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# AI strategy for apprenticeship providers
A practical guide to responsible and impactful implementation

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In this guide

Why apprenticeship providers need an AI strategy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the education landscape, and apprenticeship provision is no exception. For providers, AI offers transformative opportunities: personalised learning, reduced administrative burden, improved engagement, and better outcomes. But it also presents challenges. Shadow AI use by learners and staff, regulatory uncertainty, ethical dilemmas and inconsistent implementation can all undermine the benefits of AI.

Without a clearly defined AI strategy, providers risk non-compliance with Ofsted and Ofqual expectations, exposing learners and organisations to unnecessary risk. By adopting a comprehensive AI strategy, providers can innovate responsibly, stay compliant, and elevate the apprenticeship experience.

Foundations of an effective AI strategy

Aligning AI to organisational objectives

If you're looking to integrate AI into your workflows, the initiative must begin with strategic alignment. Whether the goal is to increase learner retention, streamline reviews, or improve marking quality, AI should directly support institutional priorities.

Avoiding shadow AI

Shadow AI refers to unsanctioned or unmonitored AI use by staff or learners. Ignoring AI entirely means that people may use it in secret regardless of IT policies, which poses serious risks to data security and compliance. Having clear usage policies and approved systems is essential to safeguard data, ensure transparency, and maintain trust.

Core questions to guide AI integration

1 Do these tools support our long-term goals?

2 Do they comply with IT security, data privacy and ethical standards?

3 Is AI culturally and operationally a good fit?

4 Are staff and systems prepared for successful implementation?

The five pillars of a successful AI strategy

1

Safety, security, and robustness

AI systems must be secure and dependable. This includes encryption, secure data storage, robust user authentication, and ongoing updates to address new threats.

2
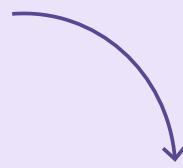
Transparency and explainability

A human-in-the-loop (HITL) approach to vital areas such as marking ensures that AI suggestions can be interpreted and challenged. Transparent audit trails and user feedback mechanisms allow for accountability and continuous improvement.

3

Fairness and bias mitigation

Bias can unintentionally creep into AI systems. Providers must proactively test for and correct any biases, especially those affecting small or protected learner groups. Ethical AI design and workflows are critical to building inclusive learning environments.

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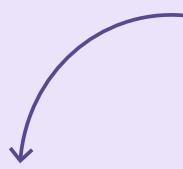
Accountability and governance

Clearly defined roles for tutors, administrators, data officers and leadership are essential. Governance models must ensure staff understand and are accountable for how AI is used.

5

Contestability and human oversight

AI tools must support, not replace, human decisions. Providers should ensure that tutors have the authority and mechanisms to override AI recommendations and offer learners fair redress pathways.

Roles and teams involved in AI strategy implementation
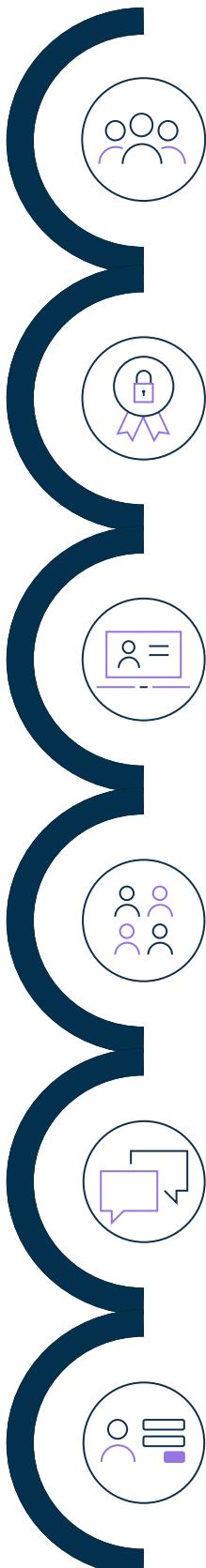
Leadership

Responsible for aligning AI strategy with institutional goals and ensuring ethical oversight.

Data protection and compliance officers

Ensure legal compliance, particularly regarding GDPR and emerging AI regulations.

Tutors/Coaches

Act as critical human oversight in AI-supported teaching, marking, and mentoring.

IT and digital teams

Lead technical deployment, integrations, IT security and ongoing system performance monitoring.

Learner support and admin staff

Track AI usage, support learners, and escalate concerns when necessary.

Learners

Must be educated in responsible AI use and encouraged to develop digital resilience so that they are not over-reliant on AI.

Policy as the cornerstone of ethical AI use

The role of an AI policy

An AI policy governs tool usage, assigns responsibilities and provides guardrails for safe innovation. It reduces the risk of shadow AI usage and ensures consistency. Given that the technical landscape is continually evolving, it should be reviewed regularly but the key principles should provide guidelines as new tools emerge.

Essential elements

- ✅ Approved tools list and usage guidelines
- ✅ Data privacy and ethics standards
- ✅ Escalation and incident reporting procedures

Monitoring and auditing

Regular audits of AI usage and system performance help providers maintain transparency, compliance, and quality assurance.

Examples of AI policy in the UK

There are a number of published AI policies that could inform the development of an effective AI policy for apprenticeship providers. As well as various template documents available from legal experts, the AstraZeneca AI governance case study provides useful information for larger organisations.

Charity Excellence has shared an AI policy template for the sector and the ICT Evangelist has developed a template AI policy document for schools that breaks down the roles and responsibilities of teachers, students and technical staff. In the private sector. Another source of information is the UK Government's AI playbook which offers a framework designed for civil service use.

Closer to the needs of apprenticeship providers, the Russell Group of universities has published a statement of principles that prioritises AI literacy in students and highlights the role of universities in preserving academic rigour and integrity. The policy statement documents the importance of sharing best practice within the Group to raise quality standards in AI use.

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Aptem Enhance: AI strategy in action

When we developed Aptem Enhance, our starting point mirrored the advice we give our customers: align every decision with the needs of learners, tutors, and the wider organisation's strategic goals. We focused on delivering clear benefits – saving time on administration, improving quality assurance, and enriching learner journeys – while protecting compliance and data security at every step.

Checkpoint is an automated objective progress monitoring tool. It can be used during onboarding to verify the learner's starting point and can be used throughout their journey to check that learners are on track. It aligns to strategic goals to demonstrate progress, improve learner engagement and achievement rates.

✅ **Accountability and governance**

✅ **Contestability and human oversight**
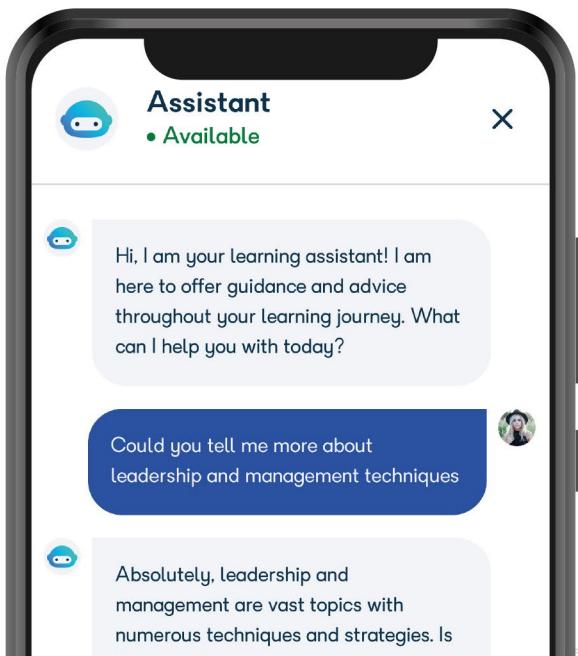
Virtual assistant delivers timely, accurate information and support to learners 24/7. It engages learners in the moment by autonomously addressing common learner questions. The virtual assistant is fully integrated with checkpoint, enabling learners who have answered questions incorrectly to instantly access information to progress their learning. Learners can also supplement questions they have answered correctly with further stretch materials.

This secure solution is built into Aptem, ensuring the highest standards of security and data protection. It includes a full audit trail with transcripts for tutors so that they can see how learners are using the tool and to check whether assignments are being copied directly from virtual assistant responses.

✅ **Safety, security and robustness**

✅ **Contestability and human oversight**

Checkpoint serves as a valuable tool in supporting coaching efforts. It enables tutors to seamlessly transition between coaching sessions and progress reviews, with checkpoint data readily available to inform and guide discussions on focus areas.

Madeleine Robinson,
Head of Apprenticeship Operations and Transformation, Pareto

Assistant
• Available

Hi, I am your learning assistant! I am here to offer guidance and advice throughout your learning journey. What can I help you with today?

Could you tell me more about leadership and management techniques

Absolutely, leadership and management are vast topics with numerous techniques and strategies. Is
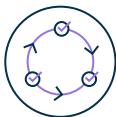
Enhanced reviews

This suite of features offers AI-powered assistance to complete routine administrative tasks relating to any type of review. For example, the review summarisation tool automatically documents the key discussion points, crucial feedback and action points, helping to improve engagement, boost accuracy and shorten feedback loops. Enhanced reviews helps to raise the quality of review documentation with consistent standards and formats. It also protects potentially sensitive learner and employer information within the secure Aptem solution.

- ✓ **Safety, security and robustness**
- ✓ **Accountability and governance**

Learn more about the regulatory guidance on AI in education.

Click here

Marking aid and feedback assistant

Marking aid and feedback assistant use the marking and feedback of your tutors to create a high-quality bank of feedback for marking exercises. The tool coaches tutors to deliver inline feedback that is consistent with best practice, raising your organisation's quality standards and accelerating the marking process. This improves learner engagement through faster responses with constructive, actionable feedback.

Because the responses are created by your tutors during their marking activities, the marking is fully explainable and maintains the required human-in-the-loop (HITL) aspect for full compliance with Ofsted and Ofqual regulatory requirements.

- ✓ **Safety, security and robustness**
- ✓ **Transparency and explainability**
- ✓ **Fairness and bias mitigation**
- ✓ **Contestability and human oversight**

These tools exemplify how AI can be applied responsibly in a way that aligns with strategic goals. Aptem Enhance combines automation with oversight to boost outcomes, quality and operational efficiency.

Steps to get started

1. **Assess readiness:** Evaluate your technical infrastructure, data policies, and staff skills.

2. **Prioritise use cases:** Identify areas where AI can have the most impact.

3. **Pilot in a controlled environment:** Start with proven tools like Aptem Enhance.

4. **Build capability:** Invest in staff training and digital literacy.

5. **Monitor, reflect, and scale:** Use feedback and performance data to refine and expand AI usage.

Working with an expert partner to implement AI within your organisation can insource expertise and allow you to quickly realise the value of your investment.

Our expert implementation team works closely with customers to ensure that our purpose-built AI tools can support your goals in a way that protects your data and IT security, and ensures that you remain fully compliant with relevant AI regulations.

Building a future-ready apprenticeship model

AI offers powerful tools to improve apprenticeship delivery, but only when guided by a clear, ethical, and compliant strategy. By embedding transparency, fairness, and human oversight into your AI framework, you not only meet regulatory requirements but also create a richer, more supportive learning experience. The future of apprenticeships is here—intelligent, inclusive, and deeply human.

Find out more

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Intelligent technology®
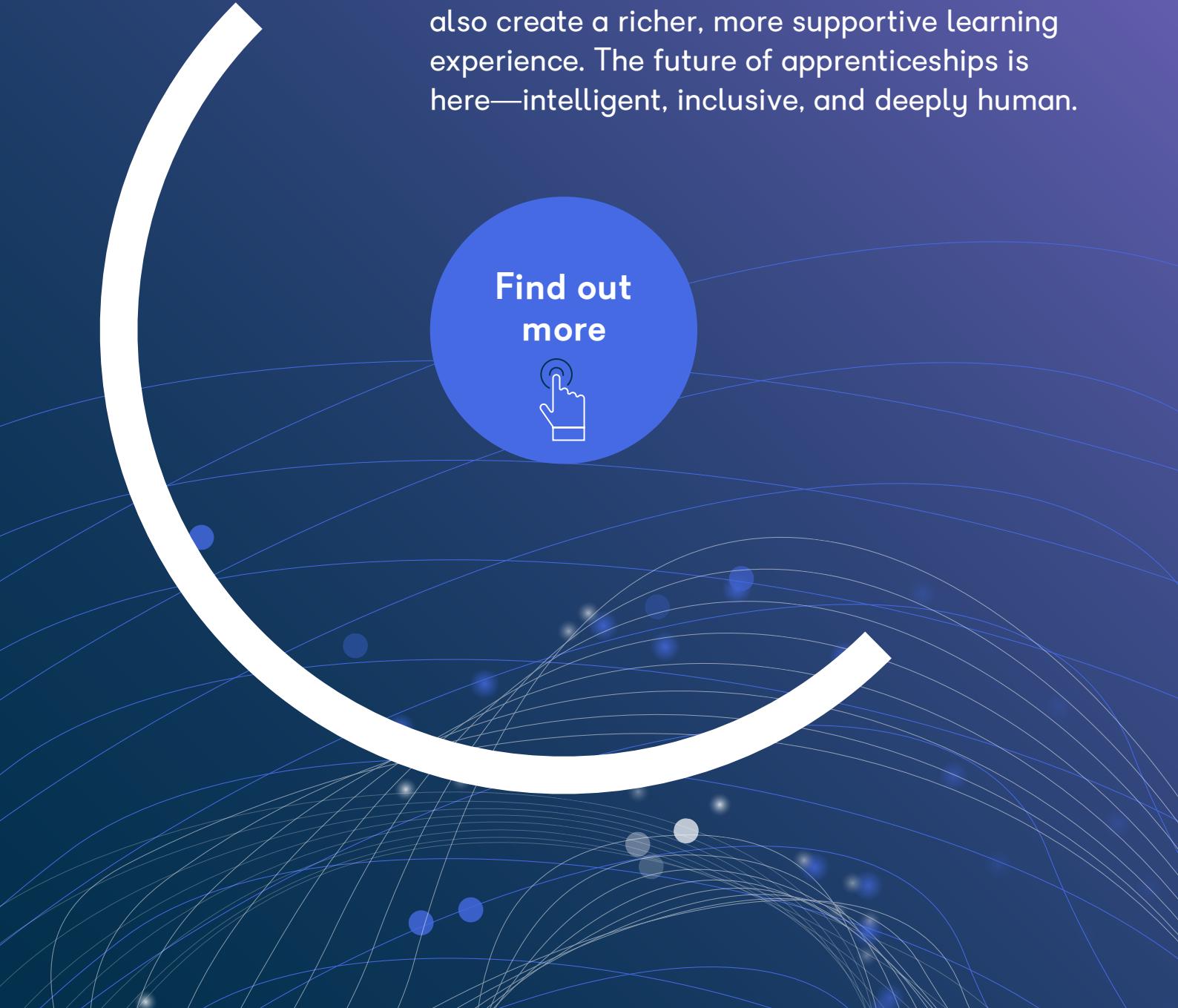
If you are an organisation that helps deliver further education and employment programmes and would like to transform the way you deliver in a cost-effective, efficient and compliant way, get in touch:

enquiries@aptem.co.uk

020 3758 8540

www.aptem.co.uk/enhance

Aptem is one of the fastest-growing SaaS software companies to manage vocational training, skills and employability programmes.

In addition to Aptem Apprentice, we offer a range of other solutions to support the development of vocational skills and re-employment.

- ✅ **Aptem Enrol,** remote onboarding of apprenticeship students, for colleges.

- ✅ **Aptem Employ,** a unique, flexible, award-winning employability system that helps to get people back into the workplace quickly and for the long term.

- ✅ **Aptem Skills,** our award-winning end-to-end delivery platform that enables fully compliant ASF course delivery and accelerates re-employment.

- ✅ **Aptem Assess,** a cognitive assessment tool that enables you to seamlessly identify and respond to learning needs.

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