GeSI | DEFIA
Digital Education for Impact Alliance

1 2 90 UNIVERSIDADE D COIMBRA

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

Appropriate Guardrails for AGI

The Crucial Role of Universities

GLOBAL AI GOVERNANCE • HIGHER EDUCATION • RESPONSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE

15 OCT
2026

UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA
Coimbra, Portugal

AGENDA

A global dialogue connecting universities, international organisations, governments, technology leaders and civil society.

WHY COIMBRA • WHY NOW

From global guardrails to university action

A one-day dialogue on how higher education can shape responsible AI and future AGI.

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming education, research, public governance and economic development. As AI systems become increasingly capable and influential, universities have a critical role to play in ensuring that their development and deployment remain aligned with human values, scientific integrity, democratic principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Building on recent international initiatives on AI governance, safety and trustworthy AI, the conference will bring together universities, international organisations, governments, technology companies and civil society leaders to explore how higher education institutions can contribute to shaping appropriate guardrails for advanced Artificial Intelligence and future Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).

The programme builds on the outcomes of recent global initiatives, including the G7 Hiroshima AI Process, the United Nations Global Dialogue on AI Governance and the work of the UN Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, as well as the discussions and outcomes of the 2026 Digital with Purpose Global Summit in Shenzhen, and the DEFIA Statement of Intent on Human-Centric AI and AGI.

COIMBRA OUTCOMES

01

DEFIA Portugal

Formal launch of the national network.

02

National Statement

Adoption and signing of the Portuguese Statement on Responsible AI in Higher Education.

03

Global Alliance

Formal announcement of SEE Institute as a GeSI-DEFIA Co-Founder from 2027.

The event will discuss the impact of AI on universities and what universities, faculty and students can do to ensure that the further development of AI benefits the whole of humanity and is aligned with the SDGs.

MORNING SESSION • 09:00–12:30

Global AI Governance & the Role of Universities

From international governance to the unique responsibility of higher education.

09:00–09:30 — **Registration • Arrival of participants and networking**

09:30–10:00

OPENING

Welcome and Opening Session

Amílcar Falcão, Rector of University of Coimbra, Portugal
Yang Baocheng, President of Huanghe Science and Technology University, China
Luís Neves, CEO of GeSI
Cláudia Sarrico, Secretary of State for Higher Education of Portugal

To formally open the event and frame it as an international dialogue on advanced AI, education, sustainability and the role of universities in shaping responsible digital futures.

10:00-10:15

ALLIANCE MILESTONE

Strengthening the Global DEFIA Alliance

Formal announcement and signing of SEE Institute as a GeSI-DEFIA Co-Founder from 2027

10:15

SPECIAL ADDRESS

H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations – video message

10:15–11:15

OPENING KEYNOTES + DEBATE

Appropriate Guardrails for AGI: Where Do We Stand and Why Universities Matter?

Mark Daley, Western University, Canada
Karthik Raju, Atria Power Corporation Pvt Ltd, India
Brian Li, Tsinghua University Online Education Center, China (online)
Mário Campolargo, University of Coimbra — Moderator

7 min each presentation followed by debate

11:15–11:30 — **Coffee Break**

11:30–12:30

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL I

The role of Universities in ensuring the global development and use of ethical and trustworthy AI

António Dias de Figueiredo, University of Coimbra
Isabel Carvalho, University of Coimbra
Júlia Seixas, SDSN Portugal

Fadi Alfaris, CEO of SEE Institute
Susana Aires Sousa — Moderator

Background note: The first GeSI DEFIA statement

DISCUSSION FOCUS

- What is the specific and unique role of universities in ensuring that AI remains trustworthy, human-centred and socially beneficial?
- How should universities rethink education to prepare graduates to use, question and shape AI responsibly?
- How can universities collaborate with technology companies to ensuring AI is serving education purposes?

12:30–12:40

SPECIAL ADDRESS

UNESCO Perspective on AI and the Future of Education

Qun Chen, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education (live online)

12:40–14:15 **Lunch**

AFTERNOON SESSION • 14:00–18:00

Accelerating Change

From the transformation of learning to the infrastructure that makes AI possible.

14:15–14:30

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Global Cooperation for Responsible AI and Digital Transformation

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) – the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – video message

Alex Wong, Senior Advisor Senior Advisor, Strategic Engagement and Initiatives, Office of the Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (online)

14:30–15:30

PANEL II

How AI is Transforming Higher Education

Sandra Soares, National Council for Pedagogical Innovation in Higher Education (CNIPES)
Julian Fraillon, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)
Thomas Van Cauwenberghe, European EdTech Alliance
Paul Hopkinson, Zayed University
Penousal Machado, University of Coimbra
Yang Baocheng, Huanghe Science and Technology University — Moderator

Background note: the second GeSI DEFIA statement

DISCUSSION FOCUS

- How is AI fundamentally changing the way students learn and teachers teach?
- Which aspects of higher education need to be redesigned rather than simply adapted?
- How should universities rethink assessment to ensure that it still measures meaningful learning, critical thinking and individual achievement?
- What should every university student understand about AI, regardless of their field of study?
- Are universities moving fast enough to prepare graduates for an AI-driven society and labour market?

15:30–15:45	**Coffee Break**

15:45–16:45

PANEL III

Responsible AI Infrastructure: University–Industry Collaboration for Safe, Secure and Sustainable AI

José Gonçalves, Kyndryl Portugal — Keynote followed by debate
Theresa Doan, SEE Institute
Sam Enoka, Greensparc
Nuno Castro, University of Minho
Márcio Santos, Google
Ricardo Rio, GeSI — Moderator

DISCUSSION FOCUS

- What does "responsible AI infrastructure" actually mean? (focus only on ALL AI tools universities and students use – from registration and grading/assessment to chatbots and agentic AI)
- What should industry be doing differently today to support AI enabled education?
- How can we scale AI infrastructure without creating environmental impacts and undermine the benefits AI is expected to deliver?
- How can companies and universities ensure that AI infrastructure remains secure, resilient and trustworthy without slowing down research and innovation?
- Where can university–industry collaboration make the greatest practical difference?

COIMBRA COMMITMENTS • 16:35–18:00

Turning Dialogue into Action

Three institutional milestones followed by a forward-looking closing dialogue.

16:45–17:20

CONNECTING GLOBAL DIALOGUE WITH NATIONAL ACTION

Launch of the DEFIA Portugal Network

Patrícia Pereira da Silva, University of Coimbra
Sandro Mesquita, GeSI
Shi Shanshan, Huanghe Science and Technology University

A short institutional session marking the establishment of the DEFIA Portugal Network, followed by a group photo.

17:20–18:00

CLOSING HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

From Coimbra to 2027: What Next for DEFIA?

Patrícia Pereira da Silva, University of Coimbra — speaker and moderator
Veerle Vandeweerd, GeSI-DEFIA
Yang Baocheng, Huanghe Science and Technology University
Theresa Doan, SEE Institute

The closing discussion will reflect on the key messages emerging from the conference and identify priorities for future DEFIA collaboration.

DISCUSSION FOCUS

- What should DEFIA prioritise after the Coimbra meeting?
- What concrete outcomes and partnerships can emerge from the event?

18:00–19:00 **Informal Networking**

EVENT POSITIONING

Coimbra as a bridge between global dialogue and concrete action

The Coimbra meeting will bring together universities, international organisations, public authorities and technology leaders to explore how higher education can help shape responsible AI and AGI futures, while translating global dialogue into concrete educational, institutional and societal action through the DEFIA initiative.

Expected outcomes include a concise set of recommendations on the role of universities in responsible AI governance, the identification of priority areas for DEFIA's 2027 work programme, new international and university–industry partnerships, the formal launch of the DEFIA Portugal Network and the adoption and signing of the Portuguese National Statement. The meeting will also mark the expansion of the global DEFIA Alliance, with the formal announcement of the SEE Institute as a GeSI-DEFIA Co-Founder from 2027.

GLOBAL DIALOGUE. NATIONAL ACTION. RESPONSIBLE AI.

Coimbra • 15 October 2026