Five priorities

shaping the sector according to Bett's Higher Education Ambassadors



bett HIGHER EDUCATION

We asked 25 HE Ambassadors across 12 countries & territories

As we plan for Bett UK 2027, we asked our HE Ambassadors what challenges and opportunities they see, what the sector needs to explore, and what would make a HE community genuinely valuable.

Spanning academic leadership, teaching and research, digital and IT, teacher education, industry relations and institutional development, our Ambassadors represent universities, business schools, teacher education, health sciences and vocational academies.



01

AI HAS BROKEN THE OLD ASSESSMENT MODEL



If AI can produce the essay, the code or the presentation, what does student work actually prove? Assessment redesign was the most frequently cited concern. Our Ambassadors highlighted the need for more authentic assessment and stronger AI literacy, alongside difficult questions about academic integrity, privacy, accessibility and the impact of AI on learning itself.

The message wasn’t to avoid AI. It was to engage with it critically, while keeping human thinking and skills front and centre.

02

CAN UNIVERSITIES MOVE AT THE SPEED OF WORK?

Industry can change in months. Curricula can take years to approve. Our Ambassadors called for stronger connections between education, industry and society, with real-world projects, internships and industry-led challenges built into learning.

Stackable degrees, micro-credentials and lifelong learning pathways were also raised as opportunities to create more responsive models of education.

The challenge is finding that agility without sacrificing academic depth, rigour or human value.



03

PEDAGOGY FIRST. TECHNOLOGY SECOND.

Buying technology is not the same as transforming learning.

Our Ambassadors want institutions to start with the learning goal and ask what technology genuinely adds. Effective pedagogical integration, professional development, institutional AI policies and change management all emerged as priorities.

And educators themselves need support. Not every university lecturer has been trained to teach, while some staff recognise gaps in their digital knowledge but may be reluctant to ask for help.

The ambition? Move beyond isolated pilots towards confident, institution-wide transformation.



04

ACCESS ≠ EQUITY



Digital transformation can widen the very gaps it promises to close. Our Ambassadors challenged the assumption that every student arrives at university digitally confident - an assumption that can particularly affect widening participation of students.

Accessibility, inclusion, digital literacy and digital wellbeing all emerged as essential considerations as institutions adopt new technologies.

And one question deserves to be asked of every innovation:

Who is this product actually serving?

05

THE ECONOMICS OF HE ARE UNDER PRESSURE



Funding strain is being felt across borders.

Our Ambassadors highlighted pressure on institutional operating models, research funding, international enrolment and student costs. At the same time, they see opportunities for stronger partnerships with EdTech to improve processes, support new approaches and deliver better experiences.

But efficiency alone is not enough. Technology should ultimately help institutions improve outcomes and value for students, not simply reduce costs.

THE MESSAGE TO US IS CLEAR

SHOW US WHAT FAILED.

Not just polished success stories. HE leaders want honest examples and lessons from what didn't work.

HE Education Theatre

GIVE US ROOM TO TALK.

More roundtables, breakout conversations and opportunities for every voice to be heard.

HE Challenge Roundtables

TableTalks

Women in EdTech

TAKE US BEYOND OUR BORDERS.

Create opportunities to compare how institutions and education systems around the world are approaching the same challenges.

HE Challenge Roundtables

TableTalks

Women in EdTech

THE MESSAGE TO US IS CLEAR

LISTEN BEFORE BUILDING.

Give HE leaders a voice back to the market, so actual institutional need - rather than perceived need helps shape innovation.

TableTalks

TECH USER LABS

GIVE US SOMETHING USEFUL.

Practical case studies, shared resources, recommendations and ideas that can travel back to institutions.

HE Education Theatre

TableTalks

TECH USER LABS

HELP THE CONVERSATION CONTINUE.

Not just polished success stories. HE leaders want honest examples and lessons from what didn't work.

HE Education Theatre

WHERE THE CONVERSATION GOES NEXT

bett
A Hyve Event

Excel London
20 - 22 January 2027

These are not challenges with simple answers. That is exactly why they need a place to be explored together.

At Bett UK 2027, our new and improved Higher Education offering will bring HE leaders, educators, innovators and solution providers together to examine these questions through honest discussion, practical examples and technology in action.

From assessment in the age of AI and curriculum agility to educator development, digital equity and sustainable institutional models, the conversations our HE Ambassadors have started will continue at Bett.



Join the Higher Education community at Bett UK 2027.