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AI and Activate Learning – Position Statement

Background

The progress made in Generative artificial intelligence (AI), particularly with the introduction of ChatGPT in November 2022, has changed our interaction with technology. As Generative AI continues to advance swiftly, it is crucial for us at Activate Learning to adopt a flexible approach that ensures our staff and students possess the necessary knowledge and skills to engage with this constantly evolving technology safely and responsibly.

Generative AI presents a highly compelling opportunity to enhance our students' learning experience. It holds the potential to empower them with increased engagement in higher-order critical thinking and creative endeavours. Furthermore, developing skills to effectively use Generative AI skills is and will remain integral to the contemporary workplace. Therefore, equipping our students with the competence to effectively harness Generative AI is a fundamental necessity, and it becomes our responsibility to facilitate their acquisition of such skills.

As with any new technology, we need to ensure our staff and students fully understand the benefits and disadvantages of using such technology and are fully aware of wide-ranging ethical considerations. Researchers had predicted that AI would affect most jobs and new predictions are emerging almost weekly. It is our responsibility to adapt our schemes of learning to embed the skills that will give our learners the best chance of being successful in this changing work landscape. These cognitive and meta-cognitive skills include critical and creative thinking, learning-to-learn, self-regulation, social and emotional skills (empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility and collaboration), and practical and physical skills, such as understanding emerging technologies.

Ethical Considerations

It is important to be mindful that Generative AI mainly revolves around providing quick answers to the questions presented to it. Relying solely on quick, which potentially could be unreliable or false, answers can hinder the development of critical thinking skills, which are essential for learning and making well-informed decisions in general. The responses generated by Generative AI may include falsified, biased or misrepresented references.

AI tools should not serve as a substitute for the human as the author of the produced work. Utilising AI tools in a way that provides an unfair advantage may violate academic integrity regulations.

Generative AI in Teaching and Learning

It is important that staff understand the shortcomings and weak points as well as the strengths of Generative AI tools. Staff need to be aware that the output of these tools can be poorly argued, out of date and factually inaccurate and/or biased.

Activate Learning is in the process of creating training materials to educate and inform both staff and students about the responsible utilisation of Generative AI. This initiative aims to establish a unified approach throughout the organisation.

Promoting AI literacy is crucial in assisting staff and students to develop a comprehensive awareness of the pros and cons associated with Generative AI tools like ChatGPT in the context of education. This will be included in the Activate Learning Digital Competencies Framework.

Generative AI in assessment

While Activate Learning believes that the use of Generative AI can be beneficial and effective for learning, students are not permitted to submit work for summative assessment that has been fully generated by any Generative AI tool. Using such tools will be considered a violation of academic integrity due to the fact that the produced content is not created by the students themselves.

Where the use of Generative AI is allowed by the course tutor, students must provide:

- A written acknowledgment of the use of Generative AI, the extent of use, and how generated materials were used.
- Proper citation and referencing where the generated content has not been modified or altered, using the most relevant source types within the applicable referencing style. Examples of these source types may include “artificial intelligence” or “non-recoverable sources.”

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We have established a comprehensive authentication method that will aid in identifying instances where students have employed AI/chatbots to produce assessment materials.

Generative AI and the Learning Philosophy

Activate Learning's Learning Philosophy emphasises a learner-centric approach, where students are encouraged to actively engage and take ownership of their learning journey. By incorporating Generative AI technologies into educational practices, we can further enhance the personalised learning approach. This integration of AI empowers students to explore and discover knowledge in a way that is tailored to their unique learning styles and interests.

However, AI technology lacks the capability to have emotions or interpret emotions in the same manner as humans. While AI tools excel at processing and analysing various forms of data, such as text and visuals, they do not possess an inherent understanding or experiential comprehension of emotions.

While AI can assist in tasks related to emotional recognition to some extent, it is important to acknowledge that AI lacks the emotional intelligence and subjective experience that humans possess. Emotions involve complex cognitive and physiological processes that are deeply rooted in human psychology and consciousness, aspects that current AI technologies cannot fully replicate.