Human Edge™

A FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE OF STRATEGIC GROWTH AND INNOVATION, LLC (SG+I)

THE OPPORTUNITY

Preparing Students for an AI-Shaped World Requires More Than Technical Fluency

Higher education is being asked to prepare students for a world that is changing faster than traditional models were designed for.

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how decisions are made, how work gets done, and what employers increasingly expect of graduates. Students are arriving with growing awareness of AI. Employers are asking for adaptability, communication, ethical reasoning, and interdisciplinary problem-solving alongside technical capability.

At the same time, institutions are navigating important questions:

- How do we prepare students to apply AI responsibly?
- How do we strengthen workforce readiness without reducing education to technical training?
- How do we create meaningful interdisciplinary experiences that connect liberal arts, professional disciplines, and technical learning?
- How do we help students build judgment alongside capability?
- Human Edge exists to help address these questions.

Human Edge is a human-centered AI collaboration model that brings together universities, industry, and public-sector partners to develop judgment, ethical reasoning, and applied capability through interdisciplinary, real-world experiences.

Through Human Edge Studios, students work across disciplines and institutions to explore real challenges involving AI, data, ethics, governance, and human impact.

This is not learning about AI in abstraction.

It is learning to apply AI responsibly in real-world environments.

THE VALUE

Why Academic Institutions Participate

Human Edge is designed to support institutional priorities that many colleges and universities are actively navigating: workforce readiness, experiential learning, responsible AI literacy, interdisciplinary collaboration, and meaningful external partnerships.

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Workforce Readiness in Practice

Students rarely work in disciplinary silos after graduation.

Organizations increasingly expect graduates who can:

- work across functions and disciplines
- communicate technical ideas clearly
- navigate ambiguity and competing priorities
- evaluate risk and unintended consequences
- apply emerging technologies responsibly

Human Edge Studios simulate how work actually happens.

Students collaborate in interdisciplinary teams, engage real stakeholders, work with authentic datasets, and present recommendations to decision-makers in ways that build confidence, communication, and judgment.

They practice not only technical skills, but how to think, collaborate, and lead in environments shaped by AI.

Interdisciplinary Learning by Design

Human Edge intentionally connects liberal arts and technical disciplines.

Students studying engineering, computer science, sociology, communications, business, ethics, public policy, education, healthcare, and other fields collaborate around the same challenge.

The friction of different perspectives is not a problem to manage.

It is part of the learning.

Technical students strengthen communication and contextual reasoning.

Liberal arts and professional students develop confidence engaging with data, technology, and AI.

Together, students learn how responsible innovation actually happens.

As Daniel Klinghard, Dean of Education and Academic Experience at the College of the Holy Cross shared:

“When you combine that breadth of perspective with the technical problem-solving of engineering, you empower students to use technology in ways that are not only powerful but purposeful, and most importantly, responsible.”

Responsible AI Capability

Human Edge is designed around a core belief:

Responsible AI requires more than access to tools.

It requires people capable of applying judgment.

Ethics, fairness, explainability, governance, and human consequences are embedded into every Studio challenge — not added afterward.

Students are asked to think critically about:

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- fairness and bias
- human impact
- governance and oversight
- risk and unintended consequences
- trust and adoption
- real-world implementation

Participants learn that responsible AI is not theoretical.

It is practiced.

Experiential Learning With Real Stakes

Human Edge Studios move beyond simulations.

Participants engage with real civic and industry challenges, real datasets, and real decision-making environments.

Students work alongside:

- faculty mentors
- industry practitioners
- civic leaders
- government stakeholders
- technology partners

The result is an experience that feels applied, practical, and relevant to the world students are preparing to enter.

Faculty Engagement Without Curriculum Burden

Human Edge is intentionally designed to be low lift for participating institutions.

Faculty may participate as:

- mentors
- judges
- challenge contributors
- workshop facilitators
- interdisciplinary thought partners

Strategic Growth & Innovation (SG+I) manages challenge design, facilitation, technology coordination, mentor preparation, event logistics, credentialing, and post-event reporting.

Institutions bring students and faculty.

Human Edge provides the infrastructure.

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Institutional Visibility & Ecosystem Access	Academic institutions participate alongside a growing ecosystem of universities, industry leaders, government partners, and civic organizations working to shape responsible AI capability. Participation creates opportunities for: • cross-institutional collaboration • industry and employer engagement • civic partnership development • regional innovation visibility • interdisciplinary faculty connection Institutions become part of a broader conversation about how AI readiness should be developed responsibly.

THE PROOF

Human Edge in Action

November 2025 — Hack for Human Impact

The inaugural Human Edge Studio brought together 100 students across six institutions to explore how AI and data can be applied to real civic challenges.

Hosted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the College of the Holy Cross, students worked in interdisciplinary teams using Massachusetts civic datasets to address issues involving water quality, environmental sustainability, and community preservation.

Participants collaborated across liberal arts and technical disciplines while engaging with state and local government leaders, faculty mentors, and industry practitioners.

The experience demonstrated what responsible, human-centered AI learning can look like in practice.

Participant outcomes included:

78%	94%	4×	86%
higher confidence with AI tools	innovation is about people, not just technology	shifted to viewing AI as a civic problem-solving tool	wanted to stay informed about future Studios

As Jason Snyder, Secretary of Technology Services and Security and Commonwealth CIO, shared: *“We’re helping demonstrate what responsible AI looks like in action.”*

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May 2026 — Predictive AI in High-Stakes Decisions

The second Human Edge Studio expanded the model to include graduate and professional participants across ten institutions.

Hosted at Northeastern University in collaboration with AIxEd and Elai, participants explored a real-world governance challenge involving predictive AI in financial services.

Student teams evaluated:

- model fairness
- explainability
- governance and oversight
- deployment readiness
- operational and reputational risk
- human decision-making requirements

Rather than focusing only on model performance, teams were asked a broader question:

Should this AI system be deployed, modified, or delayed?

The experience strengthened confidence while helping participants understand the human and organizational implications of AI deployment.

Outcomes included:

90%	80%	80%	3
higher confidence after the Studio	human judgment required — not just technical skill	team collaboration was the top learning driver	institutions returned for a second Studio

Together, these Studios demonstrate a repeatable model for responsible, applied, interdisciplinary AI learning.

THE PARTNERSHIP

What Participation Looks Like

Human Edge academic partnerships are intentionally simple.

Your Institution Contributes	Human Edge Provides
• A student cohort (any discipline welcome)	• Full Studio and challenge design
• One or more faculty mentors or judges	• Day-of facilitation and run of show
• An institutional point of contact	• Technology coordination, industry mentor connections
• Institutional partnership participation	• Student credentialing and post-event debrief

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The goal is to reduce institutional burden while maximizing student learning and interdisciplinary engagement.

UPCOMING

October 24, 2026 | Human Edge Studio

The next Human Edge Studio will convene in Worcester, Massachusetts, bringing together more than 200 participants across undergraduate, graduate, professional, industry, and civic cohorts.

Participating institutions will engage students in a structured, interdisciplinary experience designed to strengthen responsible AI capability through applied learning.

A growing cohort of academic, civic, and ecosystem partners is helping shape the experience.

Additional academic institutions are invited to participate and help define what responsible, interdisciplinary AI learning can look like as Human Edge expands.

We are building intentionally, with partners committed to thoughtful experimentation, meaningful student learning, and long-term impact.

INVITATION

Is Human Edge Right for Your Institution?

Human Edge may be a strong fit for institutions that:

- value interdisciplinary learning
- are exploring responsible AI literacy and workforce readiness
- want meaningful experiential learning opportunities
- seek stronger civic and industry engagement
- are interested in preparing students to apply AI responsibly in real-world contexts

The future of AI will not be shaped by technology alone.

It will be shaped by people prepared to use it responsibly.

We welcome the opportunity to explore whether Human Edge may be a strong fit for your institution

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