# Outgoing Higher Education Student Support Champion highlights 10 transformative trends shaping UK university experience



In a recent Policy Note aimed at shaping the future of higher education, Professor Edward Peck, the outgoing Higher Education Student Support Champion, presents a landscape marked by significant transformation. Published by the Higher Education Policy Institute, the document delineates ten emerging trends that are likely to redefine the campus university experience. While it refrains from predictively forecasting, the note provides critical insights into the evolving needs of students in an age characterised by rapid technological and societal shifts.

One key theme articulated by Peck is the reimagining of student support as a central pillar of the academic experience, rather than a peripheral service. The report suggests that activities traditionally seen as co-curricular will become fundamental to the degree value, adapting to the needs of a modern workforce increasingly influenced by generative artificial intelligence. The document posits that academic evaluations will evolve to foster not only knowledge retention but also generic skills vital for employability, such as complex analysis and critical thinking. This perspective resonates with the current shift in curriculum development, where AI is facilitating personalised learning experiences and tailored assessments, thereby promoting higher-order skills among students.

The implications of changing tuition fee structures are also discussed. Peck reflects on how the introduction of tuition fees in the UK in 2012 created a framework where a customer service ethos became paramount. This customer-centric approach, he argues, is essential as institutions strive to meet the expectations of students, their families, and policymakers alike. The report underscores the potential of generative AI to enrich educational interactions, offering new tools that can enhance both personalised learning and support systems, despite ongoing concerns about the costs and challenges of integration. Notably, a recent study revealed that 92% of UK undergraduates were using generative AI, highlighting a rapid uptake that institutions must navigate carefully to preserve academic integrity and critical thinking skills.

Another central issue raised in the report is the evolving role of campus communities in student personal development. As universities adapt to maintain traditional learning methods, they must also illustrate the unique benefits that in-person education provides. This becomes particularly vital as students encounter a landscape replete with AI-driven learning tools, which have garnered substantial interest, particularly in STEM disciplines. However, there remains significant apprehension about the potential over-reliance on AI, especially within the humanities, where the risk of academic misconduct looms large.

Regional variations in student enrolment and choices are also explored, with Peck advocating for a more structured transition from secondary to tertiary education. The potential for closer collaboration between 16-19 education institutions and universities could facilitate tailored induction processes, assisting students in navigating their journey into higher education. Such relationships would not only ease the transition but would also promote a culture of preparedness and inclusivity.

Peck concludes the document by emphasising the necessity for regulatory frameworks that address stakeholder needs, particularly students. Future regulations should focus on enhancing student benefits while mitigating potential harms from emerging technologies. Nick Hillman, the Director of HEPI, endorsed the significance of Peck’s insights, stating, “It is an honour for HEPI to be publishing the thoughts of Professor Peck, given his long-standing leadership in the university sector."

As higher education continues to grapple with the implications of technological advancement, institutional leaders must remain vigilant and proactive in adapting to these rapidly evolving dynamics. By prioritising student support and innovative educational methods, universities can ensure that they not only meet current educational demands but also empower their graduates to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/05/29/outgoing-student-support-champion-outlines-10-trends-likely-to-change-higher-education-in-the-coming-years/), [[4]](https://time.com/6982181/asu-president-michael-crow-interview/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/05/29/outgoing-student-support-champion-outlines-10-trends-likely-to-change-higher-education-in-the-coming-years/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/daa0f68d-774a-4e5e-902c-5d6e8bf687dc), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/d591fb1a-9f6c-4345-b5fc-781e091ae3f8)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.axios.com/2024/10/29/ai-tutors-college-students-efficiency), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/82d59679-0985-4c07-9416-06a0bec6e16a), [[7]](https://www.watermarkinsights.com/resources/blog/how-ai-will-transform-higher-education/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/05/29/outgoing-student-support-champion-outlines-10-trends-likely-to-change-higher-education-in-the-coming-years/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/82d59679-0985-4c07-9416-06a0bec6e16a), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/d591fb1a-9f6c-4345-b5fc-781e091ae3f8)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/05/29/outgoing-student-support-champion-outlines-10-trends-likely-to-change-higher-education-in-the-coming-years/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/82d59679-0985-4c07-9416-06a0bec6e16a)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/05/29/outgoing-student-support-champion-outlines-10-trends-likely-to-change-higher-education-in-the-coming-years/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/daa0f68d-774a-4e5e-902c-5d6e8bf687dc)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/05/29/outgoing-student-support-champion-outlines-10-trends-likely-to-change-higher-education-in-the-coming-years/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/daa0f68d-774a-4e5e-902c-5d6e8bf687dc> - This article discusses the significant progress in integrating AI into business education since the launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT in 2022. Professors at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management developed an AI assistant, All Day TA, which successfully handled 12,000 student queries over a semester. This tool has been adopted by around 100 universities worldwide, demonstrating AI's potential in education. The integration of AI enhances personalized learning, provides instant feedback, and supports educators in grading and assessment tasks. However, challenges such as costs, over-reliance on AI, and concerns about academic integrity persist.
3. <https://www.axios.com/2024/10/29/ai-tutors-college-students-efficiency> - This article highlights the transformative role of AI tutors in higher education, particularly in computer science. AI tutors are revolutionizing education by increasing access to expert knowledge and enhancing efficiency for both students and faculty. While AI is embraced in STEM fields as a powerful coding assistant, skepticism persists in the humanities due to concerns about its potential to facilitate plagiarism. Despite this, some professors and students recognize AI's potential to promote individualized learning and educational equity. A Harvard study found that students using AI tutors learned significantly more in less time compared to traditional in-class instruction.
4. <https://time.com/6982181/asu-president-michael-crow-interview/> - In this interview, Arizona State University (ASU) President Michael Crow discusses various topics, including campus protests, AI advancements in education, and the future of college sports. He emphasizes the importance of balancing free speech with prohibiting hate speech and comments on AI advancements in education, such as ASU's partnership with OpenAI to provide AI tools that enhance learning. Crow also addresses the challenges posed by rapid technological and cultural changes in preparing students for the future and expresses concerns about the commercialization of college sports, advocating for substantial scholarships and support for athletes without treating them as employees.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/82d59679-0985-4c07-9416-06a0bec6e16a> - This article reports on a 2025 survey by the Higher Education Policy Institute, revealing that 92% of UK undergraduates are using generative AI, up from 66% the previous year. Despite this widespread adoption, concerns have been raised about the impact on students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Some universities have attempted to integrate AI into assessments, only to find that such approaches yield minimal improvements, particularly among undergraduates. Experts warn that reliance on AI can hinder the development of essential skills. Evidence suggests that students and workers who understand the foundational skills of information gathering and problem-solving are better equipped to use AI effectively without becoming overly dependent on it.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/d591fb1a-9f6c-4345-b5fc-781e091ae3f8> - This article discusses the significant increase in AI usage among UK university students over the past 12 months. A study by the Higher Education Policy Institute revealed that more than 90% of students now use AI, compared to two-thirds the previous year. This surge has sparked debates about how universities should assess student work. The report highlights that science students are more likely to use AI than those in social sciences and humanities. The primary reasons for using AI are to 'save time' and 'improve the quality of work.' However, only a minority of students consider it acceptable to use AI-generated content without editing. The study also identifies divisions in AI competency, with male and wealthier students being more frequent users. While there has been a slight increase in the proportion of students who believe university staff are well-prepared to support AI usage, many students still lack clarity on usage rules.
7. <https://www.watermarkinsights.com/resources/blog/how-ai-will-transform-higher-education/> - This article explores how AI is transforming higher education, particularly in student support and curriculum development. AI-powered tools are helping students navigate graduation criteria by providing degree roadmaps that outline recommended course sequences, beneficial electives, and degree progression. These platforms also allow students to visualize 'what-if' scenarios, such as adding a minor or changing a major, to see how the update will impact their degree progression. In curriculum development, AI is revolutionizing how institutions shape curricula by analyzing labor market data to align course offerings with skills and expertise highly sought after by employers. AI also automates course creation by streamlining tasks such as finding relevant course materials, creating syllabus outlines, and synthesizing complex concepts.