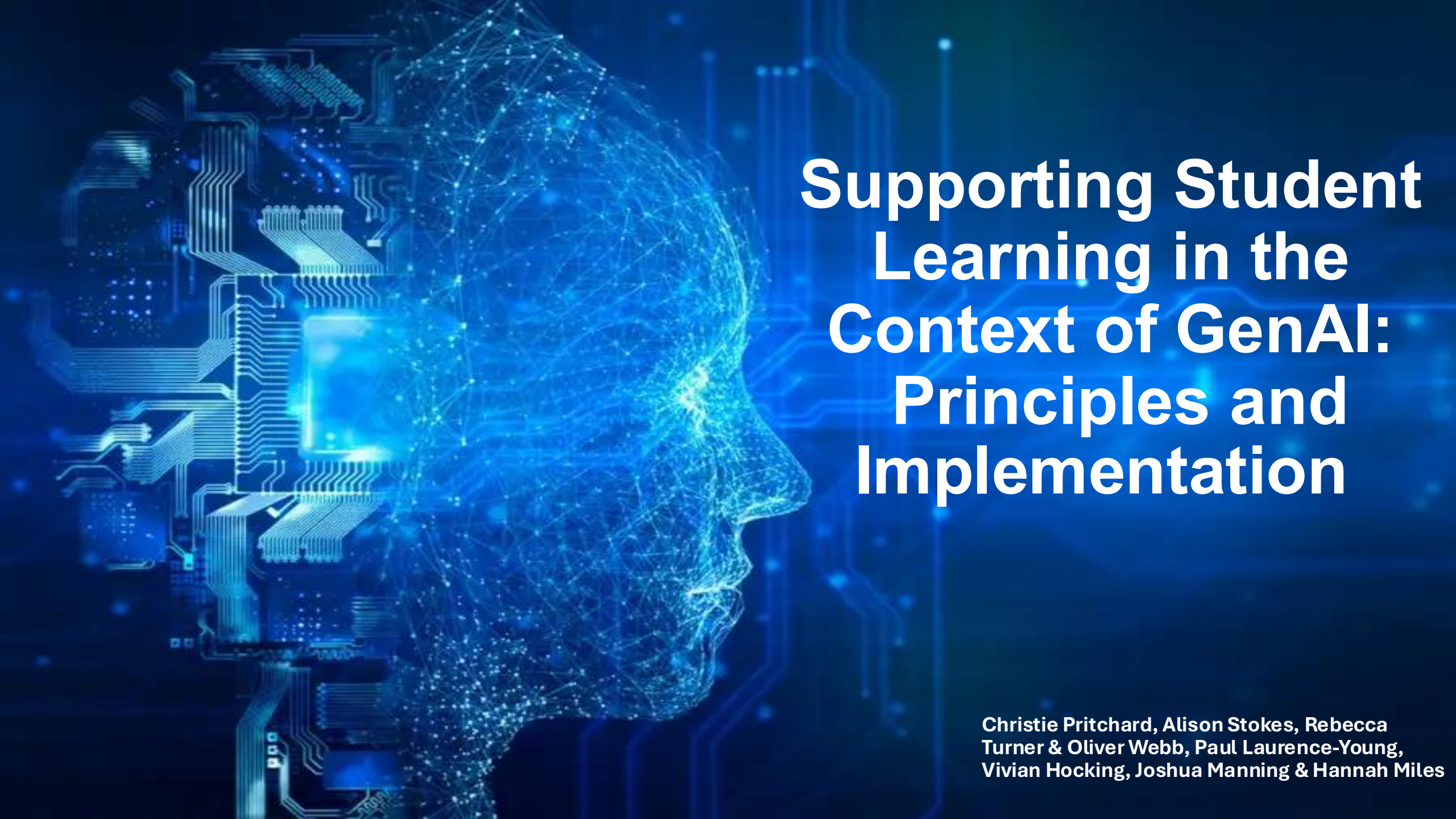


# Supporting Student Learning in the Context of GenAI: Principles and Implementation

Christie Pritchard, Alison Stokes, Rebecca Turner & Oliver Webb, Paul Laurence-Young, Vivian Hocking, Joshua Manning & Hannah Miles

# According to the World Economic Forum (2025)

AI is expected to disrupt nearly every industry, shifting the skillsets required across global labour markets.

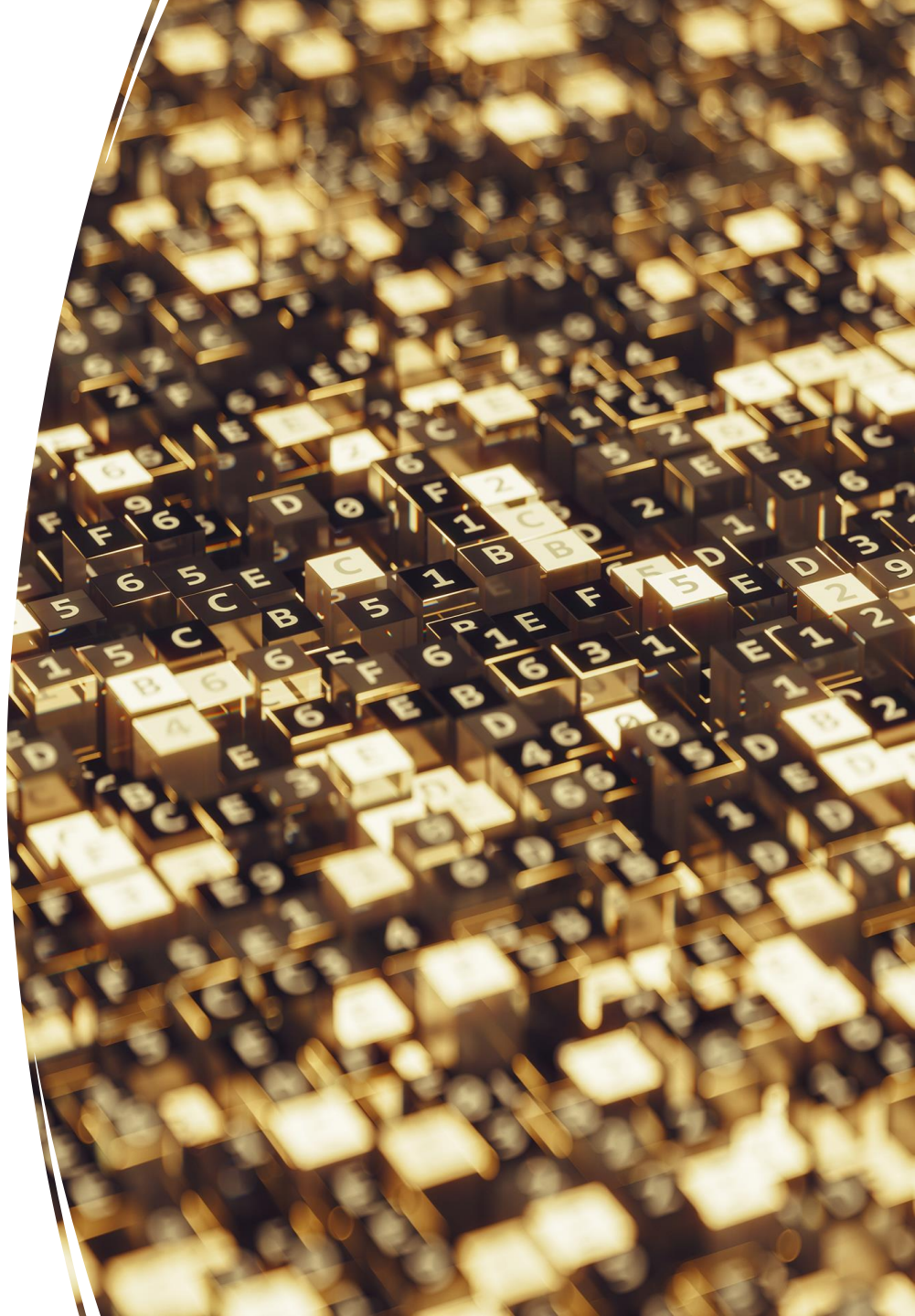
AI's most significant influence lies in how we access, process and apply information, fundamentally redefining education and the way we acquire knowledge.

**Education will be one of the sectors most affected by Gen AI.**

# Gen AI at UoP

The University is :

- Investigating the integration of GenAI tools
- Redesigning assessments
- Developing guidance
- Leading Steering Groups
- Undertaking research
- Updating existing policies
- Collating case studies and emerging practices
- Ensuring we remain up to date to guidelines policies and regulations



# UoP Principles for 25/26

**Principles on Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education**

**Academic Year 2025/2026**

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is reshaping Higher Education. These technologies present both challenges and opportunities across teaching, learning, assessment, and research. The University of Plymouth recognises the importance of engaging critically, ethically, and constructively with GenAI to prepare staff and students for an AI-informed future.

**Our Principles**

- **GenAI is transforming education and the workplace.** It is increasingly embedded in professional and everyday contexts. To best support our students, we must promote ethical and informed use, not entirely prohibit it.
- **Blanket bans are not appropriate.** While concerns about academic integrity are valid, and there are occasions where the use of GenAI will not be appropriate, banning these tools is not an effective long-term strategy. Instead, we must model ethical and transparent practices and support students in doing the same.
- **Academic integrity remains a cornerstone.** Students and staff must not submit AI-generated content as their own without acknowledgement. Doing so constitutes academic misconduct under our current policies. Staff are encouraged to explicitly discuss the appropriate and inappropriate use of GenAI with students and guide them on how to reference AI-assisted work transparently.
- **We are committed to fostering AI literacy.** Understanding the strengths, limitations, biases, and ethical implications of GenAI is essential. Critical engagement with these tools will help students and staff become confident, discerning users of emerging technologies.
- **Staff and students need to consider the ethical and legal implications of AI** and the University must maintain personal data privacy and data security, and protect intellectual property and confidential information to ensure compliance with legislation, regulations, policies and contracts. Staff should also be aware of the data bias inherent in AI for equitable use.
- **We should consider the environmental impact of GenAI.** Training and running large language models requires considerable energy and water, contributing to carbon emissions. As a university committed to sustainability and digital responsibility, we encourage the thoughtful use of GenAI, using it where it clearly adds value to teaching, learning, research, or efficiency, and avoiding unnecessary or excessive use.

# Research Overview

Project aim:
Develop contemporary insights in student experiences of Gen AI at the University of Plymouth

Research questions

- What are students' attitudes towards Gen AI at the University of Plymouth?
- How are students currently using, and accessing, Gen AI?
- What role does Gen AI play in their undergraduate studies?
- How may engagement with Gen AI be shaped by student demographic profiles
- How are lecturers currently engaging with Gen AI?

# Research Design

## Stage 1: student / staff surveys – Feb 2025

Demographic analysis focused on UK domiciled students

Survey development informed by the AI literacy framework of Ng et al. (2021); drew on themes / questions used in national / international work (e.g. HEPI/Kortext 2024; Malstron, 2023). Students' demographic profiles captured

**Respondents**:
312 students, 153 lecturers
Echoing the sample size of related work (e.g. Corbin et al., 2025).

## Stage 2: student-led focus groups – March 2025 (analysis on-going)

Explored use of Gen AI & prompted to reflect on the use of Gen AI within their academic work

Discussed how they developed their knowledge / experience with Gen AI, and the opportunities / challenges they associated with Gen AI

**Engagement:**
5 focus groups
18 participants (purposeful sampling from open call)

# Student attitude and use

Use of Gen AI widespread and commonplace:

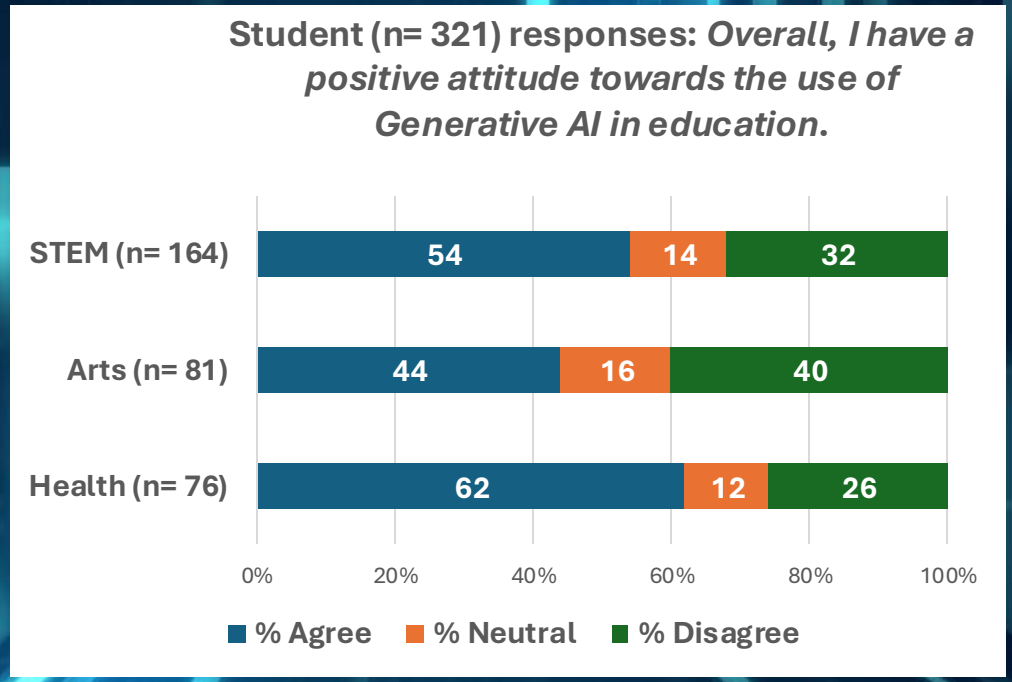
80% of respondents agreed ‘use of Gen AI common amongst students’ (77% lecturers agreed)

66% of respondents agreed ‘using Gen AI ‘could improve their grades’ (60% lecturers agreed)

65% of respondents agreed ‘students would use Gen AI to complete assessed work even if told not to’ (82% of lecturers agreed)

69% of respondents concerned about impacts on students future learning (82% of lecturers agreed)

27% of respondents felt Gen AI should be prohibited in educational settings (10% of lecturers agreed)



# Student uses of GenAI

Used to support / complete a range of tasks of varying levels of complexity:

## Low-level, everyday tasks

Admin (form filling, responding to emails), programming

Editing and revising text

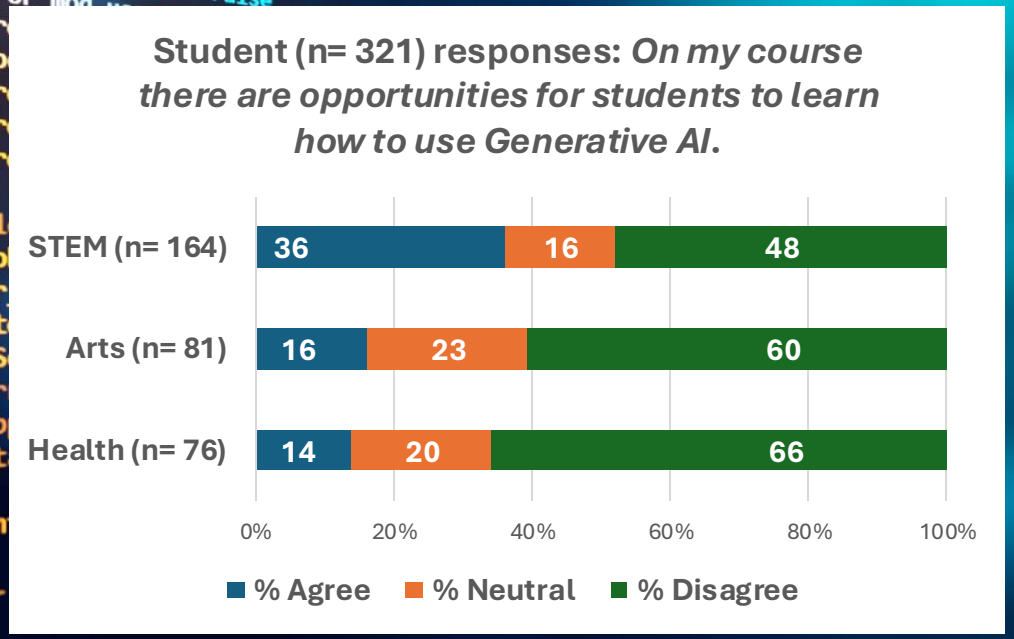
Study buddy and revision aide (e.g. produce quiz questions)

## Sophisticated tasks that **support** learning

Brainstorming / explore ideas – when introduced to a new topic, seek simple explanations, alternative perspective OR in response to assignment brief

Produce summaries – journal articles, promote comprehension (often rely on summaries rather than reading the article)

Resonates with the outcomes of the HEPI/Kortext (2024) study



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# Supporting Student Learning in the Context of Generative AI

**Discussion 1:**
**Share examples of how you introduce and support students use of GenAI in a structured way...**

# Student uses of GenAI

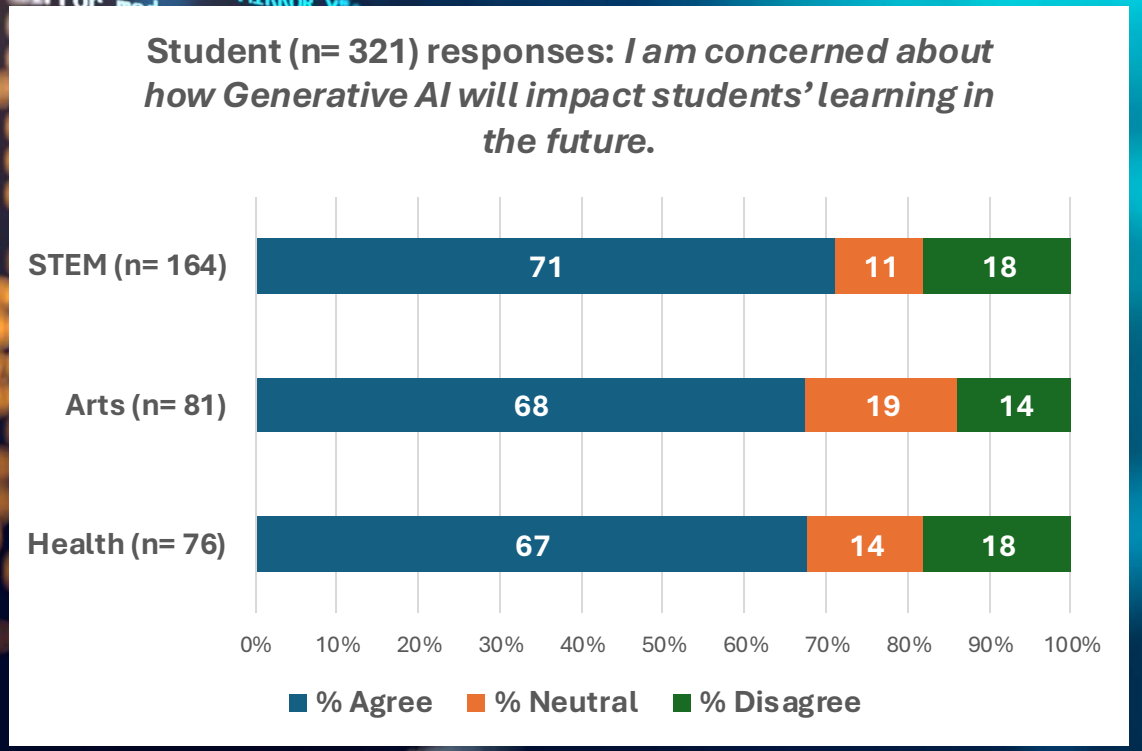
Interesting *how* the students perceive tasks they hand over to Gen AI:

*'It allows students to simplify and more effectively learn without having to condense large amounts of information - which can* ***take up lots of time and isn't necessarily productive time.'***

*'Students spend less time planning and* ***can get to the learning and writing quicker****.'*

Reading and critically reflecting on knowledge gained through reading is the foundations of HE, but not an activity valued by students. Implications of this? Evidence of an increasingly transactional view of learning?

Increasing use of Gen AI to undertake tasks essential to developing the 'language of the discipline' may undermine student academic development.



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**Discussion 2:**
**Looking through a disciplinary lens….how can you further engage with AI in your teaching?**

# GenAI and Assessment

Data suggest lecturers set parameters for student use of Gen AI; centred on role in assessment rather than wider opportunities to engage with Gen AI or develop AI literacies.

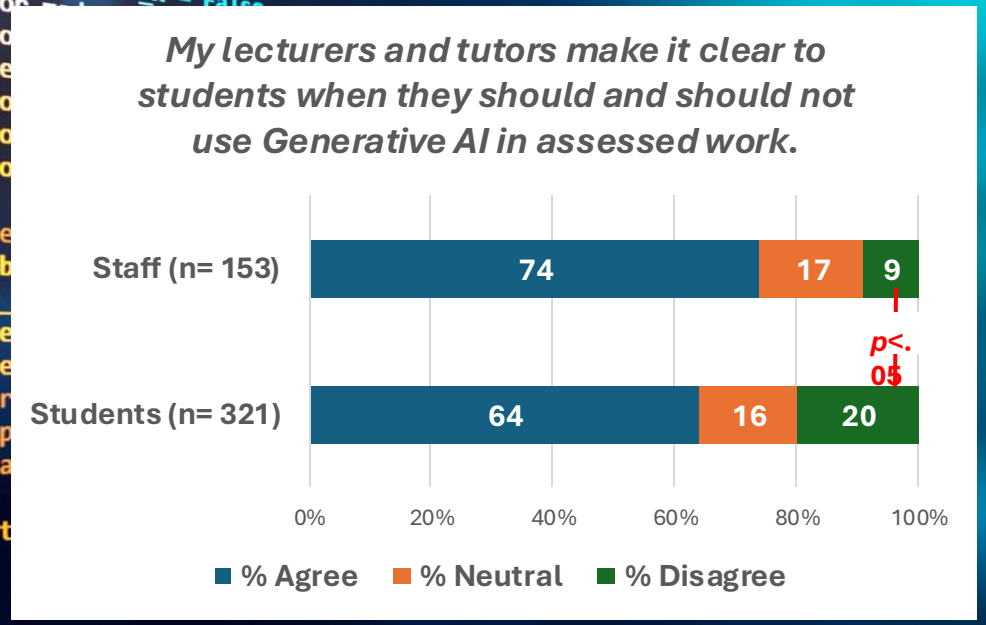
Good agreement with statements relating to lecturers & tutors making it clear when students can / cannot use Gen AI in assessment (though compliance?).

Students reported varying level of opportunities to engage with Gen AI in their learning

- 49% of science-based students report support vs. 25% of Arts-based students.

Reflective of local practice & positioning of the role of Gen AI in disciplinary practice

- Provision of opportunities to engage with Gen AI in assessments, developing AI literacies.



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# Supporting Student Learning in the Context of Generative AI

**Discussion 3:**
**How can we meaningfully integrate Gen AI into the assessment process?**

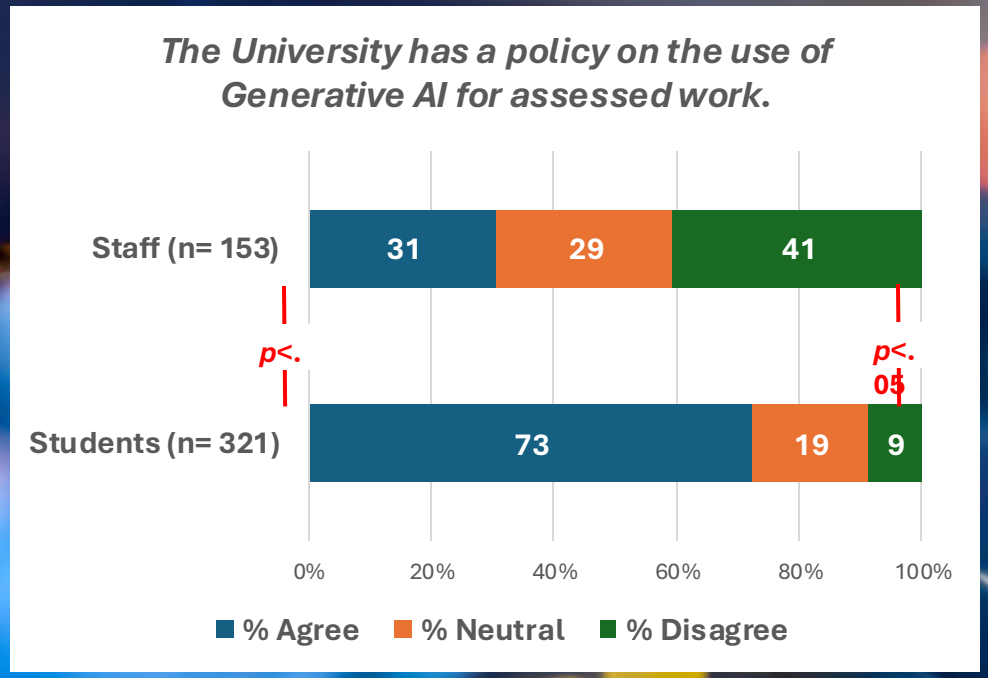
# Policy and guidelines

Students were more likely to believe there were University & School Policies around AI use, versus staff respondents – resonated with HEPI (2024) work.

- 73% of students agreed with statements on policy relating to Gen AI use.
- 64% of students agreed with the statement ‘my lecturers and tutors make it clear to students when they should and should not use Generative AI in assessed work.’

Reality of a policing Gen AI use, likelihood of students adhering to such guidance?

- (e.g.) Kings College London reported 74% of students not completing ‘AI declaration cover sheets appropriately due to fear of consequences.
  (Corbin et al., 2025)



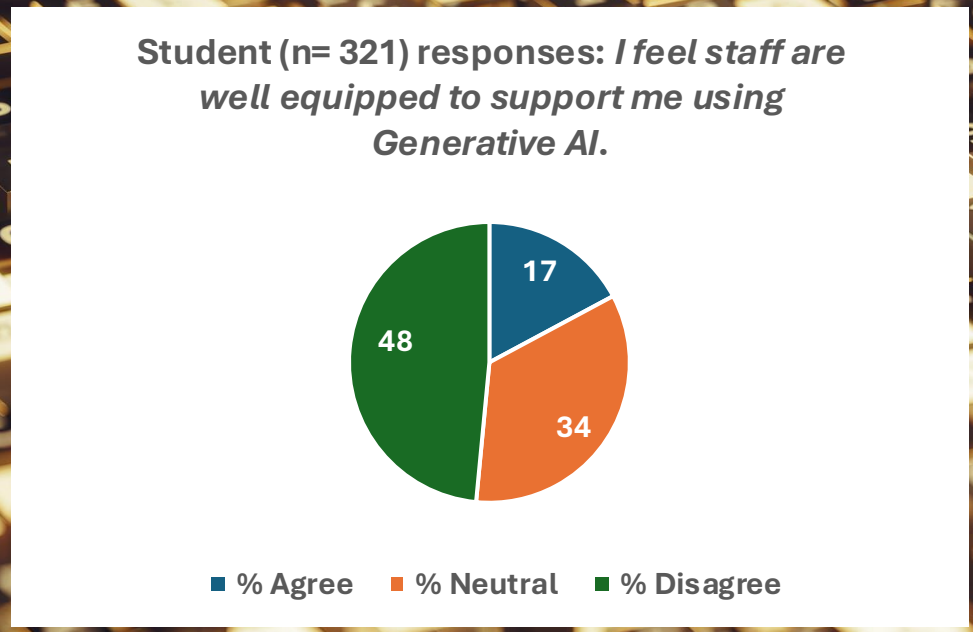
# Staff Development and Support

Students more positively disposed to Gen AI than lecturers:

- Students and staff agree Gen AI widely used within academic work

However, divergence between student & staff responses regarding attitudes towards / support for Gen AI, for example:

- Students equally agreed / disagreed with statements relating to the level of support available to guide their use of Gen AI
  - 26% students were satisfied with the support available, 38% neutral and 36% dissatisfied.
  - 9% staff satisfied with support, 30% neutral and 61% dissatisfied.



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# Supporting Student Learning in the Context of Generative AI

**Discussion 4:**

**How would you like the university to further support you?**

# Provisional Conclusions

- Challenge to maintain academic integrity
- Accept we are *all* learning about Gen AI simultaneously
- Develop students' AI literacies, inc. fostering a wider awareness of the ethical & environmental implications of Gen AI

- Whilst policy and guidelines important; essential to focus on assessment.
  - Rather than rely on compliance from students, transform assessment practices.
  - Assess process rather than product, opportunities for synchronous engagement with activities that evidence learning.

Corbin et al., 2025; Corbin & Walton, 2025; HEPI, 2024; Lee et al., 2025.

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# Supporting Student Learning in the Context of Generative AI

**Final thoughts:**
**In an ideal world…….what would you like to do with Gen AI?**

# Resources

- Principles on GenAI 2025/2026
- 7 Steps to Incorporating GenAI into your Practice
- UoP Activities for students to explore AI
- UoP AI in Education
- UoP Considerations of AI in Teaching
- Russell Group Principles on use of AI in Education
- National Centre for AI Jisc
- Student Perceptions of AI

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