

# AI in Higher Ed: Hype, Harm, or Help

The perceptions and realities of AI among university leaders and students

UK EDITION

A large graphic on a dark grey background. In the center is a large red square with the letters 'AI' in white. Surrounding this central square are numerous smaller, semi-transparent shapes in shades of purple, orange, and red, some of which are also squares or rounded rectangles. The overall effect is a dense, colorful pattern of geometric shapes.

AI

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In today's dynamic landscape of higher education, the emergence and integration of artificial intelligence (AI) have brought forth both incredible opportunities and complex challenges. As the United Kingdom's universities embrace this new age, the intertwining perspectives of students and university leaders on AI's role within academia are paramount to navigating this transformative journey effectively.

Understanding the unique viewpoints of students and university leadership — the key stakeholders — is vital in capitalizing on the potential of AI while addressing potential ethical, pedagogical, and operational challenges.

Anthology conducted a global survey of more than 5,000 higher education leaders and current students in eleven countries to provide context and perspective from students and leaders about the opportunities, challenges, adoption, and impact of artificial intelligence across a number of areas.

Our study reveals intriguing insights, with students exhibiting a growing inclination towards AI adoption, while university leaders appear more hesitant. These findings spotlight the need for a collaborative approach regarding AI to help enrich the educational experience and ensure future-ready graduates.

Through this research, Anthology aims to contribute to the enhancement of the higher education experience for students and universities as they work together to refine how teaching and learning take place. This includes providing actionable recommendations to improve services and learning environments.

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## Students, Leaders, and Artificial Intelligence

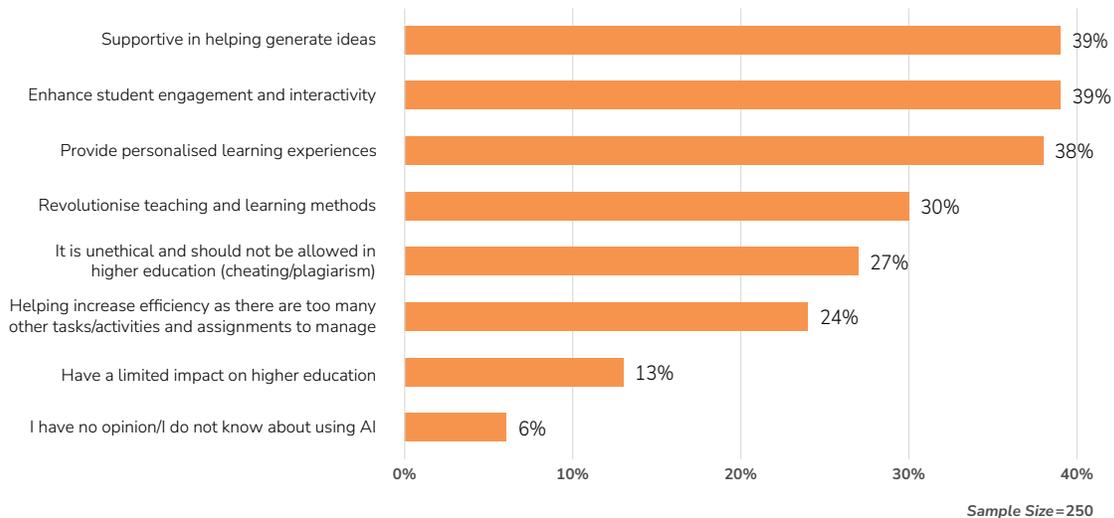
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Students in the UK are already actively using generative AI tools — 27% report using them at least monthly and an additional 38% have used these tools once or twice. While UK students are among the lowest users of generative AI tools compared to the other countries surveyed, this still represents 65% of students with at least some previous use of these tools. Perhaps more importantly, 56% of students believe their use of generative AI will increase in the next six months, showing increasing adoption of these tools among students.

Unlike students, who have generally adopted AI, university leaders have been more hesitant based on the survey. Twenty-three percent report using it at least monthly, with 31% indicating having used it once or twice — taken together, this is 11% lower than among students. Only 35% of university leaders indicated that their use would increase in the next six months, while 56% indicated that it would stay the same.

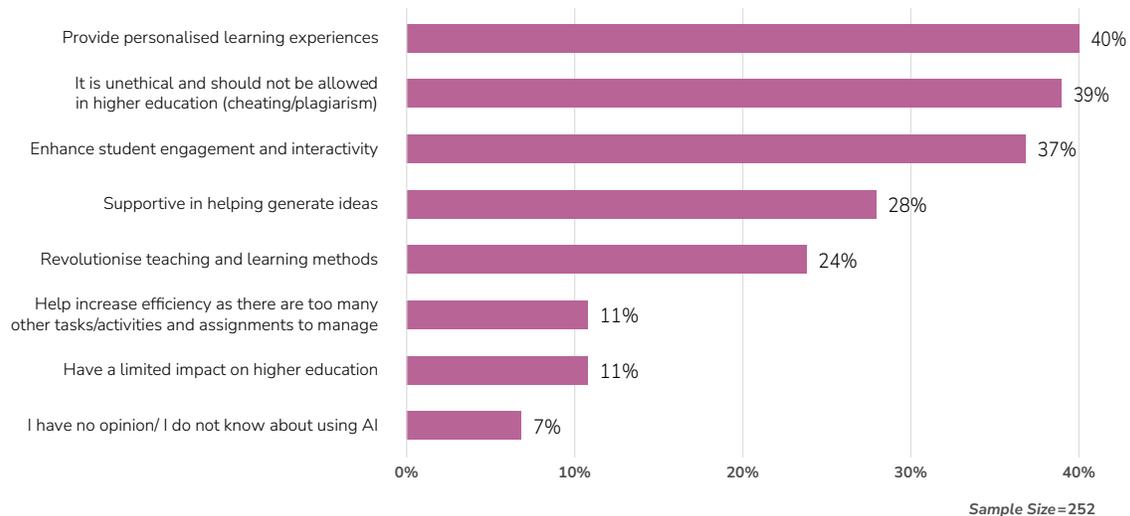
### Student view of role of AI in higher education

*What role do you think artificial intelligence (AI) will play in higher education?  
(Please select all that apply)*



## University leader view of role of AI in higher education

What role do you think artificial intelligence (AI) will play in higher education?  
(Please select all that apply)



While it is to be expected that students more quickly adopt new technology such as generative AI, it is equally important that university leaders and faculty members familiarise themselves with this technology to adjust and incorporate it into their teaching.

A comparatively high percentage of university leaders (39%) feel that AI is unethical and should not be allowed in higher education — this was only mentioned by 27% of students. On the other hand, nearly four in 10 students feel that AI tools will be helpful in generating ideas as well as enhancing student engagement and interactivity. Nearly the same percentage of students feel that AI will help provide personalised learning experiences beyond what is available today. Notable is that university leaders generally agree with students on the top areas – other than a higher percentage seeing AI as unethical. University leaders selected providing personalised learning experiences as the most important role for AI, followed by enhancing student engagement and interactivity. There is an opportunity to continue to highlight the potential of AI both inside and outside of the classroom, while ensuring that students are also aware of possible drawbacks of using generative AI technology.

Despite the apparent initial reluctance among students in the UK to embrace AI as compared to those in other countries, it's encouraging to note that UK university leadership is showing a proactive approach in addressing the potential implications of AI. The UK and Saudi Arabia lead their global counterparts on having developed and rolled out university-wide policies with respect to generative AI writing tools like ChatGPT (76% and 77% of institutions in these countries have rolled out a policy, respectively). On the other hand, only 41% of students stated that they were familiar with their institution's guidelines or policy for AI usage. This highlights an opportunity to continue to educate students about the policies put in place at the institution.

Although there might be room for further alignment, these results indicate that while UK education leaders recognise the value of AI in idea generation, they may require additional time and experience to fully embrace the broader spectrum of AI's potential in education when compared to their international counterparts.

## Methodology

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Data collection was conducted online among university leaders and students across eleven countries in August 2023, including Australia, Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. Separate questionnaires with similar questions were utilised to enable comparisons. To qualify, student respondents had to indicate that they were currently enrolled at a higher education institution and pursuing a degree or diploma. University leader respondents had to indicate that they were currently senior leaders (dean, provost, rector, etc.) at a higher education institution. In total, 2,617 university leaders and 2,728 students qualified for and completed the survey.

## About Anthology

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Anthology offers the largest EdTech ecosystem on a global scale for education, supporting more than 150 million users in 80 countries. With a mission to provide dynamic, data-informed experiences to the global education community through Anthology Intelligent Experiences™, we help learners, leaders, and educators achieve their goals by offering over 60 SaaS products and services designed to advance learning. Discover more about how we are fulfilling our mission for education, business, and government institutions at [www.anthology.com](http://www.anthology.com).