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Context

UTS College

UTS College offers a range of university pathway programs for students seeking to study at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Our programs include Academic English, UTS Foundation Studies, Diplomas, and the Cambridge International AS and A Levels. Key to the Educational Approach to Generative AI ('our approach') that we have implemented is our integrated learning model, Learning.Connected, that was introduced in 2021. This model redesigned the way learning experiences are structured for students, offering the best of faceto-face and online learning in a way that provides a student-centred, outcomes-focused approach in the pathway learning market. Learning.Connected combines independent online activities and exercises with live learning to prepare students for classes and help them reinforce the learning in between, and after lessons. Classes are digitally designed, providing active and collaborative activities to promote student engagement, centred around our Canvas LMS.

How this approach has been developed

Our approach outlined here has been benchmarked against the approaches taken by UTS and other major universities in Australia. It has also been developed in coordination with the UTS College GenAI and Academic Integrity Working Group, a collaborative group of academic and professional staff from across the Education Unit.

Timeline



The rationale for this approach

Figure 1. Timeline of the development of our approach



As can be seen from the timeline (fig. 1), both staff and students needed clarity on issues of GenAI related academic misconduct and effective usage of GenAI. In fact, staff were often not aware of how students were actually using GenAI, and this was destabilising the strong relationships we had built between teachers and students, a factor which contributes to academic misconduct (Bretag et al., 2018). The results of the student survey conducted in July 2024 revealed that students were using GenAI for various purposes. For example, over 50% of respondents reported regularly using GenAI for checking ideas, getting vocabulary and editing written work. Significantly but to a lesser extent, students also reported using GenAI to translate their written work, generate code, generate images and generate whole or partial texts for assessment submission (see appendix 1 for the full list of GenAI uses that students indicated). Along with this, we had anecdotal reports that our students were quite confused about exactly what GenAI related academic misconduct was and what kind of GenAI usage may be helpful to their learning. Therefore, we developed the approach to GenAI in learning and assessments that has provided much needed clarity and consistency throughout the College.

At the heart of our approach is the clear communication of effective usage. By this we mean communicating how, why and when using GenAl would either benefit or disadvantage students' learning. Our approach also helps us to move the conversation away from solely talking about rules around GenAl and focus more on the validity of our assessments (Dawson et al., 2024).

Addressing GenAl use in Assessment

When embarking on the development of the approach, it was necessary to address the key questions that the use of GenAI had created within education.

1. Should we state that GenAI cannot be used at all?

Yes, in secured assessments:

The point of secured assessments is to guarantee original work is done. Therefore, we must mandate no GenAI usage in secured assessments. We also have measures to prevent GenAI usage in this context, so it is valid to ban any GenAI usage here.

No, in unsecured (take home) assessments:

Unlike in secure assessments, we do not have measures that would prevent the use of GenAl in unsecured assessments. Thus, we would be setting ourselves up to fail if we mandate no GenAl usage in this context. This is also in line with other university approaches such as The University of Sydney's '2 lane' approach, which recommends not attempting to ban GenAl usage in unsecured assessments due to the inability to either prevent or detect it in this context (The University of Sydney, 2023). Therefore, as we cannot prevent GenAl usage in unsecure assessments, we must try to model effective usage following our approach.

2. What is GenAI related academic misconduct?

Our Academic Integrity Policy states:

Unauthorised or unacknowledged use of artificial intelligence constitutes cheating, where the use of any ideas, information or work generated using artificial intelligence tools, including GenAl to produce some or all of an assessment task, examination, test or quiz response, and



the use of those tools is not expressly permitted, or the authorised use of the tool is not adequately cited or acknowledged.

In practice, GenAl related academic misconduct is best described as:

1. In take home assignments, academic misconduct is when a student:

- Copies AI generated content and submits it as their own original work (text, images, code, etc.).
- Writes sentences, paragraphs, and complete text in one language and then translates it into English using GenAl or translation tools.

2. In exams, academic misconduct is when a student:

• Makes any use of GenAl.

3. As we are not attempting to ban GenAl usage in unsecured assessments, what GenAl tool do we recommend?

UTS has added Copilot to their Office 365 tenancy. As a result, all students have access to Microsoft Copilot. This is a commercially protected addition to Office 365, which does not use our data to train the underlying AI model and does not share any data with Microsoft (Microsoft,2024). The benefits of having an endorsed tool are that; it is free, secure and private for students, and as all students have access, it allows us to ethically integrate GenAI usage into learning and assessments without equity concerns.

The fact that we endorse a GenAI tool has put immediate pressure on us to help students use it effectively. However, even if an institution has no endorsed GenAI, these tools are freely available. Therefore, the onus is on all education institutions to help their students understand how to use GenAI effectively.

4. Is GenAI a credible source?

Questioning the credibility of GenAI and therefore if and how students should cite the use of GenAI is necessary to consider. GenAI use can lead to plausible looking but factually incorrect or misleading information (Fatahi, 2024). In fact, OpenAI the creators of ChatGPT state that ChatGPT makes mistakes (OpenAI, 2024a). This is not to mention the fact that GenAI itself is not an author because its ideas are not its own but borrowed from elsewhere (University College London, 2025). Therefore, we do not view GenAI as a credible source. However, there may be times when the credibility of GenAI as a source does not need to be considered. For example, if a student creates a presentation and includes AI generated images for illustrative purposes (i.e. the images themselves are not being assessed) then the use of GenAI to produce these images is no different from using, for example, Adobe stock images. In this case students should reference the images, following approved referencing guidelines.

Defining effective GenAl usage

One of the major challenges when developing our approach was identifying exactly what effective usage of GenAI in education may comprise. As GenAI is a new tool that students can



use in the learning process, we decided to treat it as we do with other technology and view it from a learning design and alignment perspective. Doing this helped us to pinpoint two aspects of learning which can provide clear distinctions between effective and ineffective GenAl usage. These two aspects are knowledge and skills, with effective usage being the building of knowledge and ineffective usage being that which prevents students from developing skills. This general distinction between knowledge and skills is not a novel concept. The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) provides standards for every Australian qualification and crucially designs the standards for each qualification level in terms of the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and the application of knowledge and skills expected at each level. Knowledge is defined as 'what a graduate knows and understands', and skill is defined as 'what a graduate can do' (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). In other words, our approach is based on this premise: Knowing how to do something is not the same as being able to do it; we encourage students to use GenAI (as a supplementary tool) for the 'knowing' not for the 'doing'.

What are some examples of this?

Firstly, we should encourage students to use GenAI to build knowledge in ways such as:

- Exploring more about topics being studied
- Simplifying complex concepts
- Checking ideas
- Conducting basic research
- Unpacking assignment briefs

And enhance knowledge retention in ways such as:

- Creating quizzes to check own knowledge
- Creating study and revision plans
- Creating word lists
- Creating mind maps
- Organising study notes

What are some educational reasons why students should not use GenAI to produce work for them?

As educators, one of our main functions is to give advice about the best way to build knowledge and develop skills. As discussed above, we do not think using GenAI to help build knowledge is particularly problematic. However, we do believe that learners will disadvantage themselves if they offload work to GenAI because they miss the opportunity to develop the very skills they are trying to learn (Bastani et al., 2024).

One of the key aspects of our approach is to show students the link between types of GenAl usage, and the specific skills each type of usage would prevent them from developing. The graphic below (fig. 2) illustrates this, followed by further reasons why students should not offload tasks to GenAI. These form the basis of the educational reasons we are currently communicating to students in line with our approach.



Producing text/code/images using GenAI means missing the opportunity to develop skills yourself:

IF YOU	YOU WILL NOT DEVELOP
generate text	• academic writing skills / English language skills / critical thinking skills
generate images	• design software skills / design thinking skills / evaluative thinking skills
generate code	• coding software skills / active coding skills / problem solving skills
summarise text	• advanced reading skills / sythesising texts skills / analytical thinking skills
translate text	• academic writing skills / English language skills / evaluative thinking skills

Figure 2: Missed skill development when using GenAI

In addition to the potential for missing skills development opportunities listed in figure 2, we also inform students of other educational reasons not to use GenAI to produce work for them:

- Students miss the opportunity to build skills over time.
- GenAl itself is not a credible source (University College London, 2025).
- GenAl makes mistakes (OpenAl, 2024a)
- GenAl demonstrates bias (OpenAl, 2024b).
- GenAl is not a subject expert (Australian Catholic University, 2024).
- Students are also not subject experts yet; they may not be able to effectively evaluate what GenAl produces.

Framing effective GenAl usage

The Framework

The framework presented here has been applied to all assessment pages within our LMS, directly targeting students at the moment of assessment formulation and submission to provide clear direction and justification for how GenAI should be used during the assessment construction process. Figure 3, below, outlines the four pillars of this framework: Clear Expectations; Transparency; and Educational Reasons 1 and 2.



A flexible framework for GenAI usage in assessments

What?	Clear expectations	Transparency	Educational reason 1	Educational reason 2
How?	 Define GenAl related Academic misconduct Outline effective usage (knowledge building and retention) 	 Request acknowledgement of any assessment related GenAl usage Provide an easy method for students to do this 	 List the skills students will not develop if they use GenAI to produce the submission for them 	 Give specific examples of how GenAI performed when asked to produce the task response OR Give general examples of GenAI limitations
Why?	 Provides clarity for both students and staff 	 Helps elevate GenAl to a non cheating tool Helps students plan and reflect on usage 	 Helps students realise why they should not use it for certain tasks and how doing so would impact their learning 	 Helps model evaluation, test susceptibility of assessment item and highlight its limitations

Figure 3: Framework for effective GenAl usage in assessment

Framework Pillars explained

Clear Expectations

Intent: Students have clear expectations and understand how to effectively use GenAI in this assessment item.

In order to reduce confusion and nerves around what students can use GenAl for when preparing the assessment, this pillar should remind them of exactly what GenAl related academic misconduct is. It should also identify examples of effective GenAl usage that are tied directly to the assessment item and provide those examples in a clear and concise way.

Reinforcing this framework pillar:

- Think about GenAI's potential for helping students build knowledge and enhance retention of that knowledge, specifically for this assessment item.
- Model effective ways to use GenAI in class time or with self-paced activities aligned to learning outcomes.

Transparency

Intent: Students share how they used GenAl in the assessment

This pillar asks students to provide brief notes on how they used GenAl in their assessment construction. The aim here is for students to see GenAl as a tool to be used in the learning process and for them to plan and reflect on its use. Doing this can help to move GenAl out of the shadows and normalise its use. You may also find that it results in meaningful data that can help identify the way students are using GenAl both effectively and ineffectively. That being said, this is quite an unusual requirement. We do not request disclosure of other technology such as



Word, Excel or even Grammarly. Therefore, we view this pillar as being useful in the short term to foster effective GenAI usage and could potentially be phased out in the long term as effective GenAI use becomes normalised over time.

Reinforcing this framework pillar:

- Explain why this is required.
- Give students an opportunity to plan how they might use GenAI in their assessment.
- Link this activity to reflection on learning.
- Provide an easy way for students to provide this information. For example, students make a brief declaration on cover sheets, in an appendix, or in assessment comment boxes within an LMS that they see when uploading an assignment (if available).

The declaration could look something like this:

- o I have not used AI in any way in this assignment.
- o I have used AI in this assignment. I used it in the following ways...

Educational reason 1

Intent: Students understand how ineffective GenAI use will hinder their learning in the assessment

This pillar informs students how using GenAI to produce work for them would hinder their learning and links this to explicit skills that are being assessed. Based on our experience, students really understand the logic of this reasoning, they know they are here to learn and that GenAI, when used to produce assessment content, will not help them to develop these skills.

Reinforcing this framework pillar:

- Unpack rubrics to highlight the skills students are being assessed on.
- Have discussions with students about the value of developing the particular skills they are being assessed on.
- Reinforce this with self-paced activities.

Educational reason 2

Intent: Students understand the limitations of GenAI's ability to produce the assessment

This pillar helps to demonstrate to students that using GenAI to produce an assessment may not result in a high-quality submission. This is not to say that a very determined student using sophisticated GenAI tools could not produce any assessment item, rather that GenAI, when used for its most basic functions, does have limitations. Using this pillar not only helps to pinpoint specific areas of concern around the quality of GenAI output but importantly it models an educator's evaluation of the output, making students more aware that they always need to critically engage with what GenAI produces. In addition, if you think GenAI easily produces a high-quality submission, this may indicate that the assessment item is highly susceptible to irresponsible GenAI usage and may need amending.

Reinforcing this framework pillar:



- Run the assessment through your favoured GenAl tool and see what it produces; does it seem like a natural sounding response? Does it respond well to the assessment brief? Does it include any false references and/or hallucinations? If so, point these things out to students.
- Familiarise yourself with the limitations of basic GenAl output.
- Incorporate activities that include evaluative judgement of basic GenAl output.
- Link evaluation of GenAl output to other more familiar areas where critical thinking is required, such as social media, the media etc.

Is the approach working?

Developing student awareness

As well as the framework in figure 3 that was implemented at UTS College in September 2024, we have taken other steps to help communicate our approach to students. These include updating our policy and procedure documents and compulsory student academic integrity module, running orientation week workshops for students on GenAl usage, providing self-paced activities and encouraging discussion between staff and students. All these actions have led to a high rate of awareness around effective GenAl usage and GenAl related academic misconduct as seen in the results of a student survey conducted in March 2025.

Student survey

Students were asked two simple questions: 'Do you know how to use GenAI effectively in your studies?' and 'Do you know what GenAI related academic misconduct is?'. Of the 950 responses collected thus far, there is a clear majority of students who have answered 'yes' to both questions.



Figure 4a. Survey results on student awareness of effective usage of GenAI





Figure 4b. Survey results on student awareness of effective usage of GenAI

This survey result is a positive indication of student understanding of effective GenAl usage but is just one metric of measuring the success of the approach. Further evaluations using other data sources such as actual GenAl student usage, will be carried out in the near future.

Associated projects

The introduction of our approach, and the 2024 TEQSA Request for Information, prompted UTS College to undertake a bigger project focused on curriculum and assessment design. Integrating best practice assessment design guides this project, including the principles and propositions laid out in TEQSA's Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence discussion paper (Lodge et al., 2023). The student voice has also played a significant role in this assessment reform project. In the student survey conducted in July 2024 we included questions that asked students to consider any motivating factors that may lead to GenAI related academic misconduct. Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that not being sure what ideas or information to include in assignments (58%) and not fully understanding the assignments (57%) were potential motivating factors for misconduct.



Figure 5. Survey results for potential reasons for academic misconduct (n = 466)

As a result of this data, we have made amendments to our course materials, including simplifying assessment briefs and associated content to make them more accessible.



Moreover, when asked to choose options that may lead to academic misconduct, the highest figures for agreement were 'not having confidence in academic skills' (65%) and 'not having confidence in English skills' (63%). From this, we inferred that many of our students have low self-efficacy – a lack of belief in a learner's own ability to meet performance expectations (Waddington, 2023). This lack of belief is potentially another reason why a student may turn to GenAl to produce the work for them and should be taken into consideration.

Key takeaways

Ultimately students will decide for themselves if and how they use GenAl in their studies and assessment related work. However, by educating our students on how and why its usage may either benefit or disadvantage them, they will hopefully begin to make decisions that enhance their learning, and that may reduce instances of academic misconduct. This approach has been well-received by both staff and students who now have some clarity around these complex issues. Awareness of academic misconduct and effective usage is high. We have looked at this problem very much from the student perspective and tried to capture their voice. The ten points below are the key lesson we have learned:

- 1. Listen to your students about their current uses and perceptions of GenAl.
- 2. Answer some of the key questions you have about GenAl in education.
- 3. Move away from framing GenAl only in terms of academic misconduct.
- 4. Consider GenAI as helpful in the learning process.
- 5. Develop a framework for communicating effective usage.
- 6. Provide examples of ways students can use GenAl effectively.
- 7. Provide educational reasons why students should not use GenAI for certain tasks or to produce work for them.
- 8. Reinforce your approach with in-class and self-paced activities.
- 9. Model evaluation of GenAl output.
- 10. Give students an opportunity to plan how they might use GenAI in assessment related work and a chance to reflect on that usage or non-usage.

Future plans for effective GenAl usage

So far, we have looked at the issues around GenAl from the learner's perspective. The next stage for this work is to start to incorporate GenAl into learning and assessments but this brings several issues for the design of educational experiences, particularly in the area of alignment and assurance of learning.

Figure 6 highlights some of the issues we face when considering incorporating GenAl into the learning process and assessments themselves. We consider that there are three key questions that need addressing before successfully integrating GenAl.



- 1. How do we know students are developing the skills we currently assess if they are producing assessment content using GenAI?
- 2. How do we know students are developing any skills as a result of their interactions with GenAI?
- 3. How do we plan to assess students' use of GenAl as we start to incorporate it into assessments?



Figure 6. Considerations for incorporating GenAI into the learning process



Appendix 1: Results of the Student Survey, July 2024



Students use of GenAl in learning and assessment - Academic

UTS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOG SYDNEY



The survey was conducted in July 2024.



466 UTS College academic students participated in this survey.



Participants were asked to select answers using a Likert scale. They were also asked to write responses to follow up questions. All responses were anonymous.



There were two main aims of this survey:



To find out how students are using GenAl in their studies.

Why? - This data can help inform how we incorporate GenAI into learning and teaching. We can also identify uses that may prevent students from developing the skills they are being assessed on.



To find out from the students perspective why they think fellow students might commit GenAI related breaches of academic integrity.

Why? - This data can help us to identify certain contextual factors that might lead to academic misconduct and then plan interventions to mitigate these factors.



How students use GenAl

Getting ideas	
62%	
Checking own ideas	
59%	
Getting vocabulary	
51%	
Improving text quality	
51%	
Translating	
38%	
Solving mathematical problems	
34%	
Generating code	
22%	
Generating images	
19%	
How students use GenAl	Re
(Misconduct)	
Generating paragraphs for use in assignments	
25%	
Generating a complete text to submit as an assignment	

Reasons for academic misconduct (Environmental)

> Not sure what ideas or information to include in assignments

> > 58%

Not fully understanding the assignments

57%

Not receiving enough feedback during the course

35%

Not having enough assignment related activities during the course

29%

Always under time pressure

55%

asons for academic misconduct (Personal)

Not having confidence in academic skills

65%

Not having confidence in English skills

63%

Always under time pressure

55%

Answering exam questions

13%

16%

Qualitative Data (categorised by Copilot)

How students use GenAl



- Idea generation and brainstorming
- Research and information gathering
- Paraphrasing and summarising
- Writing assistance
- Understanding and explaining concepts
- Practice and testing
- Translation
- General feedback

Reasons for academic misconduct



- Not understanding assessments
- Complexity of assignments
- General confusion
- Time pressure
- Lack of confidence
- Laziness
- Ease and convenience
- Pressure to achieve high grades

Student Quotes

"

well to explore new ideas or about an idea i already have but i want to know more about it. or sometimes explain the pre tutorial..."

"To paraphrase the main ideas of papers and summarise them for me."

"To generate essay plans and summarised versions of research sources for efficiency."

"Use GenAI to learn information about what is being learnt or either to use it to help understand what the topic is about."

"

Cause they don't know what the assignment wants or what information to submit."

"I think most big reason is students don't know the main idea or struggling with finding out the main idea."

"They feel insecure about their skills and feel inferior towards their peers."

"Feeling overwhelmed and not understanding the assignment."

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