Guidance for Academics:
How students talk about GenAI

GenAI has rapidly become part of the conversation in education, prompting both questions and concerns. UQ is collaborating with three other universities to research student perspectives so we can improve current educational practices and ensure students are equipped with the skills they need for the future.

What is the study?

20 UQ students from various degrees participated in focus group discussions earlier this year to help us find out how university students interact with GenAI in their learning.

Students are uncertain

Students are still grappling with uncertainty when it comes to GenAI, unsure of proper usage and their feelings toward it.

"Yeah, [accidental use of AI has] become a concern of mine. Recently ... And but I am concerned about is that? Oh, is that academic integrity do you get? Do you get what I mean?" (Jane, education student)

"It kind of doesn't sit right with me, like all the years of learning. And now we're just giving it away, like all these skills that I've developed till now. I don't want to, just like, you know. Give it away." (Sha, social work student)

The search for guidance

To alleviate this uncertainty, students seek guidance around the appropriate use of GenAI.

"I feel like we should have like a course … having students to learn how to use AI, wisely, and you know how to really take advantage of it, instead of like making mistakes that get you trouble in academic integrity." (Ebby, science student)

Maintaining transparency

Students have varying levels of trust in the use of GenAI for teaching; if it is used, they want transparency.

"I think I'd be just very scared about what I'm learning and where it's come from". (John, law student)

"They give me the sense that they are trustworthy by the acknowledging it ... and maybe in the other way around. I can trust them back." (Jimmy, education student)

Connection and compassion

Students understand and appreciate that GenAI cannot replace the human collaboration and compassion they value as part of their university experience. They also value empathy in decision-making.

"I think being a student is changing really fast, but as well, being a student involves interconnection with your classmate. This, that is something that is really important for our learning. That's why we usually what or we go to uni, we go to school." (Freud, environment student)

"Yeah. So for me, I feel like in 6 years ChatGPT cannot like replace you, visibility to like, connect with each other. This, I feel like humans are all different, so that the approach to another human is also like different." (La, psychology student)

AT A GLANCE

GenAI brings with it uncertainty and complexity.

Be aware that students have a wide range of views that are often still evolving.

Students want clear guidance on how to use GenAI properly in their courses.

Students want transparency when GenAI is used in teaching.

Students still value human connection and human decision making.

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