INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

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UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

The Academy's work on AI, learning and research impact has taken us from a staffroom in the Hunter to a UNESCO workshop in Paris and onto the Academy of Management's awards shortlist.

In this edition we share highlights, introduce the people helping to lead the next stage of our work, and set out how colleagues across the University can draw on the Academy in their own teaching and research.

In brief

- **UNESCO, Paris:** a 90-minute workshop at Digital Learning Week 2026 on recognising genuine learning when AI is part of the work.
- **Academy of Management:** one of four finalists for the 2026 Best MED PDW Award.
- **Hunter Christian School:** 89% of surveyed teachers report more meaningful use of AI two months after the Academy workshop.
- **Impact by Design:** symposia on entrepreneurship in the AI era (July) and AI, tokenisation and payments (September).





Making human learning visible at UNESCO

On 8 September, the Academy ran a 90-minute workshop at UNESCO Digital Learning Week 2026 in Paris for a mixed room of teachers, policymakers and academics.

The question was one every educator now faces: how do you recognise genuine learning when AI can produce a polished assignment in seconds? Our answer is the Human-Centric AI-First (HCAIF) framework and 3P model, which look at three things together: the Person (how the learner has developed), the Process (the reasoning and decisions behind the work) and the Product (the quality of what they create). The starting point is simple: we don't detect AI, we evidence the human.

Participants went straight to practice: how 3P runs in a real classroom, how the teacher's role changes, what counts as evidence of learning, and how to keep students driving the AI rather than the reverse. Dr Vishal Rana drew on his own design-thinking teaching to show the model at work, including how it can support fairer assessment.

For colleagues reviewing assessment: start by asking students to show their reflections, decisions and explanations alongside the finished work.

Recognition and reach

Our professional development workshop “Assessment for Learning, AI-First Pedagogy, and 3P: A Shift in Management Education in the Age of AI”, co-led by Vishal, was one of four finalists for the 2026 Best MED PDW Award. The award is made by the Management Education and Development division of the Academy of Management (AOM), the world’s leading association of management scholars. It is the second year running that our work has been recognised at AOM.

Our approach is also set out for business school leaders worldwide in a February AACSB Insights article, “**Assuring Learning When Students Work with AI**”, and was shared with University colleagues at an LDTI AI in Action session on 22 May. The article is a practical starting point for anyone considering how evidence gathered across a semester could inform assessment in their own discipline.







From workshop to classroom practice

In January, the Academy ran a full-day workshop for more than 60 primary and secondary teachers at Hunter Christian School, in partnership with Executive Principal Dr Simon Herd. Teachers left with practical tools, including Promptbook and Decision Ledger templates, and the school received structured follow-up over the next eight weeks.

Two months on, 28 teachers responded to a follow-up survey:

- 89% reported more meaningful engagement with AI
- 86% had shifted their focus from product to process
- 61% had already changed their teaching practice

One teacher wrote that the workshop had “revolutionised my whole teaching practice and delivery”. We are now looking to bring the same program to further school networks.





Impact by Design: research and industry in the same room

Our Impact by Design symposium series brings researchers and practitioners together around one question: how is AI changing this field, and what does responsible, evidence-based innovation look like in practice?

Entrepreneurship and Social Impact in the AI Era (9 July)
Co-hosted with Newcastle Business School's Discipline of Management and International Relations, this symposium featured Associate Professor Benedetto Cannatelli from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. Discussion ranged across how AI is changing venture creation, how social value is created, and how entrepreneurial capability can be taught and assessed.

AI, Tokenisation and the Future of Payments (24 September)
PayLion CEO Geoff Hetherington's keynote explored how AI, tokenisation and blockchain could reshape recurring payments. Chaired by Academy Chair Professor Shah J Miah, the session showed Design Science Research at work: starting from a real organisational problem, then designing, testing and refining a solution with the people who will use it. For researchers, it was a model of how an industry challenge can shape a project from day one.

Watch the conversation.
After the event, Newcastle Business School student Hugh Hunter interviewed Geoff and Shah about AI and blockchain in payment collection, PayLion's work with not-for-profits, and how Design Science Research turns ideas into working business solutions.

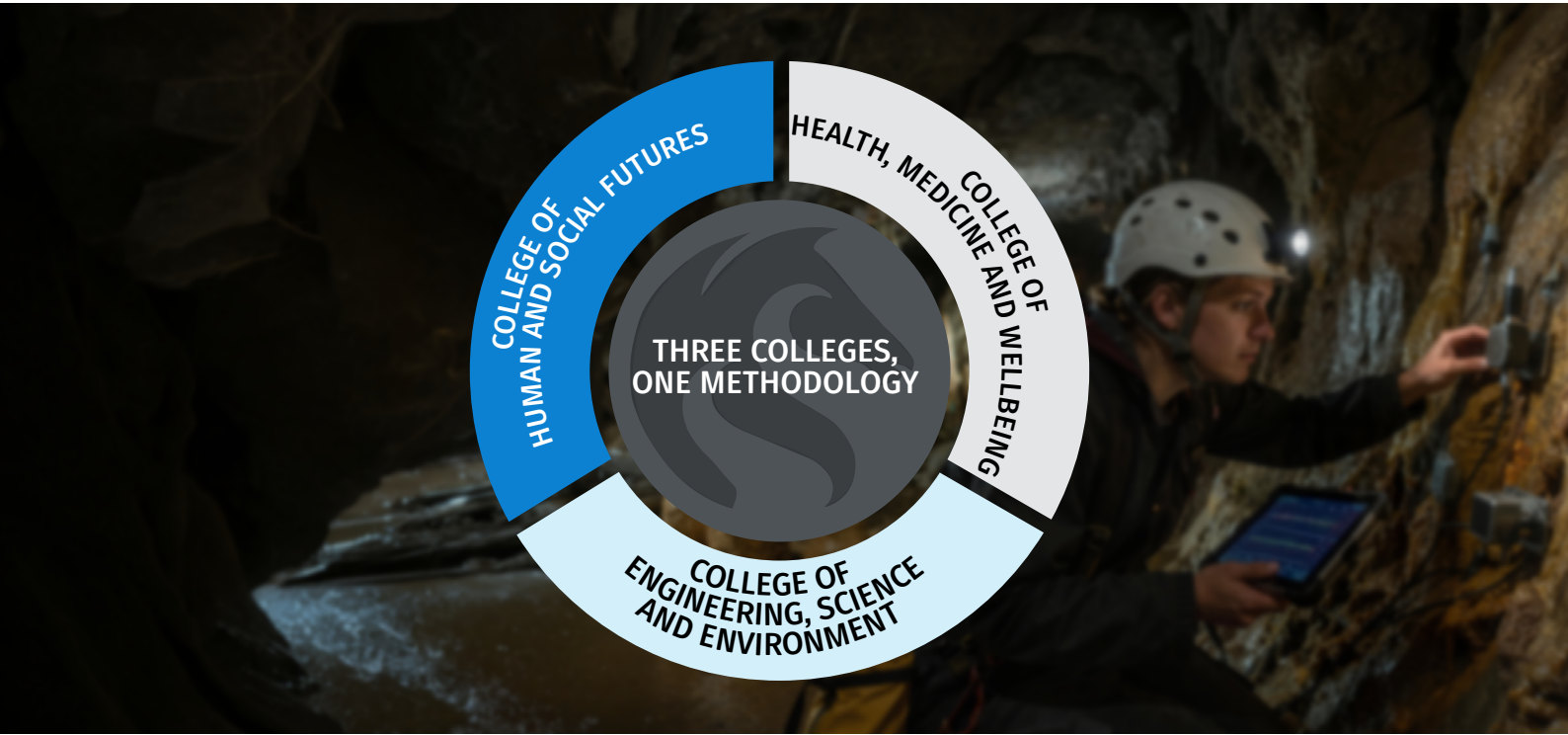
Watch the full conversation

Working across the University

Our methods are travelling well beyond the Business School:

- Medicine: innovation and entrepreneurship teaching and the HCAIF framework now run in fourth-year medical education (MEDI6102A), in partnership with Dr Tanmay Bagade and Professor Katie Wynne.
- Research bids: the Design Science Lab has contributed to funding proposals spanning health, education, sport and international development.

Planning a major bid for 2027? The Design Science Lab helps teams define the problem, design and test interventions, and build a credible case for how partners will adopt the results. We add most value at concept stage, before the impact narrative is written, so talk to us early.



Growing the Academy

A Growing Team

Dr Vishal Rana, Lecturer in Management – Innovation and Entrepreneurship, has joined the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Academy as a new academic member. Since 2023, Vishal has been developing human-centred approaches to AI in education, with work spanning co-authored research on generative AI in design-thinking education and workshops at this year's UNESCO and Academy of Management (AOM) events. He also received AOM's inaugural Best Innovation in Teaching Award. Professor Shah J Miah continues as Academy Chair, supported by Kathy Rimmer and Patrick Lydon in the Academy's operations.

Building links with Milan

The Academy's Director is currently Visiting Professor at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. The visit builds on July's symposium with Associate Professor Benedetto Cannatelli and lays groundwork for research and teaching collaboration between the two universities.

Coming up

Design Science for Research Impact, June 2027

The Academy is leading a three-day course for higher degree by research (HDR) candidates and early-career researchers in innovation, business and information sciences, in collaboration with partners from the University of Sydney, RMIT University and Victoria University of Wellington. Modelled on the design science doctoral course offered by Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands, the course will explore how researchers can develop practical solutions to real-world problems while contributing to academic knowledge. Further details and registration information will follow.



Work with the Academy

We welcome academic and professional staff, HDR candidates and external partners:

- **Rethinking an assessment task?** Talk to the Future Learning Lab about bringing 3P into your course.
- **Shaping a research project or bid?** Bring the Design Science Lab in at concept stage.
- **Exploring an industry or community partnership?** We can help connect your research with the people who will use it.

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About the Academy – The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Academy is based at Newcastle Business School and supported by the Research and Innovation Advisory Group and all three University colleges. Its Future Learning Lab focuses on learning and assessment with AI. Its Design Science Lab helps researchers design, test and translate solutions that partners can adopt.