



SMART: DATA – HIGHER EDUCATION

SERVICE DEFINITION DOCUMENT

G-Cloud 15 Framework | Lot 2b: Cloud Software

SERVICE OVERVIEW

SMART: Data for Higher Education provides a governed data enablement layer that prepares university data for AI, analytics, and automation use at scale. **Built on the ICS.AI SMART: Platform**, the service enables higher education institutions to ingest, structure, govern, and expose data safely for use across SMART: Front Door, SMART: Staff Copilot, and SMART: Agentic services.

The service focuses on making institutional data **AI-ready**, rather than replacing existing student, research, or operational systems. It addresses common challenges such as siloed data, inconsistent definitions, limited metadata, and complex access requirements, while maintaining academic, regulatory, and information governance standards.

SERVICE TIERS

Tier	Description
Foundation	• Ingestion of priority higher education data sources • Basic data normalisation and preparation • Core metadata capture and classification • Role-based access controls • Data prepared for AI consumption (RAG-ready) • Audit logging for data access and usage Foundation provides a controlled entry point for institutions beginning to enable AI over institutional data.
Premium	Includes all Foundation capabilities, plus: • Expanded coverage across teaching, research, and corporate data • Data quality rules and validation checks • Enrichment and semantic tagging • Improved metadata management and discoverability • Monitoring and reporting on data usage Premium supports broader adoption of AI and analytics across faculties and professional services.

Tier	Description
Specialist	Includes all Premium capabilities, plus: • Domain-specific data models (e.g. student lifecycle, research management, finance) • Cross-system data products spanning multiple functions • Data structures optimised for agentic and automation use cases • Advanced governance workflows and approval controls • Enhanced lineage and dependency tracking Specialist enables complex AI and automation use cases while maintaining strong academic and regulatory controls.
Ultra	Includes all Specialist capabilities, plus: • Institution-wide data fabric across academic and operational domains • Advanced lineage, assurance, and audit capabilities • Support for multi-domain AI and agentic orchestration • Scaled performance and resilience for enterprise use • Priority optimisation and support Ultra provides a mature, AI-native data foundation for large or research-intensive institutions.

SERVICE SCOPE

SMART: Data supports the full lifecycle of higher education data readiness, including:

- Ingestion of structured and unstructured data from institutional systems
- Data transformation, normalisation, and enrichment
- Metadata management, classification, and tagging
- Data quality controls and validation
- Secure access and role-based exposure of data
- Lineage, auditability, and usage tracking

Prepared data can be safely consumed by AI models, copilots, analytics tools, and agentic workflows.

KEY FEATURES

- Governed data pipelines for higher education environments
- Central metadata and classification management
- Data lineage and audit trail for transparency
- Integration with existing institutional systems
- Secure exposure of data to AI and analytics services
- Monitoring of data usage, quality, and access
- No requirement to replace existing data platforms

KEY BENEFITS

- Improves quality and consistency of data used by AI
- Reduces risk associated with uncontrolled data access
- Accelerates delivery of AI-enabled services and insights
- Supports regulatory, audit, and assurance requirements
- Maximises value from existing institutional data assets
- Provides a scalable foundation for AI maturity

TECHNICAL ARCHITECTURE

Built on the **ICS.AI SMART: Platform**, providing:

- Microsoft Azure deployment with UK data residency
- Secure data ingestion and processing pipelines
- Metadata and governance services
- Integration with retrieval, copilot, and agent runtimes
- Identity integration via Microsoft Entra ID with RBAC
- Central telemetry for data usage, quality, and risk

HIGHER EDUCATION DATA SOURCES

SMART: Data supports integration with common higher education data sources, including:

- Student information systems
- Learning management and virtual learning environments
- Research management and grants systems
- Finance, HR, and estates systems
- Document and records management platforms
- Data warehouses and reporting platforms

Integrations are configured in line with institutional data governance and information management policies.

GOVERNANCE, SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

- Role-based access control for data and metadata
- Policy controls for data exposure and use
- Data lineage and audit logging
- Sensitive data handling with redaction and minimisation
- Human oversight of data onboarding and changes
- WCAG 2.2 AA compliant management interfaces
- GDPR compliant with UK data residency

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

- **Discover & scope** – priority data sources and institutional use cases
- **Configure governance** – access rules, policies, classifications
- **Ingest & structure** – connect systems and prepare data
- **Validate & assure** – data quality and governance checks
- **Enable consumption** – expose data to AI and analytics
- **Operate & optimise** – ongoing monitoring and improvement

SUCCESS MEASURES

- **Discover & scope** – priority data sources and institutional use cases
- **Configure governance** – access rules, policies, classifications
- **Ingest & structure** – connect systems and prepare data
- **Validate & assure** – data quality and governance checks
- **Enable consumption** – expose data to AI and analytics
- **Operate & optimise** – ongoing monitoring and improvement

DEPENDENCIES & PREREQUISITES

- SMART Platform Core (included with any SMART product)
- Microsoft Azure subscription (UK or EU hosted)
- Microsoft Entra ID for identity management
- Access to institutional source systems and data

USER SUPPORT

The response time is 24 hours, depending on the contract signed by the client and applies during working hours from Monday to Friday. The Support levels are as follows:

Level	Description	Response
Level 1: Urgent	System not responding or critical function loss that affects all users.	24hr fix/workaround
Level 2: High	A function loss that causes significant disruption to business and users.	Priority response
Level 3: Normal	Function loss that affects some users but will not stop them from being able to do other tasks.	Standard response
Level 4: Low	A cosmetic issue or a minor function loss that affects some users.	Scheduled response

This service, up to an agreed number of hours per month, is included in the cost of the Licence for the SMART: Data. Additional support hours can be purchased if required.

DISCLAIMER

This service description was prepared for G-Cloud 15 and will remain on the Digital Marketplace for the duration of the framework period (up to 24 months). As AI technology and our platform capabilities evolve rapidly, specific features, integrations, or functionality described in this document may have changed since publication.

Before purchase, we recommend contacting ICS.AI to confirm current capabilities and any new features that may have been added since this description was published.

CONTACT



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Learn more about ICS.AI, our services, and how we support the UK public sector with responsible AI

<https://www.ics.ai/>



EMAIL US

Contact our team with questions about our services, G-Cloud offerings, or to start a conversation

info@ics.ai



BOOK A MEETING

Schedule a call with our team to discuss your requirements or learn more about our services

[book a meeting](#)