Student Perspective Brief

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Executive Summary

What the Conversation About Your Education Isn't Asking You

Decisions about AI in your education are being made largely without you. Of 4171 sources analyzed this week, the people writing the policies, designing the detection tools, and negotiating the vendor contracts are overwhelmingly not students — and the gap shows up in concrete ways. A Quebec survey found roughly one student in three already breaks institutional AI rules, often because the rules themselves are unclear or contradictory [19]. In the UK, 41% of universities have no publicly available AI policy at all [11]. You are being asked to comply with something nobody has written down.

[19] Un étudiant sur 3 transgresse les règles à l'aide de l'IA

[11] Karen Lumsden, PhD's Post

What's actually at stake. Over-relying on generative AI compresses the slow, frustrating work that builds judgment — Harvard faculty are now arguing that the *friction* of learning is the point, not a bug to optimize away [13], [16]. Avoiding AI entirely, though, leaves you exposed in different ways: detection tools generate false positives (one Adelphi student is suing after being accused on AI-flag evidence alone [2]), and French legal analysis confirms universities are sanctioning students under rules that don't formally exist [10]. Surveillance systems marketed as safety tools have already triggered wrongful arrests of K-12 students and are migrating upward [15].

[13] Preserving learning in the age of AI shortcuts — Harvard Gazette

[16] The case for friction in AI-mediated information seeking and learning

[2] Adelphi University accused a student of using AI to ... - Newsday

[10] Intelligence artificielle : l'université peut-elle sanctionner sans règle

[15] School AI surveillance like Gaggle can lead to false alarms, arrests

What this briefing provides. Evidence-based strategies for using AI where it genuinely helps your learning, recognizing where it quietly erodes it, and navigating institutional policies that are inconsistent, unwritten, or applied unevenly. You have more agency than the discourse implies — but only if you see the terms clearly.

Critical Tension

Students: You're Being Asked to Self-Regulate in a System That Hasn't Made Up Its Mind

The Real Dilemma

The honest version of your situation: the same tool that can compress a problem set from three hours to forty minutes can also strip out the cognitive work the problem set existed to produce. A controlled study found generative AI cut study time on math problems substantially — and also reduced retention of the underlying skill when students used it as a substitute rather than a scaffold [7]. That is not a moral problem. It is a learning-design problem that has been handed to you to solve in real time, usually without anyone naming it out loud.

[7] Generative AI Reduced Study Time on Math Problems and ...

What this means in practice: every assignment now contains an implicit second question — *how much of this am I supposed to do myself?* — and the answer changes between your 9 a.m. and your 11 a.m. class. A Radio-Canada survey found roughly one student in three reports breaking course rules using AI, but the more telling finding is how often students say they don't know where the rule is [19]. You are being asked to self-regulate inside an institution that has not finished regulating itself.

[19] Un étudiant sur 3 transgresse les règles à l'aide de l'IA

Why Institutional Guidance Isn't Helping

Forty-one percent of UK universities have no public AI policy at all [11]. Where policies exist, faculty are now drifting away from outright bans toward course-by-course discretion [3]. Discretion is not the same as guidance. It means the same paragraph of AI-assisted writing can earn a citation in one syllabus and a misconduct hearing in another. Adelphi University is currently being sued by a student accused of AI use on the basis of detector output — a category of evidence with known false-positive problems [2]. French legal commentary has flagged the same gap: institutions sanctioning without a written rule [10].

[11] Karen Lumsden, PhD's Post

[3] Faculty Ditch AI Bans: Study Shows Policy Shift - AcademicJ…

[2] Adelphi University accused a student of using AI to ... - Newsday

[10] Intelligence artificielle : l'université peut-elle sanctionner sans règle

Student voices are largely missing from the rulemaking. A Université Laval advisory built specifically around student perspectives is the exception that proves the pattern [12]. Most policy is being written by committees you don't sit on, sometimes with surveillance products — Gaggle, GoGuardian, Bark — already producing documented false alarms and arrests at the K-12 level that universities are now consider-

[12] PDF Perspective Étudiante Sur Les Systèmes D'Intelligence Artificielle

ing importing [15].

[15] School AI surveillance like Gaggle can lead to false alarms, arrests ...

The Skills Question

Here is the part nobody on either side of the debate likes to say cleanly. There is real evidence that habitual AI offloading correlates with weaker critical-thinking performance, particularly on tasks involving extended reading and multi-step problem-solving [17]. The Harvard Gazette has begun publishing on what "preserving learning" looks like when shortcuts are available [13]. A counter-argument from interaction-design researchers is that the missing ingredient is *friction* — moments in the workflow where the tool requires you to think, rather than letting you skip [16].

[17] The Impact of AI on Students' Reading, Critical Thinking, and Problem ...

[13] Preserving learning in the age of AI shortcuts — Harvard Gazette

[16] The case for friction in AI-mediated information seeking and learning

At the same time, the skills AI use *requires* — prompt construction, output verification, knowing where the model is confidently wrong, situating model output against domain knowledge — are mostly not being taught in your classes. The LOGOS framework, recently published, tries to name five distinct levels of human cognitive agency in AI-assisted work [18]. Most syllabi distinguish two: allowed or not. That gap — between the agency you actually exercise and the binary you're graded against — is where the real risk sits.

[18] The LOGOS Framework: A Five-Level Taxonomy of Human Cognitive Agency in AI-Assisted Assessment

Your Position

You have more agency than the discourse suggests, and less safety than the marketing suggests. The functional move is to keep your own record: which tools you used, at which step, for which purpose, on every graded artifact. Treat that log as the thing that protects you if a detector flags you, and as the thing that tells you honestly whether you learned the material or rented the appearance of it. Engagement data from recent classroom studies shows the students who do best with AI are the ones who use it to interrogate their own drafts, not to produce them [4]. The institutions will catch up. Your transcript and your skills will not wait for them.

[4] Frontiers | Student engagement with AI tools in learning: evidence from ...

Actionable Recommendations

Students: Building an AI Practice That Survives Contact With the System

You are being asked to develop AI fluency inside an institution that has not figured out its own rules. A survey of Quebec post-secondary

students found roughly one in three admit using AI in ways that violate course rules, often because the rules themselves are unclear or contradictory across instructors [19]. In the UK, 41% of universities still have no public AI policy at all [11]. Meanwhile, faculty are quietly abandoning blanket bans without telling students what replaces them [3]. The five strategies below assume you are navigating that mess on your own.

[19] Un étudiant sur 3 transgresse les règles à l'aide de l'IA

[11] Karen Lumsden, PhD's Post

[3] Faculty Ditch AI Bans: Study Shows Policy Shift

Keep a usage log before you need one

The default move — using AI when stuck and not thinking about it again — backfires in two specific ways. First, students who lean heavily on generative tools show measurable decreases in reading comprehension and problem-solving when the tool is removed [17]. Second, if you are accused of misuse, your defense is dramatically stronger when you can show what you actually did. The Adelphi University lawsuit shows what happens when a student has no documentation and the institution has a detector with a confidence score [2].

[17] The Impact of AI on Students' Reading, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving

[2] Adelphi University accused a student of using AI

A more effective approach: a five-minute log per assignment — which tool, what prompt, what you kept, what you rewrote.

- *This week:* start a single document. One row per AI interaction. Paste the prompt and the output.
- *This month:* annotate each entry with whether the AI saved you time or replaced thinking you needed to do.
- *This semester:* you will have a portfolio that doubles as evidence of process and a self-audit of your own dependencies.

What this builds: metacognitive awareness — the LOGOS framework calls this differentiating between AI as scaffold and AI as substitute [18]. What to watch for: if your log shows you cannot reconstruct your reasoning on a finished assignment, you outsourced the part you were supposed to learn.

[18] The LOGOS Framework: A Five-Level Taxonomy of Human Cognitive Agency in AI-Assisted Assessment

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Pick the skills you refuse to outsource — and protect them deliberately

Generative AI demonstrably reduces study time on math problems while producing comparable short-term performance [7]. That sounds

[7] Generative AI Reduced Study Time on Math Problems

like pure gain until you ask what happens on the closed-book exam, the technical interview, the licensure test. The Harvard Gazette piece on "preserving learning" makes the unsentimental version of the argument: certain cognitive operations only get built through friction, and friction is exactly what AI removes [13]. Researchers have argued this friction is not a UX bug to design away but a learning feature to design *for* [16].

[13] Preserving learning in the age of AI shortcuts

[16] The case for friction in AI-mediated information seeking and learning

A more effective approach: pick two or three skills per term — usually the ones you will be tested on without AI access — and treat them as no-tool zones.

- *This week:* write down which assessments in your courses are closed-book, oral, or proctored. Those are your no-AI training grounds.
- *This month:* do first drafts and worked problems in those skill areas by hand, then use AI only for feedback, not generation.
- *This semester:* compare your unaided performance now to your performance in the same skill at the start of the term.

What this builds: durable competence in the specific operations your field still tests directly. What to watch for: if you cannot do a problem without prompting, you have not learned it — you have learned to ask for it.

Treat inconsistent course policies as a documentation problem, not a guessing game

Policy across your transcript is incoherent by design right now. The same student can be encouraged to use ChatGPT in one course and accused of misconduct for the same behavior in the next [10]. Surveying students directly, ULaval's own academic advisory council found students wanted clarity more than permission [12].

[10] Intelligence artificielle : l'université peut-elle sanctionner sans règle

[12] Perspective Étudiante Sur Les Systèmes D'Intelligence Artificielle

A more effective approach: ask in writing, course by course, and keep the answer.

- *This week:* email each instructor a short, specific question — "Is using [tool] for [task] permitted in this course?" — and save the reply.
- *This month:* if a syllabus is silent, write to the instructor before the first assignment, not after.

- *This semester:* maintain a single page listing each course's policy in the instructor's own words.

What this builds: a defensible record. What to watch for: instructor replies that are vague ("use your judgment") — push back politely for a concrete example, because that ambiguity is what later becomes a misconduct case.

Verify AI output the way you would verify a confident stranger

The student engagement literature documents a recurring pattern: heavy users come to trust outputs they cannot independently check [4]. The "legitimacy and laziness" critique points at the deeper move — outputs feel authoritative because of fluent prose, not because of grounding [5].

[4] Student engagement with AI tools in learning

[5] GenAI in Higher Education, Legitimacy and Laziness

A more effective approach: for any factual claim or citation an AI gives you, open the source.

- *This week:* on your next AI-assisted assignment, click through every citation. Note the ones that do not exist or do not say what the AI claimed.
- *This month:* build a habit of asking the model "what is your source?" then verifying — and noticing how often the second answer differs from the first.
- *This semester:* keep a running list of the model's failure modes in your discipline.

What this builds: the same source-criticism skill that employers and graduate programs actually test. What to watch for: when you stop checking because the model has "been right lately." That is the moment it stops being a tool and starts being a liability.

Position yourself for what gets evaluated, not what feels productive

The medical education literature is already converging on competency frameworks that test AI judgment — when to use it, when not to, how to critique its output — rather than tool fluency itself

[1]. Emerging Delphi work on governance suggests this is where most disciplines will land [8].

[1] A Competency Framework for Medical AI Education
[8] Governing generative AI in higher education: a global Delphi

A more effective approach: get fluent at explaining your reasoning, with and without AI in the loop.

- *This week:* on one assignment, write a 150-word note on what you used AI for and what you chose to do yourself.
- *This month:* practice articulating that distinction out loud — in office hours, study groups, interviews.
- *This semester:* keep two or three artifacts that show your unaided thinking. They matter more than the assignments that ran through a model.

What this builds: the capacity to be evaluated as someone who works with AI, not someone replaced by it. What to watch for: portfolios that you cannot defend in conversation. If you cannot explain it, the credential is hollow — and increasingly, the people hiring you know it.

Supporting Evidence

What We Analyzed

This briefing draws on 4,171 sources from the week's discourse on AI in education, narrowed to 1,542 in the higher-education category. That's a snapshot of what researchers, vendors, administrators, and journalists are saying right now — not a settled body of knowledge. The honest framing: you're reading a synthesis of an argument in progress, much of which is being conducted *about* students rather than *with* them. Treat what follows as a map of the conversation, not a map of reality.

Who's Speaking, Who's Not

Look at who gets the microphone in the AI-in-education literature this week. Institutional voices dominate — provosts, deans, instructional designers, vendors, accreditation-adjacent governance bodies. The Springer global Delphi study on governing generative AI in higher education surveyed experts, not students [8]. The competency frameworks being proposed for medical AI education are written by faculty for faculty [1]. Even pieces nominally about student experience often

[8] Governing generative AI in higher education: a global Delphi ...

[1] A Competency Framework for Medical AI Education: Mixed Methods Study

route through faculty observation rather than student testimony.

The exceptions are worth naming. A Radio-Canada survey actually asked students and found roughly one in three admits to breaking institutional AI rules [19]. A Université Laval consultation document explicitly centers student perspectives on AI systems [12]. These are minority entries. When the dominant voice is institutional, "AI in education" becomes a problem of compliance, risk, and retention — not a problem of what learning feels like from the inside.

[19] Un étudiant sur 3 transgresse les règles à l'aide de l'IA

[12] PDF Perspective Étudiante Sur Les Systèmes D'Intellige Nce Artificielle ...

What's Actually Being Debated

The core fight isn't "is AI good or bad." It's whether faculty should regulate use or design around it. A new survey shows faculty are moving away from outright bans [3], while a parallel literature argues for *more* friction in AI-mediated learning, not less [16]. Underneath: is generative AI making thinking shallower [9], or is it a legitimate cognitive tool when scaffolded well [18]? Nobody has resolved this. You're being graded inside an unresolved debate.

[3] Faculty Ditch AI Bans: Study Shows Policy Shift - AcademicJ…

[16] The case for friction in AI-mediated information seeking and learning

[9] Impact de l'IA générative sur la « pensée critique »

[18] The LOGOS Framework: A Five-Level Taxonomy of Human Cognitive Agency in AI-Assisted Assessment

Where Implementations Are Failing

The failure modes that show up most often are not technical — they're procedural. Adelphi University is being sued over an AI-plagiarism accusation [2]. French legal analysts are openly asking whether universities can sanction AI use without written rules [10]. K-12 AI-surveillance systems have generated false alarms leading to arrests [15] — the same vendor logic is moving into higher ed. Detection tools and disciplinary processes are running ahead of due-process infrastructure. That's the pattern: institutions deploying enforcement before they've defined the rule.

[2] Adelphi University accused a student of using AI to ... - Newsday

[10] Intelligence artificielle : l'université peut-elle sanctionner sans règle

[15] School AI surveillance like Gaggle can lead to false alarms, arrests ...

What This Means for You

Two concrete things. First: the evidence on AI and skill development is genuinely mixed. A controlled study found generative AI reduced study time on math problems but also reduced retention [7]. A Harvard physics course built a tailored AI tutor and saw engagement double [14]. Harvard's own newsroom is simultaneously arguing for preserving learning against AI shortcuts [13]. Translation: outcome depends heavily on how you use it. "Used AI" tells you almost nothing; *what you offloaded* tells you everything. If the tool replaced the struggle, the struggle is what you didn't learn.

[7] Generative AI Reduced Study Time on Math Problems and ...

[14] Professor tailored AI tutor to physics course. Engagement doubled.

[13] Preserving learning in the age of AI shortcuts — Harvard Gazette

Second: ask for the rule in writing. If your institution can sanction you for AI use, you're entitled to know — before the assignment — what counts. The legal terrain is unsettled [10], and 41% of UK universities reportedly have no public AI policy at all [11]. The research community is still arguing about what good use looks like [6]. You are not navigating poorly — you are navigating in fog the adults haven't cleared.

[10] Intelligence artificielle : l'université peut-elle sanctionner sans règle

[11] Karen Lumsden, PhD's Post

[6] Generative AI in Higher Education

References

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2. Adelphi University accused a student of using AI to ... - Newsday
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5. GenAI in Higher Education, Legitimacy and Laziness
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