Policies supporting responsible and systematic GenAI adoption in higher education

This spotlight explores how generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is being used and adopted in higher education and provides examples of emerging policy responses supporting GenAI adoption. The increasing capabilities and rapid proliferation of AI technologies are reshaping higher education – how students learn and are supported, how teaching and assessment are conducted, the skills and knowledge students need, how research is conducted and how educational institutions are administered and managed.

This spotlight draws on a synthesis of the most recent evidence on GenAI use in higher education, a review of policy documents and institutional guidance, findings from the *OECD Digital Education Outlook 2026,* including the *Insights on the effective use of generative AI in education,* and discussions held during an expert hybrid seminar on GenAI in higher education that took place on 6 March 2026 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

GenAI is widely but unevenly used in higher education

Nearly all students and most academic staff have experience with GenAI

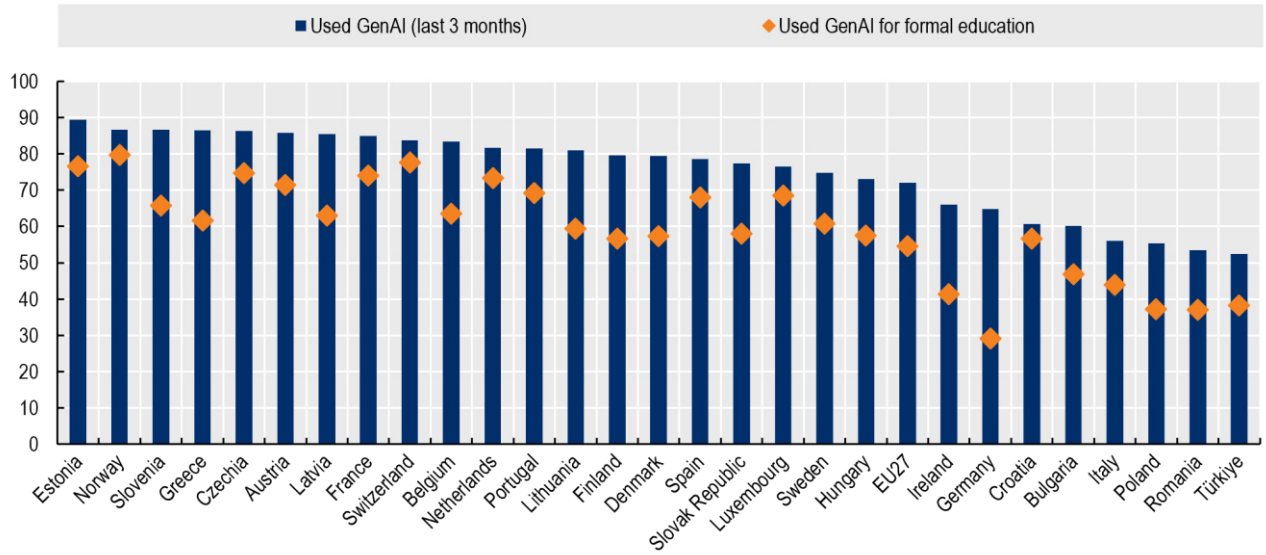
In the three years since the public release of the first of a new generation of generative artificial intelligence ("GenAI") tools in late 2022, they have developed from a novelty to being near universally used by students and academic staff. It is important to note that much of the available evidence on GenAI use in higher education is based on non-representative surveys. As a result, while findings consistently point to high levels of use, they should be interpreted as indicative of emerging patterns, rather than precise estimates.

In the United Kingdom, the share of undergraduates reporting that they use GenAI rose from 66% in early 2024 to 92% in 2025 and 95% in 2026 (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2026[1]). In Germany, usage among students increased from 63% in 2023 to over 90% in 2025 (von Garrel and Mayer, 2025[2]). In France, a study reported 55% of higher education students as having used GenAI tools in 2023, with the number increasing to 82% in 2025 (Compilatio, 2023[3]; Pascal, Taddei and Gallié, 2025[4]). In the United States, a survey carried out in October 2025 showed that about 88% of students in associate or bachelor's degree programmes reported using AI tools at least "sometimes" (Gallup-Lumina Foundation, 2026[5]). A 2024 survey covering 16 countries found that 86% of higher education students report using GenAI in their

studies, typically using more than one tool (Digital Education Council, 2024[6]) and in 2025, on average in the European Union (EU), 72% of students reported having used GenAI in the previous three months, with 53% reporting that they used it in formal education (Figure 1). There are, however, significant differences between countries, with 89% of students in Estonia reporting they use GenAI and 87% in Norway and Slovenia, while only 53% of students report the same in Romania and 52% in Türkiye (Eurostat, 2026[7]).

Figure 1. Share of students in Europe that used GenAI in the last three months, 2025

European OECD Members and accession candidate countries



Note: "Students" includes upper-secondary, vocational and tertiary students.
Source: Eurostat (2026[7]), Individuals - use of generative AI tools, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/e84cb2f3-fb51-4ef0-9be9-0d9b714f0191.

Evidence from surveys suggests that most academic staff have tried using GenAI, but that use is less widespread than among students. In the United States, for example, the share of instructors in higher education reporting that they used GenAI weekly in their teaching jumped from 18% in 2024 to 30% in 2025 (Tyton Partners, 2025[8]). Another survey in the United States found that 73% of higher education staff and faculty use GenAI for work-based tasks either daily or weekly (Robert, 2026[9]). Globally, 61% of academic staff across 28 countries reported now using GenAI weekly (Digital Education Council, 2025[10]), while in Australia, by mid-2024, about 75% of academic staff had used GenAI for their university work, with the proportion rising to around 81% for senior staff compared to only 70% for professional staff (McDonald, Paula et al., 2024[11]). In Germany, a recent analysis found that teaching staff have adopted GenAI more cautiously than students and that institutional support has been slow to emerge, with the review noting limited evidence on teaching staff and AI use (Wannemacher, Bosse and Lübcke, 2026[12]). Adoption is even broader when administrative and support staff are included: 84% of higher education professionals across Canada and the United States reported using GenAI in 2024 for either professional or personal use, up from 41% the year before (Ellucian, 2024[13]).

Adoption and advanced use vary

If GenAI is now used across higher education, it is not used by everyone equally, not used for the same purposes and not always used with the same levels of depth and sophistication.

Students and staff in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and business fields seem to use GenAI more often than those in the arts and humanities. In Germany, 96% of engineering students reported using GenAI in 2025, compared with 79% of students in arts and cultural studies (von Garrel and Mayer, 2025[2]). Surveys from the United Kingdom show STEM and health students using AI more confidently than peers in the arts and humanities, who are more likely to feel "under-supported" (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2026[1]). Staff show the same split: in Germany, engineering and natural-sciences lecturers were the most likely to report using GenAI in their teaching (von Garrel and Mayer, 2025[2]). A survey in the United States found that 40% of those teaching arts and humanities do not use GenAI at all, the highest non-use rate of any discipline (AAC&U/Elon University, 2026[14]).

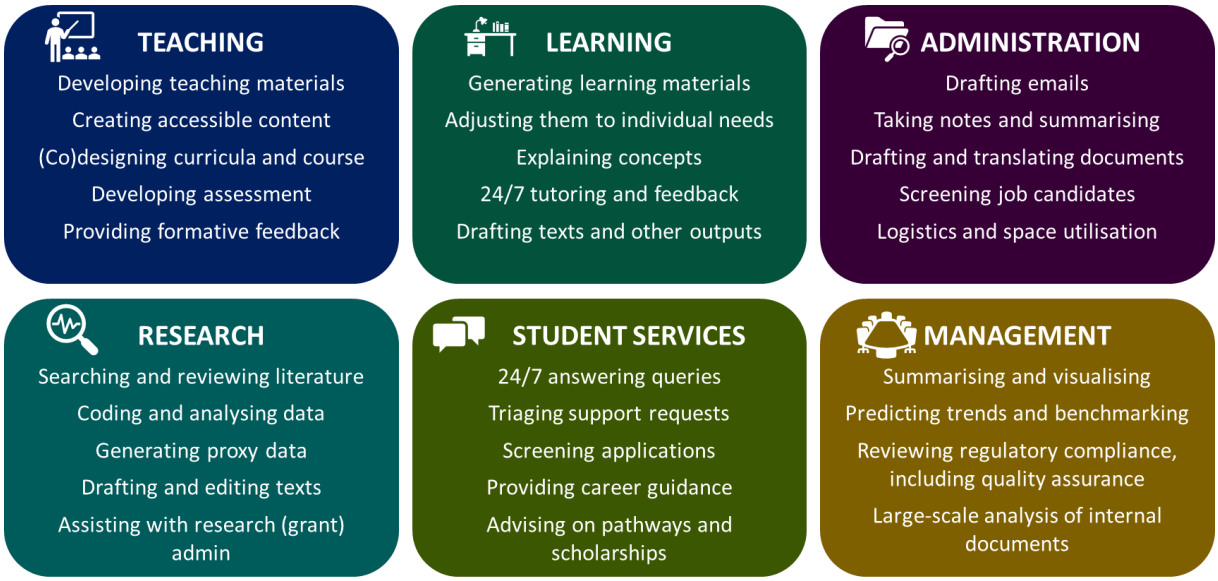
Some surveys suggest differences in usage across gender and socio-economic groups, although these gaps should be interpreted cautiously given data limitations. Undergraduate surveys in the United Kingdom consistently found that men and students from higher social backgrounds are more likely to use AI than women and peers from lower social grades, even if the gap between men and women has narrowed since early AI adoption (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2025[15]; Higher Education Policy Institute, 2026[1]). The cause of the socio-economic gap is unclear given the free availability of major AI tools, pointing to wider factors such as digital confidence and prior exposure to AI. The gender gap is also seen in surveys from other countries. In Germany, a comparable gender gap was found in earlier survey evidence, with more than two thirds (69%) of male respondents reporting GenAI use compared with around 60% of female respondents (von Garrel and Mayer, 2023[16]). The gender gap is closely associated with differences in familiarity with AI tools (Chuganova et al., 2025[17]).

Surveys consistently find that students largely use GenAI for routine tasks – such as summarising, editing and translating – and not for deep learning or problem-solving (Digital Education Council, 2024[6]). In the United States, faculty and staff show a similar pattern, with the most common uses being brainstorming, drafting emails, summarising long documents, proofreading and creating presentations (Robert and McCormack, 2025[18]). In Germany, 88% of teaching staff had used GenAI by late 2024, but mostly for lecture preparation and follow-up rather than for interactive teaching or assessment (von Garrel and Mayer, 2025[2]). Globally, just 17% of academic staff describe themselves as “advanced” or “expert” AI users, while 40% are still at the beginning of their AI literacy journey and among those who use AI in teaching, 88% do so only “minimally” or “moderately” (Digital Education Council, 2025[10]). Overall, evidence suggests that while GenAI use is widespread, its integration into more advanced pedagogical practices remains uneven and still emerging.

GenAI is used across all functions of higher education, but concerns persist

GenAI tools are being used by students, academics, researchers and professional staff across the different tasks they undertake in higher education. Figure 2 illustrates the various use cases identified in the evidence.

Figure 2. Use of GenAI across higher education



Note: Developed by the OECD Secretariat.

Despite widespread uptake, the use of GenAI raises concerns across higher education in terms of:

- **Data privacy**, as higher education institutions often have little oversight of which data students and staff input to commercial GenAI tools. The terms of many tools are not designed for educational or public-sector use, raising concerns about data protection, ownership and compliance. In contrast, institutions that provide centrally managed GenAI tools may offer greater oversight and compliance safeguards (OECD, 2026[19]; UNESCO, 2023[20]).
- **Academic integrity** is a particular concern among academic staff. Many fear that GenAI lowers the barrier to plagiarism and cheating, while also encouraging students to rely on automated tools rather than independent learning. It is very difficult to monitor appropriate GenAI use, as detection tools are not reliable (Cotton, Cotton and Shipway, 2023[21]; UNESCO, 2023[20]).
- **Equity** concerns arise in two ways. First, unequal access to advanced GenAI tools may reinforce existing inequalities between individuals and institutions. Second, biases embedded in GenAI models may produce discriminatory or unrepresentative outputs. (Li et al., 2025[22]; Varsik and Vosberg, 2024[23]).
- **Hallucinations and the apparent confidence with which GenAI tools present their outputs** raise concerns about the accuracy with which the tools can support learning. Students and staff report difficulty in assessing the reliability of GenAI outputs, which limits the extent to which these tools can be used for learning, assessment and decision making. Recent studies found that even when students were aware of hallucinations, many continued relying on GenAI outputs without verification (Kasneci et al., 2023[24]; Yeung et al., 2025[25]).
- **Skills development and cognitive offloading:** Routine delegation of tasks such as drafting, summarising or problem-solving to GenAI, known as cognitive offloading, risks displacing the thinking through which skills are built. Frequent GenAI use has been linked to weaker critical thinking, with the effect most pronounced among younger users. Other findings show that over-reliance on AI dialogue systems can erode critical thinking and decision-making, particularly

where students cannot judge the reliability of AI outputs, even if it can be useful for developing other areas such as writing proficiency (Gerlich, 2025[26]; Zhai, Wibowo and Li, 2024[27]).

- **Digital sovereignty and AI autonomy:** The dominant GenAI tools are developed and operated by a few large providers, leaving institutions with limited control over where data are processed, and whether services for education remain available and affordable (Hamadeh and Amin, 2025[28]; UNESCO, 2023[20]).

GenAI adoption is experimental and reliant on individual initiative

Despite near-universal adoption of GenAI by students and its increasing use by academic and professional staff, many higher education institutions and systems lack infrastructure and guidance to support responsible and systemic adoption of these technologies. Three features of current practice make the current model of GenAI adoption unsustainable.

1. Reliance on free and general consumer-oriented GenAI tools

Many students and staff use free GenAI tools or personally purchased licences as not all higher education institutions provide central access to advanced GenAI tools and even fewer to tools specialised for education or research. In the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) found that 38% of institutions actively provided GenAI tools to students in 2026, up from 9% in 2024 and 23% in 2025, but with student demand outstripping supply (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2026[1]). In Germany, monitoring in 2025 found that about 30% of higher education institutions had acquired some GenAI tool licences (Wannemacher et al., 2025[29]).

In the absence of institutional provision, students and staff turn to general consumer-oriented products. The Digital Education Council's Global Student Survey identified ChatGPT (66%), Grammarly (25%) and Microsoft Copilot (25%) as the most widely used tools, all of them general-purpose products designed for consumer use rather than for educational purposes (Digital Education Council, 2024[6]). Although several of these now offer education-specific versions with stronger data-protection terms, ChatGPT Edu being one example, students typically access the standard consumer versions. The picture is more mixed for staff: consumer tools are common for writing and general tasks, but researchers increasingly draw on specialised GenAI applications, for instance for automated literature reviews or the generation of privacy-preserving datasets (OECD, 2026[19]). The reliance on general-purpose consumer tools nonetheless raises three connected concerns:

- **Data security and control:** When students and staff use commercial GenAI tools through personal accounts, the institution loses control of how data is processed. In the United States, it was found that only 54% of respondents out of 94% who used GenAI for work reported they were aware of guidelines and policies for GenAI use at their institution, which has data privacy and cybersecurity implications (Robert, 2026[9]).
- **Limited functionality:** Free and basic versions of consumer tools, including the GenAI features bundled into Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace, often offer narrower capabilities than the paid versions that could provide tools with enhanced capabilities that are more suited to supporting learning, teaching, research and administration.
- **Equity of access:** Where individuals purchase their own licences, access to the most capable tools relies on these individuals' financial capacity to pay. The same dynamic also plays out between institutions, with well-resourced universities able to negotiate enterprise agreements or build their own platforms, while smaller institutions cannot. A broader challenge is that the

education sector often struggles to articulate coordinated demand, limiting the extent to which technology providers develop solutions tailored to educational needs.

2. Lack of institutional guidance and support

Individual guidance and support have not caught up with user behaviour, leaving individuals to navigate ethical, legal and pedagogical questions on their own.

By 2025, a UNESCO survey of higher education institutions hosting a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network found that only 19% of institutions globally had a formal AI policy in place, though a further 42% were developing one. Provision was uneven by region: around 70% of institutions in Europe and North America had or were developing guidance, compared with 45% in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2025[30]). In Europe, 38% of universities are currently establishing AI policies and guidelines for the first time (EUA-CDE, 2026[31]). A 2026 analysis of 163 UK degree-awarding institutions found that only 96 had publicly accessible AI policies, meaning a substantial amount had no guidance a student or regulator could readily find online (Illingworth, 2026[32]). Only 26% of faculty respondents globally report that their institution has a formal policy governing AI use (Coursera, 2026[33]).

Detailed preparedness surveys tell the same story. Jisc, the United Kingdom's digital agency for tertiary education and research, asked institutional leaders how prepared they were in relation to data protection, academic integrity, intellectual property, safety and equality. Preparedness has improved, with 35% of respondents reporting their institutions were promoting safe use of GenAI in 2025 compared to 20% in 2024, but overall readiness remained low, particularly in the areas of equality and intellectual property rights (Jisc, 2025[34]). The gap also shows up in student experience. In the United States, 53% of students say their institution discourages or prohibits AI use, yet 48% of students at those institutions still use AI weekly, and 52% report at least some classes with no clear guidance on what is permitted (Gallup-Lumina Foundation, 2026[5]).

Without clear institutional systems, responsibility for risk management, ethical use and data protection falls to individuals. Globally only 25% of faculty feel they have the right skills to use AI effectively, and only 28% say their institution has prepared them to manage student use of AI (Coursera, 2026[33]). The result is uneven practice, uncertainty and potential liability for both students and staff.

3. Use patterns focus on task completion rather than learning and on accelerating workflows without transforming pedagogy

Where staff and students use GenAI, they appear to use it mainly as a productivity tool. Students use AI for routine tasks, not deep learning and problem-solving (Digital Education Council, 2024[6]). Despite high weekly use, students in the United States were also less likely in 2025 than in 2024 to turn to GenAI for difficult academic tasks or conceptual learning, with only 17% reaching for AI when academically stuck, preferring instead to ask instructors or use other digital tools for help (Tyton Partners, 2025[8]).

This pattern reflects a feature of the tools, not a failure of users. General-purpose GenAI tools are designed to generate outputs, not to support learning. They have no pedagogical intent: they can help a student complete a task, such as an assignment, but they do little to help that student understand underlying concepts. A 2026 systematic review of the cognitive effects of ChatGPT in higher education reaches a similar conclusion: while AI tools can support some forms of creative thinking, evidence on improvements in deeper critical thinking is mixed, with several studies pointing to risks of over-reliance and surface-level engagement (Li, Cui and Hagedorn, 2026[35]). Widespread GenAI adoption has shifted student workflows and may improve task performance, but current evidence is critical about the impact of GenAI on learning.

Emerging policy responses

Generative artificial intelligence is reshaping higher education from every angle. Increasing capabilities and rapid proliferation of AI technologies are reshaping higher education – how students learn and are supported, how teaching and assessment are conducted, what skills and knowledge students need for their life, how research is conducted and how educational institutions are administered and managed. Across the globe, governments, national bodies and institutions are responding in different ways. Across OECD Member and partner countries, mapping has identified five areas of emerging policy responses to support GenAI adoption in higher education. Many of the emerging policy responses are aligned with the guidance for governments as part of the OECD Insights on the effective use of generative AI in education (Box 1).

Box 1. OECD Insights on the effective use of GenAI in education

The insights, part of the OECD Digital Education Outlook 2026, propose a set of guidance to support educational stakeholders in using and deploying GenAI. They provide general guidance on opportunities to use GenAI in education and specific pointers for various groups of educational stakeholders. The guidance for "jurisdictions and governments" encourages public authorities to:

1. Guarantee access for all to devices, connectivity, and GenAI tools
2. Provide alternatives where divides persist (e.g. unplugged AI, small models)
3. Invest in teacher education and professional development to develop GenAI literacy
4. Fund and coordinate R&D on longitudinal and repeated use of GenAI for education
5. Set (and enforce) standards for developers on privacy, safety, and bias and support education institutions in the evaluation of GenAI tools
6. Engage teachers, students, parents/families, and unions in dialogue on effective GenAI use
7. Ensure human oversight and human alternatives remain
8. Co-operate internationally on research, standards, and metrics

Source: OECD (2026[36]), "Insights on the effective use of generative AI in education", in OECD Digital Education Outlook 2026: Exploring Effective Uses of Generative AI in Education, https://doi.org/10.1787/062a7394-en.

I. Providing guidance on responsible use of GenAI

Although of varying detail, more system-level guidance on responsible use of GenAI in higher education is emerging. Examples of recent guidance include:

- **Australia**: The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) developed GenAI guidance on assessment reform and research training. The materials draw on institutional action plans submitted by every Australian university and on TEQSA's ongoing monitoring of the sector (TEQSA, 2025[37]). Furthermore, the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success has developed the Australian Framework for AI in Higher Education, a sector-developed framework that sets out shared principles for how Australian universities should approach AI in teaching, learning and research (Lodge et al., 2025[38]).
- **Brazil**: The Ministry of Education developed a broad Framework for the Development and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education. This framework is setting out principles for

the responsible use of AI across the Brazilian education system, including higher education (Brazilian Ministry of Education, 2026[39]).

- **Belgium** (French-speaking Community): The government has developed principles for the deployment of GenAI in education ("Intelligence artificielle et enseignement: principes d'application"), which covers higher education (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2025[40]).
- **Canada:** Several provinces have issued guidance for responsible AI use. In 2025, Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Québec published a common reference framework and a practical guide to help institutions establish their own AI governance and deploy GenAI responsibly (Gouvernement du Québec, 2025[41]). British Columbia's Post-Secondary Artificial Intelligence Working Group has developed voluntary model principles and guidelines under the Digital Learning Strategy, which institutions can draw on when setting their own policies for responsible and secure use (Government of British Columbia, 2025[42]). In Ontario, the Council of Ontario Universities' AI Task Force has set out principles for the ethical integration of AI across teaching, research and operations (Council of Ontario Universities, 2026[43]).
- **Colombia:** the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies has issued Ethical Guidelines for the Implementation, Development, and Use of Artificial Intelligence Systems in Public Entities. These guidelines provide principles on transparency, accountability, and human oversight, which are applicable to universities as public institutions (Colombian Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies, 2026[44]).
- **Finland**: "Artificial Intelligence in Education: Legislation and Recommendations" is a national resource platform for all education levels that provides information about binding legal obligations under the EU AI Act with practical recommendations for institutions and educators (Finnish National Agency for Education / Ministry of Education and Culture, 2025[45]).
- **Ireland**: The Higher Education Authority (HEA) released a National Policy Framework on Generative AI in Tertiary Education in December 2025. This framework aims to guide Irish higher education institutions in the responsible, ethical and coherent use of GenAI in teaching and learning, while protecting academic integrity, equity and institutional autonomy (HEA, 2025[46]).
- **Netherlands:** Npuls has developed a reference framework for the responsible use of data and AI in education working from a shared value compass developed by SURF and Kennisnet (Npuls, 2025[47]; SURF, 2025[48]).
- **United Kingdom**: Jisc, the digital agency for tertiary education and research in the United Kingdom, published in August 2025 the Strategic Framework for AI. This framework is built around three pillars: skills and knowledge, technology, and governance. It is complemented by Jisc's AI Education Maturity Model, which lets institutions benchmark their readiness against the sector (Jisc, 2025[49]).
- **European Union**: In 2022, the European Commission published the Guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and data in teaching and learning for educators, which were updated in 2026. The guidelines support educators in the human-centred, ethical, lawful and pedagogically sound use of AI and data (European Commission, 2026[50]).

II. Developing common approaches to compliance and procurement

Policymakers and national bodies in multiple countries are exploring common approaches to facilitating and securing access to GenAI tools, by pooling resources, developing common approaches to compliance and, in some cases, joint procurement. Examples of these efforts include:

- In **Italy**, the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI) signed a national agreement with OpenAI in 2025, making ChatGPT Edu available to affiliated universities and research centres on favourable terms from the 2025/26 academic year. Similar agreements with OpenAI have been made by governments and national bodies in Estonia, Greece, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Slovak Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Arab Emirates (OpenAI, 2026[51]). Similar country-level partnerships are also emerging elsewhere with other companies. Google has signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union to provide students across member states with access to its educational tools, including Gemini Pro and NotebookLM (African Union, 2026[52]). Australia has also reached an agreement with Anthropic and France with Mistral, with 14 French universities partnering with both EdTech and Mistral to co-develop reliable AI solutions for higher education (Department of Industry, Science and Resources, 2026[53]; Université Paris Saclay, 2025[54]). As many higher education institutions already rely on Google or Microsoft for core office and cloud services, these agreements often enable institutions to access basic GenAI models as part of existing software packages.
- **France**: The ILaasS federation is a group of around 20 French higher education institutions, providing shared LLM inference and transcription services, backed by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. It allows institutions access to large language models (LLMs) through pooled infrastructure rather than independent procurement (ILaaS, 2026[55]).
- **The Netherlands**: SURF supports Dutch universities in vendor compliance and risk reviews, and is rolling out eduGenAI, which is a secure, sector-focused GenAI interface with integrated data-protection safeguards, as an alternative to public GenAI tools (SURF, 2025[56]). Npuls has developed the AI-GO framework that describe indicators for AI literacy and supports the adoption of it at institutions (Npuls, 2025[57]).
- **United Kingdom**: Jisc has developed an “AI Procurement Due Diligence Framework”, enabling institutions to assess vendors offering GenAI tools on data security, financial sustainability, and ethical compliance (Jisc, 2024[58]).
- **United States**: EDUCAUSE released the “Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit” (HECVAT) Version 4 in 2026, a sector-wide risk framework used in joint vendor evaluations (EDUCAUSE, 2025[59]).

III. Developing GenAI competence

As mentioned previously, many academic staff and students do not have relevant capabilities to fully take advantage of available GenAI tools. As such, various efforts focus on developing GenAI competence:

- **Canada:** In British Columbia, BCcampus offers a GenAI toolkit, challenge series and microcourses to develop educators' AI literacy (BCcampus, 2025[60]). In Quebec, the Digital Competency Framework introduced in 2019 has been updated and promotes critical, responsible and creative use of digital technologies, as well as explicitly incorporating AI as part of a unified competency framework (Gouvernement du Québec, 2026[61]).
- **France**: The French Ministry of Higher education has been hosting the “IA Sup” webinar series (2025/26), offering online events, resources, and mutual support for educators and staff in higher education to navigate GenAI use, ethics, governance and infrastructures (French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2025[62])
- **Germany**: KI-Campus is a national learning platform developed by Stifterverband, organisation focused on education, research and innovation, offering courses and micro-credentials on AI, including some aimed at developing the AI skills of staff in higher education. And it will expand its

learning offer as part of 2026-2029 project “Strengthening AI competences at universities” supported by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (KI-Campus, 2026[63]).

- **Ireland**: The Higher Education Authority (HEA) launched four self-paced AI literacy courses in April 2026, aimed at educators and students (HEA, 2026[64]).
- **Korea**: In April 2026, Korea designated 20 universities to develop a foundational AI curriculum for all undergraduates. Each institution receives up to KRW 300 million annually to design liberal-arts AI courses, train staff and share materials sector-wide (Ministry of Education, 2026[65]).
- **Slovak Republic**: The Slovak Ministry of Education is funding two national AI Competence Centres at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava and the Technical University of Košice. Launched with EUR 12 million support, they will develop training, resources, curriculum updates, and research collaborations to integrate AI across education and research (IEDU, 2025[66]).
- **Switzerland**: Swissuniversities, the umbrella organisation of higher institutions in Switzerland, launched the “Open Education & Digital Competencies” programme in 2025, with a focus on developing competencies of lecturers (swissuniversities, 2026[67]). As part of this programme, swissuniversities is supporting ten projects, one example being the AI Competence Hub created in collaboration between University of Zurich and ETH Zurich. As part of the project, they developed an “AI Competency Framework for Lecturers”, organised events and developed courses and trained students to act as AI coaches for lecturers (University of Zurich, 2025[68]).
- **United Kingdom**: Jisc provides an “AI Literacy Curriculum for Teaching and Learning Staff” and offers online modules on AI ethics and governance (Jisc, 2026[69])
- **Europe**: Initiatives such as the “Balancing AI in EDU” project aim to strengthen stakeholder capacity, particularly among education staff and unions, to engage with AI adoption and governance (European Trade Union Committee for Education, 2026[70]).
- **Global**: In 2024, UNESCO released the “AI Competency Framework for Teachers”, which defines 15 essential AI competencies for teachers across five dimensions: human-centred mindset, ethics, AI foundations, pedagogy, and lifelong learning, guiding national and institutional training programmes for educators (UNESCO, 2024[71]).

IV. Supporting evidence collection and pilot evaluation

Evidence on use and effect of GenAI in higher education is limited, with data not comparable across institutions or countries. Multiple efforts are focused on supporting data collection, evaluations and piloting of AI tools. These include:

- **Australia:** TEQSA launched a dedicated GenAI Knowledge Hub in December 2025. It compiles case studies, quality frameworks, and resources that help institutions assess GenAI approaches systematically (TEQSA, 2025[37]).
- **Canada:** Ontario's eCampusOntario runs an EdTech Sandbox that lets institutions pilot and assess AI tools before wider adoption (eCampusOntario, 2025[72]).
- **Netherlands:** SURF and Npuls are jointly piloting EduGenAI, a secure, privacy-focused platform offering multiple LLMs in a controlled sandbox environment (SURF, 2025[56]).
- **United Kingdom:** Jisc has run a suite of pilots, ranging from AI-powered feedback (Graide) to virtual reality interview simulators, to test use cases and evaluate real-world impact in higher education institutions (Jisc, 2023[73]).
- **Nordic-Baltic region:** NordForsk, research funding organisation of the Nordic Council of Ministers, launched a call for proposals on responsible AI research in early 2025, with education explicitly

included as a priority. The aim is to fund cross-border research that evaluates AI approaches and builds shared evidence (Innovation Fund Denmark, 2025[74]).

V. Supporting development of specialised GenAI tools for higher education

Multiple actors are working to develop GenAI tools and applications that use underlying AI technologies but are adjusted, designed and specialised for various use cases in higher education. Examples include:

- **Netherlands:** Npuls and SURF are developing eduGenAI, a chat-style interface giving students and staff secure access to multiple large language models (commercial and open-source). It is designed as a safer, education-oriented alternative to consumer GenAI tools and is embedded in the SURF AI-hub as a shared infrastructure that would be difficult for single institutions to build alone (SURF, 2025[56]).
- **Switzerland:** Ethel is a virtual teaching assistant developed at ETH Zurich, using retrieval-augmented generation to ground responses in course-specific reference materials rather than relying on a model's general training data. It has been deployed across large introductory physics courses and used for both feedback on handwritten homework and grading of free-form exam responses, covering more than 1 800 students. ETH Zurich is now developing Ethel Commons to make the tool available to other universities (ETH Zurich, 2025[75]).
- **United States:** Open Adaptive Tutor (OATutor) was developed by the Computational Approaches to Human Learning lab at UC Berkeley. It is an open-source intelligent tutoring system designed for higher education. The platform allows faculty to train tutoring tools to specific courses using their own content, with subsequent deployment in chemistry, mathematics and other foundational subjects (Pardos et al., 2023[76]; OATutor, 2026[77]).
- **Global:** LearnWise is a commercial AI assistant platform built specifically for higher and further education, integrating with widely used systems such as Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard and D2L Brightspace. Each institution provides its own knowledge base (student handbooks, IT support documents, course content), which the assistant uses for retrieval-grounded responses. The platform was piloted in 2024/25 by Jisc across colleges and universities in the United Kingdom (LearnWise, 2026[78]; Jisc, 2025[79]).

Higher Education Policy Team

This document was prepared by the Higher Education Policy Team at the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills. It was drafted by Kristiana Egle (Junior Analyst) and Matej Bílik (Analyst) under the guidance of Simon Roy (Team Lead). It is based on review of international evidence and a hybrid webinar held on 6 March 2026 organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Development, Research and Youth of the Slovak Republic.

The OECD Higher Education Policy Team undertakes a wide range of comparative and system-specific analysis of higher education policy and works to facilitate mutual learning between countries in this field.

For more information

Contact: HigherEducation@oecd.org

See: OECD Higher Education Policy Team

References

AAC&U/Elon University (2026), *The AI Challenge*, https://www.aacu.org/research/the-ai-challenge (accessed on 18 May 2026). [14]

African Union (2026), *African Union*, https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20260217/auc-google-sign-partnership-advance-africas-sovereign-ai-digital-capacity (accessed on 20 May 2026). [52]

Attewell, S. (ed.) (2025), *AI and Jisc's leadership survey*, https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2025/05/01/ai-and-jiscs-leadership-survey-2025/ (accessed on 18 May 2025). [34]

BCcampus (2025), *Generative AI: Subject Guide*, https://bccampus.ca/topics-of-practice/generative-ai-subject-guide/ (accessed on 1 June 2026). [60]

Brazilian Ministry of Education (2026), *Framework for the Responsible Use and Development of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/media/segape/referencial-oficial-en.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2026). [39]

Chuganova, M. et al. (2025), "Who uses AI in research, and for what? Large-scale survey evidence from Germany", https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2025.105381. [17]

Colombian Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (2026), , https://mintic.gov.co/portal/inicio/Sala-de-prensa/Noticias/425888:Guia-Etica-para-la-Implementacion-Desarrollo-y-Uso-de-Sistemas-de-Inteligencia-Artificial-en-Entidades-Publicas-de-Colombia (accessed on 1 June 2026). [44]

Compilatio (2023), *L'IA dans l'enseignement : résultats détaillés d'une enquête où étudiants et enseignants confrontent leurs regards (AI in education: detailed results of a survey where students and teachers compare their perspectives)*, https://www.compilatio.net/blog/enquete-ia-enseignement-2023 (accessed on 1 June 2026). [3]

Cotton, D., P. Cotton and J. Shipway (2023), "Chatting and cheating: Ensuring academic integrity in the era of ChatGPT", *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, Vol. 61/2, pp. 228-239, https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2023.2190148. [21]

Council of Ontario Universities (2026), *Charting a Path Forward for Ontario Universities in the Age of AI*, https://ontariosuniversities.ca/report/charting-a-path-forward-for-ontario-universities-in-the-age-of-ai/ (accessed on 1 June 2026). [43]

Coursera (2026), *AI in Higher Education*, https://blog.coursera.org/ai-in-higher-education-report-2026/ (accessed on 18 May 2026). [33]

Department of Industry, Science and Resources (2026), *New agreement on AI collaboration with Anthropic*, https://www.minister.industry.gov.au/ministers/timayres/media-releases/new-agreement-ai-collaboration-anthropic (accessed on 22 May 2026). [53]

Digital Education Council (2025), *DEC Global AI Faculty Survey*, https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/post/what-faculty-want-key-results-from-the-global-ai-faculty-survey-2025 (accessed on 18 May 2026). [10]

Digital Education Council (2024), "Digital Education Council Global AI Student Survey 2024", https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/resource-library-items/digital-education-council-global-ai-student-survey-2024 (accessed on 6 May 06). [6]

eCampusOntario (2025), *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Initiatives in Higher Education*, https://ecampusontario.ca/ai/ (accessed on 1 June 2026). [72]

EDUCAUSE (2025), *Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit*, https://www.educause.edu/higher-education-community-vendor-assessment-toolkit (accessed on 20 May 2026). [59]

Ellucian (2024), *AI in Higher Education: 2024 Insights*, https://lp.ellucian.com/ai-innovation-survey.html (accessed on 18 May 2026). [13]

ETH Zurich (2025), *R&D Project Ethel*, https://ethz.ch/en/the-eth-zurich/education/ai-in-education/projects/ethel.html (accessed on 22 May 2026). [75]

EUA-CDE (2026), *Policies in doctoral education: navigating geopolitical change and technological acceleration while advancing Europe's society and competitiveness*, https://www.eua.eu/publications/reports/policies-in-doctoral-education-navigating-geopolitical-change-and-technological-acceleration-while-advancing-europes-society-and-competitiveness.html (accessed on 18 May 2026). [31]

European Commission (2026), *Guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and data in teaching and learning for educators*, Publications Office of the European Union, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/7967834 (accessed on 20 May 2026). [50]

European Trade Union Committee for Education (2026), *Balancing AI in EDU*, https://www.etuce.org/en/projects/137:balancing-ai-in-edu (accessed on 1 June 2026). [70]

Eurostat (2026), *Individuals - use of generative AI tools*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/e84cb2f3-fb51-4ef0-9be9-0d9b714f0191 (accessed on 15 June 2026). [7]

Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (2025), *Intelligence artificielle & enseignement : principes d'application [Artificial Intelligence & Education: Principles of Application]*, https://www.eafc-hc.be/wp- [40]

content/uploads/2025/11/Charte-officielle-de-lutilisation-de-lintelligence-artificielle-dans-lenseignement-de-la-Federation-Wallonie-Bruxelles.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2026).

Finnish National Agency for Education / Ministry of Education and Culture (2025), *Artificial intelligence in education - legislation and recommendations*, https://www.oph.fi/en/artificial-intelligence-education-legislation-and-recommendations (accessed on 20 May 2026). [45]

French Ministry of Higher Education and Research (2025), *AI Sup Webinar Series - Artificial Intelligence and Higher Education*, https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/cycle-de-webinaires-ia-sup-intelligence-artificielle-et-enseignement-superieur-100117 (accessed on 20 May 2026). [62]

Gallup-Lumina Foundation (2026), *AI in Higher Education: Widespread Use, Unclear Rules*, https://www.luminafoundation.org/resource/ai-in-higher-education-widespread-use-unclear-rules/ (accessed on 30 April 2026). [5]

Gerlich, M. (2025), "AI Tools in Society: Impacts on Cognitive Offloading and the Future of Critical Thinking", *Societies*, Vol. 15/1, p. 6, https://doi.org/10.3390/soc15010006. [26]

Gouvernement du Québec (2026), *Digital Competency Framework*, https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/digital-technology/digital-competency-framework (accessed on 1 June 2026). [61]

Gouvernement du Québec (2025), *Intelligence artificielle en enseignement supérieur (Artificial intelligence in higher education)*, https://www.quebec.ca/nouvelles/actualites/details/intelligence-artificielle-en-enseignement-superieur-quebec-devoile-des-outils-concrets-pour-guider-les-reseaux-collegial-et-universitaire-64580 (accessed on 1 June 2026). [41]

Government of British Columbia (2025), *B.C. Post-Secondary Digital Learning Strategy*, https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/digital-learning-strategy (accessed on 1 June 2026). [42]

Hamadeh, S. and H. Amin (2025), "AI, education and digital sovereignty", *Frontiers in Education*, Vol. 10, https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1677727. [28]

HEA (2026), *HEA launches online learning resources to support AI literacy in higher education*, https://hea.ie/2026/04/01/hea-launches-online-learning-resources-to-support-ai-literacy-in-higher-education/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [64]

HEA (2025), *National GenAI framework*, https://hea.ie/policy/heainnovation/national-genai-framework/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [46]

Higher Education Policy Institute (2026), *Student Generative AI Survey 2026*, https://www.hepi.ac.uk/reports/student-generative-ai-survey-2026/ (accessed on 30 April 2026). [1]

Higher Education Policy Institute (2025), *Student Generative AI Survey 2025*, https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HEPI-Kortext-Student-Generative-AI-Survey-2025.pdf (accessed on 18 May 2026). [15]

IEDU (2025), *Slovakia Invests €12M in AI Competence Centers at STU and TUKE*, https://ai.iedu.sk/en/ai-competence-centers-slovakia-universities-12-million-investment/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [66]

ILaaS (2026), *ILaaS*, https://www.ilaas.fr/ (accessed on 22 May 2026). [55]

Illingworth, S. (2026), *What UK university AI policies actually do: A study of 96 institutions*, https://www.hepi.ac.uk/reports/what-uk-university-ai-policies-actually-do-a-study-of-96-institutions/ (accessed on 1 June 2026). [32]

Innovation Fund Denmark (2025), *Nordforsk call 2025 - Call for proposals on responsible use of Artificial Intelligence*, https://innovationsfonden.dk/en/p/international-collaborations/nordforsk-call-2025-call (accessed on 20 May 2026). [74]

Jisc (2025), *A strategic framework for AI in colleges and universities*, https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2025/08/28/a-strategic-framework-for-ai-in-colleges-and-universities/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [49]

Jisc (2025), *Learnwise End of Pilot Report*, https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2025/04/28/learnwise-end-of-pilot-report/ (accessed on 22 May 2026). [79]

Jisc (2024), *AI Procurement Due Diligence*, https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2024/07/04/ai-procurement-due-diligence/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [58]

Jisc (2023), *Artificial intelligence in tertiary education pilots*, https://www.jisc.ac.uk/reports/artificial-intelligence-in-tertiary-education-pilots (accessed on 20 May 2026). [73]

Kasneci, E. et al. (2023), "ChatGPT for good? On opportunities and challenges of large language models for education", *Learning and Individual Differences*, Vol. 103, p. 102274, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2023.102274. [24]

KI-Campus (2026), *Strengthening AI competences at universities*, https://ki-campus.org/en/about-us/projects/strengthening-ai-competences-at-universities (accessed on 20 May 2026). [63]

LearnWise (2026), *LearnWise*, https://www.learnwise.ai/ (accessed on 22 May 2026). [78]

Li, C., H. Cui and L. Hagedorn (2026), "The cognitive impact of ChatGPT in higher education: A systematic review of critical and creative thinking outcomes", *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, Vol. 10, p. 100571, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2026.100571. [35]

Li, M. et al. (2025), "Potential Societal Biases of ChatGPT in Higher Education: A Scoping Review", *Open Praxis*, Vol. 17/1, pp. 79-94, https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.17.1.750. [22]

Lodge, J. et al. (2025), *Australian Framework for Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education*, https://www.acses.edu.au/publication/australian-framework-for-artificial-intelligence-in-higher-education/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [38]

McDonald, Paula, S. et al. (2024), *Apostles, Agnostics and Atheists: Engagement with Generative AI by Australia Universities*, QUT Centre for Decent Work and Industry, https://eprints.qut.edu.au/252079/ (accessed on 19 May 2026). [11]

Ministry of Education (2026), *20 New Universities Selected for 2026 University Artificial Intelligence (AI) Basic Curriculum Development Support Project*, https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=294&boardSeq=105957&lev=0&searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=020402&opType=N (accessed on 1 June 2026). [65]

Npuls (2025), *AI-GO! A Framework for AI Literacy in Education (AI-GO Framework)*, https://npuls.nl/en/knowledge-base/ai-go-ai-literacy-in-education-a-practical-framework (accessed on 1 June 2026). [57]

Npuls (2025), *Reference Framework 2.0: Responsible use of education data and AI*, https://npuls.nl/en/knowledge-base/reference-framework-2-0-responsible-use-of-education-data-and-ai (accessed on 1 June 2026). [47]

OATutor (2026), *OATutor - An Open Source Adaptive Tutoring System*, https://www.oatutor.io/ (accessed on 22 May 2026). [77]

OECD (2026), *"Insights on the effective use of generative AI in education"*, in OECD (Ed.), OECD Digital Education Outlook 2026: Exploring Effective Uses of Generative AI in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/062a7394-en. [36]

OECD (2026), *OECD Digital Education Outlook 2026: Exploring Effective Uses of Generative AI in Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/062a7394-en. [19]

OpenAI (2026), *Education for Countries*, https://openai.com/index/the-next-phase-of-education-for-countries/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [51]

Pardos, Z. et al. (2023), "OATutor: An Open-source Adaptive Tutoring System and Curated Content Library for Learning Sciences Research", *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 1-17, https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581574. [76]

Pascal, F., F. Taddei and E. Gallié (2025), *IA et Enseignement Supérieur: Formation, Structuration et Appropriation par la Société, Ministére Chargé de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche (AI and higher education: training, structuring and appropriation by society)*, https://mission-ia-sup.forge.apps.education.fr/ (accessed on 1 June 2026). [4]

Robert, J. (2026), *The Impact of AI on Work in Higher Education*, https://www.educause.edu/research/2026/the-impact-of-ai-on-work-in-higher-education (accessed on 18 May 2026). [9]

Robert, J. and M. McCormack (2025), *2025 EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study: Into the Digital AI Divide*, https://library.educause.edu/resources/2025/2/2025-educause-ai-landscape-study (accessed on 18 May 2026). [18]

Shepperd, P. (ed.) (2026), *AI literacy curriculum for teaching and learning staff*, https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2026/05/15/ai-literacy-curriculum-for-teaching-and-learning-staff/ (accessed on 20 May 2026). [69]

SURF (2025), *Values Compass*, https://www.surf.nl/en/themas/public-values/values-compass (accessed on 1 June 2026). [48]

SURF (2025), *Working on safe and responsible AI in education*, https://npuls.nl/en/edugenai (accessed on 20 May 2026). [56]

swissuniversities (2026), *Open Education & Digital Competencies (PgB 2025-2028)*, https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/digitalisierung/open-education-digital-competencies (accessed on 20 May 2026). [67]

TEQSA (2025), *Gen AI knowledge Hub*, https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/higher-education-good-practice-hub/gen-ai-knowledge-hub (accessed on 20 May 2026). [37]

Tyton Partners (2025), *Time for Class - 2025*, https://4213961.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/4213961/Publications/Time%20for%20Class/Tyton%20Partners_Time%20for%20Class%202025.pdf (accessed on 19 May 2026). [8]

UNESCO (2025), *UNESCO survey: Two-thirds of higher education institutions have or are developing guidance on AI use*, https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-survey-two-thirds-higher-education-institutions-have-or-are-developing-guidance-ai-use (accessed on 18 May 2026). [30]

UNESCO (2024), *AI competency framework for teachers*, https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ai-competency-framework-teachers (accessed on 20 May 2026). [71]

UNESCO (2023), *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research*, https://doi.org/10.54675/EWZM9535. [20]

Université Paris Saclay (2025), *Université Paris-Saclay joins a unique AI alliance with Mistral AI*, https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en/news/universite-paris-saclay-joins-unique-ai-alliance-mistral-ai (accessed on 22 May 2026). [54]

University of Zurich (2025), *AI Competence Hub*, https://www.uzh.ch/en/teachingandeducation/innovation/aicompetencehub.html (accessed on 20 May 2026). [68]

Varsik, S. and L. Vosberg (2024), "The potential impact of Artificial Intelligence on equity and inclusion in education", *OECD Artificial Intelligence Papers*, No. 23, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/15df715b-en. [23]

von Garrel, J. and J. Mayer (2025), "Künstliche Intelligenz im Studium - Eine quantitative Längsschnittstudie zur Nutzung KI-basierter Tools durch Studierende", https://doi.org/10.48444/h_docs-pub-533 (accessed on 30 April 2026). [2]

von Garrel, J. and J. Mayer (2023), "Artificial Intelligence in studies—use of ChatGPT and AI-based tools among students in Germany", https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02304-7. [16]

Wannemacher, K., E. Bosse and M. Lübcke (2026), "Die KI-Nutzung in Studium und Lehre - Ein Review auf Grundlage empirischer Studien (The use of AI in studies and teaching - A review based on empirical studies)", *Arbeitspapier*, No. 91, Hochschulforum Digitalisierung, Berlin, https://hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/news/arbeitspapier-ki-in-studium-und-lehre/ (accessed on 23 June 2026). [12]

Wannemacher, K. et al. (2025), "Wie KI Studium und Lehre verändert. Anwendungsfelder, Use-Cases und Gelingensbedingungen (How AI is changing studies and teaching. Application areas, use cases and success factors)", *Arbeitspapier*, No. 87, Hochschulforum Digitalisierung, Berlin, https://hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/news/neue-studie-ki-in-studium-und-lehre-use-cases-und-gelingensbedingungen/ (accessed on 23 June 2026). [29]

Yeung, L. et al. (2025), "In ChatGPT they trust: a study of students' perceptions and misuse of ChatGPT in higher education", *AI and Ethics*, Vol. 6/1, https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-025-00855-w. [25]

Zhai, C., S. Wibowo and L. Li (2024), "The effects of over-reliance on AI dialogue systems on students' cognitive abilities: a systematic review", *Smart Learning Environments*, Vol. 11/1, https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00316-7. [27]