



Guidance for students: How are students using GenAI?

GenAI has rapidly become part of the conversation in education, leaving many students with questions around its use. To improve educational practices and the student experience, UQ, in collaboration with three other universities, is researching how students interact with GenAI.

What is the study?

Earlier this year, 20 UQ students from a range of degree backgrounds participated in focus group discussions about GenAI.

Grappling with uncertainty

The discussions revealed that students have lots of uncertainty around GenAI - how it will shape the future, whether they are prepared for that, and how it affects them right now. Not every student has the same views, because this is a complex issue.

"I mean, AI is developing at a crazy fast rate. So, I can't really say in what way it's going to change [in the future], but it will definitely be nearly unrecognisable from how it is right now." (Sam, economics and finance student)

GenAI is a double-edged sword, and students are grappling with both sides in a way that can produce positive or negative emotions.

"I think it's changing the identity of being a student ... Sometimes in the past it's been like it requires effort, repetition, hard-work, you know ... now it's become. I guess one word is efficient, but also like somebody else mentioned lazier ... yes, being a student is not as great as it used to be." (Mam, medicine student)

The search for guidance

With so much uncertainty, students are seeking guidance from The University to navigate these changes.

"I just wanna know if there's like a barrier or not a barrier. But like, where is the line that we, as a student can use ChatGPT, and where is the line that we can't use ChatGPT." (Riri, health student)

Transparency and trust

Amid this uncertainty and various levels of distrust, students place a high value on transparency when GenAI is being used. This is something we will tell academics and admin staff.

"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)

Compassion and connection

Empathy and human connection are integral to the learning process and remain highly valued.

"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 connection is going to be difficult to be replaced by any technology so far." (Freud, environment student)

AT A GLANCE



GenAI brings with it uncertainty and complexity.



GenAI is a double-edged sword: while it offers positives, we must exercise caution and critical thinking when utilising it.



The topic of GenAI can evoke a wide range of emotions. UQ is listening to how students feel.



Students want guidance and transparency around the use of GenAI.



Empathy and human connection remain valuable.



UQ is researching GenAI to help improve the student learning experience.