# UK students embrace AI with enthusiasm amid fears over employability and equity



The recent report on student perceptions of artificial intelligence (AI), published by Jisc, paints an intriguing picture of how UK students are adapting to the evolving digital landscape. As AI tools increasingly permeate academic and personal spheres, students report a dual sense of enthusiasm and unease. The survey reveals that over 170 students from further and higher education have embraced AI technologies like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and Grammarly, integrating them into their daily lives for a variety of purposes, including writing assistance and mental health support.

However, the optimism is tempered by significant concerns. The primary fear expressed by students revolves around employability; they are apprehensive that the rise of AI may disrupt entry-level job markets and undermine their existing skill sets. With a growing reliance on these technologies, many students worry that they may not acquire the essential AI skills needed for their prospective careers. This sentiment echoes findings from the Higher Education Policy Institute, which noted a surging use of generative AI among students, rising from 66% in 2024 to an impressive 92% in 2025, though concerns about academic integrity linger prominently.

Equity in access emerges as another critical issue. The report highlights that unequal access to AI, particularly premium tools, disproportionately impacts disadvantaged students, accentuating existing educational divides. A digital experience survey conducted by Jisc further verifies this, revealing that while 22% of students have engaged with AI in their learning processes, many lack the necessary institutional support to navigate these technologies effectively. Widespread calls for more comprehensive guidance and training suggest a need for institutions to reassess their roles in facilitating AI literacy among both students and staff.

Students also articulate anxieties regarding data privacy and the potential for misinformation, vexed by the notion that their personal data may be mishandled. The ability to discern between accurate and biased AI-generated content is now more pertinent than ever. Such concerns find resonance in broader surveys that indicate a general unease among faculty regarding students’ capabilities to critically assess AI outputs. A study published in 'Times Higher Education' reveals that 82% of faculty members express concerns over students becoming too reliant on AI tools, raising questions about the efficacy of students’ analytical skills in an increasingly AI-driven academic environment.

Despite these challenges, students are not merely passive recipients of technology; they are eager to engage in the conversation about how AI should be integrated into their education. The Jisc report emphasizes a strong desire among students to collaborate in developing what they view as responsible and equitable AI policies in academia. This proactive stance, along with their recognition of AI's potential to enhance collaborative learning and boost creativity, points to a generational shift in how education might evolve to better meet the demands of a future intertwined with AI.

In conclusion, while the enthusiasm for AI among UK students is palpable, it serves as a clarion call for educational institutions to cultivate an environment that not only embraces these tools but also addresses the inherent challenges they present. By fostering a supportive and equitable framework for AI integration, educators can empower students to harness the full potential of AI, preparing them for careers in an increasingly complex and digital workforce. The balancing act between leveraging technological advancements and safeguarding educational integrity is one that requires immediate attention and strategic foresight.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.infodocket.com/2025/05/24/jisc-releases-student-perceptions-of-ai-2025-report/), [[2]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/02/26/student-generative-ai-survey-2025/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.infodocket.com/2025/05/24/jisc-releases-student-perceptions-of-ai-2025-report/), [[2]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/02/26/student-generative-ai-survey-2025/), [[5]](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/reports-and-briefings/our-reports/2023-24-uk-higher-education-students-digital-experience-insights-survey-findings/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/students-want-to-see-generative-ai-integrated-throughout-curriculum-despite-increased-concerns-around-ethics-and-equity), [[4]](https://rptel.apsce.net/index.php/RPTEL/article/view/2025-20005)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/reports-and-briefings/our-reports/2023-24-uk-higher-education-students-digital-experience-insights-survey-findings/), [[6]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/academics-fear-students-becoming-too-reliant-ai-tools)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.infodocket.com/2025/05/24/jisc-releases-student-perceptions-of-ai-2025-report/), [[3]](https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/students-want-to-see-generative-ai-integrated-throughout-curriculum-despite-increased-concerns-around-ethics-and-equity)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.infodocket.com/2025/05/24/jisc-releases-student-perceptions-of-ai-2025-report/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/02/26/student-generative-ai-survey-2025/> - The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) conducted a survey in 2025 revealing a significant increase in student use of generative AI tools, with 92% of students now using AI in some form, up from 66% in 2024. The main uses of generative AI include explaining concepts, summarising articles, and suggesting research ideas. However, concerns persist regarding academic misconduct and the accuracy of AI-generated results. The survey also highlights a widening digital divide, with institutions urged to review assessment practices and support AI literacy among staff and students.
3. <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/students-want-to-see-generative-ai-integrated-throughout-curriculum-despite-increased-concerns-around-ethics-and-equity> - Jisc's latest report indicates that students increasingly recognize the importance of acquiring generative AI skills for their future careers. The report highlights a shift towards collaborative learning, with AI being used in a coaching role to support active learning and critical thinking. Students express concerns about ethics, equity, and accessibility related to generative AI and expect educators to address these challenges in a safe, inclusive, and responsive manner. The report emphasizes the need for comprehensive integration of AI across education and the competence of educators in using AI tools.
4. <https://rptel.apsce.net/index.php/RPTEL/article/view/2025-20005> - A study published in the 'Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning' journal provides qualitative insights into student perspectives on the impact of AI in higher education. The research, conducted at the University of Bristol, addresses the lack of qualitative data on students' thoughts and feelings regarding AI within a UK context. The study compares concerns related to AI in higher education as categorized by academics and those generated by students using their own frames of reference, offering recommendations for higher education institutions in response to identified issues.
5. <https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/reports-and-briefings/our-reports/2023-24-uk-higher-education-students-digital-experience-insights-survey-findings/> - Jisc's 2023/24 UK Higher Education Students Digital Experience Insights Survey reveals that 22% of students have used AI as part of their learning, and 16% have received training specifically in the appropriate use of AI tools. The survey highlights concerns among students about the responsible use of AI, particularly around plagiarism and discerning reliable information. It also notes that more than half of students who needed support to use AI features were not subsequently offered support, indicating a need for improved institutional support in this area.
6. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/academics-fear-students-becoming-too-reliant-ai-tools> - A global study published in 'Times Higher Education' reveals that 82% of university faculty members are concerned about students becoming overly dependent on AI tools, with 55% considering this a significant concern. Additionally, 83% of faculty members doubt students' ability to critically evaluate AI-generated output, with 52% strongly agreeing that this poses a threat. The report emphasizes the need for stronger institutional support, clearer governance frameworks, and improved AI literacy to harness AI's potential effectively.
7. <https://www.anthology.com/en-emea/news/new-survey-from-anthology-reveals-the-perceptions-and-realities-of-ai-in-uk-higher-education> - A survey by Anthology reveals that 27% of students in the UK are frequent or occasional users of AI tools, the lowest among the countries surveyed. University leaders express concerns about AI creating new challenges in identifying plagiarism, with 37% identifying this as a significant issue. Despite these concerns, 40% of leaders believe AI will help provide more personalized learning experiences for students, and 31% see it fostering creativity and innovation among students and faculty.