Perspectives of students with disabilities on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) has significantly reshaped teaching, learning, and assessment practices in higher education. While debates surrounding academic integrity and authorship dominate institutional discourse, the implications of GAI for students with disabilities remain underexplored. For this group of learners, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini AI, etc., AI-based writing assistants, and automated summarisation systems function not merely as productivity tools but as critical accessibility and assistive supports. This paper examines the perspectives of students with disabilities regarding the use of generative artificial intelligence in higher education. Drawing upon literature in inclusive education, disability studies, assistive technology, and academic integrity, the paper critically analyses the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations associated with GAI use. The paper argues that generative AI should be recognised as an inclusive support mechanism aligned with Universal Design for Learning rather than viewed solely as a threat to academic standards. The study concludes with policy recommendations for higher education institutions to ensure equitable, ethical, and disability-sensitive integration of generative AI.

Keywords: Students with Disabilities, Generative Artificial Intelligence, Higher Education, Assistive Technology, Inclusive Education, Academic Integrity

1. Introduction

Higher education systems across the world are undergoing profound transformation due to rapid developments in digital technologies, particularly artificial intelligence. Among these

developments, generative artificial intelligence (GAI), including tools such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini AI, etc., AI-powered writing assistants, automated summarisation systems, and speech-based interfaces, has emerged as a disruptive force influencing teaching, learning, assessment, and academic authorship. Universities and policymakers have responded with a mix of enthusiasm, caution, and concern, especially regarding issues of academic integrity, plagiarism, and ethical use (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Perkins et al., 2023).

While much of the existing discourse focuses on the risks posed by generative AI to traditional academic practices, comparatively little attention has been paid to its implications for students with disabilities. This omission is significant, given that students with disabilities continue to face persistent structural, pedagogical, and attitudinal barriers within higher education institutions. Despite international commitments to inclusive education, many universities remain inadequately prepared to meet the diverse learning needs of disabled students, particularly in terms of accessible curriculum design, flexible assessment methods, and timely provision of reasonable accommodations (UNESCO, 2020; World Health Organisation, 2011).

Students with disabilities, including those with sensory impairment, learning disabilities, locomotor disabilities, and neurodevelopmental conditions, often encounter challenges related to accessing learning materials, comprehending dense academic texts, producing written assignments, managing time-bound assessments, and participating fully in classroom interactions. These challenges are frequently exacerbated by rigid pedagogical models that privilege speed, standardised written expression, and conventional modes of assessment. Consequently, students with disabilities are often required to expend disproportionate effort simply to meet baseline academic expectations, placing them at a structural disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

Technology has long played a critical role in mitigating such disadvantages. Assistive technologies such as screen readers, Braille displays, speech-to-text software, captioning tools, and note-taking applications have significantly enhanced access to education for students with disabilities. Generative artificial intelligence represents the next evolutionary stage in this continuum of assistive support. Unlike traditional assistive tools, GAI systems offer adaptive, interactive, and personalised assistance that can support comprehension, expression, organisation, and independent learning. From a disability studies and inclusive education perspective, such capabilities hold considerable promise for advancing educational equity.

However, the rapid adoption of generative AI has also generated institutional responses that may unintentionally undermine inclusion. In many universities, policies addressing AI use have been developed primarily through the lens of academic misconduct, with limited consideration of accessibility and disability rights. Blanket bans, ambiguous guidelines, or punitive monitoring practices risk disproportionately affecting students with disabilities who rely on digital tools to access curriculum content and demonstrate learning. For these students, generative AI may function not as a shortcut or substitute for learning, but as an essential means of participation on equal terms.

Recent studies indicate that students themselves often hold nuanced views of generative AI, recognising both its benefits and limitations. Johnston et al. (2024) report that students frequently perceive AI tools as acceptable when used for language support, clarification of concepts, and organisational assistance. For students with disabilities, these tools may reduce academic anxiety, increase confidence in written expression, and promote greater autonomy in learning. Yet, uncertainty surrounding acceptable use and fear of accusations of plagiarism create significant stress, discouraging transparent and responsible engagement with AI technologies.

Within this context, it becomes imperative to examine generative artificial intelligence not merely as a technological innovation but as a socio-educational phenomenon that intersects with issues of disability, equity, ethics, and academic integrity. Understanding how students with disabilities perceive and use generative AI is essential for developing inclusive institutional policies that balance the preservation of academic standards with the principles of accessibility and social justice.

Accordingly, this paper explores the perspectives of students with disabilities on the use of generative artificial intelligence in higher education. Drawing on literature from inclusive education, assistive technology, disability studies, and academic integrity, the paper seeks to critically analyse the opportunities and challenges associated with GAI use. It argues that generative AI should be recognised as an assistive and inclusive technology aligned with the principles of Universal Design for Learning, rather than viewed solely as a threat to academic integrity. By foregrounding the experiences and needs of students with disabilities, this paper aims to contribute to a more balanced, ethical, and inclusive discourse on the role of generative artificial intelligence in higher education.

2. Generative Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) refers to a class of artificial intelligence systems capable of producing original outputs such as text, images, audio, or code in response to user prompts. Unlike traditional rule-based or deterministic AI systems, generative AI models are trained on large-scale datasets using advanced machine learning techniques, enabling them to generate contextually relevant, adaptive, and human-like responses (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Prominent examples include conversational agents like ChatGPT, AI-powered writing assistants, automated summarisation tools, and multimodal systems that integrate text, speech, and visual inputs.

In higher education, the adoption of generative AI has expanded rapidly, reshaping how students engage with academic content and learning tasks. These tools are commonly used for a range of educational purposes, including:

- drafting and revising academic writing;
- explaining complex concepts in simplified or alternative forms;
- summarising lengthy academic texts and research articles; and
- assisting with research planning, idea organisation, and study management.

From a pedagogical perspective, generative AI introduces new possibilities for personalised and self-directed learning. Students can interact with AI systems at their own pace, seek clarification without fear of judgment, and receive immediate feedback on academic tasks. Such features align with contemporary learner-centred approaches that emphasise flexibility, autonomy, and individualised support.

Nevertheless, the growing presence of generative AI in higher education has also generated significant debate. Critics argue that excessive or unregulated use of AI tools may undermine critical thinking, originality, and independent intellectual effort. Concerns have also been raised regarding plagiarism, authorship ambiguity, and the erosion of traditional assessment practices. However, emerging research suggests that the educational impact of generative AI is not inherently negative but is largely shaped by the context of use, pedagogical design, and institutional regulation (Perkins et al., 2023).

For students with disabilities, generative AI occupies a particularly important position within the higher education landscape. Traditional classroom environments and assessment systems often fail to accommodate diverse learning needs, resulting in unequal access and participation. In this context, generative AI provides personalised, on-demand academic support that can compensate for gaps in institutional accommodations. By assisting with language processing, comprehension, organisation, and expression, GAI tools can help students with disabilities engage more effectively with curriculum content and demonstrate their learning more equitably.

Importantly, for disabled learners, generative AI is not merely a convenience or productivity enhancer but often functions as an accessibility and assistive mechanism. When integrated responsibly, these technologies can reduce academic stress, enhance learner confidence, and support independent engagement with higher education. Understanding generative AI through this inclusive lens is essential for developing balanced academic policies that uphold integrity while promoting equity and accessibility.

3. Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

Despite sustained international commitments to inclusive and equitable education, students with disabilities continue to experience unequal access, participation, and academic outcomes in higher education systems worldwide. The World Health Organisation (2011) highlights that persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by systemic barriers across education, employment, and social participation. Within higher education contexts, these challenges are often intensified by inflexible curricular designs, standardised assessment practices, and limited institutional preparedness to respond to diverse learning needs.

Students with disabilities frequently encounter obstacles that extend beyond physical accessibility. Commonly reported challenges include limited access to printed and digital learning materials, particularly when resources are not provided in accessible formats. Many students also experience difficulties in sustaining attention, processing complex information, and managing cognitive load in fast-paced academic environments. Time-bound examinations

and rigid assessment structures further disadvantage students whose disabilities affect reading speed, writing fluency, or executive functioning. Additionally, conventional written formats of assessment may not adequately capture the knowledge and competencies of students with diverse cognitive, sensory, or communication profiles.

Although legal frameworks in many countries mandate the provision of reasonable accommodations such as extended time, alternative formats, assistive technologies, and academic support services, their implementation remains uneven and, in many cases, delayed or inadequate (UNESCO, 2020). Procedural complexities, limited faculty awareness, and resource constraints often hinder timely access to these supports. Consequently, students with disabilities are frequently required to engage in self-advocacy and informal coping strategies to meet academic expectations.

In response to these systemic gaps, technology has emerged as a critical mediator between institutional demands and individual learning needs. Digital tools, including assistive and adaptive technologies, play an increasingly important role in supporting access, engagement, and expression for students with disabilities. However, the effectiveness of such tools depends not only on availability but also on institutional recognition of their legitimacy and alignment with inclusive pedagogical practices. Understanding the lived experiences of students with disabilities in higher education is, therefore, essential for evaluating the potential of emerging technologies such as generative artificial intelligence to contribute meaningfully to inclusive educational environments.

4. Conceptualising Generative AI as Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is broadly defined as any product, device, or system that enhances the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities and supports their independence and participation in educational and social contexts (World Health Organisation, 2011). Within higher education, assistive technologies have traditionally included tools such as screen readers, Braille displays, captioning systems, speech-to-text software, and alternative input devices. These technologies have played a critical role in reducing barriers related to access, communication, and expression for students with disabilities.

From this perspective, generative artificial intelligence can be conceptualised as an emerging form of assistive technology when it is used to support access to information, comprehension of academic content, and expression of knowledge, without substituting for intellectual engagement or learning effort. Unlike conventional assistive tools, generative AI systems are interactive and adaptive, offering personalised support that can respond to individual learning needs in real time. This adaptability positions generative AI as a potentially transformative resource within inclusive higher education frameworks.

4.1 Students with Visual Impairment

Students with visual impairment have historically relied on screen readers, Braille displays, audiobooks, and tactile materials to access academic content. While these tools remain

essential, generative AI complements and extends their functionality in meaningful ways. Generative AI enables voice-based interaction for content creation, allowing students to draft and revise academic work through speech input. Additionally, AI-based summarisation tools can condense lengthy academic texts, making complex material more manageable and reducing cognitive and time demands.

Structured AI-generated responses also assist students with visual impairment by minimising extensive navigation through digital documents and interfaces. By presenting information in organised and coherent formats, generative AI supports independent learning and aligns with principles of universal accessibility and inclusive design (Burgstahler, 2015). These features enhance academic efficiency while preserving the learner's intellectual agency.

4.2 Students with Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities, including dyslexia and dysgraphia, frequently encounter challenges related to spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and written organisation. Such difficulties can obscure their conceptual understanding and academic potential, leading to frustration and reduced confidence. AI-based writing tools offer real-time feedback, rephrasing options, and organisational scaffolding, enabling students to focus on content and ideas rather than mechanical aspects of writing.

Research indicates that assistive writing technologies can significantly improve writing fluency, confidence, and academic self-efficacy among students with learning disabilities (MacArthur, 2000). Generative AI further enhances these benefits by providing individualised explanations and alternative representations of information. Importantly, when used ethically, these tools support students in expressing their own ideas more clearly rather than generating content on their behalf.

4.3 Students with Hearing Impairment

Access to spoken academic content remains a major challenge for students with hearing impairment, particularly in lecture-based instructional settings. Although sign language interpreters and captioning services are valuable accommodations, they are not always consistently available. Generative AI contributes to accessibility by enabling AI-generated transcripts, captions, and summaries of lectures and discussions, providing alternative text-based modes of access.

These tools support improved comprehension, facilitate review of instructional content, and enhance participation in classroom interactions. Marschark and Spencer (2016) emphasise that access to accurate and timely textual representations of spoken language is critical for academic success among students with hearing impairment. In this context, generative AI serves as a complementary assistive resource that strengthens inclusive learning environments.

4.4 Students with Neurodiversity

Neurodiverse students, including those with autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), often experience challenges related to executive functioning, attention regulation, organisation, and information overload. Generative AI tools that offer structured explanations, step-by-step guidance, and planning assistance can help mitigate these challenges by reducing cognitive complexity and supporting task management.

Such features align closely with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasise multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression (CAST, 2018). By enabling flexible and personalised learning pathways, generative AI supports neurodiverse students in navigating academic demands more effectively, thereby promoting inclusion and learner autonomy.

5. Student Perspectives on Generative AI Use

Empirical research increasingly indicates that students tend to hold cautiously positive attitudes toward the use of generative artificial intelligence in higher education, particularly when such technologies are employed as supportive tools rather than substitutes for learning. Johnston et al. (2024) report that a substantial proportion of students consider the use of generative AI acceptable for academic purposes such as grammar correction, language refinement, clarification of ideas, and preliminary structuring of written work. These findings suggest that students generally differentiate between ethical support and inappropriate replacement of intellectual effort.

For students with disabilities, perceptions of generative AI are shaped strongly by experiences of accessibility and inclusion. Many disabled students view generative AI as a mechanism for achieving parity with non-disabled peers, rather than as a means of gaining an unfair advantage. Students report that AI-assisted tools enhance confidence in academic writing, particularly for those with learning disabilities, visual impairment, or language-processing difficulties. By supporting spelling, grammar, organisation, and clarity, generative AI enables students to communicate their own ideas more effectively, thereby strengthening academic self-efficacy.

Importantly, students with disabilities emphasise that generative AI does not replace their cognitive engagement with course content. Instead, these tools are perceived as facilitating clearer expression of existing knowledge and ideas. This distinction is critical, as it challenges deficit-based assumptions that AI use necessarily undermines learning. For many students, generative AI reduces reliance on peers, scribes, or institutional support staff, thereby promoting greater independence, dignity, and control over the learning process.

Despite these perceived benefits, student perspectives are also marked by significant anxiety and uncertainty. Ambiguity surrounding institutional policies on AI use creates fear of being accused of plagiarism or academic misconduct, even when AI tools are used for accessibility-related support. This concern is particularly acute for students with disabilities, who may depend on AI tools in ways that are not explicitly recognised within existing academic integrity

frameworks. As a result, some students engage with generative AI covertly or avoid its use altogether, limiting its potential benefits.

These findings highlight the need for clearer, more inclusive institutional guidance that reflects student experiences and recognises the legitimate role of generative AI in supporting accessibility. Understanding student perspectives, especially those of students with disabilities, is essential for developing ethical, transparent, and equitable approaches to generative AI use in higher education.

6. Academic Integrity and Ethical Considerations

Academic integrity constitutes a foundational principle of higher education and is commonly associated with values such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. These values underpin scholarly practice and ensure the credibility of academic qualifications. The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has complicated traditional understandings of authorship, originality, and independent work, prompting institutions to reassess existing academic integrity frameworks. While concerns regarding plagiarism, unauthorised assistance, and misrepresentation of authorship are legitimate, scholars caution that blanket prohibitions on generative AI fail to capture the contextual, pedagogical, and ethical complexities of its use (Perkins et al., 2023).

Traditional academic integrity policies have largely been developed in contexts where learning supports were limited to human assistance or static technological tools. Generative AI, by contrast, operates as an interactive and adaptive system, blurring rigid distinctions between support and substitution. Ethical evaluation of AI use, therefore, requires a shift from rule-based enforcement toward principle-based judgment, emphasising intent, transparency, and learning outcomes rather than mere tool usage. Such an approach allows institutions to distinguish between practices that undermine academic standards and those that legitimately support learning and accessibility.

From a disability and inclusion perspective, ethical considerations surrounding generative AI must be assessed in relation to equity of access and fairness of opportunity. For many students with disabilities, AI tools function in ways that are comparable to traditional accommodations, such as spell-checkers, screen readers, or note-taking assistance. Using generative AI for grammar correction, content summarisation, idea organisation, or language clarification does not inherently compromise academic integrity, provided that the student retains intellectual ownership of the work. Instead, such uses may enable students to demonstrate their knowledge more accurately by reducing disability-related barriers.

Ethical use of generative AI in academic contexts is therefore characterised by several key principles. First, students must maintain cognitive and intellectual ownership of ideas, arguments, and conclusions. Second, generative AI should be used as a supportive aid rather than a replacement for learning or critical thinking. Third, transparency and disclosure of AI assistance, where required by institutional policy, should be encouraged to promote trust and

accountability. These principles align ethical AI use with long-standing academic values while accommodating diverse learner needs.

Equating all forms of AI use with academic misconduct risks reinforcing ableist assumptions that privilege normative modes of reading, writing, and expression. Such an approach may disproportionately disadvantage students with disabilities who rely on technological supports to access and engage with academic content. Ethical frameworks that fail to recognise this risk undermine the goals of inclusive education and contradict broader commitments to equity and social justice. A nuanced, inclusive approach to academic integrity is therefore essential for ensuring that generative AI contributes to fair and ethical learning environments rather than exacerbating existing inequalities.

7. Institutional Policy and Inclusive Governance

Higher education institutions play a decisive role in shaping how generative artificial intelligence is understood, regulated, and integrated into teaching and learning practices. Institutional policies not only influence patterns of technology adoption but also shape student perceptions of legitimacy, risk, and ethical acceptability. UNESCO (2023) underscores that governance frameworks for artificial intelligence in education must be grounded in human rights principles, with explicit attention to equity, inclusion, and social justice. Within this context, the absence of clear and inclusive institutional guidance can exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly for students with disabilities who rely on digital tools for access and participation.

Inclusive AI governance requires institutions to move beyond restrictive or punitive approaches and instead adopt policies that recognise the legitimate educational and assistive functions of generative AI. Explicitly acknowledging generative AI as a form of assistive technology is a critical first step in this process. Such recognition helps differentiate ethical support, such as language refinement, content summarisation, and organisational assistance, from practices that constitute academic misconduct. Without this distinction, students may experience uncertainty and fear regarding acceptable use, leading to underutilization of tools that could otherwise enhance accessibility and learning.

Equally important is the provision of systematic training for both students and faculty members on responsible and reflective AI use. Faculty awareness is essential for designing inclusive assessments, interpreting student work fairly, and avoiding assumptions that equate AI use with dishonesty. For students, AI literacy initiatives can promote ethical decision-making, transparency, and critical engagement with technology. These efforts must be inclusive, ensuring that students with disabilities are not disproportionately penalised for using AI tools to access or express academic content.

Institutional policies must also address issues of equitable access. If generative AI tools are to function as inclusive educational resources, institutions must ensure that cost, licensing, or infrastructural limitations do not exclude marginalised learners. Aligning AI policies with existing disability inclusion frameworks, such as reasonable accommodation policies and

universal design principles, can help integrate generative AI into broader institutional commitments to accessibility.

Collectively, inclusive governance approaches foster transparency, reduce anxiety among students, and support ethical engagement with emerging technologies. By embedding generative AI within rights-based and inclusion-oriented policy frameworks, higher education institutions can ensure that technological innovation contributes to, rather than undermines, the goals of inclusive education.

8. Implications for Special and Inclusive Education

The rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence into higher education has important implications for the field of special and inclusive education, particularly in the preparation of future teachers. Teacher education programs, including B.Ed. Special Education and M.Ed. Special Education courses in different disability areas must proactively equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and ethical understanding required to navigate AI-enhanced learning environments. As classrooms become increasingly digital and technologically mediated, educators play a critical role in ensuring that emerging technologies support inclusion rather than exacerbate existing inequalities.

One of the key competencies that teacher education programs must foster is a foundational understanding of generative artificial intelligence, including its capabilities, limitations, and potential biases. Educators need to critically engage with AI technologies to make informed pedagogical decisions and to guide students in their responsible use. Understanding how generative AI systems produce outputs, as well as their limitations in terms of accuracy, bias, and contextual understanding, is essential for preventing misuse and over-reliance.

Another important implication relates to the design of inclusive and flexible assessment practices. Traditional assessment models that prioritise speed, standardised written expression, and rigid formats often disadvantage students with disabilities. Generative AI presents opportunities to rethink assessment design by emphasising higher-order thinking, process-oriented learning, and multiple modes of expression. Teacher education programs should therefore train future educators to develop assessments that allow for diverse ways of demonstrating learning while maintaining academic rigour and integrity.

Supporting students with disabilities through the ethical use of AI tools is also a critical area of professional preparation. Future educators must be able to identify how generative AI can function as an assistive technology, complementing existing accommodations such as screen readers, captioning, and alternative formats. This includes recognising when AI use supports accessibility and when it may cross ethical boundaries. Educators trained in special and inclusive education are particularly well positioned to mediate this balance, ensuring that AI enhances autonomy without replacing intellectual engagement.

Finally, teacher education programs must emphasise the promotion of ethical, reflective, and transparent technology use. Educators serve as role models in shaping students' attitudes

toward academic integrity and responsible innovation. Embedding discussions of ethics, data privacy, authorship, and equity within AI literacy training can help foster critical digital citizenship among both teachers and students.

Integrating AI literacy into teacher education curricula is therefore essential for sustaining inclusive education practices in the digital era. By preparing educators to engage thoughtfully with generative artificial intelligence, higher education institutions can ensure that technological innovation aligns with the core values of special and inclusive education—equity, accessibility, and respect for learner diversity.

9. Challenges and Limitations

Despite its significant potential to enhance accessibility and inclusion, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) in higher education is accompanied by several challenges and limitations that require critical consideration. These concerns are particularly salient for students with disabilities, who may be disproportionately affected if appropriate safeguards and inclusive policies are not in place.

One of the primary challenges associated with generative AI is unequal access to advanced or paid AI tools. Many high-quality generative AI platforms operate on subscription-based models, creating a digital divide between students who can afford these services and those who cannot. Students with disabilities, who already incur additional educational and assistive technology-related expenses, may face further disadvantage if institutions fail to provide institution-wide access to such tools. Without equitable access, the benefits of generative AI risk being unevenly distributed, thereby reinforcing existing educational inequalities.

A second concern relates to the risk of over-dependence on AI tools. While generative AI can support learning by reducing cognitive load and providing scaffolding, excessive reliance may limit opportunities for developing independent academic skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. For students with disabilities, the challenge lies in balancing necessary support with the promotion of autonomy and self-efficacy. This underscores the importance of guided and reflective use of AI, rather than uncritical dependence.

Data privacy and confidentiality issues represent another significant limitation. Generative AI systems often require users to input personal data, academic work, or sensitive information. Students with disabilities may share additional personal or diagnostic details while seeking tailored support, increasing the risk of data misuse or breaches. In the absence of clear institutional guidelines on data protection, consent, and ethical use, students may be exposed to privacy risks that undermine trust in digital learning environments.

Furthermore, the lack of clear institutional policies and guidance exacerbates these challenges. Ambiguous or inconsistent rules regarding acceptable AI use create uncertainty and anxiety among students, particularly those with disabilities who rely on AI for accessibility-related support. Fear of being accused of academic misconduct may discourage transparent and responsible use of generative AI, leading to underutilization of potentially beneficial tools.

Addressing these challenges requires ongoing dialogue and collaboration among students, educators, institutional leaders, policymakers, and technology developers. Higher education institutions must adopt inclusive governance frameworks that ensure equitable access, promote ethical and reflective use, and safeguard student privacy. By proactively addressing the limitations of generative AI, institutions can maximise its inclusive potential while minimising risks, thereby supporting students with disabilities in navigating increasingly AI-mediated academic environments.

10. Conclusion

Generative artificial intelligence represents a significant and transformative development in higher education, particularly for students with disabilities who continue to face systemic barriers to equitable participation. This paper has argued that when understood and implemented through an inclusive and ethical lens, generative AI functions not merely as a technological innovation but as a powerful assistive and accessibility tool. By supporting comprehension, expression, organisation, and independent learning, GAI can enhance academic engagement and learner autonomy among students with diverse disabilities.

The findings and discussion presented in this paper underscore the importance of moving beyond deficit-oriented or punitive narratives surrounding AI use in academic settings. Restrictive policies that treat all forms of generative AI use as academic misconduct risk disproportionately disadvantaging students with disabilities who rely on digital tools to access curriculum content and demonstrate learning. Instead, higher education institutions must adopt balanced approaches that distinguish between unethical substitution of academic work and legitimate, accessibility-oriented support.

Recognising generative AI as an inclusive technology aligned with the principles of Universal Design for Learning is essential for promoting equity and social justice in higher education. Disability-sensitive institutional policies should clearly articulate acceptable uses of AI, ensure equitable access to AI tools, protect student data and privacy, and provide guidance and training for both faculty and students. Such policies not only uphold academic integrity but also foster transparency, trust, and responsible engagement with emerging technologies.

In conclusion, generative artificial intelligence should be viewed as an opportunity to advance inclusive higher education rather than as a threat to academic standards. When governed by ethical frameworks grounded in equity, accessibility, and academic integrity, generative AI can contribute meaningfully to creating learning environments that recognize and accommodate the diverse needs of all students. Future research should continue to explore the lived experiences of students with disabilities in AI-mediated learning contexts and examine institutional practices that effectively balance innovation with inclusion.

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