

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE CROSS-REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITIES' AI POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

The surge in Artificial Intelligence (AI) has prompted higher education institutions to reconsider academic integrity principles and formalise AI policy at universities. Many international universities have already adopted AI policies, promoting AI governance to ensure the responsible use of AI. The objective of this paper is to compare the current institutional policies on AI integration in the academic context across universities and investigate the fundamental components of the regulatory framework. The study applied qualitative comparative analysis to the AI policies of international universities across Europe, North America, the Middle East, Australia, and Oceania, using the following metrics: scope, ethical priorities, permitted and prohibited uses, and contributing factors. The findings of this study revealed that there is no universal AI policy. AI policies vary significantly across regions, reflecting differences in AI governance. AI regulation is explicitly categorised and controlled in Europe, North America, and the Australia/Oceania region, whereas minimal restrictions are imposed at universities in the Middle East. The outcomes of this study significantly contribute to a broader discussion on AI governance in higher education institutions and its successful implementation in educational practices.

Keywords: AI policy, Artificial Intelligence in Education, AI governance, Higher Education Policy

MAP EDUCATION
AND HUMANITIES

Volume 7

ISSN: 2744-2373/ © The Authors.
Published by MAP - Multidisciplinary
Academic Publishing.

Article Submitted: 10 September 2026
Article Accepted: 21 October 2026
Article Published: 22 October 2026



Publisher's Note: MAP stays neutral with
regard to jurisdictional claims in published
maps and institutional affiliations.

<https://doi.org/10.53880/2744-2373.2026.7.93>

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Pachuashvili N. (2026). **Institutional Responses to Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: A Comparative Cross-Regional Analysis of Universities' AI Policies.**

MAP Education and Humanities, 7, 93-110. doi: <https://doi.org/10.53880/2744-2373.2026.7.93>



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Introduction

The advancement in AI tools has necessitated the urgency to develop and implement an AI policy in higher education settings. AI technologies created both opportunities, such as innovation, support for learning, and productivity, and risks, such as plagiarism issues, misinformation, and over-reliance (Ally & Mishra, 2024a). AI-powered platforms facilitate academic writing processes and are widely available for free. These tools enhance information search, content generation, problem-solving, and research methodology. AI tools have made educational content accessible, which made universities realise and act quickly to respond to the emerging trend on how these tools should be used. The academic society was in confusion about whether the integration of AI should be allowed for professors and students, and how to regulate its proper use. AI policy became the only solution to respond to the issue.

With such accelerated emergence of AI tools, higher Education institutions were left with no choice but to face the unique challenge of developing a comprehensive regulatory AI governance policy. On the one hand, universities adopt AI tools and implement them in educational practices. On the other, they are seen as pioneering innovative practices. Educational administrators have to ensure that AI-powered tools augment human capability, do not replace critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Ally & Mishra, 2024b). Taking responsibility demands rigour and dedication in understanding ethical risk, data governance, and strategies towards AI implementation. Ding (2025) and Humble (2025) argue that AI policymaking requires systematic training and practical work to develop an effective AI governing policy at the institutional level. AI policy is said to regulate and standardise the ways of using Artificial Intelligence ethically.

One of the most important reasons for introducing AI policy at the institutional level stems from concerns associated with ethics. Despite numerous affordances, AI-powered platforms pose serious risks to academic integrity (Smit, Wagner, & Bond-Barnard, 2025). One of the major risks is associated with bias. AI, as an algorithmic engine, is trained on large datasets, that lead to perpetuating the bias in generated responses (Bahammam, 2023; Ding, 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Biased content in turn contributes to data deviation from genuine content, resulting in inaccuracies and skewed responses. AI can blur the line between AI-generated content and authenticity (Khatri & Karki, 2023; Kotsis, 2024).

The concern of ethics further extends to the violation of academic integrity. If students generate and claim AI content as their own, this is a violation of the academic principle that emphasises honesty, fairness, and responsibility in learning (Bahammam, 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Ersöz & Engin, 2024; Gatrell et al., 2024). The role of universities is to develop students' critical thinking skills, and assessment methods to measure their abilities. AI-generated content comes into conflict with academic integrity since it makes it harder for professors to assess students' assignments fairly (Kohnke & Zaugg, 2025; Qadhi, Alduais, Chaaban, & Khraisheh, 2024). Unregulated use of AI leads to passing the course without obtaining any skills at university. Unethical application of AI platforms can also lead to cheating and plagiarism that may have a detrimental effect on students' intellectual capacity. Universities and experts have raised their voices for an efficient AI framework to regulate its ethical use (Ally & Mishra, 2024a; Khatri & Karki, 2023). Academic integrity can also be violated by fraudulent publications, spreading misinformation, or manipulating data that AI can contribute to (Ersöz & Engin, 2024; Gatrell et al., 2024). Since AI can produce content that is almost identical to authentic research, it can directly undermine academic integrity principles. This practise also undermines one's creativity and impedes critical thinking skills. Conducting research requires rigour and adherence to academic integrity principles that place humans at the forefront of research processes. Over-reliance on AI platforms and breach of academic integrity principles lead to diminishing critical thinking skills that can also compromise AI's effectiveness in many instances (Chan, 2023; Khatri & Karki, 2023; Kotsis, 2024).

Another important aspect that accelerated the process of AI policy stemmed from AI's significant impact on society. AI has transformed almost all industries, including education and governance. Its implications have reached all parts of society and created the necessity for all citizens to become AI literate (Ding, 2025; Kotsis, 2024). AI has transformed and automated educational processes, placing fewer administrative burdens on teachers (e.g., grading, attendance, feedback). AI-assisted platforms enable a personalised and adaptive learning environment, they can assist students to perform tasks tailored to their needs, preferences, and abilities. The platforms thus support diverse learners and maintain their motivation. Furthermore, AI has become strategically important for governments across all countries. Countries participate in the "AI race," and those that successfully lead on AI innovation appear to be institutionally well-positioned across the world (Radu, 2021; Roshanaei et al., 2023). In the

AI era, educational institutions are under pressure to integrate Artificial Intelligence quickly, not to be left behind in educational advancement. Such speed-driven AI adoption requires comprehensive strategic planning and responsibility. AI regulation leads to harmonising the markets and protecting stakeholders' rights, as well as fostering trust in AI systems, which are essential for global competitiveness (Zaretsky et al., 2024). The latter also mitigates the harm that may arise from the unregulated deployment of AI in the educational context.

Researchers also argue that the role of an educator is not only to instil literacy skills in students, but to prepare them for a fast-paced digital world (Ally & Mishra, 2024b). UNESCO (2023) emphasises the importance of digital skills to prepare students for the 21st-century technological revolution. AI has already transformed all sectors such as medicine, law, business, education, and students entering the workforce will need to be AI-skills equipped as well as understand the associated links and limitations. The role of a university is to upskill graduates, so they do not leave university feeling unprepared for the real world (Humble, 2025). This necessitates the importance of AI policy since educational institutions need to integrate AI in education and align its standards with the competencies needed for an AI-driven market (Smit et al., 2025). It is essential that higher education institutions adapt AI policy and guidelines to integrate into the curriculum successfully, with critical alignment with AI literacy skills and professional development regarding AI.

The above reasons illustrate that an AI policy is essential to provide clear regulation on Artificial Intelligence governance. The absence of regulations may lead to confusion about what is acceptable, eventually resulting in academic misconduct. However, the degree of AI permission varies, and it often depends on the institution's own academic culture, national regulations, and ethical priorities. While AI can be allowed in assignments in some universities, it can be prohibited in research practices in others. Furthermore, different universities may follow their country's data protection law, which affects the use of AI in research, learning, and teaching processes. In light of the above, the present paper aims to illustrate how university policies differ in AI governance. In particular, it analyses the scope and content of AI policies, ethical priorities, and the allowed and prohibited practices of AI. The paper also analyses the factors that contributed to the regulation of AI and a typical aspect of the policy. The paper also

aims to highlight the importance of AI regulations in universities, which are still developing the regulatory framework.

Literature Review

How AI Policies Come into Regulation

An increased use of Artificial Intelligence has pushed educational administrations across universities to reach a consensus to introduce a comprehensive yet flexible policy to embrace AI benefits while mitigating the risks (Stracke et al., 2025). The efforts were made to promote the formation of an AI policy to address issues such as ethics, data privacy, transparency, and plagiarism, as well as introduce efficient ways of integrating AI into educational practices.

UNESCO's (2023) Recommendations

One of the first international organisations to address the use of AI was UNESCO, who released a framework for education policymakers (Bradshaw et al., 2024; UNESCO 2023). Issued in 2021 and adopted by 193 UNESCO member countries unanimously, UNESCO's (2023) recommendations on the ethics of AI guide educators, policymakers, institutions, and universities on the following four core values: human rights and human dignity, living in peaceful and interconnected societies, ensuring diversity and inclusion, and the environment ecosystem and flourishing. The first core value, Human Rights and Human Dignity, emphasises the rights of an individual, such as privacy, freedom of expression, and the protection of human dignity. The core principle prevents AI usage from exploiting students' privacy and emphasises the risk of unfair surveillance. Instead, AI should support the learning process. The second core principle outlines strengthening fairness, justice, and global collaboration to promote inclusivity and collaboration in universities. The third core value aligns with social, linguistic, and cultural diversities, ensuring no marginalised groups are excluded. It emphasises the inclusiveness of AI technologies to promote accessibility and benefit to everyone, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, or gender. The last core value underscores the importance of environmental sustainability since training AI models requires significant energy and resources, affecting the climate. Recommendations are given to use AI to minimise environmental harm and maximise its support in achieving ecosystem goals. In other words, these four core values emphasise human-centred, inclusive, socially responsible, and environmentally sustainable use of Artificial Intelligence (UNESCO 2023).

UNESCO's (2023) guidelines also emphasise ten core ethical principles, including the right to privacy and data protection, safety and security, multi-stakeholder and adaptive governance and collaboration, responsibility and accountability, transparency and explainability, fairness and non-discrimination, and awareness and literacy. To address the values mentioned above, UNESCO (2023) issued actionable policies for education policymakers to realise the goal of education to establish a fair, ethical AI framework, ensuring the fundamental values of equity and inclusion in education. The recommendations state that universities should go beyond high-level principles and implement practical strategies. In other words, guidelines emphasise using AI in practice in a morally sound, unbiased, reasonable, and inclusive way.

Taking all these values together, UNESCO's (2023) recommendations serve to provide guidelines for member countries to promote responsible and fair, equitable distribution of AI. UNESCO is working with higher education institutions, government sectors, and private organisations to translate the guidelines and put them into action. UNESCO also assigns responsibilities to governments to regulate AI use to meet the public interest and establish an institutional response to ethical AI (Bradshaw et al., 2024).

EU AI Act

Another important impact-based approach to imposing regulations on AI was proposed by the EU AI Act Whitepaper. In 2024, after negotiations and political agreements, the AI Act was adopted by the European Parliament in March 2024. The European Council issued the first comprehensive international framework to mitigate AI-induced risks: the AI Act (Stracke et al., 2025; Zaretsky et al., 2024). The Act ensures that AI implementation is safe and does not violate human rights and trustworthiness. The Act identifies four risk levels, ranging from unacceptable risk to minimal or no risk. The first level, unacceptable risk, identifies AI as forbidden/ unacceptable if it violates safety, human rights, and people's freedom. These practices include the manipulative use of AI and real-time biometric identification in public spaces. For example, AI systems that rank people according to their behaviour characteristics or statistics are banned (Social Scoring Systems) or systems that exploit vulnerability. These practices also include emotional recognition in sensitive cases, such as using AI to read emotions in hiring processes, at schools, or in workplaces. Layer two includes high

risk, outlining that AI systems can pose serious risks to people's health and their fundamental rights. They are only allowed under strict measurements. These practices include using AI in medical devices or employment decisions, such as hiring people or CV screening, as well as in education, such as grading and student admission. The third layer, low-risk AI systems do not pose danger, but can be misleading unless strictly regulated. Such practices include customer service chatbots (users should be informed they are talking to AI) and generative AI models (outputs should be labelled as AI-generated). The last level, minimal risk AI or No-risk AI, includes AI platforms of low impact and the platforms that do not impose obligations beyond the existing law. Such practices are AI in video games, recommendation systems for entertainment. Such practices do not require compliance under the AI Act (Zaretsky et al., 2024).

The EU Act also introduces obligations on AI high-risk systems and general-purpose AI (GPAI). High-risk AI systems must be under ongoing risk management to evaluate and mitigate the risks. The document assigns obligations to AI providers, users, and distributors. It outlines the provider's obligation to ensure that high-risk AI systems comply with the applicable requirements of the AI Act, including risk management and conformity assessment before the systems are placed on the market. It also emphasised the importance of human oversight as well as transparency in providing information to users. The EU AI Act assigns the following obligations for users to use AI according to the provided instructions and with human oversight when required. AI platforms must be monitored to report issues and comply with transparency regulations. As for distributors, AI systems must be verified to ensure traceability. In case of non-compliance, AI distributors are recommended to take actions (Stracke et al., 2025; Zaretsky et al., 2024).

The EU AI Act establishes a risk-based regulatory framework that moves beyond reliance on voluntary guidelines and self-regulation by imposing specific compliance obligations on providers and deployers of AI systems. Users, providers, and distributors of AI systems must adhere to the binding regulations, in case of breach, they must face penalties. The document also governs AI frameworks, such as ethical guidelines and institutional commitments, which were not strongly regulated before. It is rooted in the protection of human rights, which are enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and other legislative documents like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The EU AI Act is a human-centric

approach to AI governance, ensuring transparency, fairness, human dignity, and protection of privacy. It further proposes the need for training and testing to reach transparency about the data used and compliance with regulations (Humble 2025; Stracke et al., 2025; Zaretsky et al., 2024).

The OECD AI principles

The OECD AI principles, set in 2019 but refined in 2024, propose ethical, human-centered, beneficial, and trustworthy implementation of AI in society while supporting innovation and economic growth. The principles acknowledge the beneficial effect of AI in healthcare, productivity and science while emphasising potential risks such as disinformation, copyright infringement, and data insecurity (OECD, 2024; O'Sullivan et al., 2025). Acknowledging that AI has no borders, OECD proposes principles for international organisations and policymakers to guide the deployment of AI to maximise its benefits while mitigating its risks. The OECD AI principles cover the following regulations: Inclusive Growth and Well-being (AI should be beneficial to all), Respect for Human Rights and Democracy – AI should ensure fairness, privacy, dignity, and freedom. Transparency, Safety, and Accountability come as guiding principles to ensure people have a fair understanding of AI outcomes, AI systems are reliable, and organisations as well as humans, have responsibilities for AI systems (OECD, 2024). OECD proposes recommendations for policymakers to invest in AI research and development, build a digital ecosystem and foster inclusive AI systems, create an agile policy environment to support AI transition from research to its operation stage, balancing innovations and safeguards. OECD principles also recommend building human capacity, promoting AI skills training, transforming the workforce, and promoting international cooperation. As of 2024, 47 countries have adopted OECD recommendations, among which 8 are non-EU member countries (OECD, 2024; O'Sullivan et al., 2025).

These international organisations' initiatives pushed academic institutions to create an AI policy to regulate the use of Artificial Intelligence. AI policies serve as a governing document for students, educators, researchers, and university administrative personnel, outlining advantages and limitations. UNESCO's (2023) recommendations and the EU AI Act provide guidelines for its ethical use as an additional tool rather than a substitute for human capacity. The guidelines focus on improving students' learning experience and increasing engagement in research activities, while also mitigating administrative burden. The

recommendations also serve to provide an ethical framework and guide higher education institutions towards taking actionable steps and implementing AI policies transparently (Bradshaw et al., 2024; Stracke et al., 2025; Zaretsky et al., 2024).

International Universities' Response to AI

International universities' AI policies often vary due to national regulations, cultural context, or funding infrastructure. AI policies also differ in terms of emphasising the benefits to addressing ethical issues. The UK universities are at the forefront of this innovation. UK Research and Innovation is allocating a large sum of income to the exploration of AI in research processes (Chubb, Cowling, & Reed, 2021). Some British universities require students to submit a disclosure to declare the use of AI in their assignments, while other universities, for example, the University of Oxford supports the use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, Bing Chat and Google Bard, but emphasises the importance of critical thinking in formulating scholarly-based arguments (University of Oxford, 2026). Similarly, the University of Cambridge embraces the use of AI in a number of academic tasks, such as research and formative work, while strictly adhering to academic principles. The university further warns students of data privacy, bias and inaccuracy in AI-generated content. Unacknowledged use of AI content constitutes academic misconduct; therefore, students are reminded to disclose the use of AI, the tools used, and the prompts provided (University of Cambridge, 2025).

Unlike the universities outlined above, the University of Birmingham allows the use of AI with strict limitations in assignments. Students cannot exclusively utilise AI unless authorised by the instructor. Even when permitted, AI content should not exceed a specified percentage of overall word count (Atkinson-Toal & Guo, 2024). The University's guidelines are in alignment with The Russell Group's initiative to promote AI literacy, empower faculty members, update teaching methods to reflect on AI, and provide equal access to all. The Russell Group (RG) is an association of 24 highly ranked research universities in the UK that issued the 5 principles of using AI (Russell Group, 2023). The Russell Group universities receive a large sum of funding for research initiatives and are known for their academic standards. RG principles on AI use have been adapted by member universities, such as the University of Birmingham, the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, University College London (UCL), the University of Edinburgh, etc.

Apart from the above AI policies, the University of Exeter allows students to cite AI-generated content as personal communications. Furthermore, students are required to disclose a list of AI tools and prompts used in academic assignment writing processes. Monash University in Australia also emphasises the responsible and ethical use of AI for students, staff, and administration. The policy advocates for fairness to ensure AI respects human rights and promotes equity. It also emphasises integrity and transparency. Staff and students are required to use AI ethically while understanding the threats associated with it (Monash University, 2025). University of Leicester embraces the ethical and responsible use of AI in learning, teaching and assessment. The university acknowledges the affordances such as Copilot, Gemini, and ChatGPT. The policy applies to all programmes at the university, including research courses such as a PhD. However, the policy does not apply to researchers who are covered by the Research Code of Conduct.

Despite the above-mentioned, there is no universal AI ethical policy across universities. Many international universities either do not have an AI policy or are working towards regulating its use. In many cases, universities' uncertainty stems from the country's unclear regulatory AI policy. Universities often rely on the country's national frameworks to guide their teaching, research, and assessment practices. The absence of a state-regulated AI framework leads to confusion among the university community. It can also result in developing fragmented or inconsistent AI policies, raising ethical risks and data privacy issues. For this reason, the decision, whether or not to use AI in the educational context, is often left to individual instructors. Some universities do not have clear AI guidelines, whereas some assign decision-making responsibility to instructors. While AI can be prohibited in a few higher education institutions, an insignificant proportion of universities accept AI as a source to be cited in assignments if permitted by the instructor. The AI revolution has accelerated educational processes, leaving educators with no choice but to keep pace with this innovation. However, the major challenge faced by academics is to redesign their practices and emphasise their ethical use. Financial backup of AI innovation has also fuelled the integration process into the current curriculum (Chubb, Cowling, & Reed, 2021).

Research Questions

Based on the above-presented analysis, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the similarities and differences across international universities' AI policies regarding scope, ethical priorities, permitted and prohibited use?
2. To what extent do regional differences shape international universities' AI policies?
3. What regulatory policy framework (UNESCO recommendations, OECD principles, EU AI act, or national strategies) contributed to the development of institutional AI policy?

Research Methodology

The present study employed a descriptive qualitative research method to investigate the extent to which international universities regulate artificial intelligence in the academic context. Descriptive qualitative research provides straightforward and comprehensive analyses of documents. While this method is mostly valuable in health science research, the author believes that it can provide a hands-on experience of the phenomenon, directly inform policy development and contribute to evidence-based interventions (Creswell, 2024). Furthermore, the present method allows capturing rich descriptions without interpreting or theorising data. It enables the researcher to systematically describe and categorise data. It focuses on identifying patterns, similarities, and differences.

The rationale behind selecting this methodology lies in examining AI policies and regulatory frameworks in depth, considering ethical issues and institutional positioning with regard to an emerging innovation. The purpose of the study is to examine how AI governance frameworks vary across international universities and further explore cross-cultural differences in institutional approaches to AI regulation. In particular, selecting a descriptive qualitative design enables the identification of varying uses of AI policies focusing on ethical priorities, AI allowance, AI prohibition, and contributing factors. The analysis helps to systematically describe, categorise, and interpret the patterns within institutional AI policy documents. A descriptive qualitative design also enabled the provision of in-depth analysis on how global ethical principles, such as academic integrity, accountability, data protection, are integrated and translated into institutional policy across different regions. The present design also enables to draw a comparison between university AI policies across regions and examine how nations shape regulatory decisions.

Data Collection

The dataset of the present study consists of the international AI policy documents collected from official university websites. A purposeful sampling strategy has been applied to select institutions that have AI policies publicly available and addressed the use of artificial intelligence in academic contexts. The selection criteria also included the explicit reference to the use of AI in learning, teaching, and research processes, allowed and prohibited use of AI, ethical priorities, and contributing factors. The data collected were also categorised as institutional-level documents rather than department-specific regulations. Furthermore, the availability of the document in English has also been a selection priority for the present dataset. The final sampling reflected geographical diversity to allow the comparative analysis among universities across regions. The most up-to-date policy documents were downloaded and prepared for systematic qualitative analysis.

Procedure

The data collected were analysed using NVivo to explore international universities' AI policies in-depth. It has facilitated the rigorous and transparent analytical process (Limna, 2023). NVivo enabled systematic coding of policy documents and organising them under the following thematic codes: Scope, Ethical Priorities, Permitted Use, Prohibited Use, and Contributing Factors. The platform allowed the researcher to carry out in-depth reading analysis of datasets and ensured that relevant fragments of the texts could be easily allocated and compared around each theme.

In addition, NVivo was supportive in conducting a cross-cultural comparison by examining the frequency and intensity of particular themes across all institutional policy texts. This functionality further enabled the researcher to identify similarities and differences across universities in different regions. It has further enriched the present study and contributed to reliable and transparent data analysis.

Findings

The first group of universities comprises The University of Leicester, UK, Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e), Netherlands, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, and The University of Bologna, Italy. Table 1 below presents the universities' AI policies and their permitted and prohibited practices. Furthermore, ethical priorities and contributing factors are emphasised.

As can be seen from Table 1 above, although all AI policies focus on AI governance, the universities' scope differs. The University of Leicester applies AI policy primarily to all undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including taught modules, however, AI governance is limited for research staff. Research activities are governed by a separate Research Code of Conduct. Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) and Trinity College Dublin, on the other hand, adopt a broader institutional scope and apply their AI policies to all students, academic staff, and researchers as well as programme directors and teaching staff. The University of Bologna extends its AI governance to students and lecturers, including teaching assistants, people in leadership positions, and even external contributors, such as companies or publishers.

As regards the permitted use of AI, the above-discussed universities share the following practices. AI is permitted to be used for brainstorming and idea generation (University of Leicester, TU/e, and Trinity College Dublin), as well as summarising and translating information (University of Leicester, TU/e, University of Bologna). In all the above universities, AI is permitted for language refinement and planning/structuring academic work. It is also permitted to be used as a research assistant. However, there are some institution-specific practices: Trinity College Dublin permits the use of AI if acknowledged or cited appropriately. Similarly, the University of Bologna allows substantial use of AI in research and academic writing, if it is declared or supervised.

The above-presented universities impose restrictions on AI use to protect academic integrity and adhere to copyright rules. Prohibited applications of AI include submitting AI-generated content as one's own work (University of Leicester, Trinity College Dublin, University of Bologna) and uploading confidential or copyrighted materials into AI tools (TU/e, Trinity College Dublin, University of Bologna). Some universities require students to submit a disclosure (TU/e, Trinity College Dublin). Using AI as an author or co-author is prohibited at the University of Bologna. The University of Leicester introduces a traffic light system in which assignments are flagged as red (banned), amber (support) only, and green (content allowed). All in all, the universities prohibit the use of AI if it substitutes human intellectual property rather than augmenting it.

As can be inferred from Table 1, all European universities emphasise ethics in relation to using AI. All universities emphasise transparency and disclosure of AI, as well as academic integrity and authorship responsibility. TU/e, University of Bologna,

Table 1.
European Universities' AI Policies

University	Scope	Permitted Use	Prohibited Use	Ethical Priorities	Contributing Factors
University of Leicester, UK	UG/PG students teaching staff	Brainstorming, planning, summarising, language improvement, coding, data analysis, content creation	AI in restricted assessments, submitting AI work without citation, uploading data without consent	Academic integrity, transparency, fairness, inclusivity, GDPR	OFS B, Senate regulations, GDPR, stakeholder input
TU/e, Netherlands	Students, teaching staff, examiners, programme leaders	Brainstormingsummarising, language support, self-study, content creation with disclosure	Undisclosed AI-generated work, sensitive/copyrighted data, AI-generated research data without permission, automated decisions without human oversight	Transparency, academic integrity, privacy, IP, accuracy, bias	Examination regulations, Code of Scientific Conduct, GDPR, programme input
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland	Students, academic/research staff, professional staff	Brainstorming, planning, summarising, teaching, research, language support with acknowledgement	Submitting AI work as own, personal/confidential data, copyright material, unverified AI output	Transparency, accountability, privacy, IP, academic integrity	EU AI Act, research-integrity guidance, institutional policies, UNESCO guidance
University of Bologna, Italy	Students, teaching/research staff, leadership, external collaborators	Information gathering, translation, language support, substantial AI use with disclosure and supervision	Personal/confidential data, AI as author, undisclosed synthetic data, plagiarism, replacing intellectual activity	Human-centred use, transparency, accountability, accuracy, privacy, equality	University regulations, research-integrity rules, EU/national legislation

Note: Developed by the researcher based on the University of Leicester (2026), Eindhoven University of Technology (2024), Trinity College Dublin (2025), University of Bologna (2026).

and University of Oxford also emphasise human oversight and accountability for AI-generated content. Data protection and intellectual capacity have also been underpinned as ethical priorities.

The above-presented data also reveal that there are several influencing factors that contributed to the design of AI policies. GDPR and data protection legislation influence the AI policies at the University of Leicester, TU/e, Trinity College Dublin, and the University of Bologna. There is also an explicit reference to the EU AI Act and UNESCO (2023) guidelines for the AI policy at Trinity College Dublin. The Code of Ethics also contributed to the design of AI at the University of Bologna.

The second group of universities comprises the universities from North America, Yale University, Duke University, Loyola University New Orleans, Northeastern University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Table 2 below presents the universities' AI policies according to the given criteria.

As can be seen in Table 2, Yale University and Loyola University New Orleans impose a centralised AI policy that applies to their students, faculty, and staff, covering both academic and administrative levels. Northeastern University's AI policy primarily focuses on guiding faculty and staff in the use of AI for research and professional activities. Duke University, on the other hand, assigns responsibilities

Table 2.
North American Universities' AI Policies

University	Scope	Permitted Use	Prohibited Use	Ethical Priorities	Key Factors
Yale University, USA	Students, faculty, staff, researchers	Academic/ administrative use with appropriate attribution	Confidential or legally restricted data	Accuracy, bias, equity, DEIB	Rapid AI development, school-level input, privacy/ security
Loyola University New Orleans, USA	Faculty, staff, students, affiliates	Ideation, research, translation, tutoring with acknowledgement	Discriminatory/illegal content, fraudulent research, restricted data, undisclosed AI work	Academic integrity, privacy, security, fairness, transparency	AI development, accuracy/bias, equal access, legal obligations
Northeastern University, USA	Faculty and staff	Teaching, research, administration, creativity with attribution	Unattributed AI use, unverified outputs, unauthorised sensitive-data processing	Privacy, security, bias prevention, legal/ academic integrity	Rapid AI development, legal/privacy risks, operational needs
Duke University, USA	Faculty, teaching staff, students	Drafting, revision, ideas, research and synthesis when permitted	Unauthorised AI use, submitting AI work without understanding/ verification	Academic integrity, transparency, critical thinking, responsible use	Rapid technological change, disciplinary differences, AI literacy
MIT USA	Faculty, staff, students, IT providers	Teaching, learning, research and administration using approved tools	Security/privacy/IP violations, unauthorised AI tools, academic-integrity violations	Data security, privacy, academic integrity, confidentiality, compliance	Rapid AI development, sensitive data, legal/institutional requirements

Note: Developed by the researcher based on Yale University (2026), Loyola University New Orleans (2026), Duke University (2025), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2025), Northeastern University (2025).

to instructors to determine AI use within individual courses, aligning its ethical use with academic integrity standards. MIT AI policy covers the use of AI across faculty, staff, students, and IT support providers, also emphasising its application in administrative jobs, teaching, and research.

AI is generally permitted to be used in academic and research tasks such as brainstorming, drafting, and editing (Loyola University New Orleans, Duke University). The practices extend to pre-writing, drafting, revising, and synthesising. It can also be used as a research assistant in drafting research documents and analysing data (Northeastern University, MIT). AI can also be used as a reference tool, tutor, and translator at Loyola University New Orleans. Furthermore, AI is allowed to be used in teaching and learning activities at MIT and Yale University. The latter also accepts AI in academic and administrative activities. In other

words, AI is mostly allowed as a learning support in administrative and academic activities.

Regarding prohibited uses, although universities generally permit the use of AI in academic contexts, they impose restrictions to protect academic integrity and ensure compliance with institutional policies. Common prohibitions include submitting AI-generated content without acknowledgment or attribution. Such practices are regarded as a violation of academic integrity (Yale University, Loyola University New Orleans, Duke University). It is also not permitted to insert restricted data into AI systems or use AI in a way that violates institutional standards (Yale University, MIT, Northeastern University, Loyola University New Orleans). Besides, AI is prohibited from substituting human work and producing fake, fraudulent research (Loyola University New Orleans). The above universities all emphasise the compliance

of AI use with academic integrity principles and the protection of personal data. Their ethical priorities focus on responsible authorship (Loyola University New Orleans, Duke University, MIT), transparency and attribution of AI-generated content (Yale University, Loyola University New Orleans, Duke University), and protection of personal data and compliance with institutional regulations (MIT, Northeastern University, Yale University). Furthermore, Yale University integrated the DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging) principle in relation to ethical AI use.

As can also be inferred from the table, North American universities' AI policies are strongly influenced by technological advancement, institutional requirements to keep pace with the AI revolution, and security concerns. All universities emphasise the importance of data protection and compliance with regulations such as FERPA and HIPAA. Universities further aim to provide AI literacy

and promote responsible use among university communities (Yale University, Duke University).

The third group of universities comprises the universities in the Australia/Oceania region. The following universities have been selected: Monash University, Australia, Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), New Zealand, University of Sydney, Australia, and James Cook University (JCU), Australia. Table 3 below presents their AI policies.

As can be seen from Table 3, AI policies apply to students, staff, governance bodies, administration leaders, and associates (Monash University, JCU). AI's use further extends to visiting scholars and service providers at VUW. Policy governance is embedded across teaching, research, and institutional practices at the University of Sydney. All universities in Australia and Oceania generally implement institution-wide governance frameworks integrating AI in multiple academic and professional settings.

Table 3.

AI policies in the universities in the Australia/Oceania region

University	Scope	Permitted Use	Prohibited Use	Ethical Priorities	Key Factors
Monash University, Australia	Staff, students, associates, council members and committees	Education, research and operations, GenAI with risk assessment, oversight and attribution	Privacy/security/ IP violations, academic-integrity breaches, unassessed deployment, biased or harmful use	Integrity, accountability, fairness, privacy, security, sustainability	Global operations, different legal frameworks, bias/misuse risks
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand	Staff, students, contractors, researchers and service providers	Teaching, research and coursework where permitted, approved tools for sensitive data	Unapproved use of confidential data, unauthorised coursework/thesis use, unauthorised assessment/review of external work	Privacy, academic integrity, Māori interests, inclusion, accessibility, sustainability, transparency	Rapid AI development, legal requirements, accuracy/ bias, equal access
University of Sydney, Australia	Mainly students, teaching/integrity staff	Study, skills development and digital literacy, AI in unsupervised assessments if acknowledged	AI in supervised assessments unless permitted, undisclosed AI-generated work, breaches of unit rules	Academic integrity, transparency, fairness, student ownership, critical thinking	Academic-integrity policy, ICT policy, unit-specific rules
James Cook University, Australia	Students, academic/ administrative staff, researchers and AI product owners	Teaching, learning, research, administration, feedback and innovation	Academic-integrity breaches, unauthorised AI, privacy/security violations, failure to follow approval/risk processes	Transparency, accountability, human oversight, fairness, privacy, safety	Data quality, algorithmic bias, regulation, organisational risk management

Note: Developed by the researcher based on Monash University (2026), Victoria University of Wellington (2025), University of Sydney (2026), and James Cook University (2024).

As regards permitted uses of AI, it can be observed that AI is permitted in educational practices such as research and teaching (Monash University, VUW, JCU). It is used to support the learning process and promote digital literacy and skills development (University of Sydney). It is also worth noting that AI can contribute to administrative efficiency and student feedback provision as well as support innovative initiatives (JCU). It is permitted for staff to use it for teaching, research, and administrative purposes, provided confidential data is not inserted into the AI system (VUW). Students are also allowed to use in open assignments if properly acknowledged (University of Sydney). It can be noted that across all universities, using AI is framed as a supportive tool to enhance educational quality, research productivity, and institutional efficiency.

Despite wide institutional practices of using IA, the universities prohibit AI use in assignments unless it is explicitly stated. Unauthorised AI in thesis or coursework is classified as academic misconduct; therefore, universities emphasise the importance of preventing AI misuse in academic works (University of Sydney, VUW). AI is also prohibited if it violates intellectual property and data privacy. Universities prioritise responsible handling of sensitive information and data protection (Monash University, VUW). Monash University requires carrying out risk assessment before deploying AI systems, moreover, JCU prohibits AI use if it does not comply with risk management frameworks. In all the above-presented universities, it is clearly implied that AI should not replace human judgment, and its use must require human oversight. The universities assign accountability and decision-making capacity to humans.

Table 4.
Middle East Universities' AI Policies

University	Scope	Permitted Use	Prohibited Use	Ethical Priorities	Contributing Factors
Zayed University (ZU), United Arab Emirates	Students, faculty and staff	AI use according to course requirements, research with citation, instructor-approved use	Unauthorised AI use, AI-assisted cheating/plagiarism, impersonation	Academic integrity, attribution, proper citation	Reliability of AI outputs, fabricated information/citations, limitations of AI
United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)	Students, faculty, researchers and administrative staff	Supporting learning, skills, education and research, developing critical/creative thinking.	Conditional/implicit restrictions rather than an explicit blanket ban	Innovation, creativity, critical thinking, academic/professional development	UAE National AI Strategy, government leadership, national AI ambitions
King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia	Students and researchers	AI as a supportive research/writing tool where it does not replace human contribution	Generating ideas, submitting AI-generated content as one's own	Academic integrity, transparency, innovation, technological leadership	Saudi Vision 2030, national R&D priorities, partnerships
The American University in Cairo, Egypt	Applies to all AUC community members: students, faculty, staff	Research, creativity and coursework where permitted, discipline-specific use	Presenting AI-generated material as one's own, gaining unfair advantage	Originality, authenticity, transparency, academic integrity	Growing role of AI, academic/professional needs, development of institutional best practices

Note: Developed by the researcher based on Zayed University (2026), King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (2024), King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (2026), United Arab Emirates University (2025), The American University in Cairo (n.d.).

The universities from Australia and Oceania place a strong emphasis on ethical principles in AI governance. Universities prioritise transparency, accountability, and responsible use of AI (Monash University, JCU), emphasising human-centered AI governance and fairness. Furthermore, the University of Sydney and Victoria University of Wellington also underline student responsibility and academic honesty when using AI. They encourage proper AI acknowledgment practices to adhere to academic integrity principles. Moreover, universities strictly emphasise human rights and social good in AI deployment (Monash University, VUW).

Lastly, the above-presented universities' AI policies are based on multiple international legal frameworks and country legislation, such as the Privacy Act and Copyright Act (Monash University, VUW). Some universities, such as the University of Sydney and Victoria University of Wellington, frame AI use through educational assessment concerns.

Fourth group comprises the following universities in the Middle East: Zayed University (ZU), United Arab Emirates, United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia and The American University in Cairo, Egypt. Table 4 presents their institutional AI policies.

As can be seen from Table 4, Zayed University and The American University in Cairo (AUC) regulate AI applications through their academic integrity frameworks. Their policies primarily apply to university students, faculty members, and research staff. The AI policy is often course-dependent, and its governance is applied to teaching, coursework, and research activities. United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), on the other hand, regulates AI use through an AI strategy (AI agenda 2025–203), focusing on the use of AI in educational programmes. The permitted use of AI includes its application in coursework, research activities, and creative and academic tasks (ZU, AUC). IA permitted if explicitly permitted by instructors. The universities also require students to properly cite and acknowledge the use of AI in their works. UAEU and KAUST also promote the use of AI for learning enhancement and writing skills development. KAUST also supports AI use in research and development.

As regards prohibited use, ZU and AUC explicitly prohibit submitting AI-generated content as one's own work and treat it as plagiarism. The use of AI for cheating and other forms of academic misconduct is prohibited. The universities also require

an acknowledgement of AI in academic works. Additionally, ZU prohibits AI-based impersonation. However, UAEU and KAUST do not explicitly ban the use of AI. Their AI policy framework's main focus is on innovation and adoption rather than restrictions.

Most Middle Eastern universities emphasise ethical use, academic integrity, and responsible application of AI. ZU and AUC encourage proper citation and attribution of any AI use, while emphasising AI as a tool rather than a replacement for human intellectual effort. UAEU further emphasises innovation, creativity, and critical thinking, while KAUST prioritises technological leadership and talent development. As regards contributing factors, as can be seen in Table 4, AI policies reflect on maintaining educational standards and preventing plagiarism (ZU & AUC). AI policy is also influenced by the UAE National AI Strategy and the government support for AI development (UAEU & KAUST). Furthermore, AI policy at KAUST is shaped by Saudi Vision 2030 and national priorities.

Discussion

Presence and Scope of AI policies

The above analysis of AI policies of international universities emphasises that European universities have a strong academic integrity focus (University of Leicester, Trinity Dublin College, University of Bologna, TU/e). AI misuse is framed primarily as plagiarism and academic misconduct. The universities require their students to provide citations and disclosures of AI use. Each European university presented above has structured assessment regulations. The University of Leicester has implemented a traffic-light assignment system. All European universities categorise when AI can be permitted or prohibited. They impose mandatory AI disclosure of the AI tool, version, and method required (TU/e, Trinity College Dublin). They also assign accountability to individual students and researchers for outputs. AI is not recognised as an author and is not treated as a supporting author. The universities' policies are comprehensive, highly formalised, and institutionally embedded in study and research processes (University of Leicester, TU/e, Trinity College Dublin, University of Bologna). European Universities' AI policies are the most mature and provide a standardised AI regulatory framework. Their policies are strongly influenced by European regulatory frameworks that are characterised by high AI governance and structured flexibility. Their policies emphasise innovation yet strictly adhere to the regulatory frameworks.

Unlike European Universities, North American Universities have decentralised governance of AI. AI governance is infrastructure-led and often faculty-defined (Duke University, Loyola University New Orleans, Yale University). Similar to European Universities, AI is framed as a learning enhancement tool and a cognitive support system. In other words, AI should focus on learning development (Duke University). Some universities also provide licensed AI tools to create a secure research environment for users (MIT). North American universities strongly emphasise the importance of AI citation and acknowledgement of AI use. AI misuse is defined as plagiarism and unauthorised assistance, however, its enforcement mechanisms are less standardised than in Europe. Like European Universities, North American universities emphasise data privacy and institutional security. Their policies comply with FERPA and HIPAA regulations. North American Universities' AI policies are less rigid than European ones: AI governance is often instructor-led as well as institutional. Their hybrid governance model is a combination of instructor autonomy and institutional oversight.

Australian and Oceanian universities' AI policies, on the other hand, are highly centralised and systematic. University policies are embedded in institutional governance and risk management frameworks. Their policies extend to administration and operations. The universities have a risk-based governance approach (Monash University, JCU, VUW), emphasising safe use of AI context, data sensitivity, lifecycle governance, and risk assessment. Moreover, Australian universities have a clear distinction between acceptable use of AI and AI misconduct. Beyond academic integrity, the universities emphasise ethical and cultural integration, such as Māori values, sustainability and global responsibility (VUW). AI governance is linked to cultural responsibilities, inclusion, and social justice. Australian Universities' AI frameworks are more structured than North American ones, but less legally driven than those in Europe.

Compared to other regions, Middle Eastern Universities' AI policies are fragmented and uneven across institutions. The scope of their policies is limited to academic integrity-based principles (Zayed University, AUC). Some universities' AI policies operate through AI strategies and an innovation framework (UAEU, KAUST). Table 4 shows that none of the universities has established a comprehensive AI governance framework encompassing the full AI lifecycle, risk-based institutional procedures, and structured mechanisms for assessment regulation. ZU's and the AUC's focus is on teaching, coursework,

and academic conduct, whereas UAEU and KAUST emphasise research, innovation, and national-level AI integration.

Permitted and Prohibited Uses of AI

European Universities offer structured and conditional permissions to university stakeholders. AI use is explicitly categorised and controlled. In all European universities, AI is permitted when used as a supportive tool for learning, such as brainstorming, drafting, structuring ideas, or improving language and academic writing (University of Leicester, Trinity College Dublin, TU/e, University of Bologna). Its use is prohibited when IA replaces students' or researchers' intellectual capability and threatens critical thinking. AI use is permitted within clearly defined frameworks and categories, such as traffic-light systems or substantial vs non-substantive use of AI (University of Leicester, University of Bologna). AI permission is also exam-controlled, which determines acceptable levels of use (TU/e). It is also worth mentioning that in all European universities, AI is permitted when disclosed and properly cited, often requiring disclosing AI tools, purpose, and methods applied (Trinity College Dublin, TU/e, University of Bologna). AI is prohibited when it is not disclosed or is misrepresented (University of Leicester, Trinity College Dublin, TU/e). The European universities also strictly emphasise data protection and privacy regulations. AI is prohibited when it involves uploading confidential and copyrighted data.

Similarly, AI is permitted as a learning tool in North American Universities. It can be used for idea generation, drafting papers, research, or administrative efficiency (Yale University, Duke University, Loyola University New Orleans, Northeastern University, MIT). Like European Universities, North American universities prohibit the use of AI when it misrepresents authorship or bypasses learning processes. Without correct attribution, AI use is not allowed. As mentioned in the findings, North American universities' AI policies are decentralised, and the responsibility of AI governance is often instructor-led. In some North American universities, AI permission aligns with course-specific guidelines set by instructors (Duke University, Loyola University New Orleans). It is therefore prohibited when used without the instructor's approval. The universities also emphasise transparency when AI use is acknowledged and cited appropriately. AI use is prohibited when it involves unauthorised tools or insecure handling of confidential, personal, or restricted data (Yale University, Northeastern University, MIT).

In the Australia-Oceania region, AI is permitted as part of integrated teaching, learning, and research practices, particularly when its use is open and unsupervised (University of Sydney, Monash University, VUW, JCU). It is allowed when its use strictly adheres to institutional risk assessment and approval processes, including using institution-approved tools (Monash University, VUW, JCU). Like European and North American Universities, AI is prohibited when it breaches academic conduct, such as in restricted assessment or submitting AI-generated content without disclosure (University of Sydney, VUW, Monash University). It is also prohibited if it involves using unapproved AI tools or bypassing AI governance principles. Similar to all universities across the regions discussed above, Australian and Oceanian universities emphasise transparency and encourage clear acknowledgement of AI policies in academic contexts (University of Sydney, VUW).

Unlike European, North American, and Australian universities, the universities in the Middle East impose minimal restrictions on AI use. AI is widely permitted, especially in innovation-focused institutions. It is prohibited in cases of academic misconduct, with fewer detailed governance mechanisms. In particular, AI is permitted in coursework, research, creativity, and skill development, often requiring instructor approval and citations (ZU, AUC). AI is encouraged for innovation, research development, and technical advancement (UAEU, KAUST). Its use is prohibited when it contributes to plagiarism, cheating, and misinterpretation of authorship (ZU, AUC). Failure to follow basic citation and acknowledgement practices is also prohibited.

Contributing Factors

European universities' AI regulatory policies are strongly influenced by national regulations. These frameworks are data protection and AI governance legislation, GDPR requirements, and emerging EU regulatory frameworks (University of Leicester, Trinity College Dublin, TU/e, University of Bologna). AI policies are also influenced by existing academic governance systems, including senate regulations, academic integrity frameworks, and research ethics policies. The policies are also informed by international regulatory frameworks such as the EU AI Act (2024) and EU Guidelines on Responsible AI in Research (2024). In North America, AI policies are heavily influenced by legal and regulatory requirements related to data privacy, information security, and compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and institutional policies (Yale University, Northeastern University, MIT). The rapid development of AI

technologies has highly contributed to AI policies to adhere to flexible governance approaches and keep pace with updates (Northeastern University, Duke University, Loyola University New Orleans).

AI policies in Australia and Oceania are largely influenced by institutional risk management systems, including privacy impact assessments and information security frameworks (Monash University, JCU, VUW). The policies are shaped by national legislation and educational regulations. Unique contributing factors include the integration of cultural values and indigenous perspectives Maori principles (VUW). Institutions emphasise educational priorities such as inclusion, equality, and fairness as well as addressing risks such as bias, misinformation and data misuse. AI policies in the Middle East, however, are strongly tied to national and political priorities, including UAE National AI Strategy (UAEU) and Saudi Vision 2030 (KAUST). They position AI as a tool for economic growth and global competitiveness. AI policies are shaped by the goal of fostering innovation, research excellence and talent development (UAEU, KAUST).

Conclusion

The present paper applied qualitative comparative analysis to review AI policies of international universities across Europe, North America, the Middle East, Australia, and Oceania against the following metrics: scope, ethical priorities, allowance, prohibited use, and contributing factors. It has been discussed that the advances in AI technologies have prompted educational institutions to reconsider academic integrity principles and adopt AI use. However, the institutional response to AI regulations differs across universities and regions. Universities globally adopt AI but at different speeds, which means that there is no unified AI framework for regulating its use. The present paper helped to identify the existing AI regulatory models and gaps, providing a broader and clearer picture of how AI is governed. It also enabled outlining the challenges that universities face regarding plagiarism, authorship ambiguity, and assessment risks, how they define and manage these challenges across contexts. The paper further looked at legal systems, national and international regulatory frameworks and cultural values that shaped the AI policies. The latter was useful to understand why policies differ across regions and what influences them.

The research revealed that in Europe and Australia/Oceania, AI policies are most comprehensive and integrated into institutional

governance, whereas in North America, AI practices are mostly instructor-led control. In the Middle East, AI policies are unevenly developed, ranging from basic academic guidelines to national strategy-driven approaches. The study further revealed similarities and differences in permitted and prohibited use of AI. European universities have stricter regulations on conditional and categorised use of AI as a supporting tool, whereas in North America, AI use is flexible and instructor-dependent, allowing it to increase learning productivity. In Australia, AI policies are strictly governed by risk-based and assessment-specific systems, whereas in the Middle East, AI use is broad and open, especially for innovation and development.

All universities across emphasise ethics when using AI, however, priorities differ. European universities emphasise transparency, accountability and data protection. North American universities prioritise responsible use, AI literacy and critical thinking. Australian and Oceanian universities emphasise inclusion, cultural values, fairness and sustainability, whereas the universities in the Middle East split between academic integrity and innovation-driven ethics.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that AI is increasingly integrated in higher educational context, however, its governance remains highly context-dependent. The review of AI policies clearly illustrated that regulations should reflect diverse regulatory, institutional and cultural factors. If AI continues to evolve at an increasing speed, universities might find themselves looking for more coherent, transparent and adaptable frameworks that balance innovation and ethical priorities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be drawn: Universities should develop comprehensive AI policies that clearly define permitted and prohibited use, ethical priorities and responsibilities for academic community. AI governance should be flexible rather than rigid. AI governance should be discipline-specific and instructor-led. AI tools are evolving too fast, different disciplines require different levels of AI use, therefore, flexibility will allow immediate response to innovations, such as adapting new tools. Also, the avoidance of outdated and overly restrictive rules. Universities should also ensure transparency by establishing explicit guidelines. This should include disclosing when and how AI was used. AI use must be properly acknowledged and standardised citation practices

should be promoted across all institutions. Furthermore, universities should adopt risk-based approaches such as guidelines for handling sensitive data, protection of intellectual property, and security risks. It is also recommended that universities should invest in AI literacy training for students, academic and administrative personnel. Training will raise awareness of ethical and responsible use of AI, critical evaluation of AI outputs, and addressing the risks and challenges. AI policies should be aligned with national and international regulatory frameworks. This will ensure legal compliance, global relevance, and consistency. Lastly, given the rapid advancement in AI technologies, universities should review their AI policies regularly and update them if necessary. This will enable universities to monitor AI processes and respond to AI evolution timely.

Limitations

The present study has a number of limitations. First, the research sample comprises a small number of universities, which does not fully represent the global higher education landscape. Given the fact that the study focuses on the uneven regional distribution of AI development, the findings may not be generalisable to universities in a particular region. Second, the study is solely based on publicly available policy documents, meaning that internal guidelines, informal practices, or unpublished policy frameworks may not be captured. This potentially limits the completeness of the findings. Moreover, since AI policies are rapidly updating, the findings reflect a specific moment in time, which may contribute to reducing their long-term applicability. Thirdly, as descriptive qualitative research using NVivo, analysis may have involved a degree of researcher interpretation when categorising the data. Lastly, the study solely focused on content rather than AI policy implementation, limiting the insights into how policies function in practice. However, the study opens the opportunity for further investigation into the effectiveness of AI policies in the university context. This should include how they are implemented and perceived by stakeholders.

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