Responsible Adoption of Generative AI in Higher Education:

Developing a “Points to Consider” Approach Based on Faculty Perspectives

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In collaboration with

Members of the University of Pittsburgh Ad Hoc Committee on Generative AI in Research and Education

Question

How should Institutions of Higher Education make decisions about generative AI (GenAI)?

Including:

- Decisions about when and where policies are needed
- Decisions about what to include in policies
- Guidance for individuals' decisions

Metohods

Combining three approaches to elicit perspectives from faculty at the University of Pittsburgh in Fall 2023:

- Semester-long committee discussions, 29 participants
- Focus groups in eight academic units, 19 participants
- Survey in the same units, 144 participants

Key Limitations: Mostly faculty; one university

Results

Today's focus:

- Developing a "points to consider" approach
- Contrasted with rule-based, top-down approaches

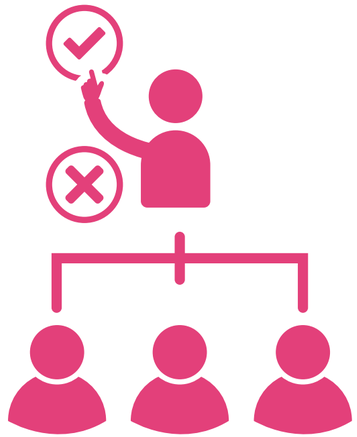
Also in the paper:

- Barriers to GenAI Adoption in Higher Education
- Reasons to adopt GenAI in Higher Education
- Risks, Concerns, and Potential Benefits
- Potential Uses of Generative AI

Governance Approaches

Rule-Based, Top-Down

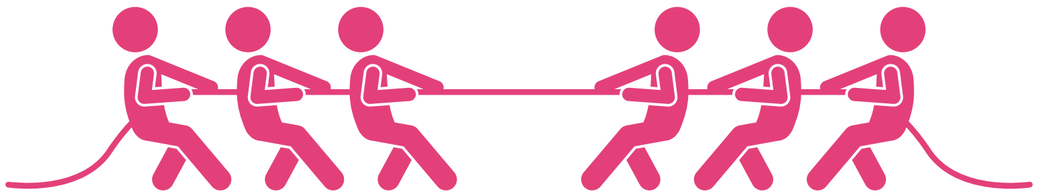
Management decides on policies or rules
to which the organization’s employees are expected to adhere



Tension

The rule-based, top-down approach is at odds with

The shared governance of faculty in higher education
The ethical norm of academic freedom



“Points to Consider” Approach

The “Points to Consider” approach provides a framework within which to consider relevant issues rather than providing strict rules.

Widely used in domains characterized by context-dependency, unsettled legal and regulatory consensus, or the need to maintain room for individual judgment. Examples: FDA, IRB.

Combine with Rule-Based

Point consideration may sometimes reveal a need to develop top-down rules.
Examples:

In sponsoring research, e.g., for internal grant competitions
In publishing, e.g., when publishing a student journal
In buying AI, e.g., procurement policies

The Points to Consider

Points Grounded in Ethical Values and the Values of Higher Education

Academic Freedom	Faculty should have latitude in deciding whether and how to adopt GenAI tools in their research and teaching.
Scientific Values	The integration of GenAI into higher education should be consistent with academic and scientific values, such as accuracy, replicability, creativity, intellectual honesty, and integrity.
Risk Minimizing	Seek to minimize risk of harms such as discrimination, misinformation, physical and mental harm, and reputational harm.
Equity	Seek to mitigate inequities both in access to GenAI and through the use of GenAI and its output.

Pragmatic Points to Consider for GenAI Policy Development in Higher Education

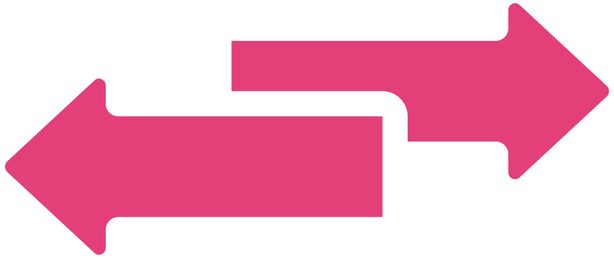
Regulatory Burden	Reduce the regulatory burden by considering to amend existing rules, policies, and guidance to address GenAI.
Adaptabillity	Rules, policies, and guidance regarding GenAI should be sufficiently broad and adaptable to maintain adaptability to rapid change of GenAI tools. They might be “time stamped” for future review to ensure their continued applicability.

Application: Context, Trade-offs, and an Example

Context & Trade-offs

The “points of consider” alone are insufficient for application.

Contextual features and trade-offs are crucial.



Contextual Features and Tradeoffs

Goal	The use of GenAI should be justified in virtue of its use serving the goals of the activity.
Material Impact	Material impact dimensions include immediacy, reversibility, and magnitude of importance for individual and/or group well–being.
Guardrails	Whether adequate guardrails, policies, rules, and guidance to ensure the responsible use of GenAI are in place.
Tool Proficiency	The extent to which potential users understand how the tool works and its limitations.
Topic Proficiency	To be able to recognize and redress errors and biases, users must have adequate knowledge of the subject matter.

Example:

Should instructors use GenAI in courses?

Some points to consider:

- **Value point**: Will a blanket policy infringe on academic freedom?
- **Value point**: How do we ensure equity in student access to GenAI?
- **Practical point**: How can the policy keep up with rapid tech changes?

Example:

Should instructors use GenAI in courses?

Some contexts and tradeoffs to consider:

- **Goal context:** Does the GenAI use serve the pedagogic goal? E.g. Write text to demonstrate subject matter understanding vs. to clarify thoughts or emotions.
- **Proficiency context:** Do the student have sufficient skills to verify the GenAI outputs? E.g., intro-level vs. advanced level
- **Guardrail context:** Are there clear GenAI plagiarism policies?

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