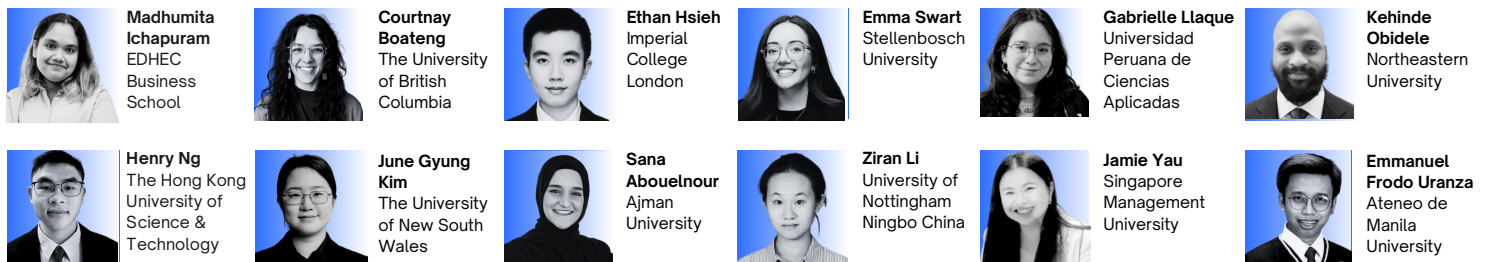


Student Voices on AI: An Actionable Guide for Institutions and Faculty

This practical guide draws on insights from Digital Education Council Executive Briefing #025 that convened students from universities across different continents to share their lived experiences of AI in higher education.

The guide synthesises these insights into concrete considerations for institutions navigating the realities of AI adoption in 2026.



How to Access DEC Resources

Selected DEC resources below are available for [public download](#).

For more information on the Digital Education Council, see [here](#).

Setting Clear Guidelines for AI Usage

What students are experiencing:

Ambiguity around AI use causes students to use AI tools discreetly, without guidance or shared norms.

In the absence of clear policies, students default to personal ethics resulting in an inconsistent use of AI in the classroom.

What students are calling for:

Clarity, consistency, and shared expectations around acceptable AI use so that AI can be used openly rather than covertly.

What students think institutions can do:

- Establish explicit AI-use guidelines at the outset of each course
- Normalise transparent AI use disclosure through clear declaration statements
- Reduce reliance on AI detection tools

“There’s a responsibility on the part of the university to guide students on what they think is appropriate AI usage for a specific assignment, essay, or an examination.”

DEC Resources:

[Digital Education Council AI Communication Worksheet](#) is designed to help establish, manage, and review your institution’s AI communication strategy.



Differentiate AI Policies by Field

What students are experiencing:

Students believe that different courses should allow for varying levels of AI integration, aligned with the skills and learning outcomes they are designed to develop.

What students are calling for:

Discipline-sensitive AI policies that reflect how knowledge and skills are developed differently across fields.

What students think institutions can do:

Move away from one-size-fits-all AI rules and align AI use expectations with disciplinary learning objectives and professional realities.

In fields that place a strong emphasis on critical thinking (e.g. psychology, humanities, and law), AI use may warrant clearer boundaries, with a focus on critique and interpretation.

In more applied fields, such as STEM and business curricula may allow for more experimental and integrated use of AI to reflect its growing role in professional practice.

DEC Resources:

[DEC Executive Briefing #010: Classifying AI Use in Higher Education](#) provides institutions with benchmarking data on global AI usage classification practices in education.



Redesign Assessments Around Process, Not Output

What students are experiencing:

Students expressed concern that an overreliance on AI compromises the development of key skills such as critical thinking, and reasoning.

What students are calling for:

Assessment designs that protect core cognitive development while recognising AI's role as a support tool.

What students think institutions can do:

Educators can redesign assessments to require students to develop their own theses and arguments first, before using AI to filter information, test logic, or explore relevance.

Learning can be assessed through grading drafts, reflections, decision logs, and revisions, and by requiring students to explain how AI contributed to their assignments.

“ If I can't explain my work to a professor without AI's help, then I didn't actually learn it.”

DEC Resources:

[The Next Era of Assessment: A Global Review of AI in Assessment Design](#) presents a comprehensive mapping of AI-integrated assessment practices in higher education.



Teach Output Evaluation, Not Just Prompting

What students are experiencing:

Beyond prompt engineering, which is currently the focus of most AI institutional training, students expressed a desire to learn how to evaluate AI output for accuracy, bias, and “AI hallucinations”.

What students are calling for:

Structured guidance on how to critically judge AI output quality.

What students think institutions can do:

Students raised a demand for “AI auditing” workshops or classes, and suggested educators add rubrics in assignments for:

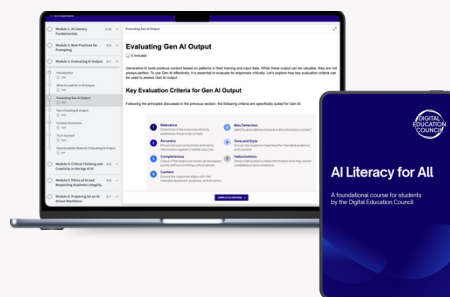
- Logical validation of AI-generated arguments
- Verification of sources
- Contextual judgment

“We’re learning how to ask AI questions, but not how to analyse its outputs.”

DEC Resources:

DEC AI Literacy for All is a 4-hour foundational course designed to rapidly equip students with key knowledge and practical skills to navigate the impact of AI in their studies and career.

Download brochure [here](#).



Adopt a Positive Culture Towards AI Literacy

What students are experiencing:

Students already see significant value in using AI as a “thinking companion” to support their learning, but find that institutional approaches have not kept pace.

Students noted that AI literacy remains uneven, as much of their learning still occurs informally through trial and error. There is limited structured guidance on ethical, critical, and responsible use of AI.

What students are calling for:

Intentional, institution-led AI literacy rather than fragmented, informal learning.

What students think institutions can do:

With AI adoption accelerating beyond the classroom and into the workforce, students are calling on institutions to intentionally embed AI literacy as a core academic requirement.

DEC Resources:

DEC Certificate in AI for Higher Education is a 20-hour course designed for faculty and academic leaders to build practical AI competence for effective use in teaching and learning.

Download brochure [here](#).



To learn more about joining the Digital Education Council, [see here](#).

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