

THE RISE OF INTELLIGENT RESEARCH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS:

*What Higher Ed Leaders
Need to Know*

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THE RESEARCH *Enterprise at a Crossroads*

Higher education is entering a period of profound transformation. Research administration - once grounded in stable staffing structures, well-understood processes, and institutional memory carried forward across generations of administrators - is now marked by rising workload, shrinking teams, and rapidly changing expectations. The pressures shaping today's research enterprise are not incremental; they are structural, accelerated by demographic trends, regulatory change, and technological disruption.

At the same time, artificial intelligence has made significant inroads into academic life. Students use AI in more than 90% of their coursework, [according to Forbes](#), normalizing these tools as everyday companions. Faculty are experimenting with AI for research, data extraction, preliminary manuscript drafts, coding, and instructional materials. Departments are beginning to rethink their workflows and documentation practices. In many cases, AI has already become embedded in university operations, often

without formal policy guidance in place.

Research administration is sitting at the center of this shift. Administrators handle sensitive data, interpret federal regulations, communicate with investigators, document decisions, assess compliance risks, and support research integrity. They are stretched thin. They feel the weight of complexity. And they are increasingly asked to perform high-stakes work with insufficient time, staffing, and institutional support.

This ebook addresses a central question facing the field today How can research administration evolve to remain resilient, efficient, and trustworthy in a world increasingly shaped by AI?

The chapters that follow examine the state of the research enterprise, the rise of AI in higher education, the opportunities and risks AI introduces, and the structural changes required to build an "AI-ready" research office. The final chapter examines how platforms like Kual Research offer a secure, unified foundation essential for responsible AI adoption.

01

THE STATE OF RESEARCH *Administration in 2025-2026*

Research administration has reached a moment of intensifying pressure. The pace of regulatory change is accelerating, federal requirements are expanding, and expectations for transparency continue to rise. At the same time, research offices are experiencing significant staffing transitions, with many seasoned administrators retiring and taking decades of institutional knowledge with them. These challenges are further influenced by [recent federal efforts to cap indirect research funding](#), which may limit the resources institutions traditionally rely on to support research administration staff and infrastructure.

Across NCURA, SRAI, and peer research administration communities internationally, as well as in other [national listening sessions](#), administrators are expressing a similar concern: research offices are losing seasoned staff at a pace that threatens continuity and institutional memory.



represent the loss of tacit knowledge: the nuanced interpretation of sponsor language, the historical context behind workflow steps, and the practical judgment built through years of proposals and audits. Much of that knowledge was never written down. It lived in people—people who are now leaving.

New administrators find themselves entering a system where documentation may be outdated, fragmented, or nonexistent. They inherit procedures without context. They observe exceptions without understanding the logic behind them. They face urgent faculty needs without having a mental map of how to navigate institutional workflows effectively. This leaves them vulnerable to errors and dependent on the few remaining experts, who themselves are overwhelmed.

Regulatory demands are simultaneously expanding. Federal agencies require more documentation, more frequent reporting, and more transparent disclosure practices. Human subjects protections, export controls, COI/COC, data-sharing requirements, and research security oversight have all grown more intricate. The workload associated with compliance review has increased faster than staffing capacity. As a result, many institutions report delays in protocol review, increased backlogs, and stress among compliance administrators who fear missing critical information.

AI has added a new layer of complexity. A [2025 Nature article](#) warns that AI-generated manuscripts and data products may compromise reproducibility or obscure methodological transparency. [Phys.org highlights concerns](#) that universities may face quality assurance challenges as AI makes it harder to distinguish authentic research from algorithmically generated outputs. These issues put additional scrutiny on research integrity offices and IRB/COI teams.

Administrators describe emotional strain, cognitive overload, and ambiguous expectations. Many individuals feel responsible for upholding institutional and federal standards, yet they often lack the time or tools to do so effectively. [NPR reporting](#) reflects this broader national pattern: workers across industries feel threatened by AI while simultaneously being overwhelmed by workloads that AI might help alleviate.

Vice Presidents for Research have become increasingly concerned about workplace sustainability. They recognize the fragility created by turnover and the compounding risk that arises when overloaded teams cannot fully absorb new responsibilities.

Table 314.20. Employees in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by sex, employment status, control and level of institution, and primary occupation:
Selected years, fall 1991 through fall 2022

Sex, employment status, control and level of institution, and primary occupation	1991	1995	2001	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2018	2020	2021	2022	Percent change, 2011 to 2022
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
All institutions	2,545,235	2,662,075	3,083,353	3,379,087	3,561,730	3,724,661	3,841,819	3,896,053	3,914,284	3,925,642	3,811,104	3,816,867	3,880,322	1.0
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	826,252	931,706	1,113,183	1,290,426	1,371,587	1,439,074	1,524,469	1,545,381	1,552,256	1,543,212	1,489,415	1,499,236	1,507,641	-1.1
Graduate assistants	197,751	215,909	261,136	317,141	329,001	343,204	355,916	363,416	366,868	382,749	377,459	392,310	398,862	12.1
Other ¹	1,521,232	1,514,460	1,709,034	1,771,520	1,861,142	1,942,383	1,961,434	1,987,256	1,995,160	1,999,681	1,944,551	1,925,321	1,973,819	0.6
Male	1,227,591	1,274,676	1,451,773	1,581,498	1,650,641	1,710,021	1,754,919	1,772,803	1,776,928	1,768,349	1,695,000	1,690,441	1,708,740	-2.6
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	525,599	562,893	644,514	714,453	744,047	761,002	789,567	791,971	789,405	771,861	734,605	732,404	731,113	-7.4
Graduate assistants	119,125	123,962	142,120	167,529	173,128	181,328	188,305	191,501	193,202	196,791	188,950	194,212	196,558	4.4
Other ¹	582,867	587,821	665,139	699,516	733,466	767,691	777,047	789,331	794,321	799,697	771,604	763,825	781,069	0.5
Female	1,317,644	1,387,399	1,631,580	1,797,589	1,911,089	2,014,640	2,086,900	2,123,250	2,137,356	2,157,293	2,116,104	2,126,426	2,171,582	4.1
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	300,653	368,813	468,669	575,973	627,540	678,072	734,902	753,410	762,851	771,351	754,810	766,832	776,528	5.7
Graduate assistants	78,626	91,947	119,016	149,612	155,873	161,876	167,611	171,915	173,666	185,958	188,509	198,098	202,304	20.7
Other ¹	938,365	926,639	1,043,895	1,072,004	1,127,676	1,174,692	1,184,387	1,197,925	1,200,839	1,199,984	1,172,947	1,161,496	1,192,750	0.7
Full-time	1,812,912	1,801,371	2,043,208	2,179,864	2,281,516	2,382,305	2,435,988	2,472,434	2,507,787	2,551,382	2,544,429	2,530,451	2,581,456	6.0
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	535,623	550,822	617,868	675,624	703,757	729,152	762,114	791,378	807,109	832,130	836,597	837,024	842,407	10.5
Other ¹	1,277,289	1,250,549	1,425,340	1,504,240	1,577,759	1,653,153	1,673,874	1,681,056	1,700,678	1,719,252	1,708,182	1,693,427	1,739,049	3.9
Part-time	732,323	860,704	1,040,145	1,199,223	1,280,214	1,342,356	1,405,831	1,423,619	1,406,497	1,374,260	1,266,675	1,286,416	1,298,866	-7.6
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	290,629	380,884	495,315	614,802	667,830	709,922	762,355	754,003	745,147	711,082	652,818	662,212	665,234	-12.7
Graduate assistants	197,751	215,909	261,136	317,141	329,001	343,204	355,916	363,416	366,868	382,749	377,459	392,310	398,862	12.1
Other ¹	243,943	263,911	283,694	267,280	283,383	289,230	287,560	306,200	294,482	280,429	236,369	231,894	234,770	-18.4
Public 4-year	1,341,914	1,383,476	1,558,576	1,656,709	1,742,370	1,804,332	1,843,314	1,884,854	1,925,674	2,021,429	2,021,508	2,031,897	2,074,514	12.5
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	358,376	384,399	438,459	486,691	518,930	539,946	575,624	601,126	622,283	670,988	675,165	685,647	696,130	20.9
Graduate assistants	144,344	178,342	218,260	257,578	266,451	275,878	285,905	287,839	291,770	299,328	294,031	306,172	309,142	8.1
Other ¹	839,194	820,735	901,857	912,440	956,989	988,508	981,785	995,889	1,011,621	1,051,113	1,052,627	1,040,078	1,069,242	8.9
Private 4-year	734,509	770,004	912,924	1,073,764	1,158,196	1,230,409	1,297,376	1,318,760	1,323,899	1,306,885	1,272,738	1,279,824	1,310,591	1.0
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	232,893	262,660	325,713	430,305	473,455	498,403	540,018	550,512	558,262	545,475	533,488	539,454	546,329	1.2
Graduate assistants	23,989	33,853	41,611	59,147	62,550	67,326	70,011	75,537	75,079	83,393	83,355	86,121	89,703	28.1
Other ¹	477,627	473,491	545,600	584,312	622,191	664,680	687,347	692,711	690,558	678,017	655,895	654,249	674,559	-1.9
Public 2-year	441,414	482,454	578,394	610,978	619,455	638,361	642,455	642,430	622,754	567,025	488,893	476,421	467,260	-27.3
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	222,532	272,434	332,665	354,497	357,596	373,842	378,535	367,608	348,708	310,761	266,202	259,251	250,701	-33.8
Graduate assistants	29,216	3,401	1,215	374	0	0	0	13	13	17	16	16	17	†
Other ¹	189,666	206,619	244,514	256,107	261,859	264,519	263,920	274,809	274,033	256,247	222,644	217,154	216,542	-18.0
Private 2-year	27,398	26,141	33,459	37,636	41,709	51,559	58,674	50,009	41,957	30,303	28,216	28,725	27,957	-52.4
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	12,451	12,213	16,346	18,933	21,606	26,883	30,292	26,135	23,003	15,988	14,827	14,884	14,481	-52.2
Graduate assistants	202	313	50	42	0	0	0	27	6	11	4	1	0	†
Other ¹	14,745	13,615	17,063	18,661	20,103	24,676	28,382	23,847	18,948	14,304	13,385	13,840	13,476	-52.5

Source: [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\), Table 314.20 — Employees in degree-granting postsecondary](#)

This capacity gap underscores a fundamental truth shaping the future of research administration: institutions must find innovative ways to preserve institutional knowledge, stabilize workflows, and mitigate administrative burdens. AI enters this landscape as both a necessity and a challenge.





02 | THE RISE OF AI IN *Higher Education & Research*

Artificial intelligence has become one of the most rapidly adopted technologies in the history of higher education. Its rise is driven by accessibility, capability, and the pressure to solve longstanding efficiency challenges.

Students have normalized AI. Tools like GPT-4, GPT-5, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity have become extensions of their academic routines. Faculty use AI to support literature reviews, analyze datasets, create instructional materials, or draft manuscripts. Administrative units utilize AI for tasks such as scheduling, message drafting, and summarization. AI now exists everywhere in the university, even in departments and workflows that lack a formal AI policy.

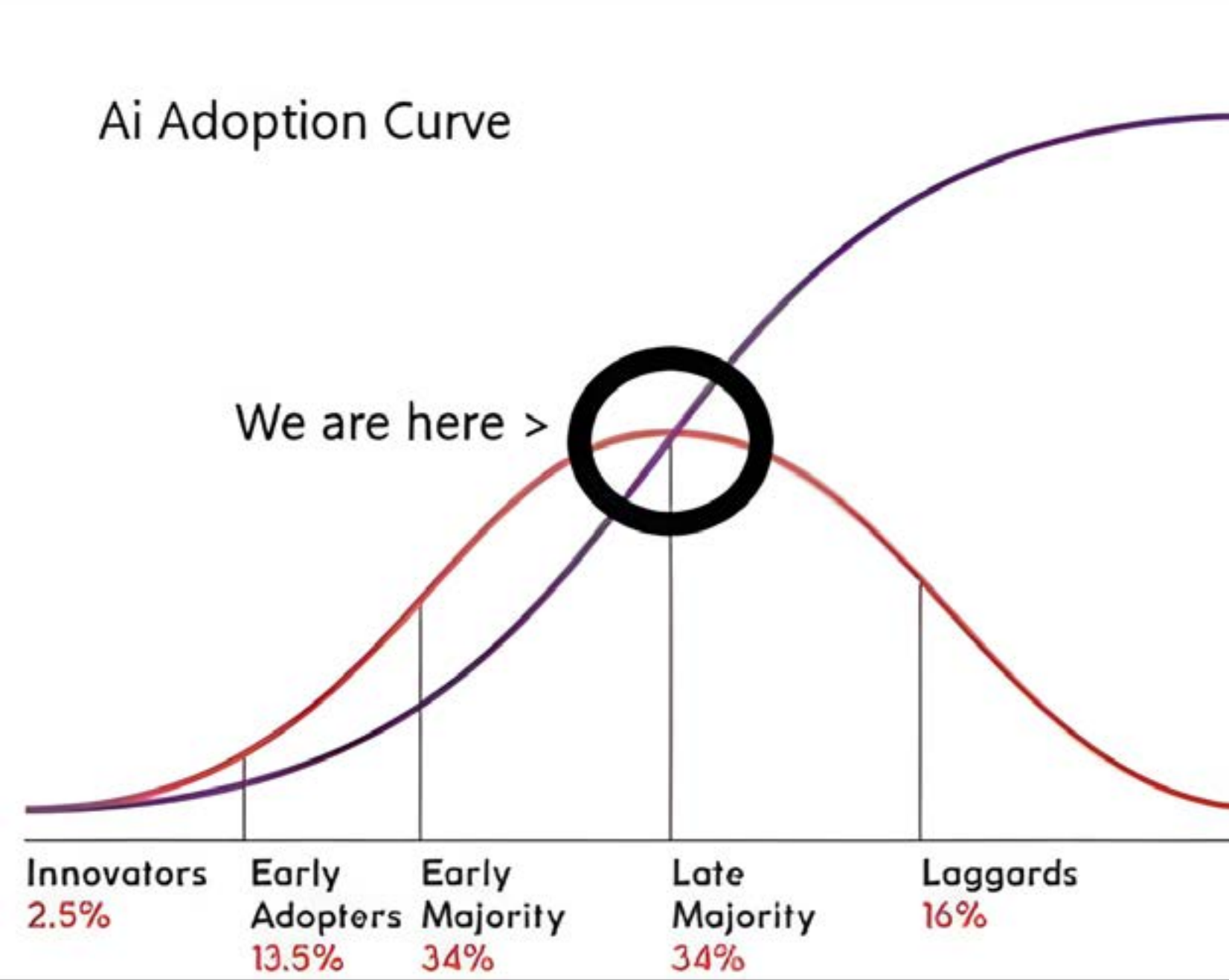
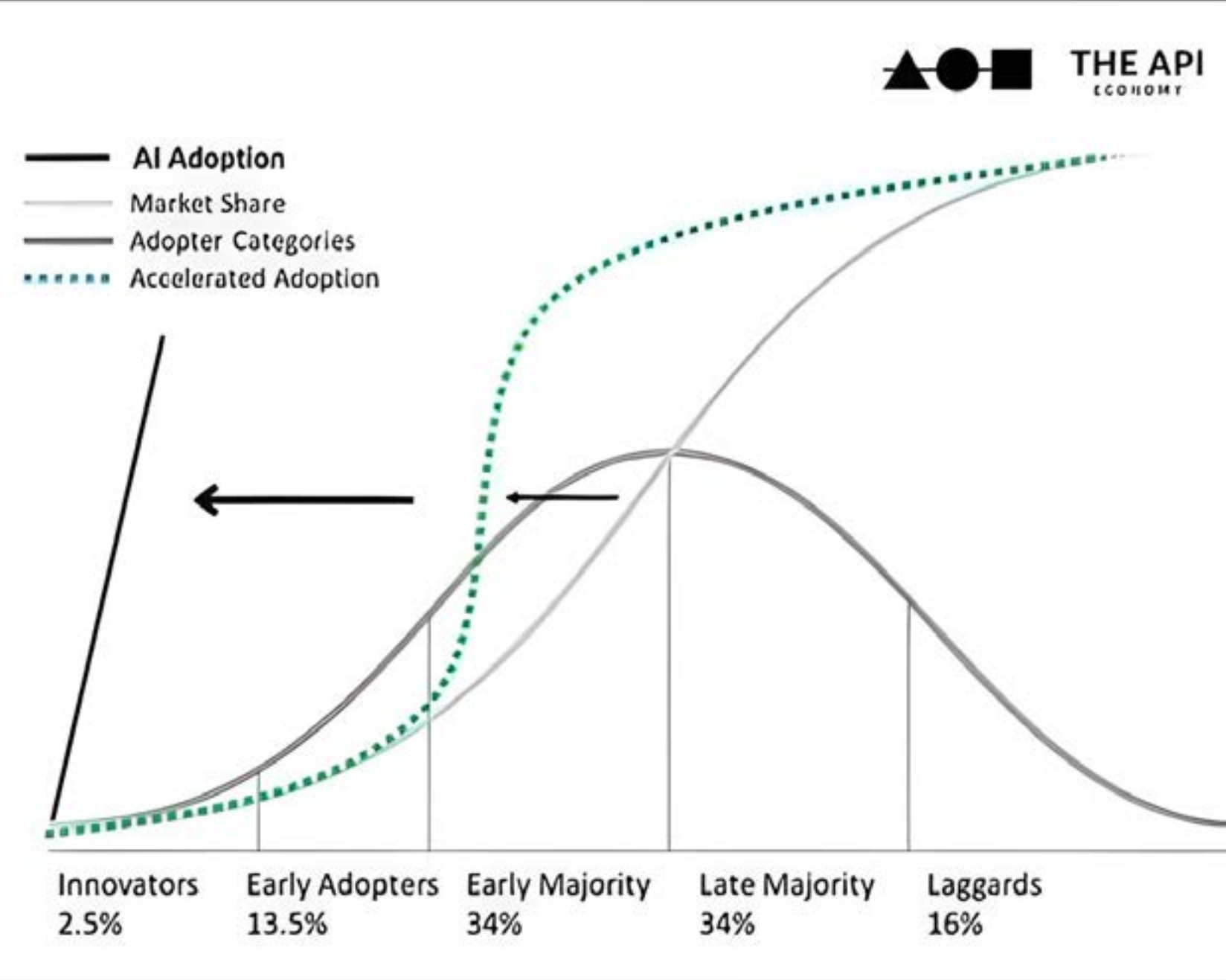
More importantly, institutions are beginning to recognize the strategic implications of AI. [Tsinghua University's university-wide AI governance framework](#) is one of the most comprehensive models released internationally, outlining expectations for transparency, ethics, and responsible use across teaching, research, and administration. Their approach signals where global higher education is heading: AI literacy will become a campus-wide competency, not a niche skill.

Many of the pressures pushing research administration toward AI adoption are structural:

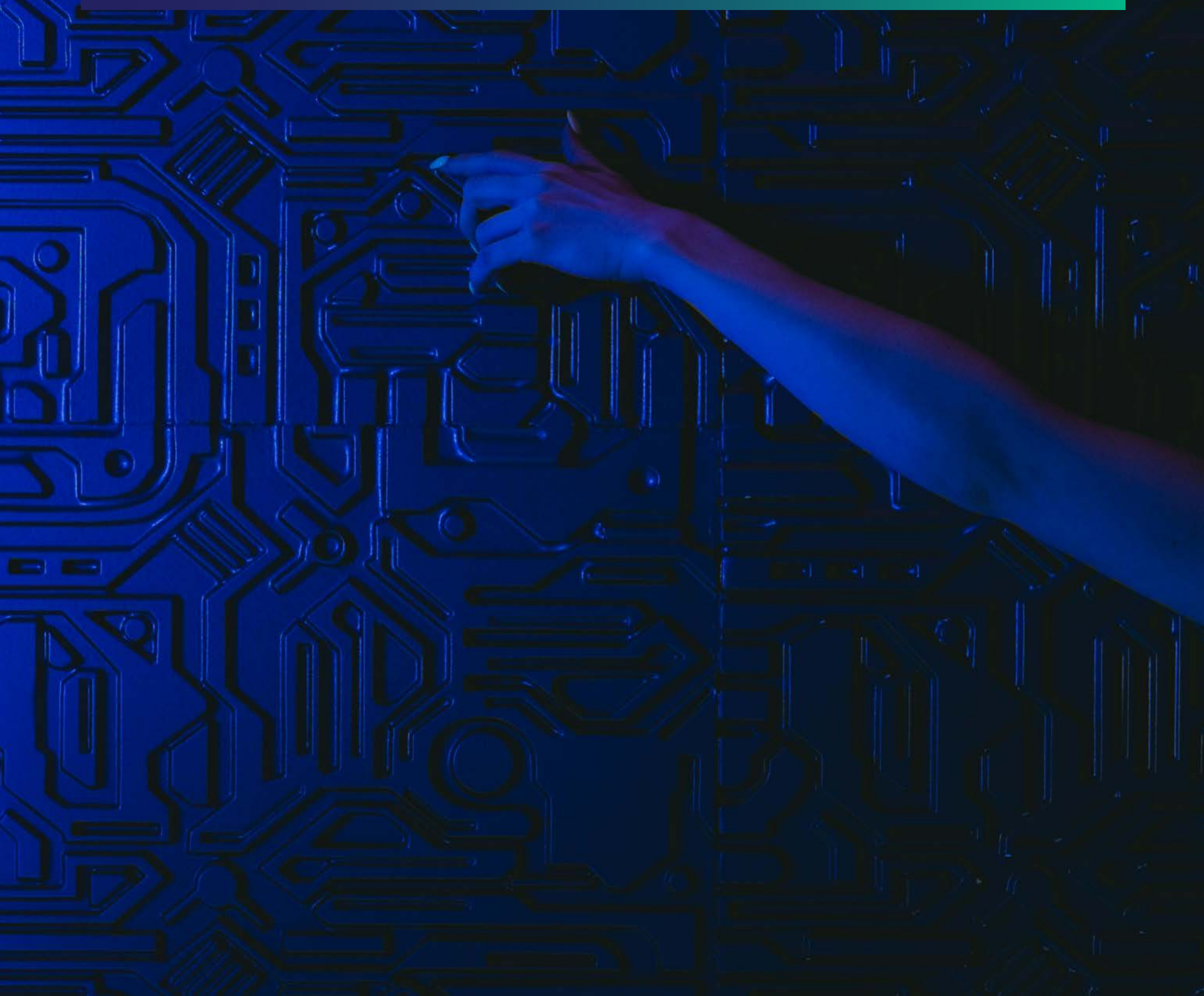
- The sheer volume of information administrators must interpret continues to rise
- Sponsor guidelines are longer and more complex than ever
- Compliance requirements demand increasing granularity
- Staff turnover requires faster, more effective onboarding
- Investigators expect immediate and accurate support.

AI is uniquely positioned to mitigate these pressures. It can summarize complex documents, detect patterns, surface key requirements, and generate draft communications. It can serve as an accessible knowledge resource for new staff. It can make the invisible visible, highlighting inconsistencies, missing information, or areas that need review.

But it cannot replace administrators. It cannot interpret institutional nuance or apply judgment to ambiguous scenarios. It cannot navigate interpersonal dynamics or stakeholder expectations. AI is a tool—not a substitute—for the expertise research offices provide.



The institutions that will thrive in the AI era will be those that build governance frameworks, staff training programs, and technological foundations that enable AI to support - not disrupt - the research enterprise.



03

HOW AI CAN SUPPORT Research Administration Today



Research administration is defined by volume, complexity, and precision. Administrators navigate dense regulations, tight deadlines, faculty expectations, and continuous documentation requirements - all while managing an environment in which institutional knowledge is disappearing. AI is not a replacement for the expertise research administrators provide; it is a practical support system designed to reduce the time spent on repetitive or cognitively draining tasks.

In recent years, AI tools have evolved into reliable assistants for reading, summarizing, drafting, interpreting, forecasting, and organizing information. When applied thoughtfully, these tools can transform the daily rhythm of research administration by giving teams more clarity, more time, and more confidence. Below are real-world use cases paired with specific AI technologies and how each can meaningfully assist in day-to-day research administration.

AI Type	Description	Useful Tools	How They Help
AI for Reading, Summarizing & Interpreting Sponsor Guidelines	Research administrators often spend hours interpreting long, complex RFPs from federal agencies. AI tools excel at condensing these dense documents into understandable summaries, highlighting key requirements, or identifying changes from previous solicitations. These tools act as rapid information processors that free administrators to focus on interpretation, compliance, and communication with PIs.	• ChatGPT • Claude 3.5 • Genei / ScholarAI	• Extract key eligibility requirements • Generate checklists tailored to sponsor formats • Identify sections requiring special attention • Compare previous and current solicitation versions
AI for Proposal Document Preparation	Proposal preparation requires meticulous formatting, proofreading, and alignment with the sponsor's specific guidelines. AI tools designed for writing and document management can assist in formatting complex documents, refining language, generating structured content, and extracting information from PDFs. These tools significantly reduce the time spent on mechanical editing, allowing administrators to focus on compliance and quality.	• Microsoft 365 Copilot • ChatGPT with formatting capabilities • Adobe Acrobat AI Assistant	• Convert raw CV content into NSF or NIH biosketch formats • Draft budget justification text based on basic inputs • Format tables or convert messy PDFs into editable content
AI for Email Drafting & Faculty Communication	Administrators often write dozens of emails daily - clarifying rules, requesting missing information, sending reminders, or explaining institutional processes. AI writing assistants transform rough notes into polished, professional messages and can suggest multiple tone options appropriate for faculty, compliance offices, or departmental contacts.	• Outlook Copilot • Gmail AI • ChatGPT for tone adjustment	• Draft professional, clear emails quickly • Explain complex requirements with accessible language • Rewrite unclear faculty emails into actionable items • Provide variations (formal, concise, assertive, neutral)

<i>AI Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Useful Tools</i>	<i>How They Help</i>
AI for Compliance Triage (IRB, COI, IACUC, COC)	Compliance staff frequently conduct initial reviews of protocols and disclosures to identify any missing or unclear information. AI tools can assist with the “triage” layer - summarizing submissions, flagging information gaps, and generating questions for investigators. While AI does not make ethical or regulatory determinations, it accelerates the initial screening process and ensures consistency across reviewers.	• Claude 3.5 (excellent at long-form reasoning) • JurisAI / policy interpretation assistants • AI PDF reviewers like Humata.ai	• Summarize long protocols into key sections • Highlight missing consent language • Extract potential conflicts from COI disclosures • Suggest clarifications for investigators
AI for Knowledge Capture & Institutional Memory Preservation	One of the most significant challenges in research administration is the loss of knowledge as senior staff retire. AI-powered knowledge systems act as intelligent repositories that interpret and retrieve information. They help newer staff access procedural insights, historical context, and explanatory guidance that might otherwise be lost.	• Notion AI • Confluence AI • Guru AI (knowledge management assistant)	• Convert process documents into searchable Q&A tools • Allow staff to ask “How do I...?” questions and receive guidance • Maintain version history and update institutional knowledge easily
AI for Meeting Notes, Action Items & Documentation	Research offices conduct numerous meetings, including proposal planning, budget reviews, regulatory consultations, and sponsor Q&A sessions. AI transcription and meeting assistants transform meetings from ephemeral conversations into actionable records that support continuity and accountability.	• Otter.ai • Microsoft Teams Premium AI • Zoom AI Companion	• Generate real-time transcripts • Highlight decisions and action items • Tag responsibilities by participant • Create summaries that can be added to internal systems
AI for Budgeting, Financial Tracking & Forecasting	Post-award teams frequently need to analyze financial data, review expenditures, generate burn rate reports, and forecast deficits. AI-enhanced data analytics tools automatically interpret spreadsheets, identify irregularities, and generate visualizations.	• Excel Copilot • ChatGPT’s Code Interpreter mode	• Highlight unusual charges needing review • Predict when a project may overspend or underspend • Create charts, reports, or summaries for PIs
AI for Literature Scanning & Research Support	When administrators help faculty understand programmatic fit or compliance requirements, AI can assist in scanning literature, identifying trends, and summarizing relevant publications. These tools are not replacements for research librarians but complement early-phase exploration.	• Elicit.org • Semantic Scholar AI • Scite.ai	• Summarize research papers for administrators • Extract methods or funding patterns • Provide citation context (supporting vs. contradicting literature)
AI for Policy Interpretation & Procedural Clarity	Administrators must interpret both federal guidelines and internal policy language to ensure compliance. AI tools offer concise explanations, rewrites, or definitions that make complex material more accessible. The goal is not to defer judgment to AI, but to give administrators more clarity before making decisions.	• ChatGPT • Claude 3.5	• Rephrase dense regulations into simpler language • Explain why certain compliance steps are required • Provide examples of correct vs. incorrect interpretations

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

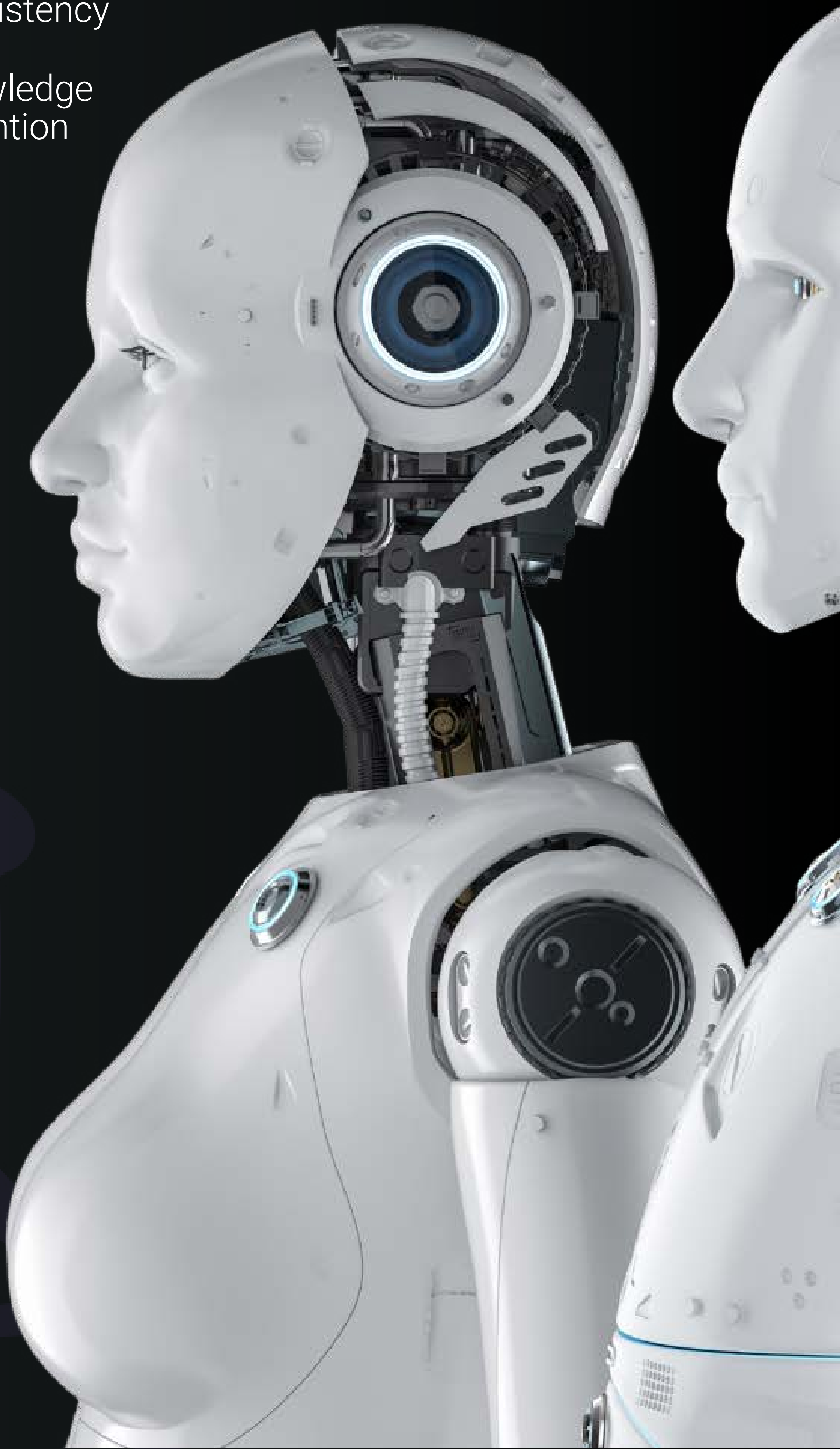
AI as a Partner, Not a Replacement

AI enhances the work of research administrators by supporting:

- 1 Clarity
- 2 Speed
- 3 Accuracy
- 4 Confidence
- 5 Consistency
- 6 Knowledge Retention

In a field where administrators frequently juggle dozens of tasks, manage compliance risk, and support faculty under tight deadlines, AI becomes a daily ally, not a threat. It lifts the cognitive burden, accelerates routine tasks, and preserves the institutional knowledge that ensures stability across generations of staff.

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04

THE NEW *Compliance Landscape*

Compliance offices now operate in a world where research integrity is affected by technologies that did not exist five years ago. AI creates new forms of misconduct risk: fabricated data, manipulated figures, synthetic participants, and algorithmically drafted text that obscures methodology. These risks do not replace traditional oversight challenges - they amplify them.

A 2025 Nature article warns that AI-generated content may erode the reproducibility standards that underpin scientific credibility. Phys.org reports that universities face mounting pressure to adapt their quality control workflows to evaluate AI-enabled research practices.

Compliance reviewers now encounter proposals and publications where AI played an undefined or undisclosed role. Protocols may rely on machine learning pipelines the reviewers must understand at a technical level. COI disclosures may involve AI companies or external engagements that require new evaluation frameworks. Integrity offices must learn to detect AI misuse, from image fabrication to flawed synthetic dataset generation.

These Changes Require:

- The sheer volume of information administrators must interpret continues to rise.
- Sponsor guidelines are longer and more complex than ever.
- Compliance requirements demand increasing granularity.
- Staff turnover requires faster, more effective onboarding.
- Investigators expect immediate and accurate support.

Compliance is no longer simply a procedural checkpoint. It is becoming a domain where institutions must protect their reputation, mitigate novel risks, and design systems capable of evaluating technology-driven research practices.

Understanding AI Risks

- 01 Ensure that your AI systems are built on representative and unbiased data.
- 02 Invest in robust security protocols to safeguard.
- 03 Be proactive in workforce planning.
- 04 Don't shy away from seeking external expertise or third-party audits.
- 05 Develop guidelines and protocols that prioritize privacy and data protection.
- 06 Consider the ethical implications of AI use within your organization.
- 07 Stay informed about the ongoing conversation around AI risks, including existential concerns.

05

BUILDING THE AI-READY *Research Office*

Becoming an AI-ready research office requires cultural alignment, training, and technological foundation. AI-readiness is not simply adopting tools - it is creating an environment where AI supports trusted decision-making and reinforces institutional values.

Leadership must begin with the message that AI is here to support staff, not replace them. Without that reassurance, even beneficial tools may be met with resistance. Administrators need clarity about which tasks AI should assist with, which require human oversight, and where hybrid approaches offer the most value.

AI literacy is essential. Staff must understand:

- how AI models generate outputs
- how to validate or cross-check information
- when to escalate to human review
- privacy and compliance implications
- responsible use standards
- risks of overreliance

Training should include hands-on practice, examples of safe versus unsafe prompts, and clear workflows for approved use.

Data governance forms the backbone of AI-readiness. AI works best in structured, clean, standardized datasets. Research administration benefits enormously from:

- consistent workflow design
- standardized forms and data dictionaries
- metadata quality controls
- integrated systems
- clear provenance trails
- strong permissions frameworks

A research office with fragmented tools, inconsistent processes, and unstructured data will struggle to leverage AI effectively. An AI-ready office is one where people, processes, policies, and systems all point toward responsible innovation.



The future of research administration will not be shaped by external AI tools like ChatGPT, but by intelligent systems that integrate AI directly into institutional workflows. External AI tools lack context, compliance guardrails, auditability, and the ability to reference historical decision patterns. They are helpful for individual productivity, but unsuitable as enterprise solutions for research administration.

Intelligent research systems use structured data to deliver contextual guidance. They can explain workflow steps, identify missing compliance elements, or generate preliminary summaries. They understand roles, permissions, and data provenance. They produce outputs that are auditable and traceable—requirements essential to research oversight.

As workloads increase and staffing shortages persist, intelligent systems will become the backbone of institutional resilience. They will help ensure consistency in decision-making, reduce manual administrative burden, and preserve institutional knowledge.

EXTERNAL AI TOOLS VS. INTELLIGENT INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

ASPECT	External AI Tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.)	Intelligent Institutional Systems (AI embedded inside Kualu Research)
PRIMARY OBJECTIVE	General-purpose content generation and assistance.	Improve research workflows through contextual, system-aware intelligence.
STRENGTHS	Fast, flexible, creative; good for drafting and summarizing.	Accurate, governed, auditable; aligned with institutional policies and data.
WEAKNESSES	Privacy risks; hallucinations; no awareness of institutional rules or workflows.	Requires setup and configuration; depends on clean institutional data.
KEY FEATURES	Large language models, broad knowledge, natural-language responses.	Workflow-aware suggestions, policy-based guidance, process-specific automation.
DATA REQUIREMENTS	Uses public training data; does not understand local systems or terminology unless manually provided.	Draws from institution-specific datasets, permissions, and workflows within the platform.
TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACH	External, cloud-based general AI with no connection to institutional systems.	Embedded AI operating inside a governed research administration environment.
TRANSPARENCY & OVERSIGHT	Limited explainability; outputs cannot be audited or tied to institutional rules.	Fully auditable; outputs inherit system permissions, logs, and workflow history.
APPLICATIONS IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION	Drafting emails, summarizing long documents, brainstorming.	Pre-review support, route suggestions, document validation, onboarding help, knowledge retention.

Institutions that adopt intelligent systems gain strategic advantages: improved accuracy, reduced errors, better onboarding, and more satisfied staff who feel supported, not replaced.

07 | HOW KUALI RESEARCH Supports AI-Ready Transformation

As AI becomes a routine part of research administration, institutions must ensure the technology is introduced into an environment that is secure, governed, and built on structured data. [Kuali Research](#) provides exactly that foundation. This foundation becomes even more powerful when paired with structured onboarding resources, such as [Kuali's Grant Administrator Onboarding Guide](#), which outlines the skills, training steps, and regulatory fundamentals new administrators need to succeed. As teams shrink and turnover increases across higher education, combining strong onboarding practices with AI-assisted workflows ensures that new staff can learn faster, seasoned staff can work more efficiently, and institutions can sustain excellence even as demands grow. In this hybrid future, AI doesn't replace administrators - it makes their expertise more scalable, more resilient, and more valuable than ever.

Kuali's Kuali Research is designed to ensure that information is captured consistently and routed through predictable workflows. This structure matters because AI is only as reliable as the data and processes that surround it. Rather than scattered spreadsheets and disconnected systems, Kuali Research creates a governed ecosystem where AI can support administrators without compromising compliance or operational integrity.



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Within a platform like Kuali Research, AI can assist research administrators by:

- Summarizing complex documents such as protocols, proposals, or correspondence
- Highlighting missing or unclear information before review
- Retrieving institutional knowledge, including historical decisions or workflow explanations
- Supporting onboarding, giving new administrators contextual help based on institutional processes
- Drafting preliminary text for communications or procedural guidance.

These supports do not replace administrators - they reduce burden, improve accuracy, and make institutional knowledge accessible, even as teams change. Kuali also helps institutions prepare for AI adoption by encouraging cleaner data practices and clearer documentation. Many institutions rely on guides such as [Modernizing Research Administration](#) to understand how standardization and workflow redesign enable modern tools to work effectively.

The platform also brings built-in guardrails that external AI tools cannot provide:

- Data stays inside institutional boundaries
- Permission controls ensure sensitive information is surfaced only to the right users
- Audit trails create accountability and transparency
- Workflows ensure AI recommendations appear within appropriate steps - not in isolation.

As research administration evolves, AI will increasingly become a partner in daily operations. But its power depends on the quality of the environment it operates in. AI inside a well-governed system is fundamentally different from AI used as a standalone tool.

And because [studies consistently show that human-AI teams outperform humans or AI alone](#), Kuali's structured workflows, rich data model, and transparent processes provide the ideal foundation for this hybrid future.

Kuali Research does not replace the expertise of research administrators - it amplifies it. By providing the architecture where AI can function safely and meaningfully, Kuali helps institutions preserve institutional knowledge, strengthen review quality, and prepare for the next decade of intelligent research administration.