Participant Information Sheet
Student Focus Group

Research Project
GenAI in Scottish Higher Education: Attitudes and Perceptions of Students and Staff

Research Team
Principal investigator: Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink

Co-investigators: Sara Preston, Catherine Ogilvie, Emily Cleland (University of Aberdeen); Rosemarie McIlwhan (Heriot-Watt University); Louise Drumm (Edinburgh Napier University); Emma Duke-Williams (University of Dundee).

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully, and please retain this copy for your personal records. Please ask if anything requires further clarification.

What is the purpose of the study?
This is a study to help develop a better understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of university students and staff to the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Midjourney, DeepL Translator) in learning and teaching. We want to understand what may influence students and staff when deciding to engage, or not, with generative artificial intelligence tools and how to support them to use these tools responsibly, ethically and effectively.

Why have I been invited to take part?
We are inviting you to take part because you are a student currently studying at a Scottish university. Students across all disciplines, all levels of study (undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate), from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds and with diverse learning needs are being asked to take part, to ensure participants are representative of the student population.

Do I have to take part?
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. This participant information sheet has been produced to help you decide if you would like to take part in this study. It is up to you (and you alone) to decide whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw from the study at any point up to and during the focus group session by stating that you no longer wish to continue. You do not need to provide any reason for this decision. If you choose to withdraw after you have participated in the focus group session, you can contact the research team by emailing genai-education@abdn.ac.uk and requesting that your data be removed from the study. This can be done up until the point at which the study data analysis is completed.

How do I give my consent to participate in the study?
It is important that you give your informed consent if you decide to take part in this study, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent. If you are happy to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a digital consent form (alternative formats will be made available, if required).

What does taking part involve?
If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete the consent form before the start of the focus group session. The focus group sessions may be online, (e.g. MS Teams or Zoom), or face to face, in a location on a university campus, and will likely consist of 4 – 8 participants. Before the focus group session starts the researchers, consisting of a facilitator and an observer, will go through the study and make sure that you are comfortable with taking part. You will then be asked to participate in the discussion by sharing your views on the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Midjourney, DeepL Translator) in your studies; how you, your peers and staff may be using these tools; and how we can better support and inform students and staff about generative artificial intelligence tools. The focus groups will be facilitated by student research interns who will provide instructions and open questions to encourage discussion about the topic. The

entire focus group will take no more than 60 minutes and will be digitally recorded for later analysis by the research team.

To thank you and show appreciation for your time and effort participating in the study, you will receive a £10 voucher by email on completion of the focus group session.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?
There are no risks associated with taking part in this study. Your safety and comfort will be a priority, and you are free to leave at any point. Every focus group session will be recorded and supervised by the research team.

Are there any benefits associated with taking part?
The study aims to improve the support provided to students and staff when deciding whether to use generative artificial intelligence tools, as well as identify the skills and support students and staff need to use these tools responsibly, ethically and effectively.

What will happen to my data?
To participate in this research project, we will need to collect information that could identify you, called 'personal identifiable information'. Specifically, the data that we will need to collect includes:
- The university you are studying in
- What you are studying and level of study
- Ethnicity
- If English is your first language

The data collected will be in a video or audio recording, and in text.

Personal data will be stored on a secure password protected University of Aberdeen servers. This data will only be accessed by members of the research team who will comply with the University Policy on Data Protection which complies fully with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations).

All stored research data will be electronic, no paper records will be stored. If a paper consent form is returned, it will be scanned and stored digitally alongside the other consent forms. All data files will be managed and stored in a secure University of Aberdeen database to align with the University Research Data Management Policy.

The data will be stored in a pseudonymised form (meaning the data will be edited so that the participants are referred to only by a unique identification number). The link between ID and name will be held by the Principal Investigator and stored as a password protected document. Names will not be included on databases containing study data. Any identifiable information within the data will be anonymised when being transcribed and or analysed by a member of the research team. Only the research team will have access to participant identifiable data.

All data generated by the study will be stored on secure University of Aberdeen servers and retained for a period of 5 years after the project end date and thereafter permanently deleted in accordance with University IT data security procedures. The anonymised dataset will be made openly available for use by the international Higher Education community. All project outputs (a set of resource cards, infographic of key project findings, anonymised dataset, project report) will be licenced under Creative Commons licence to enable them to be reused by other institutions.

You can also consult the University of Aberdeen's Privacy Notice for Research Participants for further information on how we manage your data - https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/privacy/research-participants-938.php. Your data may be stored and processed outwith the UK. No matter its physical location, the storage and usage of your personal data will be treated as if it were stored within the UK; University requirements and the provisions of the data protection laws will apply at all times.

Will my participation be confidential?
Any information collected for the study will be kept on a confidential basis and access will be restricted to the research team. Your name will not be revealed, your answers will not be given to anyone outside of the research team, and your identity will be protected. Some of the data that may be used in the analysis and final report will include quotes from participants however these will all be presented in a way that prevents your identity being linked to the quote.

The research team will not inform your university that you have expressed an interest or completed the study. The only other people who would know would be those that you choose to inform.

Please note that you must keep anything discussed within the focus groups as confidential.

How will I find out about the results of the study?
The project will generate the following outputs:
- A set of resource cards to support institutional conversations on the potential and actual uses of GenAI and the perceptions of it.
- An infographic of key project findings for use by universities to brief key stakeholders.
- An anonymised dataset openly available for use by the Higher Education community.
- A report of project findings.

The project outputs will be licenced under Creative Commons licence to enable them to be reused and rebranded by other institutions, thus extending the reach of these resources. They will be made available to download for free via a dedicated project website. Project findings with be disseminated via academic publications, conferences, and other relevant channels to contribute to the broader academic discourse on GenAI in Higher Education.

Who is funding and/or sponsoring the study?
This research study is being funded by Carnegie Trust.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the Committee for Research Ethics and Governance in Arts, Social Sciences & Business, University of Aberdeen on the 3 April 2024.

Contact Details

If you have any general queries, require further information about the study or would like to withdraw your consent to participate, please contact the principal investigator:

Name: Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink

Email: genai-education@abdn.ac.uk

Telephone: 01224 438034

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you can contact the Chair of the Committee for Research Ethics & Governance in Arts, Social Sciences & Business:

Name: Dr Elizabeth Curtis

Email: (elizabeth.curtis@abdn.ac.uk)

Thank you for considering taking part in this study.