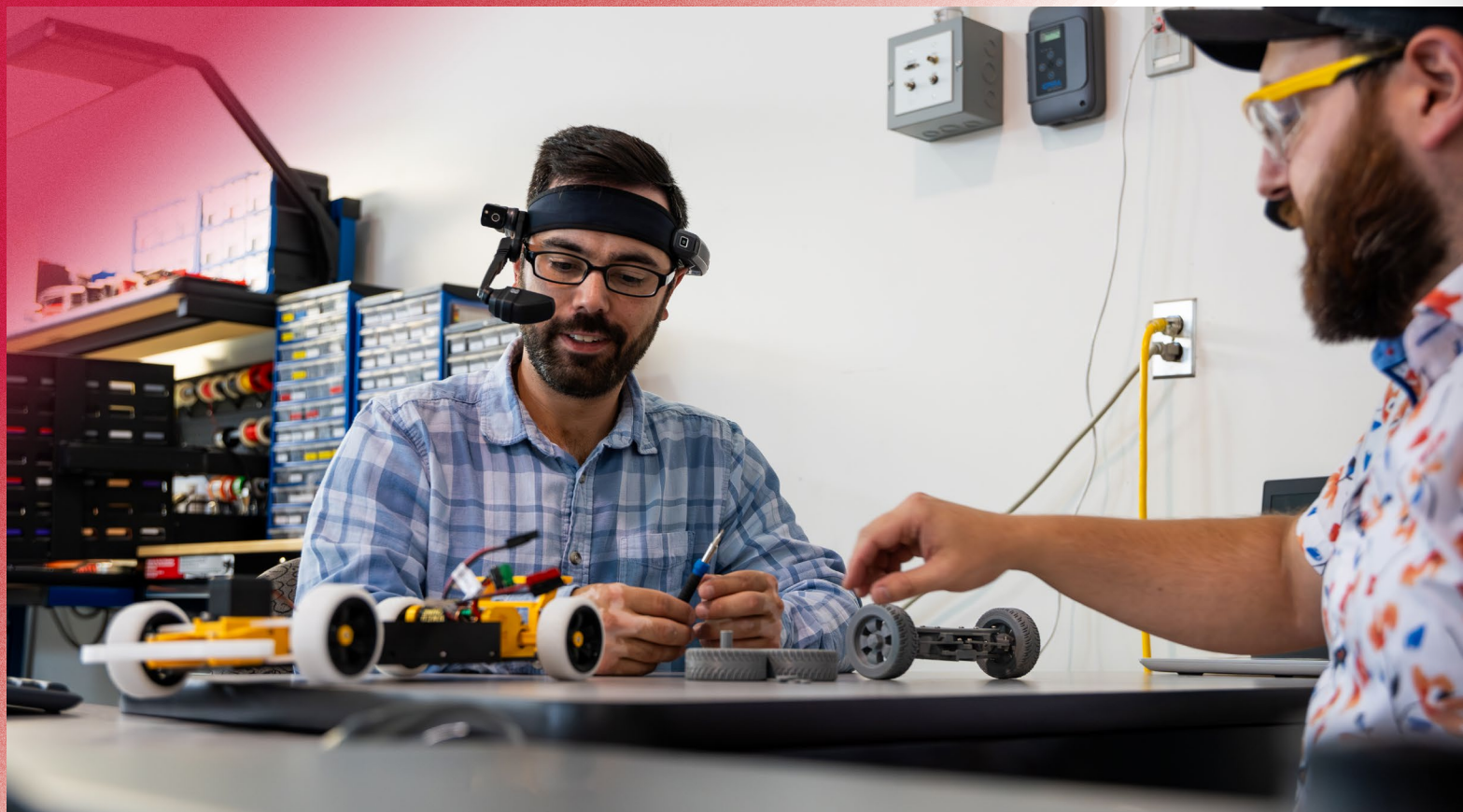
Operations

- **AI Policy and Procedures** - Drafted policy and procedures to provide direction to the Polytech community on safe AI use.
- **AI Departmental Impact** - Explored a tool to explore the impact of AI on specific roles.

Research

- **AI Centre** - Explored the development of a space where the Polytech community can build AI capabilities.
- **Environmental Sustainability and AI** - Researched how to demonstrate transparency with the impact of AI use on energy and water.





AI Working Group Initiative Highlights

AI READINESS IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Through this initiative, programs identify the impact of AI on their industry, validate with their program advisory committees and then update curriculum to ensure that students graduate with AI skills to be competitive in the workforce.

Phase 1 programs will be teaching AI skills starting in Fall 2026. Over time, this initiative will become an integral part of program renewal and new program development, building institutional capacity to continuously assess the evolving impact of AI on industry and adapt curriculum to meet changing workforce needs.

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COURSES UPDATED ACROSS
FIVE PROGRAMS READY FOR FALL 2026

Phase 1: November 2025-August 2026

- Nursing
- Early Childhood Education
- Teaching for Learning
- Professional Sales and Strategic Marketing
- Digital Media Design

Phase 2: April 2025-February 2027

- Business Administration
- Power Engineering Technology
- Culinary Arts
- Legal Assistant
- Architectural Technology
- Construction Management
- Baking and Pastry Arts
- Common Core Communication Courses

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AI CURRICULUM

In Fall 2025, the Early Childhood Education program was selected to collaborate on the development of AI Curriculum with the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii) through the AI Workforce Readiness Consortium. This resulted in an extensive AI curriculum to teach ECEs how to use AI in responsible ways to support content development for children.

STUDENT AI LITERACY

As part of our membership in the AI Workforce Readiness Consortium led by Amii, RRC Polytech piloted the AI Student Literacy Training “Module 0” with 52 students, staff and faculty and provided feedback to support its refinement. Following updates by Amii, the module was made widely available to students across the Polytech and promoted through Library and Academic Services. While direct participation has grown steadily, the value of this resource extends beyond enrolment numbers by providing instructors with a trusted training they can recommend to students and demonstrating RRC Polytech’s commitment to building AI literacy as a foundational skill for learning, work and life.

STUDENT AI COMPETENCIES

RRC Polytech is developing a set of AI Functional Competencies to help ensure all graduates are prepared to use AI effectively, critically, ethically and responsibly in academic, workplace and community contexts. Supported by faculty and staff consultation, this framework will establish a common foundation of AI literacy that can be adapted across programs while promoting consistency institution-wide. By defining the core AI capabilities students need, the project will help graduates navigate emerging technologies with confidence and exercise-informed judgment, and remain adaptable as AI continues to transform learning and work.



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STUDENTS, STAFF, AND
FACULTY ACCESSING
AI READINESS WITH
MODULE 0

152

RESPONSES TO THE
AI COMPETENCIES
FEEDBACK SURVEY

AI Training and Learning Initiatives

TRAINING AND LEARNING

AI is advancing at pace, and it is important to provide AI training to the Polytech community to build AI capacity, support change management, address how AI is impacting operations and ensure students graduate AI-ready.

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STAFF AND FACULTY ENROLLED:
"FUNDAMENTALS AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI"

250

STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY ENROLLED:
"AI READINESS WITH MODULE 0" WITH AMII

130

FACULTY PARTICIPANTS:
"AI ASSESSMENT REDESIGN LAB"

30

FACULTY PARTICIPANTS:
"AI COLLABORATIVE PARTNER LAB PILOT"

210

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS:
"MS COPILOT PREMIUM TRAINING
WITH INFO-TECH RESEARCH GROUP"



TRAINING AND LEARNING HIGHLIGHTS

Fundamentals and Responsible Use of AI

Based on an AI literacy training adapted from NAIT, the Fundamentals and Responsible Use of AI staff and faculty AI literacy module was developed as a two-hour asynchronous training. It was piloted with more than 71 staff and faculty. The pilot feedback was used to update the module, and it was rolled out Polytech-wide in May 2026. Beyond direct participation, the module establishes a common foundation for AI literacy across the Polytech, helping staff and faculty develop a shared understanding of responsible AI use and reinforcing RRC Polytech's commitment to preparing its workforce for an AI-enabled future.

AI Assessment ReDesign Lab

Developed by a team of instructors and educational developers, this synchronous training guides participants through the process of diagnosing an assessment's vulnerabilities to implementing practical redesigns. This ensures student learning can be accurately assessed in the presence of AI. While approximately 130 faculty have participated to date, the impact extends well beyond individual attendees by building institutional capacity to respond to AI's influence on teaching, learning and assessment. Additional offerings are planned for the next academic year to expand participation, strengthen assessment practices across programs and further support educators in navigating the evolving educational context shaped by AI.



AI Strategy Initiatives

To help the Polytech community adapt to the growing impact of AI, RRC Polytech has implemented initiatives that build AI literacy, support responsible adoption and embed AI into key institutional processes.

These efforts help ensure employees have access to resources and learning opportunities while preparing students to graduate with the skills and awareness needed in an AI-enabled world.

AI Webpages

- AI Hub in Staff Forum – Responsible AI, governance, resources, training, AI adoption at RRC Polytech
- AI on rrc.ca – AI commitments and principles, AI vision and governance

AI Skills in Job Postings

- AI skills listed in academic and non-academic job posting templates
- Over 90% of hiring managers gave positive feedback with AI skills in job postings and interview questions

AI in Course Outlines

- Updated AI information in course outline templates
- Instructors indicate if and how AI can be used in courses
- Link to student AI literacy “AI Readiness with Module O”

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE POLYTECH COMMUNITY

AI Strategy Surveys

- Staff and faculty: Feedback from over 430 employees
- Student: Feedback from over 612 students

Student Engagement

- Focus groups: Sentiment from over 25 students
- Community of practice: Building relationships around AI skills

AI Strategy Presentations

- College Council
- Knowledge Keeper’s Council
- All Leaders
- Staff and Faculty
- School of Continuing Education
- RED Forum
- Red River Ready
- And more



Pictured: RED Forum AI Strategy Session. From left to right: Kylie Cox, Nadine Ogborn, Eddy Lau, Melanie Gudmundson, Rebecca Molly Hiebert, Karen Kabel, Baltej Singh Rupal.

AI Strategy Surveys

Staff and Faculty AI Strategy Survey Results

- Attitude towards AI:
 - 43% Enthusiastic adopter and interested and exploring.
 - 23% Skeptical, hesitant and actively avoidant.
- Concerns about ethics, bias, unforeseen vulnerabilities, privacy, environmental impact and job displacement.
- AI most used for writing, administrative work, presentations, communication tasks and data analysis.
- 59% of respondents think RRC Polytech should lead AI innovation and collaborate to shape the future of AI in Manitoba’s industries.
- 79% of respondents think it is important and very important to prepare students for using AI in the workplace.
- 75% of respondents think it is important and very important to update coursework to stay relevant with AI workplace trends.
- 70% of faculty state that they teach students basic or no AI skills

Student AI Strategy Survey Results

- Attitude towards AI:
 - 31% Enthusiastic adopter and interested and exploring.
 - 34% Skeptical, hesitant and actively avoidant.
- AI most used for writing quality, explaining concepts and brainstorming ideas.
- Concerns about ethics (fairness and responsible use), academic integrity, loss of critical thinking and over-reliance on technology.
- Respondents wanted more clarity on AI in coursework, including examples of allowed vs not allowed AI use, clear guidelines and how to cite AI.
- 50% of respondents never use AI in coursework.
- How AI should be included in post-secondary education:
 - 36% say AI should not be part of post-secondary education.
 - 34% say AI tools should be integrated in individual courses where relevant to the field.



RESPONSE TO SURVEY RESULTS:

Provide AI training, AI readiness in programs in collaboration with industry, and direction on responsible AI through policy and procedures to build AI capacity and address concerns and resistance.



RESPONSE TO SURVEY RESULTS:

Provide students with AI literacy and help them understand the impact of AI on industry to reinforce the importance of graduating AI-ready; provide clearer direction on AI and academic integrity in coursework.

AI Use Cases

AI Working Groups explored opportunities to use AI tools to solve problems across the Polytech, generating more than 50 potential AI use cases across working groups.

Through a prioritization workshop with Info-Tech Research Group and oversight from the Executive Sponsors group, the AI Steering Committee assessed use cases for alignment with institutional values and strategic priorities, risk, data readiness, impact on work and implementation considerations. Working groups then collaborated with impacted departments to advance selected use cases, exploring practical AI solutions that respond to institutional needs, improve services and support the responsible use of AI in teaching, learning and operations.

- **Teaching and Learning working group and Centre for Program and Learning Excellence**
 - **Boost Courses with AI in LEARN** - Piloted Lumi to enhance creating engaging activities for instructors and an AI tutor for students.
- **Academic Programming working group, Ace Project Space and ITS**
 - **Student AI Sandbox for Ethical Experiential Learning** - Met with vendors to explore the development of an AI Sandbox for safe AI exploration for students.
- **Operations working group, People Services and ITS**
 - **ITS and People Services Virtual Assistant** – Launching a virtual assistant to provide 24/7 responses to students and employees through an enterprise management system.
- **Student Experience working group and Admissions**
 - **Automated Admissions Services** – Ran an RFP for an AI tool to enhance the admissions experience for prospective students.

AI USE CASE HIGHLIGHTS

Boost Courses with AI in LEARN

The Lumi and Creator+ pilot demonstrated strong potential to improve course development for accessibility and learner engagement, with 48 active users generating more than 19,000 pieces of content and creating over 2,100 interactive learning elements in LEARN (learning management system). Building on the success of the pilot, Lumi will be expanded more broadly in the next academic year to support instructors in creating engaging, AI-facilitated learning experiences for students. The Polytech will also explore the potential of student-facing Lumi Chat and Lumi Tutor tools to provide personalized, 24/7 course support and enhance student learning beyond the classroom.

LUMI PILOT ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS: 48

Automated Admissions Services

The Admissions AI initiative is advancing through the procurement process, with vendor submissions evaluated to identify a solution that best supports applicant and institutional needs. Once implemented, the tool is expected to enhance document processing and communications, creating a more seamless and responsive admissions experience for prospective students while enabling staff to focus more time on personalized guidance and support. Building on these efficiencies, the initiative has the potential to strengthen engagement with future learners and improve their connection to RRC Polytech from their first interaction with the institution.

TARGET LAUNCH: FALL 2027

Engagement with the External Community

Through the AI Strategy, the Polytech has engaged with a wide range of external partners.

- **Province of Manitoba:** Presentation about RRC Polytech's AI Strategy.
- **Signal49:** AI Readiness in Academic Programs and AI Assessment Redesign project teams interviewed with the Signal49 research team to share about the progress and successes of the initiatives.
- **CBC's Up to Speed:** Interviewed with CBC's Up to Speed program to share about RRC Polytech's AI Strategy and vision for AI readiness at the institution.
- **Signal49:** Quoted in Signal49 report Human Skills in AI Training to share information on the AI Assessment ReDesign initiative.

PARTNERSHIPS

- **AI Workforce Readiness Consortium with Amii**
- **Post-secondary partnership with University of Manitoba, University College of the North and Brandon University**
- **Pan-Canadian AI Consortium through Bow Valley College**
- **OCAD University and Alberta University of the Arts** to prepare a proposal on AI in Creative Arts for the AI Workforce Readiness Consortium



RRC POLYTECH IN THE FEDERAL AI STRATEGY

RRC Polytech was the only post-secondary institution recognized nationally in [Canada's Federal AI strategy](#) for partnership with Amii in development of AI curriculum for Early Childhood Education.



Future Opportunities

The first full year for the AI Strategy had many successful initiatives and opportunities to address new and emerging needs in the AI sphere. Plans for 2026-27 address these opportunities through targeted mitigations to keep the AI strategy moving forward.

- **Capacity**
 - Dedicate more time, specialized expertise and resources to maintain momentum.
 - **Change and Resistance**
 - Respond to feedback from students, staff and faculty to support a range of views, including concerns about the impact of AI on the environment and job market.
- **Governance**
 - Continue work on AI policy, software review, data use classification and tool use for alignment across areas and the safe use of AI.
 - **AI Infrastructure**
 - Continue building AI partnerships and infrastructure to enable AI innovation.

NEXT STEPS

2026-27 Roadmap

Feedback from leadership alongside insights gathered from staff, faculty and student AI surveys, focus groups, Info-Tech Research Group and broader interest-holder input has highlighted the importance of strengthening areas such as consistent messaging, AI training, change management, academic innovation, student engagement, industry connection, Indigenous perspectives and sustainability.

With the Executive Sponsors group and the AI Steering Committee continuing, the 2026-27 AI working groups are being refreshed to be able to address the identified challenges and to advance the existing AI activities to make measurable impacts.

Expanding AI Strategy Initiatives

Following the release of [Canada’s National AI Strategy in June 2026](#), larger initiatives are being explored to align with this strategic direction:

- **Increase AI capacity through exploring dedicated resources and support for AI innovation.**
- **Explore industry AI readiness through applied research supports, industry partnerships and innovation-focused initiatives.**



