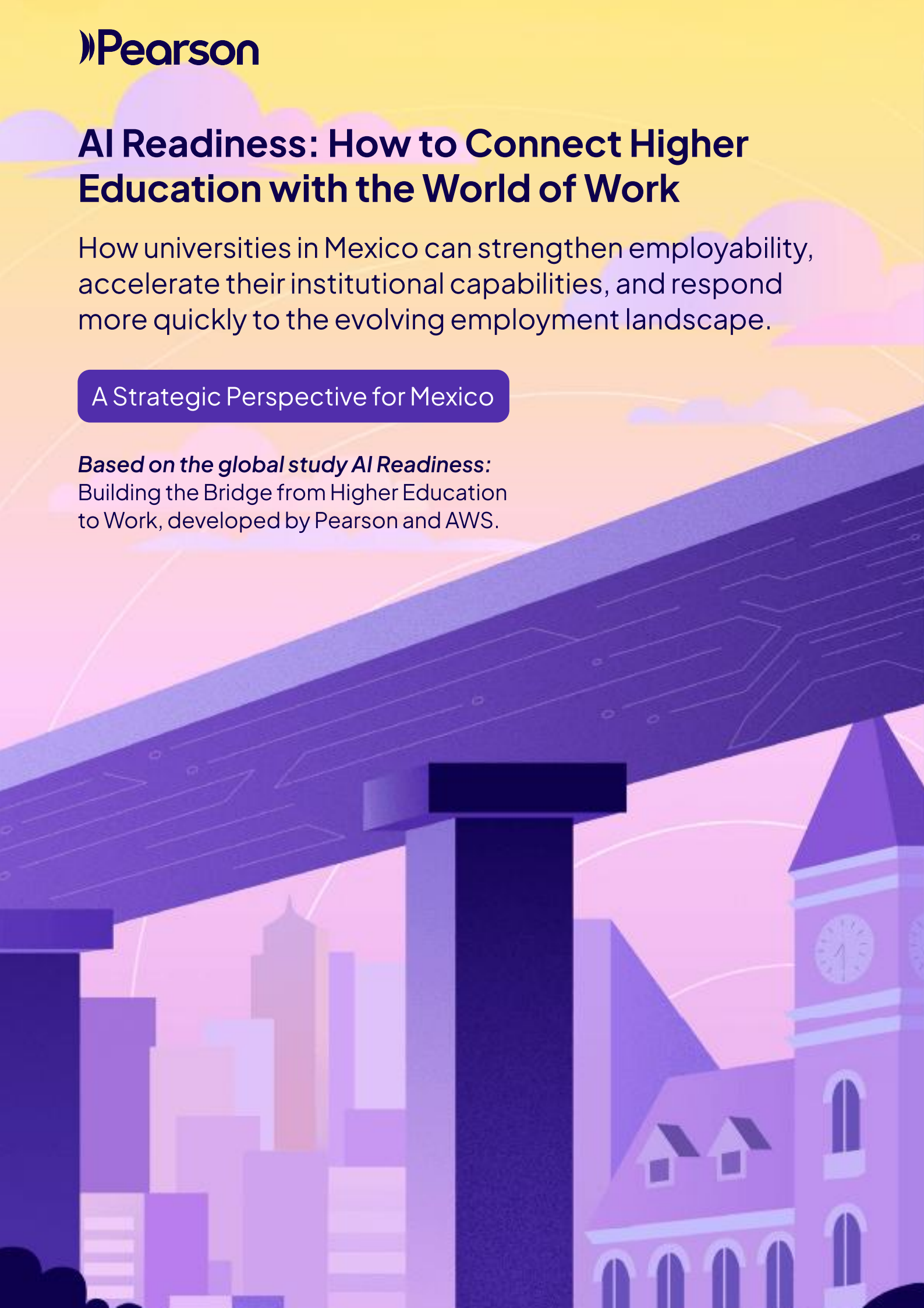
Pearson

AI Readiness: How to Connect Higher Education with the World of Work

How universities in Mexico can strengthen employability, accelerate their institutional capabilities, and respond more quickly to the evolving employment landscape.

A Strategic Perspective for Mexico

Based on the global study AI Readiness: Building the Bridge from Higher Education to Work, developed by Pearson and AWS.



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Foreword

The transition from higher education to the labor market has never been a simple process. However, the rapid adoption of **artificial intelligence** is raising expectations for students, institutions, and employers by transforming the skills required, entry-level roles in the labor market, and the ways in which talent is assessed.

Globally, the pace of **AI-driven change** is creating new expectations regarding the ability of higher education institutions to prepare their students.

Far from diminishing the importance of universities, this transformation reinforces their **strategic role** in developing the knowledge, capabilities, and experiences graduates need to navigate increasingly AI-enabled professional environments with sound judgment, adaptability, and responsibility.

For Pearson, **AI readiness** only becomes meaningful when learning translates into the ability to perform in real-world settings. The institutional challenge goes beyond adopting new tools.

It requires creating the right conditions for students, educators, and academic leaders to use **AI effectively, critically, ethically, and responsibly.**



"There is no positive future for AI without a strong foundation in human learning."

Tom ap Simon - President, Higher Education and Virtual Learning, Pearson

About This Publication

This publication is a Pearson-led initiative that explores the strategic application of the AI Readiness Friction Framework within Mexico's higher education context. It builds on the global study AI Readiness: Building the Bridge from Higher Education to Work, developed by Pearson and AWS, and contextualizes its key findings and framework using publicly available evidence from Mexico.

The sources used for the local data are listed in the references and include research and publications from both national and international institutions. This evidence complements the global research by providing insights into Mexico's higher education landscape. The purpose of this publication is to support and strengthen conversations about AI readiness across the country's higher education sector.

Introduction

Why AI Requires an Institutional Response in Mexico

The global economy is at an inflection point. The relationship between human capital, technological capabilities, and **institutional readiness** is evolving rapidly. At the heart of this transformation is the transition from higher education into employment, a process that has historically created friction and is now being accelerated by the adoption of **artificial intelligence**.

AI is not simply another incremental productivity tool. It represents a disruption that is **reshaping work, skills development, and the role of universities**. In fields with greater exposure to AI, many tasks that once served as entry points into employment are being automated or redesigned. At the same time, AI is changing how students search for jobs, prepare application materials, and assess their own prospects in an increasingly automated labor market.

However, the challenge is not a lack of future opportunities. The World Economic Forum projects that although AI will displace millions of jobs by 2030, it will also create a significant number of new roles.

The real question is whether the education-to-employment system can address the perception gaps, operational misalignment, and capability gaps that currently exist among students, educators, university leaders, and employers.

In this context, **AI readiness** is defined as the human capacity to work effectively alongside intelligent systems. It combines functional AI proficiency, strategic intelligence, ethical stewardship, and critical human skills such as adaptability, communication, and professional judgment.

ENIAG 2025 included 2,900 higher education institutions, 1,539,732 students, and 163,259 educators.

Following the application of the validation criteria, the analysis included responses from 1,143,451 students and 133,582 educators.

Methodology: *A census-based, non-probability exercise drawing on valid responses received from the different higher education subsystems.*

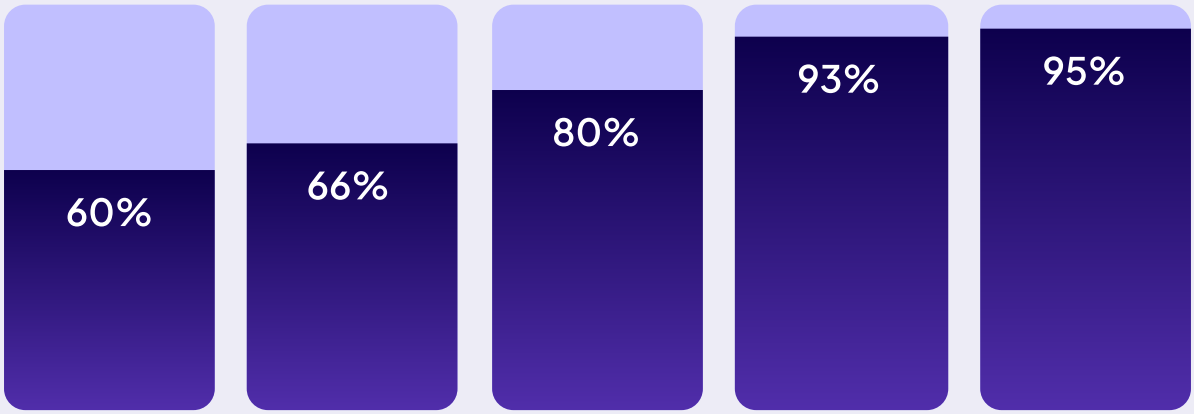
At the same time, Mexico's labor market is placing growing pressure on universities to respond. IMCO, the local partner for the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025, reports that **40% of the core skills** required for jobs in Mexico are expected to change over the next five years; **95% of companies** plan to adopt AI tools; and **82%** expect to accelerate the automation of processes and tasks.

This is why this **Mexico-focused edition** is especially relevant: institutions must respond to two challenges at once. First, they need to manage the use of AI, which is already widespread across campuses. Second, they must prepare graduates to succeed in a labor market that is redesigning roles, skills requirements, and hiring criteria at a pace that far exceeds traditional cycles of institutional change

Source: *Future of Jobs Survey 2024, results for Mexico; global survey of more than 1,000 employers across 55 economies.*

Mexico | Local Evidence

Signs of GenAI Adoption in Mexican Higher Education



Analytical base: *1,143,451 students and 133,582 educators from 2,900 participating higher education institutions. ENIAG 2025, a census-based, non-probability exercise. Regular use: at least once per week.*

Chapter 1

Why AI Is Redefining the Relationship Between Universities and Employment

Executive Summary

For university leaders, this is neither a peripheral conversation nor a purely technological agenda. It is a question of institutional responsiveness. When the labor market evolves faster than curricula can be redesigned, student adoption outpaces institutional policy, and employers update their expectations before universities can adjust the signals their graduates bring to the labor market, the gap is no longer conceptual. It becomes a strategic challenge.

The message of this chapter is clear: AI is reshaping the pace of change, how the value of a university degree is perceived, and the criteria employers use to assess whether graduates are ready for the labor market. Understanding this transformation is the first step toward determining how institutions should respond.

Evidence from the Global Study

> ***"The greatest barrier is not the technology itself, but mindset and governance. Universities are designed to move slowly and deliberately. But AI is evolving at tremendous speed. The gap emerges precisely from this friction between slow-moving institutions and fast-moving technology."***
>
> *Graça Carvalho, University College London (UCL)*

Artificial intelligence is transforming the connection between higher education and employment at a pace that exceeds many institutions' ability to adapt. Universities now face a strategic choice: **accelerate curricular and organizational transformation or risk graduating students who are not adequately prepared for a labor market increasingly shaped by AI**.

The global study by **Pearson and AWS** illustrates the scale of this change: **67%** of respondents describe the pace of AI-driven change as very or extremely fast, while **70%** of higher education leaders expect this acceleration to increase over the next two years.



Mexico | Local Evidence

The Pace of Change Is Outstripping Traditional Institutional Cycles

This trend is already evident in Mexico. Mexico's Ministry of Public Education (SEP) reports widespread use of generative AI among university students and educators, while the labor market anticipates significant shifts in skills and large-scale adoption of AI by employers. This raises an urgent question for higher education institutions: **are universities preparing graduates who are truly ready for an AI-driven labor market?**

Mexico is no longer observing generative AI from the sidelines. The country has entered a phase of **widespread adoption**, although institutions are progressing at different levels of maturity. The conversation is no longer about whether AI will become part of university life. The focus has shifted to the purpose it should serve, the teaching culture needed to support its use, and how it can be meaningfully connected to the labor market.



Evidence from Mexico points to the regular use of **GenAI across higher education**, while also revealing gaps in governance, pedagogical support, infrastructure, and impact measurement.



Mexico's labor market is already demanding AI, automation, and data analytics skills, alongside adaptability and large-scale upskilling.



For large universities, competitive advantage will not come simply from "having AI," but from embedding it across the institution in ways that are ethical, measurable, and aligned with employability outcomes.



For institutional leaders, AI readiness is not a stand-alone technology conversation. It is an agenda that affects academic reputation, curriculum relevance, operational efficiency, the student experience, and engagement with employers.

Pearson's Strategic Perspective

In Mexico, **AI readiness** has become a strategic priority for university leadership. When student adoption advances faster than institutional transformation, gaps in AI readiness can emerge, with potential implications for **learning, academic integrity, and employability**.

Evidence from the Global Study

Why Many Universities Are Still Struggling to Keep Pace

Despite widespread agreement on the speed of change, only a minority of participants in the global Pearson study believe that universities are keeping pace with the AI-driven transformation. The challenge is not necessarily a lack of willingness. To a large extent, it lies in an **institutional model** built around longer cycles of review, accreditation, and change.

The value of a university degree is also evolving. Employers no longer view a degree solely as evidence of subject knowledge. Increasingly, employers also see it as a signal that a graduate can learn quickly, adapt, collaborate, use AI tools with sound judgment, and perform effectively in more complex and less predictable working environments.

This shift does not mean that university degrees are losing value. Rather, it changes what that value must demonstrate. **Sixty-three percent of participants** in the study believe that universities are more essential today than they were five years ago. The paradox is clear: universities remain indispensable, yet they are expected to evolve much faster than in the past.

AI does not make universities irrelevant. It requires universities to **redefine their value proposition**. Institutions remain essential, but the transmission of established knowledge alone is no longer enough.



Universities remain the environment where subject knowledge, critical thinking, ethical judgment, and structured learning come together.



What is changing is what graduates are expected to demonstrate. A degree must reflect knowledge, the ability to apply it, sound judgment, adaptability, and the capacity to work alongside AI systems.

Pearson's Strategic Perspective



In Mexico, this is particularly important because the gap between educational provision and labor market demand was already a challenge before AI. AI is now accelerating that gap and making it more visible.

Universities remain essential. But institutions must now demonstrate that graduates are equipped with the judgment, applied capabilities, and employability skills needed to succeed in AI-enabled environments.

Evidence from the Global Study

What Employers Value and How Universities Must Respond

Most participants in the study believe that the best preparation for an **AI-enabled workplace** combines **a university education with practical experience**. Employers are not suggesting that hands-on experience should replace higher education. Instead, they are calling for a closer integration of theory, judgment, technological fluency, and real-world application.

What Employers Value Today	How Universities Must Respond
Communication and collaboration	Active learning, interdisciplinary work, presentation, and argumentation.
Adaptability	Flexible curricula, lifelong learning, and problem-solving-based assessment.
Human judgment when working with AI	Output verification, critical analysis, and context-aware decision-making.
Practical ability to use AI tools	Hands-on experience with tools, projects, and applied evidence.

Mexico | Local Evidence

In Mexico, the need for this **blended approach** is reinforced by signals from the labor market itself. Artificial intelligence and big data, creative thinking, resilience, cybersecurity, and social leadership are among the skills expected to see the strongest growth in demand over the coming years. Employers are not looking for technical proficiency alone. They increasingly require a combination of **practical, cognitive, interpersonal, and ethical capabilities.**

- **According to PwC Mexico***: skills are changing fastest in occupations with greater exposure to AI, making lifelong learning essential.
- **Pearson's recommendation**: an AI-ready university in Mexico must develop four areas simultaneously: practical proficiency with AI tools; the ability to identify business value and impact within a discipline; the judgment to verify AI-generated outputs and use AI responsibly; and distinctly human capabilities that are difficult to automate.

To close this gap, universities need a more explicit definition of what it means to graduate "**AI-ready**" and must translate that definition into curricula, assessment, learning experiences, and consistent messages to students and employers.

Source: *Analysis of 18.2 million job postings in Mexico, PwC, AI Jobs Barometer 2025, 2021–2024 period.*

Chapter 2

How Ready Is an Institution for AI?

Executive Summary

Conversations about AI in higher education often focus on tools. Yet the real difference between institutions cannot be explained by technology adoption alone. It depends on how effectively each institution aligns its strategy, investment, educator development, governance, student experience, and connections to the labor market.

In other words, institutional readiness is not determined by how extensively AI is being tested, but by how coherent and sustainable the institution's overall response is.

This chapter provides senior leaders with a clear framework for assessing three questions:

- What signals indicate that an institution is making meaningful progress?
- Where do significant gaps remain?
- Which factors have the greatest impact on graduates' AI readiness?

Evidence from the Global Study

An AI-mature institution is not one that adopts the most tools, but one that turns AI adoption into measurable learning outcomes, clear standards for responsible use, academic confidence, and tangible employability outcomes.

As institutions and students work to adapt to a rapidly evolving technological landscape, progress remains uneven. The evidence points to significant differences in investment, fragmented adoption of AI tools, and regional gaps in institutions' ability to equip graduates with the experiences and capabilities employers expect.

Only a minority of higher education leaders describe AI as an institutional priority supported by significant investment. Investment should be assessed not only by its scale, but also by its strategic focus across **AI tools, educator development, industry partnerships, curriculum redesign, infrastructure, and governance.**

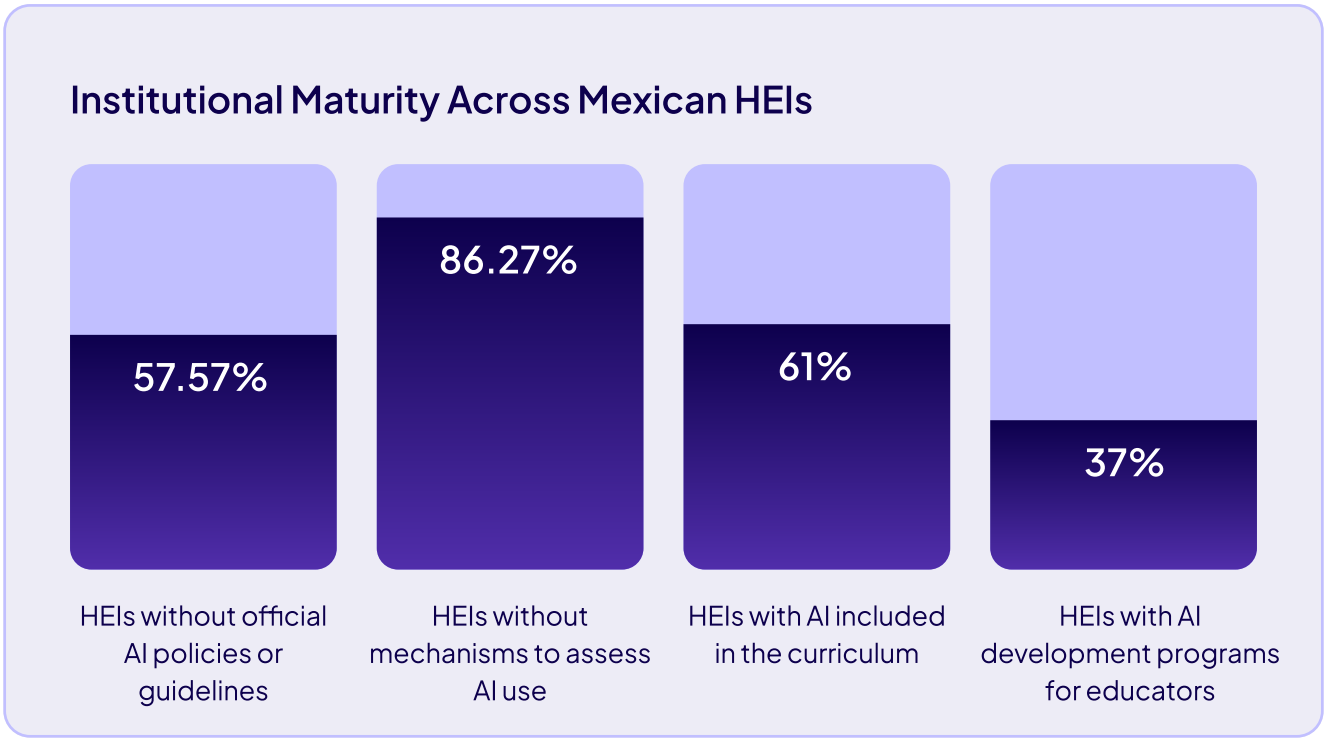
Pearson's Strategic Perspective

The key point is that investing more is not enough. Institutions need to invest more effectively. Those that align investment, curricula, the student experience, educator capability, and employer engagement create stronger conditions for closing the AI readiness gap.



Mexico | Local Evidence

Mexico: Significant Progress, Uneven Maturity



Source base: *161 higher education institutions participating in the OIIAES assessment, representing 31 federal entities.*

The initial findings from Mexico's **Interinstitutional Observatory on Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education (OIIAES)** reveal a mixed picture. On the one hand, there is evidence of curricular progress and growing institutional interest. On the other, significant gaps remain in governance, assessment, infrastructure, and interinstitutional collaboration.

- **57.57%** of participating HEIs still lack official AI policies or guidelines.
- **86.27%** do not have mechanisms in place to assess the use of AI in the classroom.
- **61%** report offering courses, subjects, or modules that address AI within the curriculum.
- **37%** have an institutional AI development program for academic staff.
- **75%** lack licenses for AI resources or applications that support teaching practice.

Pearson's Strategic Perspective

Mexico is not starting from scratch, but it does not yet operate with a consistent, system-wide standard for institutional AI readiness. For large universities, this creates an opportunity to lead, but also demands disciplined execution.

- Curricular progress is evident, but institutional maturity remains uneven.
- Governance and assessment continue to present the most visible gaps.
- Educator development is not yet scaling at the pace required by AI adoption.

Mexico | Local Evidence

Educator Capability: A Key Driver of Graduate Readiness



Educator development is not simply a support program. It is critical infrastructure for institutional transformation. Investment in tools and infrastructure matters, but **educator capability** is one of the main institutional levers for strengthening graduate readiness.

Preparing educators cannot be reduced to teaching them how to use a tool. It must include principles of instructional design, assessment, attribution, output verification, data protection, academic integrity, and an understanding of discipline-specific implications. Without this foundation, students may have very different **learning experiences** depending on the course, school, or even the individual educator.

In Mexico, the fact that only a proportion of higher education institutions report having institutional AI development programs confirms that this is **a critical priority**. Institutions seeking to make meaningful and sustainable progress must treat educator development as core infrastructure, not as a peripheral experiment.

Pearson's Recommendation

Suggested Educator Development Model

Level 1
Institution-Wide AI Literacy

Shared guidelines, principles for AI use, risks, opportunities, and minimum standards across the academic community.

Level 2
Discipline-Specific Pedagogical Integration

Learning activity design, assessment, traceability of AI use, and adaptation to the specific needs of each school or academic program.

Level 3
Advanced Community of Practice

Guided experimentation, peer mentoring, case documentation, and institutional mechanisms for scaling effective practices

Mexico | Local Evidence



Governance: From Uncertainty to Responsible Adoption

AI has become part of academic life faster than many institutions have been able to establish clear, practical, and pedagogically sound rules. When policies arrive too late or remain ambiguous, AI use does not disappear. It becomes less visible, harder to track, and more uneven. Effective governance is not simply about imposing restrictions. **It creates the conditions for AI to be used openly, ethically, productively, and reliably**.

The **UNESCO assessment of Mexico's AI readiness*** points to a country with strengths in capabilities, talent, and rights-based frameworks. However, Mexico still lacks a fully consolidated framework that robustly coordinates the national AI agenda. In this context, institutional leadership within universities becomes even more important.

Pearson's Strategic Perspective

The conclusion for university leaders is clear: while Mexico continues to build a more mature national framework, institutions that define their own AI agenda, grounded in ethical, pedagogical, operational, and workforce considerations, can position themselves as leaders rather than become late adopters

Pearson's Recommendation

What Every Institutional AI Policy Should Include

- Clear principles and definitions.
- Defined roles and responsibilities for students, educators, and support functions.
- Standards for attribution and transparency.
- Guidelines tailored to different types of assessment and levels of study.
- Data protection provisions and a regular policy review cycle.

Source: *UNESCO, assessment of artificial intelligence readiness in Mexico. The assessment covers policies, capabilities, and national conditions; it is not a representative survey of higher education institutions.*



From Student Confidence to a Successful Transition into Employment

Students' confidence in their ability to enter **AI-enabled workplaces** depends largely on the institutional environment they experience: how visible AI use is among educators, how deeply AI is embedded across the curriculum, what opportunities students have to apply their learning in authentic contexts, and how clear the rules of engagement are.

The question university leaders should be asking is not simply how extensively AI is being used, but what kind of institutional experience that use is creating throughout the student journey and as students transition into employment.

When an institution aligns **investment, educator development, applied learning, governance, and labor market signals**, graduate readiness becomes less dependent on chance and more firmly embedded as an institutional capability. This alignment elevates AI from an isolated academic discussion to a strategic priority for university leadership and academic affairs.

Labor Market Pressure

The conversation about AI is no longer purely academic once it begins to affect the promise of employability that an institution makes to students and their families. Universities are preparing graduates for a labor market that is changing faster, across a broader range of roles and disciplines, and with growing demand for hybrid skill sets.

Mexico | Local Evidence

IMCO*, the World Economic Forum's local partner in Mexico, reports that **40%** of the core skills required for jobs in Mexico are expected to change over the next five years.

Source: *World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2024, results for Mexico. Global survey of more than 1,000 employers representing 14 million workers across 22 industries and 55 economies. IMCO served as the WEF's local partner in Mexico.*

95% of surveyed companies plan to adopt AI tools during this period, while **82%** expect to accelerate the automation of tasks and processes.

The skills expected to see the strongest growth in demand include artificial intelligence and big data, creative thinking, networks and cybersecurity, resilience, and social influence.

PwC Mexico* reported that job postings requiring AI skills nearly doubled in 2025, rising from **33,000** in 2024 to **68,000**, with approximately 35,000 new vacancies requiring these capabilities.

Source: *Online job postings published in Mexico between 2021 and 2025.*
PwC, AI Jobs Barometer 2026, Mexico edition; PwC analysis based on Lightcast data.

These findings mean that conversations about university readiness must explicitly address employability, hands-on experience, portfolios, applied assessment, and clear evidence of value for employers, rather than focusing solely on pedagogical modernization.



Chapter 3

From Global Findings to Local Application

Executive Summary

The gap between institutional ambition and effective graduate readiness can take many forms. Closing that gap requires more than acknowledging that AI is transforming the landscape. Each institution must identify where friction could limit its ability to respond effectively.

Developed from the global study by Pearson and AWS, the **AI Readiness Friction Framework** provides a structured lens for this analysis. The framework does not assume that all six areas of friction will be present with the same intensity across every institution or context. Its purpose is to help institutions identify which areas require greater attention, evidence, and institutional reflection.

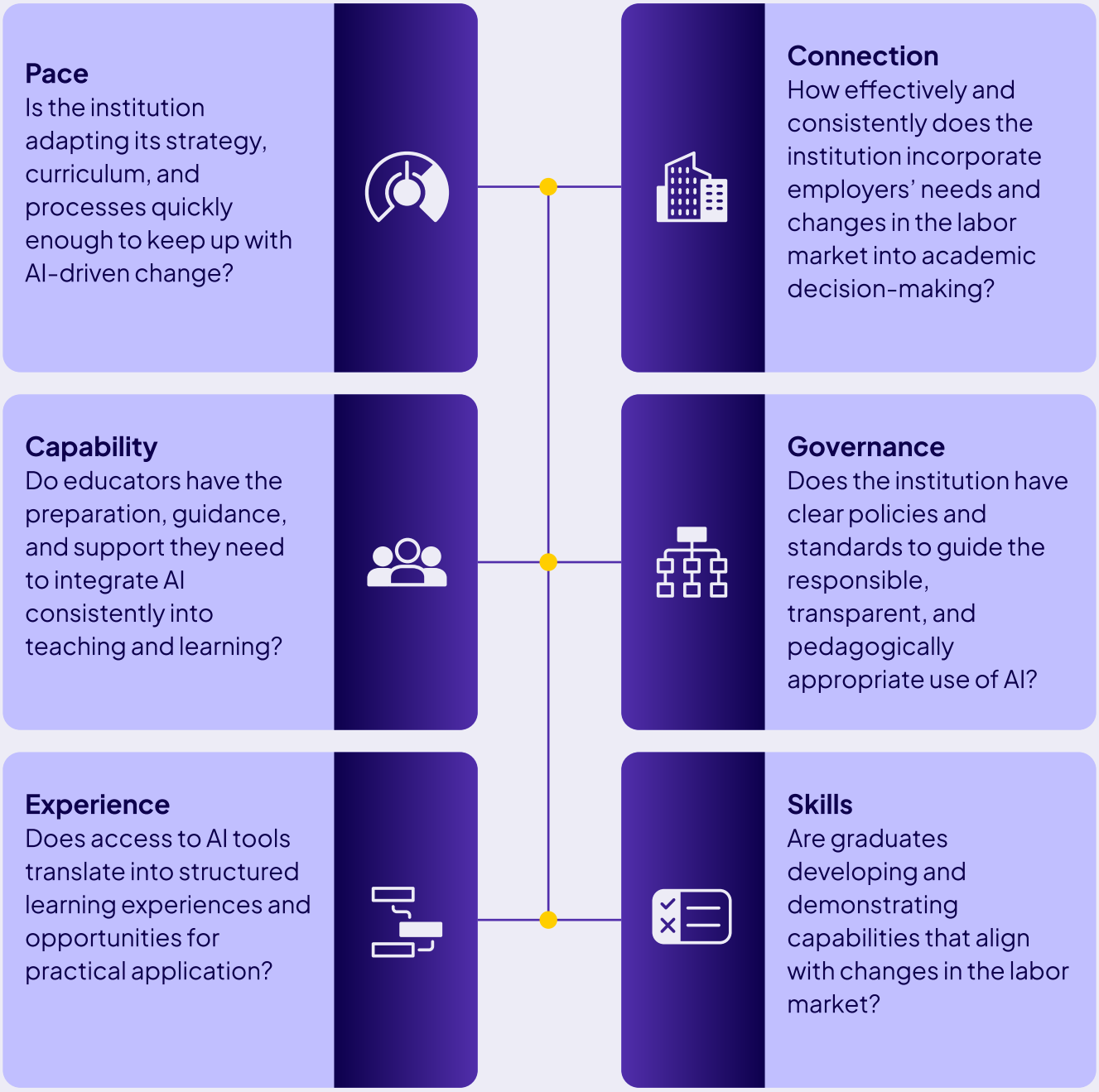
For Mexican institutions, the framework provides a way to move beyond a broad conversation about innovation and conduct a focused assessment of their priorities, taking into account their strategy, context, capabilities, and relationship with the labor market.

The Six Areas of Analysis

- **Pace**
- **Connection**
- **Capability**
- **Governance**
- **Experience**
- **Skills**

AI Readiness Friction Framework

Six Areas Every Institution Can Examine to Identify Priorities and Guide Decision-Making



The framework was developed as part of the global study **AI Readiness: Building the Bridge from Higher Education to Work**, by Pearson and AWS. Its application in Mexico is intended as a tool for institutional analysis, rather than as a nationwide assessment of the six areas of friction.

Mexico | Local Evidence

Friction 1

Pace: Assessing the Institution's Ability to Keep Up with Change

Mexico is seeing rapid adoption of artificial intelligence, alongside shifts in the skills required by the labor market. Findings from ENIAG 2025, PwC's AI Jobs Barometer, and the Future of Jobs Report 2025 show that these changes are unfolding quickly, placing new demands on institutional processes for curriculum review and decision-making.

- When students adopt AI faster than institutional guidance can keep pace, institutions need to respond with greater clarity and coordination.

- As professional roles and skills evolve more rapidly, programs with more flexible, modular structures can adapt with greater agility.

- Moving faster does not mean compromising academic rigor. It requires stronger mechanisms, including continuous curriculum review, microcredentials, scalable pilots, interdisciplinary collaboration, and ongoing monitoring of labor market signals.

Pearson's Recommendation

Questions for University Leaders

- How often do we review learning outcomes related to AI, data, and hybrid skills?
- Which elements of our academic portfolio could be updated through modules, microcredentials, certifications, or complementary learning pathways?
- Which external signals, such as employer needs, market trends, admissions patterns, and competitor activity, inform our decisions? How often do we review them?

***Sources**: ENIAG 2025; PwC Mexico; IMCO and the World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025. See the full reference list at the end of this publication.*

Evidence from the Global Study

Friction 2

Connection: Assessing the Relationship Between the Institution and the Labor Market

The global study by Pearson and AWS identifies the connection between institutions and employers as a potential source of friction. In Mexico, rapidly evolving labor market needs make it especially important for each institution to assess the quality and frequency of its employer engagement mechanisms.

- Career fairs and advisory boards provide value, but their impact can be strengthened through more frequent and structured feedback mechanisms.

- Effective employer engagement enables institutions to translate labor market needs and signals into learning experiences, assessment, portfolios, practical experience, industry challenges, and skills frameworks.

- Universities strengthen their relevance when they integrate labor market signals in ways that remain consistent with their institutional identity, educational purpose, and academic standards.

Pearson's Recommendation

Priorities for Strengthening Connection

1. **Map Priority Industries and Roles**
   Identify the most relevant opportunities, transformations, and skills for each school or faculty and graduate profile.

2. **Strengthen Employer Engagement Mechanisms**
   Establish advisory boards, regular forums, shared metrics, and clear processes for translating employer feedback into institutional decisions.

3. **Co-design Learning Experiences**
   Integrate case studies, industry challenges, projects, practical experience, microcredentials, and assessments connected to authentic professional contexts.

***Source**: Pearson and AWS, AI Readiness: Building the Bridge from Higher Education to Work, 2026.*

Mexico | Local Evidence

Friction 3

Capability: Creating the Conditions for Consistent AI Integration

According to the **OIIAES assessment***, **37%** of participating institutions have an institutional AI development program for academic staff. This finding points to a significant opportunity to expand and strengthen educator development across the institutions included in the assessment. When educator development is not delivered in a structured and institution-wide way, the learning experience can vary significantly across programs, disciplines, and individual educators.

- Not every educator needs the same level of expertise, but the entire academic community needs a shared foundation covering appropriate use, limitations, learning activity design, assessment, and verification.

- Development must go beyond the practical use of AI tools. It should also address pedagogical design, ethics, data protection, prompt design, output verification, and classroom management.

- Institutional capability becomes stronger when AI integration is developed as a shared educator competency, supported by professional development, ongoing guidance, and peer collaboration.

Pearson's Recommendation

A Progressive Pathway for Educator Development

Level 1: Shared Institutional Foundation
Principles for AI use, opportunities, risks, ethical standards, and common guidelines for the entire academic community.

Level 2: Discipline-Specific Pedagogical Integration
The design of AI-enabled learning experiences, activities, and assessments adapted to each field of study.

Level 3: Advanced Community of Practice
Guided experimentation, peer mentoring, documentation of lessons learned, and the sharing of effective practices.

***Source**: Institutions participating in the OIIAES assessment.*

Mexico | Local Evidence

Friction 4

Governance: Assessing and Strengthening the Conditions for Responsible Adoption

Mexico has made meaningful progress in AI governance. Institutions such as **UNAM**, **Tecnológico de Monterrey**, **UnADM**, and **Universidad Anáhuac** have developed guidelines and recommendations to support the responsible use of AI.

At the same time, the **OIIAES** assessment points to opportunities among the participating institutions to expand the adoption of official policies and assessment mechanisms related to AI use.

- Effective governance is not necessarily the most restrictive. It is governance that provides clear, practical standards aligned with the institution's educational purpose.

- Guidelines should address the questions that arise in everyday academic practice: when AI use is permitted, how its use should be disclosed, what is being assessed, what constitutes academic integrity, and how institutional data and information should be protected.

- A clear and well-communicated policy promotes transparent AI use and helps students and educators make informed decisions with greater confidence.

Pearson's Recommendation

Key Elements for Evaluating an Institutional AI Policy

- Definitions, scope, and ethical principles.
- Roles and responsibilities for students, educators, and administrative teams.
- Standards for transparency and disclosure of AI use.
- Guidance tailored to the type of activity, assessment, and level of study.
- Data protection, privacy, and information security.
- Mechanisms for the regular review and updating of the policy.

***Source**: Institutions participating in the OIIAES assessment.*

Evidence from the Global Study

Friction 5

Experience: Assessing Whether Access Translates into Applied Capability

The global study by **Pearson and AWS** identifies a potential gap between access to AI tools and the development of practical experience. Access alone does not ensure readiness. Employers participating in the study point to challenges involving real-world application, hands-on experience with AI tools, and the ability to connect knowledge with authentic professional contexts.

In Mexico, where **generative AI** is already widely used across higher education, institutions need to assess whether this access is translating into contextualized, progressive learning experiences connected to the labor market. The institutional question is not simply whether students are using **AI tools**, but what opportunities students have to apply them, verify their outputs, explain their decisions, and demonstrate what they have learned.

- Learning experiences become more valuable when they connect AI with real-world problems, simulations, interdisciplinary projects, practical activities, laboratories, case studies, and assessments that consider both the process and the outcome.

- Practical application requires clear expectations: when and why AI should be used, how its use should be documented, and what evidence will be used to assess learning.

- The goal is for every student to be able to demonstrate what was done with AI, how the outputs were verified, which decisions were made, and what the student's own contribution was.

Pearson's Recommendation

Indicators of a Well-Designed Learning Experience

- Portfolios that document the process, decisions, and use of AI.
- Rubrics that assess judgment, verification, and reflection, rather than focusing only on the final outcome.
- Work involving data, case studies, industry challenges, and projects contextualized by discipline and sector.
- Opportunities to apply, explain, and defend decisions made with the support of AI.

Source: *Pearson and AWS, AI Readiness: Building the Bridge from Higher Education to Work, 2026.*

Evidence from the Global Study

Friction 6

Skills: Assessing the Alignment Between Graduate Capabilities and the Labor Market

The **global study by Pearson and AWS** shows that AI readiness requires the integration of technical, strategic, ethical, and human capabilities. This is not about choosing between proficiency with **AI tools and human skills**. It is about developing the ability to use AI purposefully, evaluate its outputs, make informed decisions, and collaborate effectively in changing environments.

- The labor market values AI and data capabilities alongside creative thinking, adaptability, communication, and leadership.

- The ability to verify outputs, identify bias, and recognize where AI can add value is becoming an increasingly important professional differentiator.

- Institutions can make these capabilities visible through clearly defined learning outcomes, applied learning experiences, assessment criteria, and evidence of performance.

Readiness cannot be demonstrated through tool use alone. It requires evidence of what each student can accomplish with AI, how AI-generated outputs are evaluated, which standards and judgment are applied, and the contexts in which these capabilities can be transferred.

Pearson's Recommendation

Institutions Can Make These Capabilities Visible Through:

- Clearly defined learning outcomes;
- Applied curricular experiences;
- Assessment criteria;
- Portfolios and evidence of performance;
- Regular mechanisms for dialogue with employers.

Assessing this alignment helps institutions identify potential gaps and prioritize institutional adjustments, without assuming that every program, school, or institution begins from the same position.

***Source**: Pearson and AWS, AI Readiness: Building the Bridge from Higher Education to Work, 2026.*

Applying the AI-Ready Graduate Profile to the Mexican Context

An AI-ready graduate is not simply someone who knows how to use AI tools. AI-ready graduates understand when to use them, how to verify their outputs, how to apply them responsibly, and how to contribute human judgment in contexts where technology is reshaping work.

In Mexico, this profile is particularly relevant because the labor market is already **accelerating AI adoption, automation, and new ways of working**. For universities, the challenge is not simply to ensure that students are familiar with or use artificial intelligence tools. Students must also be able to apply these tools with sound judgment, verify their outputs, understand their ethical implications, and translate their capabilities into professional value.

For this reason, an **AI-ready graduate** must combine technical, strategic, ethical, and human capabilities.

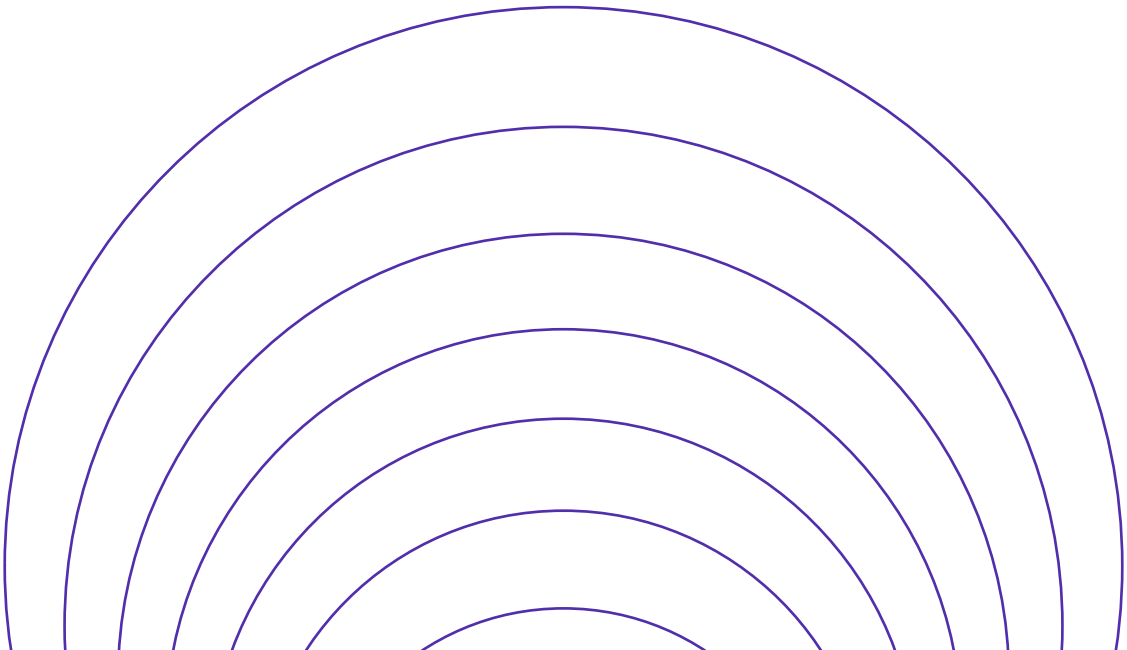
Together, these four dimensions connect university learning with real labor market expectations and with the institution's responsibility to prepare talent capable of **performing effectively** in a constantly evolving environment.

Capability	What It Means in Mexico	Core Competencies	Expected Evidence
Functional AI Proficiency	Uses AI tools with operational and discipline-specific judgment. Understands how to integrate AI into academic and professional tasks.	Effective use of tools, prompt design, basic understanding of models, and integration of AI into workflows.	Documented prompts, workflows, AI-supported projects, and evidence of responsible tool use.
Strategic Intelligence	Recognizes where AI adds value, where it introduces risk, and how it can transform processes, decisions, and operating models.	Opportunity identification, process analysis, critical thinking, and context-based decision-making.	Applied case studies, process analysis, well-supported decisions, and AI-enabled improvement proposals.

Capability	What It Means in Mexico	Core Competencies	Expected Evidence
Ethical Stewardship	Verifies and explains outputs, provides attribution, and protects data, privacy, and rights. Takes responsibility for AI-related bias, errors, and limitations.	Output verification, disclosure of AI use, data protection, bias awareness, and academic integrity.	AI-use disclosure, critical review, compliance with guidelines, and ethical risk analysis.
Critical Human Skills	Communicates, collaborates, solves problems, and continues learning in AI-enabled environments where human judgment remains essential.	Communication, collaboration, adaptability, creativity, problem-solving, and continuous learning.	Teamwork, presentations, critical reflection, portfolios, and evidence of adaptability.

This profile becomes credible only when institutions translate it into concrete decisions: learning outcomes, applied experiences, assessment criteria, educator development, and evidence that students can demonstrate to employers.

It is not enough to claim that graduates "**use AI**." Universities must demonstrate what graduates can accomplish with AI, the judgment they apply, how they verify outputs, and the human value they add. This is where AI readiness moves from an aspiration to a measurable institutional advantage.



Conclusion

Key Decisions for Leading AI Readiness in Higher Education

Executive Summary

AI readiness requires institutions to move from intention to execution. For university leaders, the challenge is no longer simply to adopt technology, but to **align governance**, **educator capability**, **applied learning**, and **employability** within a coherent institutional strategy.

Universities that move forward with greater clarity can **turn AI into an academic and competitive advantage** by preparing graduates to work with sound judgment, responsibility, and human insight in a labor market increasingly shaped by intelligent systems.

What This Means for Higher Education Leaders

The global framework identifies six potential sources of friction that can limit institutional **AI readiness**: pace, connection to the labor market, educator capability, governance, applied experience, and skills alignment. These areas of friction will not necessarily be present with the same intensity across all institutions.

For university leaders, the first step is to assess which areas require **greater attention within their own context** and what evidence supports that assessment. Some institutions may prioritize governance, while others may focus on educator development, curriculum redesign, applied experience, or employer engagement.

The accuracy of the institutional assessment matters as much as the ambition to change. The goal is not to assume that every area of friction is present, but to identify specific **opportunities for improvement**.

Immediate Priorities for University Leaders

01. Define the institution's position
02. Establish institution-wide governance
03. Assess educator capability
04. Redesign applied learning
05. Connect AI readiness to employability



Pearson helps institutions turn evidence on AI, learning, and employability into **strategic conversations and institutional action**.

Our purpose is to ensure that learning builds **real capabilities** for students, educators, and institutions in an environment of continuous change.

What This Means for Academic and Educational Innovation Leaders

- Review learning outcomes and curriculum maps to embed AI as a cross-disciplinary or discipline-specific capability.
- Design pathways by school or faculty. Disciplines may require different applications, but all need a baseline of AI literacy and ethics.
- Update assessment. Move beyond recall and basic production to evaluate process, judgment, verification, and AI-supported problem-solving.
- Build repositories of activities, prompts, rubrics, and cases to help educators scale effective practices.

The opportunity is significant: when integrated well, AI enriches the learning experience, makes student thinking more visible, enables assessment redesign, and strengthens the link between learning and performance.

What This Means for Employability, Employer Engagement, and Student Life

- Translate AI readiness into clear value for employers, tailored by program and degree type.
- Develop industry challenges, work-based experiences, projects, and microcredentials with companies and organizations.
- Help students demonstrate what they accomplished with AI and which human skills they applied.
- Embed well-being, academic support, and responsible digital practices into AI adoption rather than treating them separately.



Competitive advantage no longer comes from simply adopting AI. It comes from demonstrating that an institution can prepare graduates to use AI effectively, ethically, and in ways that matter to employers. This will be one of the clearest signs of university leadership in the years ahead.

References

The references for this edition bring together three levels of evidence: **the global quantitative study on AI Readiness by Pearson and AWS**; recent public sources on adoption, governance, and the labor market in Mexico; and relevant institutional guidelines that illustrate how universities are advancing toward more ethical, pedagogically sound, and practical models of AI use.

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- Universidad Anáhuac México. Guía para el uso ético y responsable de la IAGen en entornos digitales para el aprendizaje.

How AI-Ready Is Your Institution?

AI readiness does not depend on a single initiative. It requires strategic clarity, governance, educator capability, applied learning, and ongoing engagement with the labor market. Complete Pearson's assessment to identify your institution's main areas of friction and the strategic conversations to prioritize.

Scan the QR code and complete a short assessment to identify your institution's next steps.

Assess My Institution

