

Responsible Use of Generative AI in Higher Education

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence is undergoing unprecedentedly rapid development, profoundly transforming all areas of human activity, including higher education. The aim of this article is to analyse selected policy and guidance documents concerning the use of generative artificial intelligence at higher education institutions in the Czech Republic. The analysis reveals that Czech public universities largely share a common approach to the use of artificial intelligence in learning and teaching: its use is permitted provided it is transparent, ethical, and treated as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for students' own intellectual work. The article further presents two illustrative examples of institutional approaches to AI tools adopted by Czech universities. In conclusion, the paper summarises the main benefits and risks associated with the use of generative AI by students and formulates recommendations for its responsible and effective application in higher education.

KEY WORDS: *Generative AI, Academic Integrity, Instructional Design, AI Literacy, Ethics*

Citation: Petr HRUZA. Responsible Use of Generative AI in Higher Education. In Proceedings of the Challenges to National Defence in Contemporary Geopolitical Situation, Brno, Czech Republic, 7-10 September 2026. ISSN 2538-8959, <https://doi.org/10.47459/cndcgs.2026.124>

1. Introduction

The emergence of generative AI and large language models in recent years represents a technological revolution comparable to the advent of the internet. One need only consider how the capabilities of AI tools have advanced in the last few years. In 2022, AI could not reliably perform basic arithmetic. By 2024, it could write simple software. By 2025, leading developers claim that most of their code is now written by AI. With each new generation, models advance to such an extent that what came before seems to belong to a completely different era. The models available today are unrecognisable from those that existed just six months ago [1].

This new technology is two-sided: it brings new possibilities for automation, analysis and personalisation, whilst simultaneously lowering the barriers to malicious misuse (e.g. sophisticated phishing campaigns or the creation of malicious code). The same tension is reflected in the university environment: AI can facilitate learning, aid understanding of complex topics (through visualisations and accessible explanations) and assist with structuring texts, formulating hypotheses, conducting literature reviews or synthesising multiple sources. At the same time, however, it opens the door to unethical circumvention of academic requirements and threatens academic integrity. All of this has a fundamental impact on education, science and practice.

Just as generative AI is both a helper and a hindrance, it has also become a significant aid to many university students in their studies. It presents specific opportunities in learning, but also many challenges. AI can significantly facilitate university studies, increase learning efficiency and help overcome obstacles – from time management to understanding complex topics. It can explain taught theory in simpler terms and create visualisations for better understanding (e.g. diagrams, concept maps, images). Based on a prompt, it can suggest text structures, formulate hypotheses, conduct literature reviews and suggest possible sources. It can also generate study materials and condense and summarise several documents or academic texts into a single coherent and concise piece – which today's university students are keen to use. Studying becomes easier and less mentally taxing when it comes to understanding the subject matter. However, students are also misusing artificial intelligence to make it easier to write essays, create presentations, and even write dissertations. The quality of content generated by artificial intelligence has already reached a point where many professionals cannot distinguish between AI outputs and human work. And that is currently a major problem [2].

2. Analysis of Documents on the Use of Generative AI in Higher Education

The European Union has responded by adopting the AI Act as the first comprehensive legal framework regulating artificial intelligence. The Czech Republic has defined its priorities through the 'National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Czech Republic 2030'.

In the Czech Republic, higher education institutions are classified in a manner prescribed by law, specifically according to their founding body and the nature of their educational activities. The classification of higher education institutions by founding body is governed by Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions, as amended. Public higher education institutions are established by the state; they are legal entities and operate on state funding. State higher education institutions are established by individual ministries. At present, there are only two state higher education institutions: the University of Defence, established by the Ministry of Defence, and the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague, established by the Ministry of the Interior. The final category comprises private higher education institutions, which are established by a legal or natural person with state approval. These institutions are funded predominantly by tuition fees, which students must pay.

My analysis of the available documents on the use of generative AI at universities will focus solely on public and state universities. There are currently 26 public universities in the Czech Republic. This figure is taken from the official overview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which maintains a list of all public, state and private universities authorised to provide higher education under Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on universities. All state universities in the Czech Republic are actively addressing the issue of the use of generative AI by students, academic staff and researchers. I searched the universities' websites for all documents relating to AI of the following types (measures, methodological guidelines, directives, binding principles, regulations, official notice boards). Most universities publish information on their websites regarding the use of artificial intelligence in higher education. AI is permitted as a support tool, not as a substitute for the student's own work. The documents repeatedly emphasise that generative AI should be used as a support tool, not for ghost-writing. The use of generative AI tools should be meaningful and responsible. Universities explicitly define generative AI as a support tool and require the extent of its use to be stated. They further recommend using AI beneficially, but honestly and critically. If generative AI is used when writing a final thesis, this thesis must include a declaration of the use of generative AI. This is the responsibility of each student. Furthermore, universities place great emphasis on the security and protection of data that students and academic staff send to AI tools. It is prohibited to send personal, sensitive, research and classified data to public chatbots. Most documents provide practical examples of how to use generative AI tools correctly, but above all how to cite their use correctly. It is expressly prohibited to copy AI outputs and submit them as one's own work.

Analysis results:

1. Universities do not ban AI – but regulate its use. AI is seen as a tool to support learning and research.
2. Transparency/disclosure – students must state that they have used AI and describe how and where.
3. AI must not replace one's own work – AI should be used as an aid, not as a generator of finished work. Submitting AI-generated text without editing is regarded as plagiarism.
4. Emphasis is placed on critical verification (hallucinations, false citations, the need to verify outputs).
5. Author's responsibility for data security – highlights the risk of sensitive data leaks (GDPR, sensitive/research data).
6. Support for the use of AI (a new trend) – some universities actively provide tools (e.g. Copilot, Gemini)

Czech public universities agree on the use of artificial intelligence in studies, but transparently, ethically and as a supplement – not a substitute for independent thinking.

3. AI at Charles University

In my opinion, Charles University has the best-designed documents and website. On this website, you will find everything you need to use AI tools. It can be found on the page titled 'AI at Charles University' (<https://ai.cuni.cz/AIEN-1.html>). These are Charles University's recommendations:

- *"AI technologies can be useful for students, educators, and researchers, offering a competitive advantage and increasing work productivity.*
- *The use of AI tools should complement, not replace, one's own thinking and work.*
- *The use of AI tools will require significant innovation in teaching methods and assessment.*
- *If AI tools are used responsibly and in accordance with ethical principles, they can significantly contribute to improving the quality of education and research.*
- *The use of AI tools must be transparent and in accordance with the instructor's or supervisor's guidelines.*
- *AI tools must be used with due regard for academic integrity and honesty.*
- *The risks associated with using AI primarily include the uncritical acceptance of generated content without verification, dependency on AI technologies, plagiarism, and AI errors in the form of false results.*
- *Adopting AI-generated results in their literal or slightly modified form and presenting them as one's own work is considered plagiarism."* [3].

4. AI at Masaryk University

Another Czech university with well-drafted documents is Masaryk University. The document "Statement on the Application of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching at Masaryk University" sets out Masaryk University's basic position on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in university education [4]. This document is followed by "Recommendations on the use of artificial intelligence tools in fulfilling study requirements". This document sets out a series of voluntary

recommendations for the use of artificial intelligence tools in fulfilling study obligations and requirements at Masaryk University [5].

Masaryk University advises students using AI tools to: be inquisitive, be pragmatic, be conscientious and honest, be transparent, and be responsible. Masaryk University advises teachers using AI tools to: be open to new information, be resourceful, promote fairness, be mindful of accountability, be responsive and transparent, set clear rules, be pragmatic, and be cautious [4].

5. What is the Reality?

The main aim and mission of university education is to foster creative and critical thinking, and to equip students with the skills essential for becoming independent, competent and critically thinking professionals. To date, no AI-based tool has been capable of achieving this.

From my long-standing experience as an academic at a university, I can confirm that university students do use AI tools in their studies. Many students use these tools in accordance with the rules set by individual universities. However, there are also students who use generative AI tools and then unashamedly pass off the generated text (images, presentations or entire papers) as their own ideas. This constitutes plagiarism. But how is a teacher supposed to spot this easily? Not every teacher is familiar with generative AI tools. Not every teacher uses them on a regular basis, and not every teacher knows what today's generative AI tools can generate. Therefore, any misuse of generative AI tools, and especially passing them off as one's own ideas, must be punished without compromise.

On the one hand, we have students who use these tools regularly, and on the other, we have students who do not know how to use them. I therefore recommend that all first-year students be introduced to the possibilities of using generative AI tools. Lecturers should demonstrate the practical applications of generative AI tools. But above all, all students must be made aware of the potential penalties for plagiarism involving AI.

Most universities provide at least one generative AI tool to their students free of charge as part of their studies. These are Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot. In exceptional cases, some students have paid access to ChatGPT. Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot are cutting-edge AI assistants, each excelling in a different area. Copilot is ideal for work productivity and integration with Office 365 (Word, PowerPoint, Teams). Gemini works better with Google Workspace (Gmail, Drive) and is stronger in creative writing and image generation. Copilot focuses on data analysis, email management and document creation. Gemini excels at brainstorming and content generation, rapid brainstorming, summarising lengthy documents or creating images.

6. Benefits, Risks and Recommendations for Students Using Generative AI

Benefits for students using generative AI:

1. Personalised learning
 - AI enables adaptive learning materials (pace, difficulty, format).
 - Immediate feedback on assignments and tests.
 - Support for students with different learning styles or specific needs.
2. Support for independent learning
 - Explanation of concepts, summarising texts, generating examples.
 - Help with programming, maths and writing academic texts.
 - 24/7 availability of a 'virtual tutor'.
3. Development of digital and AI skills
 - Practical experience with tools that will be commonplace in practice.
 - A better understanding of the possibilities and limitations of AI.
 - Critical analysis of algorithm outputs.
4. Increased study efficiency
 - Faster navigation of extensive resources.
 - Support for exam preparation and project work.

Risks for students using generative AI:

1. Weakening of deep learning
 - Risk of superficial understanding of the material ("AI will do it for me").
 - Reduced ability to analyse and solve problems independently.
2. Academic dishonesty
 - Difficulty distinguishing between one's own text and AI-generated text.
 - Plagiarism, ghostwriting, cheating in exams.
3. Dependence on AI
 - Reduced ability to write, argue or programme without support.
 - Weaker development of metacognitive skills.
4. Quality and accuracy of information

- AI can generate incorrect, outdated or biased information.
 - Risk of uncritically accepting outputs.
5. Inequality of access
- Differences in access to paid tools.
 - The digital divide among students.

These are my *recommendations* for students:

1. Use AI safely and fairly.
2. Always check your facts (AI sometimes ‘hallucinates’).
3. Cite your sources – and when AI “cites” something, check that it actually exists.
4. Do not enter sensitive data (personal details, non-public materials, internal assignments, research results).
5. Maintain transparency: where the rules require it, state how the AI was used (e.g. proofreading, outline).
6. Use AI as a tutor (have the content explained to you, take a test, have exercises generated).

7. Conclusions

Tools utilising artificial intelligence are becoming widely available and are increasingly used in the academic sphere. All universities view the development and use of AI tools primarily as a challenge and an opportunity, not merely as a threat or a risk. The aim of universities is to support the use of generative AI tools in higher education whilst formulating conditions and recommendations for their active use. The use of generative AI tools in teaching supports the continuous development of new and effective teaching methods (in line with the latest trends and with the aid of modern technologies).

The responsible use of generative AI at university is not a question of prohibition or laissez-faire; it is primarily a matter of design – a combination of clear rules, well-thought-out teaching design, technical and security measures, and the systematic development of AI literacy. With the right approach, it is possible to maximise the benefits of artificial intelligence whilst safeguarding the integrity, security and quality of education. By utilising artificial intelligence, we thus enhance the competencies not only of students, but also of academic and research staff.

Acknowledgements. This work was carried out as part of the scientific project of the University of Defence "Conducting Land Operations (DZRO LANDOPS)".

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