



## CASE STUDY:

# King's College London and ICS.AI Light the Path for Safe, Personalised AI in Higher Education

How a university-approved Copilot helped students understand complex topics, practise for exams, and build confidence - without compromising academic integrity.

---

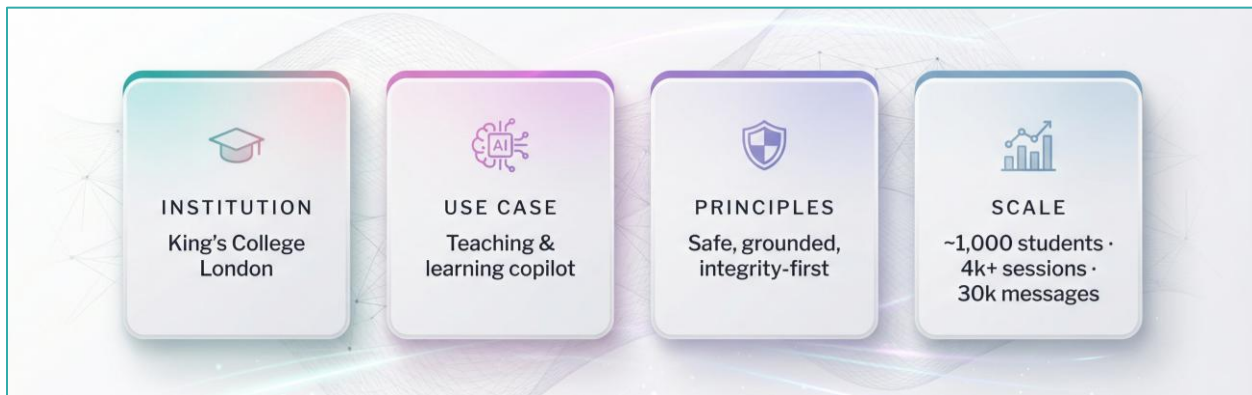
February 2026

**KING'S**  
*College*  
**LONDON**

**ICS.AI**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

King's College London and ICS.AI: Piloting Safe, Personalised AI in Higher Education



## Challenge

Students were using public AI tools without guardrails, risking academic integrity and raising concerns about hallucination, while faculty needed trusted AI solutions aligned with learning outcomes.

## Solution

Deployed KEATS AI on the SMART: Unified AI Platform within King's College London's Azure environment, featuring content-grounded responses with citations, formative assessment capabilities, and academic integrity safeguards.

## Results

Over 4,000 chat sessions and 30,000 messages across Neuroscience MSc students, with deep engagement, significant 'Test Me' usage during exam preparation, and strong student advocacy.

## Impact

Students reported improved understanding of complex concepts, increased confidence for assessments, and greater learning efficiency. The pilot provided King's College London with crucial institutional learnings into student adoption, the value of content-grounded AI, and the technical and faculty-wide requirements for any future large-scale Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) integration.

King's College London wanted to give students and staff the benefits of generative AI without compromising academic integrity. Together with ICS.AI, the university piloted SMART: Learn (known as the KEATS AI Pilot during the collaboration) to explore how a university approved teaching and learning AI copilot could help students understand complex topics faster, practise with relevant questions and build confidence ahead of exams, while also laying foundations for educator workflows and future VLE integration.

What began as a minimum viable product matured - through careful adoption planning, a redesigned interface and in class onboarding - into a live evaluation with Neuroscience cohorts. The result - sustained student engagement, strong advocacy for a trusted, content grounded Copilot, and intelligence on the effort needed to bring in module, in VLE capability into production scale use.

**“We Needed an AI Experience We Could Stand Behind”**

❌ PUBLIC AI TOOLS	✅ KING'S-APPROVED COPILOT
❌ Not grounded in course content	✅ Scoped to authorised module content
❌ No citations or source transparency	✅ Inline citations on every response
❌ Academic integrity risk	✅ Guardrails + governance built in
❌ No institutional governance	✅ Aligned to pedagogy and assessment

Students were already experimenting with public AI tools. Faculty and digital learning leaders wanted something different: a safe, transparent Copilot that cited official materials, was grounded in curated academic content, respected assessment rules, and encouraged learning rather than shortcut-seeking. The remit for ICS.AI was to deliver a SMART: Copilot that could thrive in the realities of a large university - technically, pedagogically, and culturally.

### KEATS AI was designed around two complementary student experiences:

- 1. Ask & Understand** - a conversational way to query authorised module content with inline citations and guardrails.
- 2. Test Me** - formative quizzes generated from module materials to support self-assessment and revision.

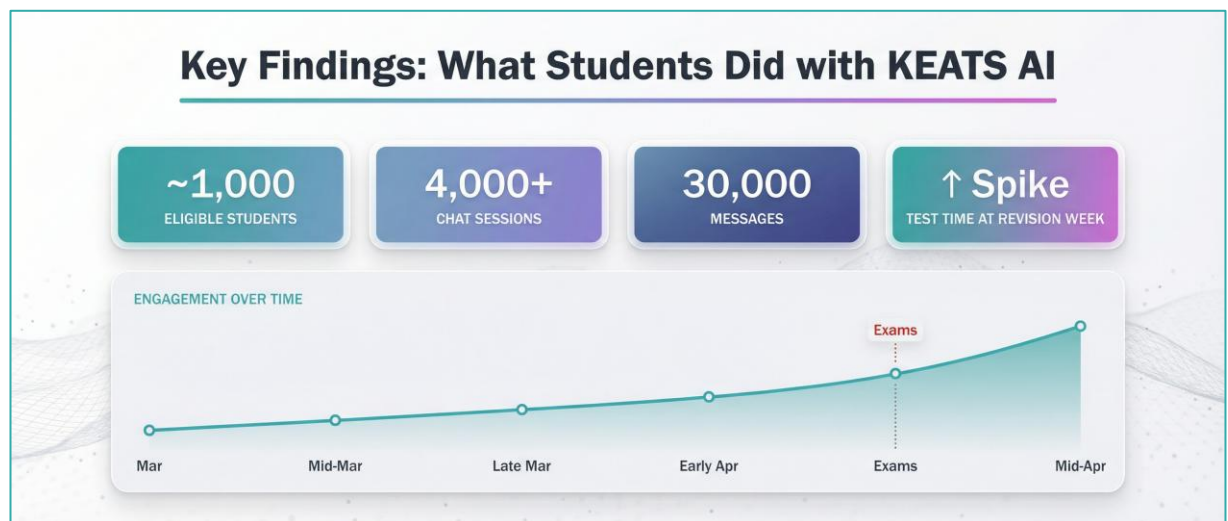
From the outset, the project paired product development with a structured adoption plan: onboarding during lectures, weekly training and Q&A, and clear communication that set expectations, showcased responsible use, and invited feedback.

## FROM MVP TO MEANINGFUL USAGE

The first phase focused on the foundations: deploying a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) of a working student copilot, a beta educator view, and a prototype integration path with KEATS (Moodle). Once the core capabilities were in place, the team shifted gears to an adoption and evaluation phase with live cohorts. That pivot proved decisive - moving the conversation from 'what can it do?' to 'how does it help in practice?'

A redesigned multi-panel user interface (UI) arrived mid-trial. Students could switch between general GenAI access and module-aware experiences, bring content into a chat with a simple @reference and use an initial version of SMART: Notes to work with transcripts and documents. The modern UI tuned for study flows - small, thoughtful details - helped turn curiosity into daily habit.

Weekly training sessions demystified prompting, showed how citations keep answers grounded, and encouraged students to try 'Test Me' repeatedly in the runup to exams. Educators saw how the SMART: Copilot avoided writing assessed work while still supporting learning. This was an explicit design choice to uphold academic integrity.

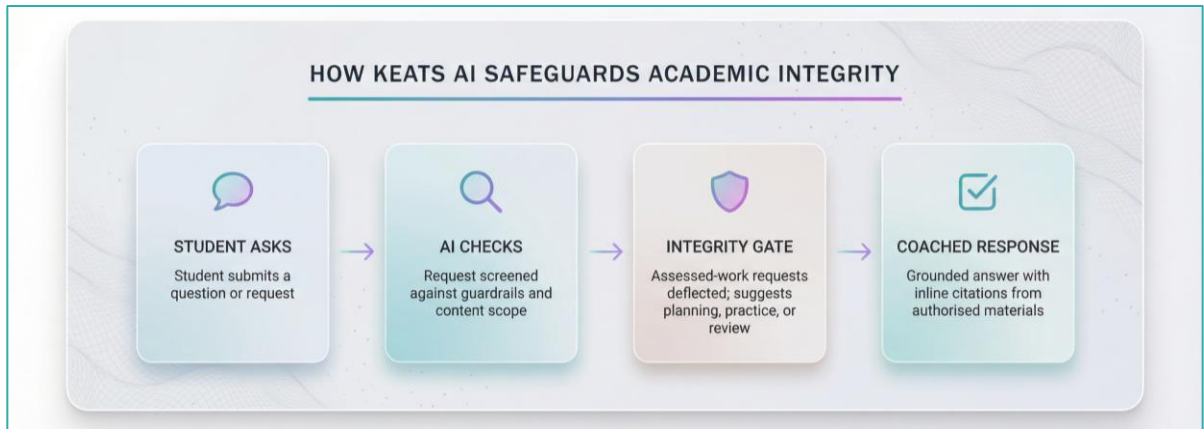


Usage data and feedback told a consistent story. The pilot covered around 1,000 eligible students across two MSc Neuroscience modules; KEATS AI handled over four thousand chat sessions from the subset of students that engaged and nearly thirty thousand messages.

The pattern of use suggests students were engaging in more sustained, exploratory conversations rather than one-off queries. During revision week, Test Me became a go-to feature, with students using it to generate practice questions from their own module materials.

At the same time, feedback emphasised trust and transparency. Students liked seeing where answers came from and valued that KEATS AI operated within a King's approved environment. Many reported feeling more confident with complex concepts and better prepared for multiple-choice exams.

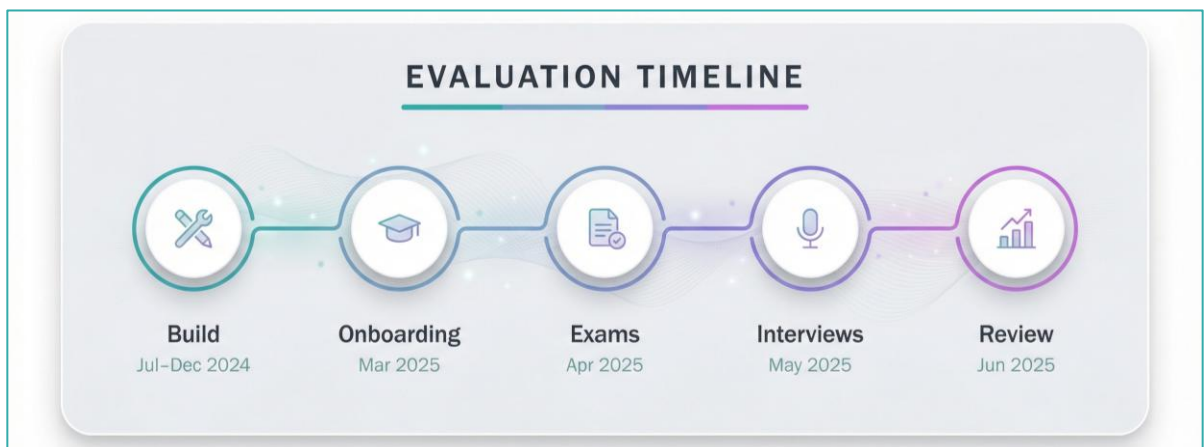
# TEACHING AND INTEGRITY, BY DESIGN



KEATS AI is deliberately tuned to coach learning. Prompts and responses encourage understanding, rehearsal, and reflection - not ghost-writing. When a request drifts towards producing assessed work, the SMART: Copilot redirects the student to plan their approach, review course concepts, or practise with questions instead. Inline citations and scoping to authorised content make it easier for students to see, and trust, what the SMART: Copilot is drawing on.

For educators, the pilot also laid groundwork: a beta teaching view, evolving analytics, and a growing library of adoption materials. The intent was simple - help lecturers do more of what impacts learning while reducing manual overheads associated with formative assessment and content navigation.

## INSIDE THE EVALUATION: RUNNING THE PILOT



## Timeline and setup

Following the initial build (July–December 2024), the team engaged Neuroscience academics to 'AI-enable' upcoming modules and plan an evaluation phase that mirrored production.

Students were introduced to KEATS AI in the first module session, then supported by weekly training from mid-March to mid-April 2025. The evaluation concluded after the final exams in April, followed by surveys and interviews in May and a results review in early June.

## Designing for adoption

The heart of the evaluation was real-world usage. Students accessed the Copilot where they studied; materials were uploaded through a Moodle plugin; and everything - from prompts to UI copy - was refined to make learning with AI feel natural, safe, and effective. Crucially, content scoping and citations turned KEATS AI into a study companion that amplified the course, rather than a general-purpose chatbot.

## What changed during the trial

The redesigned interface introduced Quick Start prompts, SMART: Notes, and multi Large Language Model (LLM) access, while the @reference feature let students bring different "skills" (e.g., general reasoning or module grounding) into a single conversation. These changes, combined with weekly training, corresponded with sustained usage growth as students approached assessments.

### Results that matter



#### High engagement

Thousands of sessions and messages from a predominantly student user base across the evaluation window.



#### Deep sessions

Signalling exploration and back-and-forth refinement.



#### Feature adoption

Led by Test Me, tightly coupled to exam preparation.



#### Student advocacy

A strong majority of engaged respondents saying they would recommend the copilot.



#### Reported learning gains

Students citing improved understanding of key module concepts.

Behind the numbers, students also described a shift in study experience: faster access to relevant explanations, clearer links between topics, and less stress.

## WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE

### A university approved space for AI

By providing a sanctioned, transparent Copilot with citations and scope limits, King's College London gave students a route to use AI responsibly. That increased trust versus public tools and reduced concerns about hallucinations or overreach.

### Adoption as a first class workstream

Live onboarding, weekly training, and consistent communications ensured students knew where KEATS AI added value and how to get started. The uplift in usage during revision weeks underscores how contextual enablement drives meaningful results.

### Iterating with students

The redesigned interface, SMART: Notes, and @referencing emerged from real classroom needs. They made the copilot more usable and more obviously tied to the act of studying.

### Integrity safeguards

Guardrails that deflect requests to write assessed work - and instead channel students towards practice, planning, and understanding - built educator confidence without diminishing the benefits of AI.

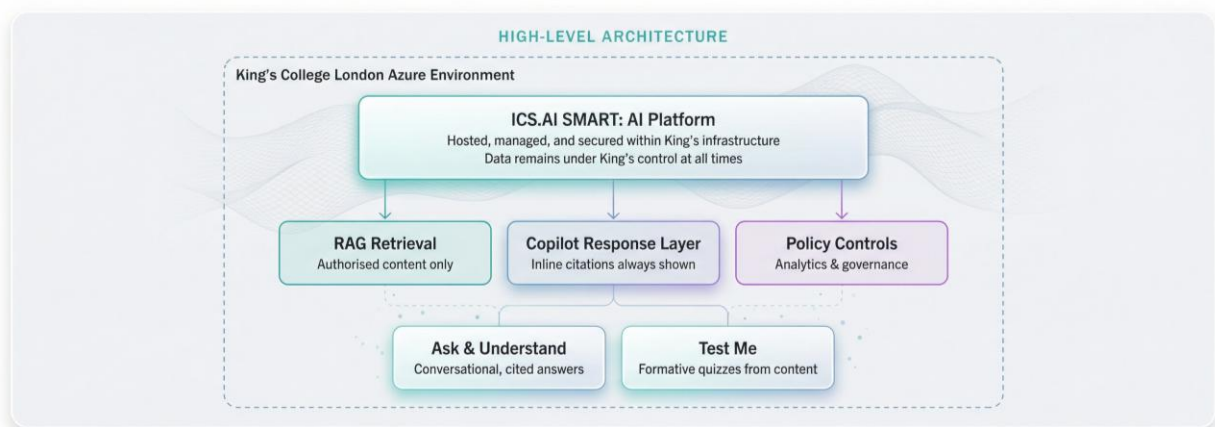
## PILOT EVALUATION AND FUTURE CONTEXT

The evaluation provided positive indications via student feedback and usage data of the core value of KEATS AI – that students learn better with a trusted, content-grounded Copilot – while also defining clear requirements for what a full production experience should add.

Following the pilot, and in the context of a rapidly evolving AI landscape, it was determined that the specific business case for a full-scale production rollout could not be sustained. In the interim, other AI capabilities have emerged within the core KEATS platform itself. Reflecting this new context, King's is now undertaking a broader evaluation of all relevant options to meet its long-term needs.

The pilot also provided key institutional learnings: in a large and complex organisation like King's, the adoption of such a platform is a multi-year process. It requires foundational support from bodies like King's Academy and the faculties, a significant consideration as the technology landscape continues to shift.

# ARCHITECTURE AND GOVERNANCE



KEATS AI runs on the ICS.AI SMART: AI Platform, hosted in the King's College London Azure environment for security, compliance, and scalability.

A jointly agreed technical implementation ensured that all data remained within the King's Azure environment under King's control, in line with the university's data-protection policies.

Retrieval augmented generation constrains answers to authorised content; inline citations make sources explicit. Central policy controls and analytics help the university steer usage, manage data access, and evaluate impact.

For KEATS, a prototype integration path was successfully proven during the pilot. The evaluation confirmed that the same platform architecture could underpin future educator experiences, with the potential to reduce repetitive tasks while preserving academic standards.

## LESSONS FOR THE SECTOR

- **Make adoption a programme, not a footnote** - treat training, communications, and success measurement as core to the work.
- **Design for integrity** - embed guardrails and citations so students learn how to use AI well, not just fast.
- **Meet students in their flow** - put the copilot where learning happens - the VLE and the module - then keep friction low.
- **Iterate with cohorts** - use real usage and feedback to guide interface, prompts, and features across the term.

## WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

*"I felt supported and grateful to have this as a tool."*

Student, MSc Neuroscience

*"It helped me gain confidence in the topic and prepare for the MCQ exam."*

Student, MSc Neuroscience

*"Having an approved King's College London tool ensures [the use of AI] is aligned with our pedagogy, our curriculum and our institutional values as well. It allows us to create prompts that reflect specific module outcomes; the reading for the modules and the assessment requirement. We can ensure accessibility and the data privacy. That's really important."*

Senior Neuroscience Lecturer

## ABOUT SMART: LEARN

**SMART: Learn (KEATS AI)** is a university approved Copilot for students and staff, built for higher education. It combines content grounded answers, formative practice, and features which support study, teaching, and collaboration.

**SMART: Notes** provides real-time transcription of conversations into structured, compliant documentation through voice recording. In addition to web-application use on laptops, it's available through a smartphone app on iOS and Android devices too, achieving 98% transcription accuracy and supporting multilingual input.

**SMART: Learn and SMART: Notes** are part of the **ICS.AI SMART: AI Platform** - a unified AI for all solution providing a strategic, flexible and affordable choice for AI adoption in education. It powers a number of specialised Copilots across student services, research, and operations delivering measurable ROI & efficiency.

# ABOUT ICS.AI

ICS.AI supports institutions to move from fragmented AI experimentation to institution-wide, measurable transformation. We align three critical elements: an AI Maturity Model (how people and the institution evolve), an AI Target Operating Model (how AI is governed and run as a capability), and a Unified AI Platform (how to deploy safely and affordably at scale).

For the education sector, this means delivering value across three domains: AI-enabled student and applicant front doors, staff copilots that lift productivity and consistency, and agentic back-office automation across admissions, finance, HR and research administration. Our focus is on predictable, in-year outcomes - combining improved student experience and protected income with cashable efficiency savings, underpinned by compliance-by-default and an AI value ledger that evidences impact.

**SCHEDULE  
A CALL**



[cris.bloomfield@ics.ai](mailto:cris.bloomfield@ics.ai)

**AI FOR ALL  
TEST DRIVE**



<https://digl.ink/bwuogq8>

**CONNECT ON  
LINKEDIN**



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ics-ai-ltd>

