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# Balancing Innovation and Integrity: Strategies for Managing Student Use of Generative AI in Higher Education

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# Overview

## AI as a Learning Enabler

- AI is emerging as a powerful tool for personalized learning.
- Technological advances are making AI more effective in educational contexts.

## Institutional Stance in Ireland

- Irish universities recognize the transformative role of generative AI.
- Emphasis is placed on ethical and responsible use in academic settings.

## Academic Integrity and Policy

- AI-generated content is not accepted as original student work.
- Policies promote AI as a supplementary learning aid, not a substitute for critical thinking.

# Overview (continued)

## Policy Evolution

Focus on academic integrity, transparency, and AI literacy.

Institutions aim to prepare students for ethical AI use in future careers.

## Case Studies: UL and TUS: Midlands

The study examines practices at University of Limerick (Technical Communication students).

Also reviews strategies at Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands (Business students).

## Managing AI in the Classroom

Academics are adopting proactive strategies to manage AI engagement.

Highlights include fostering critical engagement and aligning with learning objectives.

# Establishing Clear Academic Policies on AI Use

- **Importance of Defined AI Policies**
  - Clear institutional guidelines are critical to ensure ethical and responsible use of AI in academia.
  - The National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) emphasizes learner understanding of AI to prevent integrity breaches.
- **NAIN's Ethical Framework**
  - Advocates for ethical awareness and responsible engagement with AI tools among students.
  - Encourages institutions to adopt policies that reflect academic integrity principles.
- **TUS Policy Approach**
  - No standalone AI policy; adopts NAIN's framework due to institutional affiliation.
  - Academic regulations define AI misuse as academic infringement unless explicitly allowed.
  - Students must properly reference AI-generated content in assessments.
- **UL's Interim Guidelines**
  - University of Limerick has released a provisional academic integrity statement.
  - Full policy and misconduct procedures to be implemented in September 2025.

# Assessment Design for Ethical and Applied Learning

**University of Limerick (UL) – Technical Communication**

- **Assignment 1 (50%)**
  - Proposal and storyboard for a digital learning resource
  - Application of design theories and accessibility principles
  - Includes rough work (e.g., hand-drawn workflow plans) to support originality
- **Assignment 2 (50%)**
  - Development of an interactive learning component
  - Assesses creativity, technical execution, and user engagement
- **Reflective Practice Interview (Pass/Fail)**
  - Students explain their work process and decisions
  - Reinforces academic integrity and deepens understanding

# Assessment Design for Ethical and Applied Learning

- **Technological University of the Shannon (TUS: Midlands) – Business Module**
- **Assignment 1 (40%)**
  - Research and conduct an interview based on a business brief
  - Emphasizes applied learning and professional communication
- **Assignment 2 (20%)**
  - Design a questionnaire aligned with the same business scenario
  - Evaluates understanding of effective survey design principles
- **Assignment 3 (40%)**
  - Group-based secondary research and report writing
  - Focuses on database use, academic writing, and practical recommendations
  - Promotes critical thinking and relevance to real-world business challenges

# Technological Constraints in Managing AI Use

**Challenges in Detection**

AI-generated content often closely resembles authentic student writing.

Distinguishing between independent work and AI-assisted output is increasingly difficult.

**Caution in Evaluation**

Faculty must avoid premature assumptions regarding AI usage.

Hasty accusations can undermine student-instructor trust and violate principles of fairness and due process.

**Institutional Gaps**

Many educators face unclear policies and lack sufficient training on AI-related issues.

Institutional support structures remain underdeveloped in this rapidly evolving context.

**Resource Limitations**

Budget constraints hinder implementation of robust AI detection systems.

Investigative capabilities are limited, increasing the need for prudent and balanced responses.

**Need for a Measured Approach**

Responses to AI use must be cautious, evidence-based, and equitable.

Emphasis should be placed on dialogue, education, and best practices—not punitive measures.

# Student Perspectives on AI and Reflective Practice (TUS)

## AI Usage Among Students (TUS Sample)

- 12 final-year students shared their experiences with AI in coursework.
- 10 found AI valuable; 1 did not; 1 was undecided.
- All students reported using AI tools in some capacity:
  - 8 for writing assistance (e.g., Grammarly)
  - 3 for referencing
  - 1 for research purposes

# Student Perspectives on AI and Reflective Practice (UL)

- **Reflective Practice Presentation**
  - Structured as a low-stakes, pass/fail component.
  - Encourages students to articulate learning experiences, assignment challenges, and skill development.
  - Fosters deeper engagement with content over reliance on AI.
- **Learning Benefits**
  - Students reflect on evolving thought processes and academic growth.
  - Highlights time management strategies, collaboration, and integrity in academic work.
  - Enhances ability to self-assess and communicate academic development effectively.
- **Impact on AI Dependency**
  - Knowing they must reflect on their work discourages excessive reliance on AI tools.
  - Promotes authentic learning and internal accountability throughout the term.

# Promoting Academic Integrity Amid Rising AI Use

- AI is now embedded in higher education; managing its impact requires clear, proactive strategies.
- Students increasingly use AI in coursework—guidance must be clear, written, and consistently communicated.
- Many lecturers now review assessment design to address AI-related challenges, with a focus on awareness and monitoring.
- At UL, assignment design emphasizes theory, creativity, and applied skills that AI cannot replicate.
- Regular check-ins and reflective interviews at UL support student accountability and deter misuse.
- TUS prioritizes authentic assessment—personalized tasks, in-person interviews, and research justification.
- For postgraduates, continuous engagement and reflective presentations (pass/fail) promote honesty and ethical learning.

# Conclusion & Recommendations

- Face-to-face assessments (e.g. reflective presentations, oral exams) enhance academic integrity.
- Direct interactions encourage authentic student engagement and reduce overreliance on AI.
- Open dialogue about AI use promotes transparency and ethical awareness.
- Clear guidelines and classroom discussions help students understand appropriate AI applications.
- Reflective and interactive assessment strategies act as deterrents to misconduct.
- Emphasizing integrity and process over product builds a culture of academic honesty.

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