

Chapter 39 :AI in Higher Education Is ‘Not a Student Problem’: Reframing Knowledge, Ethics, and Fluency in the Age of AI

Dr Craig J Selby¹

¹*Academic Director, The Third Degree (Australia and Malaysia), Academic Affiliate, Partium Christian University (Romania), Academic Affiliate, Obuda University (Hungary)*

Correspondence Email: craig@ttd.education

Abstract

This chapter introduces the ‘Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education’; an interdisciplinary framework designed to move beyond narrow, student-centric or compliance-driven narratives surrounding artificial intelligences’ role(s) in academia. Rather than positioning AI as a tool to be controlled, this chapter reframes it as a catalyst for a broader transformation in how knowledge is produced, governed, legitimised, and mobilised across the higher education ecosystem. Drawing on perspectives from the humanities and social sciences, the framework identifies six interconnected domains through which AI fluency is shaped and enacted: learners, educators, workforce expectations, institutional systems, societal leadership, and the knowledge and publishing ecosystem. Together, these domains provide a holistic view of AI as a socio-technical phenomenon that extends beyond classrooms into the structures that define academic legitimacy, authorship, and access to knowledge. The chapter places particular emphasis on the ethical implications of AI integration, including questions of authorship, transparency, equity, and the amplification of existing global inequalities in knowledge access – especially for scholars in the Global South. In doing so, it highlights the risks of fragmented or reactive institutional responses that fail to engage with the full complexity of the AI ecosystem. Central to the argument is the need for sustained institutional investment in AI literacy and training – not only for students, but for educators and academic leaders. Such investment is positioned as a critical mechanism for aligning stakeholders, supporting responsible and context-aware AI use, and enabling higher education institutions to move from reactive governance toward proactive, informed engagement. Ultimately, the chapter presents the Six Domains Framework as both an analytical tool and an open invitation for further development. It argues that meaningful AI fluency will not emerge from isolated interventions, but from coordinated, ethically grounded engagement across the entire academic ecosystem.

Keywords

AI Fluency, Higher Education, Knowledge Production, Education Futures, Institutional Governance, Ethics & Equity, Knowledge Ecosystem.

Introduction

The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) within higher education has generated widespread debate concerning academic integrity, assessment security, authorship, and the future role of universities in digitally mediated societies. Much of this discourse, however, has been framed through a narrow and frequently reactive lens — one that positions students as the primary site of concern and AI itself as a problem to be controlled (Song, 2024; Sweeney, 2023). Yet universities themselves are increasingly integrating AI across broader institutional operations, including enrolment management, administration, staffing, analytics, governance processes, and beyond.

Institutional responses to date to AI have largely focused on plagiarism detection, policy restriction, assessment redesign, and questions of misuse, often without sufficient consideration of the broader structural, pedagogical, and epistemological transformations AI is introducing across the wider higher education ecosystem (Almosiamani, 2025; An, et al, 2025; Buriak et al, 2023; Dabis and Csaki, 2024; Valdivieso and Gonzalez, 2025;)

This chapter proposes that AI in higher education is fundamentally ‘not a student problem’. Rather, it represents a systemic challenge extending across institutional governance, workforce expectations, pedagogical practice, knowledge production, ethical leadership, and the evolving relationship between universities and society (Crawford and McGuire, 2026; Marcinkevage and Kumar, 2025). While concerns surrounding academic integrity remain steadfastly important, an over-emphasis on surveillance and compliance risk obscuring deeper questions regarding how knowledge is created, legitimised, distributed, and applied within increasingly AI-mediated environments.

The emergence of generative AI technologies has exposed significant tensions within higher education systems. Universities are expected to prepare graduates for AI-enabled workplaces while frequently lacking shared institutional understanding of what responsible or meaningful AI engagement means and should involve. Educators are increasingly required to redesign assessments, adapt pedagogical practices, and guide students through rapidly evolving technological environments, often without sustained institutional support or professional development. Concurrently, institutional

leaders must balance innovation, public trust, ethical accountability, and governance. This task is made harder by the speed of technological change, which often outpaces institutional response. (Aslam et al, 2026; Hedquist et al, 2025; Parker and Becker, 2026; Yin et al, 2025; Zhang and Ali, 2025).

These tensions extend beyond teaching and learning. AI is reshaping the broader knowledge ecosystem within which universities operate, including publishing, peer review, authorship, research visibility, and access to information. Questions surrounding transparency, intellectual ownership, bias, and the amplification of existing inequalities particularly those affecting scholars and institutions within the Global South increasingly challenge traditional assumptions regarding academic legitimacy and authority (Munsch, 2025; Nakazawa et al, 2022).

This chapter introduces the Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education framework as a means of understanding these interconnected dynamics. The framework proposes that meaningful AI fluency emerges through the fluid relationship of six interconnected domains: learners, educators, workforce expectations, institutional systems, societal and leadership responsibilities, and the broader knowledge ecosystem. Collectively, these domains provide a holistic framework for examining AI's impact on higher education. They position AI as a catalyst for institutional and epistemological transformation.

Drawing upon sustained professional engagement across higher education contexts during this period of rapid AI adoption, the chapter adopts a practice-informed and conceptually oriented approach. Its purpose is not to provide definitive empirical conclusions regarding AI adoption across the sector, but rather to offer an interpretive framework capable of supporting institutional reflection, dialogue, and future research.

Central to this discussion is the proposition that universities must move beyond reactive governance models towards more integrated and ethically-grounded approaches to AI engagement. AI fluency, in this sense, becomes less about technological mastery and more about cultivating critical judgment, contextual awareness, ethical responsibility, and institutional coherence within increasingly complex digital environments.

Ultimately, AI fluency is positioned as an ecosystemic challenge requiring coordinated engagement across the full spectrum of higher education stakeholders. The future of AI in higher education will be shaped by the extent to which institutions are willing to rethink their assumptions regarding knowledge, learning, authority, and the broader social responsibilities of higher education itself.

Approach and Evidentiary Basis

This chapter adopts a practice-informed and conceptually oriented approach to examining the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) within higher education. Rather than presenting a large-scale empirical study, the chapter draws upon sustained professional engagement across higher education environments during this period of accelerated institutional exposure and attention to generative AI technologies. The framework proposed here is best understood as conceptually led, but informed through ongoing institutional observation, professional interaction, and targeted qualitative insight.

The development of the Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education framework emerged iteratively through repeated engagement with academic leaders, educators, doctoral candidates, institutional support units, and broader professional networks involved in navigating AI integration within university contexts, particularly across Global South environments. These engagements occurred across multiple domains of practice, including academic development, postgraduate supervision, curriculum and assessment discussions, institutional advisory work, professional training activities, and broader strategic conversations relating to AI governance and capability building.

Collectively, these interactions revealed recurring patterns of uncertainty, fragmentation, opportunity, and tension across the higher education ecosystem. Early observations of institutional responses to generative AI highlighted a persistent tendency to frame AI primarily as a challenge of student misuse or academic misconduct. Ongoing engagement unveiled that these concerns represented only one component of a much broader transformation affecting higher education systems.

Through an iterative process of conceptual synthesis, six recurring domains consistently emerged within discussions surrounding AI capability, preparedness, governance, ethical responsibility, and institutional adaptation. This subsequently evolved into the six interconnected domains presented in this chapter: learners, workforce expectations, institutional systems, educators, societal leadership, and the knowledge ecosystem.

To strengthen the practical grounding of the framework, the chapter also incorporates targeted qualitative reflections from senior academic and institutional stakeholders engaged in AI-related decision-making and implementation. These reflections were not gathered through a formal interview-based research design, and are not presented as conventional empirical findings. Instead, they function as qualitative, practice-based engagements that helped surface recurring institutional concerns, interpretive patterns, and areas for further inquiry. Participants included individuals involved in institutional leadership, academic management, curriculum oversight, educational innovation, and policy development.

These qualitative engagements were used primarily as sensitising and interpretive inputs rather than as a formal dataset. They informed the identification of recurring themes, tensions, and institutional patterns across the six domains, but were not intended to generate representative or generalisable findings. The chapter therefore adopts a reflective, practice-informed methodology consistent with exploratory conceptual work. It draws on professional experience, stakeholder dialogue, and interdisciplinary synthesis to develop a framework for further inquiry.

Methodologically, the chapter aligns most closely with interpretive and exploratory traditions within the humanities and social sciences. Its purpose is not to provide predictive or universally representative conclusions regarding AI adoption, but rather to offer an interpretive framework capable of supporting institutional reflection, interdisciplinary dialogue, and future research during a period of rapid technological and organisational change.

The framework should therefore be understood as an evolving conceptual model intended to support ongoing discussion surrounding AI, ethics, governance, and institutional transformation within higher education.

AI Fluency as a Socio-Technical and Institutional Concept

Discussions surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education are frequently framed through the language of tools, platforms, and technological capability. Institutional conversations often focus on what AI can do, whether its use should be permitted, and how it could be regulated. While such concerns are logical, they risk reducing AI to a purely technical phenomenon and overlooking the broader institutional, pedagogical, ethical, and epistemological transformations currently reshaping higher education.

This chapter argues that AI fluency should not be understood as simply the ability to operate AI tools effectively. AI fluency represents a broader socio-technical and institutional capability, encompassing critical judgment, contextual understanding, ethical reasoning, and the ability to navigate increasingly complex relationships between humans, technologies, and knowledge systems.

The distinction between competency and fluency is important. Competency often implies procedural skill acquisition and task completion. Fluency, however, suggests adaptability, interpretation, responsiveness, and meaningful engagement within changing environments. AI fluency thus involves understanding how to use AI systems, as well as when, why, and under what conditions their use may be appropriate, ethical, or educationally valuable.

This distinction is particularly significant within higher education because universities are fundamentally concerned with the production, validation, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge. The emergence of AI raises questions extending into the foundations of academic practice itself, including authorship, originality, transparency, trust, and legitimacy, amongst others.

AI also exposes significant institutional tensions. Universities are expected to prepare graduates for increasingly AI-mediated workplaces, while many institutional systems, governance structures, and pedagogical practices continue to evolve unevenly in response to rapid technological development. Institutional responses frequently remain fragmented, with academic integrity units, teaching and learning centres, information technology divisions, and leadership structures often approaching AI from different operational perspectives.

These dynamics highlight why AI fluency cannot be understood as residing within any single stakeholder group. It is not solely a student issue, nor exclusively a pedagogical or technological challenge. Rather, AI fluency emerges through the interaction(s) between learners, educators, institutional systems, leadership cultures, workforce expectations, and knowledge ecosystems.

This interconnectedness reflects the fundamentally socio-technical nature of AI integration. Technologies both shape and are shaped by the environments within which they are embedded. Decisions concerning assessment, publishing, governance, academic integrity, and institutional policy are therefore never purely technical. They also shape how knowledge and legitimacy are constructed within academia.

AI fluency should therefore be understood as an ecosystemic capability emerging through alignment across multiple institutional and societal domains. Meaningful AI engagement cannot be achieved through isolated policy interventions, technical workshops, or student-focused compliance mechanisms alone. Instead, it requires coordinated institutional reflection on AI's effects on knowledge, learning, labour, governance, and public responsibility within higher education.

The Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education framework presented in the following section is intended to support this broader understanding. By examining AI through the interconnected perspectives of learners, workforce expectations, institutional systems, educators, societal leadership, and the knowledge ecosystem, the framework seeks to move beyond narrow technological narratives toward a more holistic interpretation of AI as a transformational force within higher education.

The Six Domains Framework

The Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education framework proposes that AI fluency is an interconnected institutional and ecosystemic capability rather than an individual technical skill. Responsibility for AI engagement does not sit with any one stakeholder group. Instead, it emerges through the interaction of multiple actors, systems, and expectations shaping how AI is interpreted, governed, adopted, and normalised within higher education.

The framework identifies six interconnected domains through which AI fluency can be examined: the learner lens, the workforce lens, the systems lens, the educator lens, the societal and leadership lens, and the knowledge ecosystem lens.

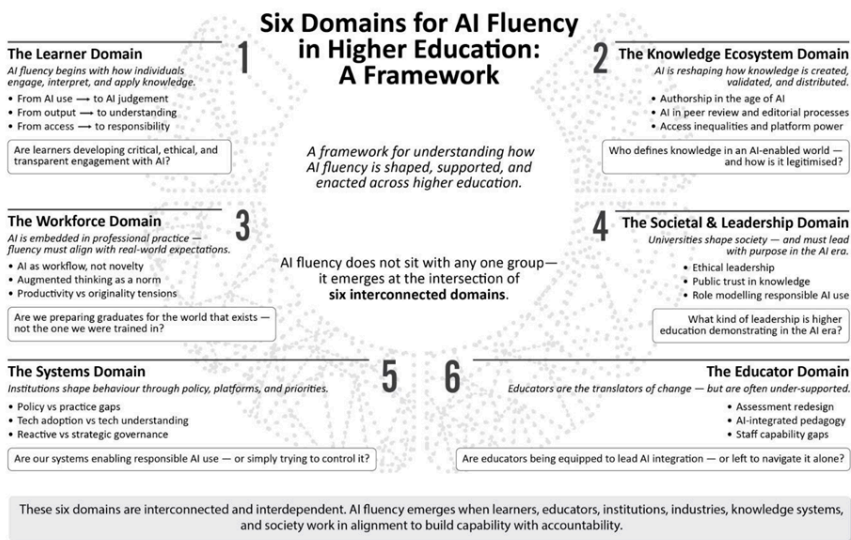


Figure 1: Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education: A Framework. [Source: Author]

The Learner Domain

The learner domain begins with students, who have often been placed at the centre of AI debates in higher education. Much institutional discussion has focused on concerns surrounding academic misconduct and assessment integrity. While these concerns are legitimate, an overly narrow focus on misuse risks reducing learners to objects of suspicion rather than recognising them as participants in rapidly changing knowledge environments.

From this perspective, the key question becomes how and are students developing the ability to evaluate, question, verify, and responsibly apply AI-generated outputs. AI fluency for learners requires critical engagement with the limitations, biases, affordances, and ethical implications of AI systems.

Students must develop skills to move beyond passive output consumption toward informed judgment and reflective engagement. Universities have a responsibility to train students how to engage with AI critically, transparently, and ethically, and not just to regulate AI usage.

The learner domain also foregrounds issues of equity. Students do not encounter AI from equal starting points. Differences in technological access, language confidence, educational background, and financial resources shape how learners engage with AI systems. AI fluency therefore must also be understood as a question of educational justice.

The Workforce Domain

The workforce domain examines the relationship between AI fluency and graduate preparedness. AI tools are increasingly embedded across professional environments, including communication, administration, research, design, analytics, and decision-making processes. Graduates entering these environments are expected to use AI tools, as well as to understand their limitations, ethical implications, and appropriate applications.

This creates tension for universities. Institutions remain concerned about academic authenticity while simultaneously preparing graduates for workplaces where AI-supported productivity is sufficiently normalised. If higher education responds primarily through restriction and avoidance, it risks preparing students for academic environments disconnected from the demands of contemporary professional realities.

The workforce domain argues that universities must move beyond simplistic debates regarding whether students should use AI and instead focus on how students develop professional judgment within AI-mediated environments. Graduates need to understand how to work with AI responsibly rather than becoming dependent upon it.

This also has implications for curriculum and assessment design. AI fluency cannot be treated as a generic digital skill detached from disciplinary context. The ethical and professional implications of AI vary significantly across fields such as law, medicine, journalism, education, business, engineering, and the humanities. Universities now require discipline-specific approaches to AI engagement.

The Systems Domain

The systems domain shifts attention from individuals toward the institutional structures shaping AI engagement. Universities are complex organisations composed of policies, governance arrangements, technologies, professional services, leadership cultures, and academic traditions. AI adoption is mediated through these systems, which determine what forms of engagement are encouraged, restricted, resourced, or ignored.

Institutional responses to AI have typically been reactive, focusing heavily on misconduct, detection, and compliance. While such responses may address immediate concerns, they often reveal deeper gaps in institutional preparedness. Policies may be introduced before shared understandings exist. Guidance may vary across departments. Educators and students may receive inconsistent messages. It also contradicts in many cases universities' use of AI across all other functions and operations.

The systems domain asks whether institutional systems are enabling responsible AI engagement or simply attempting to control it? Control-oriented approaches privilege surveillance and restriction. Enabling approaches recognise that governance must be accompanied by capability development, pedagogical support, ethical reflection, and institutional learning.

This domain also highlights the importance of institutional coherence. AI-related decisions are frequently dispersed across multiple institutional units, creating fragmented governance structures and inconsistent experiences and awareness for staff and students. AI fluency at the institutional level therefore requires coordination, communication, and shared responsibility.

The Educator Domain

The educator domain focuses on academic staff as central mediators of AI engagement within higher education. Educators are expected to maintain academic standards, redesign assessments, guide students through ethical questions, interpret institutional policy, and adapt pedagogical practice within rapidly changing technological environments.

Yet many educators are being asked to perform this work without sufficient institutional support, training, workload recognition, or professional development. Preparedness remains uneven at best. Some educators have engaged enthusiastically with AI, while others remain cautious, uncertain, or overwhelmed.

The educator domain therefore asks whether academic staff are being sufficiently equipped to lead AI integration or left to navigate it alone. This matters because

educators shape how students experience AI within learning environments. They determine how AI is discussed, how expectations are communicated, and how responsible engagement is modelled.

Assessment redesign represents one of the most immediate challenges. Generative AI has exposed vulnerabilities in assessment approaches heavily reliant on unsupervised written outputs. However, effective AI-responsive pedagogy requires time, expertise, institutional support, and opportunities for professional learning. Without such investment, calls for innovation risk becoming another form of intensified academic labour.

Ultimately, this domain positions educators as essential agents of responsible institutional transformation, yet, many are not ready to embrace this role.

The Societal and Leadership Domain

The societal and leadership domain highlights the broader responsibilities of universities in the AI era. Higher education institutions do not exist solely to deliver qualifications or respond to labour market demands. They are also public knowledge institutions with ethical, civic, and social responsibilities.

Institutional leaders are increasingly required to make decisions about AI under conditions of uncertainty. These decisions ultimately communicate institutional values. Whether universities approach AI through fear, opportunism, experimentation, or ethical responsibility shapes organisational culture and public trust, and how stakeholders view the university as a component of society.

A major challenge within this domain concerns the gap between symbolic and substantive leadership. Public commitments to innovation may coexist with limited staff development, fragmented governance, or under-resourced support systems. Responsible leadership therefore requires significantly more than rhetorical recognition of AI's importance. It requires sustained investment, institutional coordination, and ethical reflection.

This domain also emphasises the extensive role of universities within wider society. AI is reshaping public knowledge environments through misinformation, synthetic media, automated content production, and algorithmic mediation. Universities therefore have a responsibility to also contribute critically to public understanding and ethical debate(s).

The societal and leadership domain positions AI fluency as a matter of institutional purpose and public responsibility rather than merely operational adaptation.

The Knowledge Ecosystem Domain

The knowledge ecosystem domain extends discussion beyond teaching and governance into the wider systems through which academic knowledge is produced, validated, circulated, and legitimised. AI is increasingly shaping publishing, peer review, research communication, authorship, literature discovery, and scholarly visibility.

This domain asks who defines ‘knowledge’ in AI-mediated environments, and how that knowledge becomes legitimised. Generative AI complicates traditional assumptions regarding authorship, originality, transparency, and scholarly contribution. If AI contributes to the production of academic text, universities and publishers must reconsider how authorship and disclosure are made and understood.

The knowledge ecosystem domain also spotlights issues of access and inequality. AI can support multilingual scholarship, improve accessibility, and reduce barriers for researchers operating outside dominant English-language academic centres and those in the Global North. At the same time, uneven training datasets may reinforce existing inequalities by privileging already-visible scholarship, institutions, languages, and epistemic traditions.

These concerns are particularly significant for scholars (and institutions) within the Global South. AI-mediated systems risk amplifying existing exclusions if dominant publishing infrastructures and datasets continue to privilege knowledge production in / from the Global North.

Ultimately, this lens returns the discussion to the core purpose of the university: the stewardship of knowledge. If AI changes how knowledge is produced, discovered, and trusted, then universities cannot treat AI as merely a teaching-and-learning issue. It becomes central to academic legitimacy itself.

Interdependence Across the Six Domains

Although each domain highlights a distinct element of AI fluency, the framework’s central contribution lies in emphasising their interdependence. Learner behaviour is shaped by educator guidance, institutional systems, assessment design, and society and industry expectations. Educator practice is influenced by leadership cultures, governance structures, workload models, and professional development opportunities. Knowledge production is shaped by publishing systems, technological infrastructures, and broader social inequalities.

This interconnectedness helps explain why fragmented institutional responses frequently fail. Universities may introduce AI policies without supporting educators to

redesign assessment. Institutions may encourage AI readiness while maintaining governance cultures rooted primarily in restriction and surveillance. Students may be expected to engage responsibly with AI despite inconsistent guidance across programmes and disciplines.

The framework therefore encourages a shift from intervention thinking toward ecosystem thinking. Rather than asking what single policy or technology can solve AI-related challenges, universities must instead ask how institutional structures, relationships, incentives, and values interact to shape positive and ethical AI engagement on multiple levels and scales.

AI fluency is not achieved solely through student training or institutional policy. It emerges through alignment across learners, educators, leadership, governance systems, workforce, and knowledge ecosystems. This is why AI in higher education cannot be understood as a student problem alone. It is an ecosystemic transformation requiring coordinated and ethically grounded institutional engagement.

Of importance is that the framework does not suggest that universities should seek total consensus regarding AI. Disagreement, experimentation, and critical debate are essential components of academic life. Institutions require structures capable of supporting informed disagreement rather than fragmented uncertainty. AI fluency in higher education depends upon the ability of institutions to create environments where stakeholders can engage critically, transparently, and collaboratively with technological change.

The *Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education* framework offers a possible pathway towards this coherence. By recognising the interdependence of the domains, the framework encourages universities to move beyond isolated intervention(s) and towards more integrated, ethically grounded, and institutionally reflective approaches to AI engagement.

Limitations and Future Research

The Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education framework has been laid out as a practice-informed and conceptually oriented model for understanding and (re)thinking AI within higher education. The framework is exploratory rather than empirically definitive, and emerges primarily from sustained professional engagement, institutional observation, and interdisciplinary reflection.

Consequently, the framework reflects particular institutional experiences and higher education contexts rather than universally representative conditions across the global

higher education sector. The discussion should thus be understood as interpretive and developmental, rather than generalisable.

The pace of technological change also represents an important limitation. AI technologies, governance approaches, and institutional responses continue to evolve unevenly and often, not in conjunction. Thus, the framework must be treated as adaptive and evolving rather than fixed.

Despite these limitations, the exploratory nature of the framework also represents one of its strengths. Higher education institutions currently operate within conditions of uncertainty, experimentation, and transition. Conceptual frameworks capable of supporting institutional reflection and interdisciplinary dialogue therefore remain valuable to stakeholders.

Future research may build upon this framework. More detailed and comparative studies across institutional and disciplinary contexts can help identify patterns of AI preparedness, governance alignment, and capability development. Additional research examining educator experiences, workload implications, disciplinary differences, and student understandings of ethical AI engagement would also contribute meaningfully to institutional planning.

Inquiry into AI-assisted scholarship, publishing ethics, multilingual knowledge production, and epistemic inequality is especially important, particularly in relation to scholars and institutions operating within the Global South.

Ultimately, the Six Domains Framework should be understood as an open contribution to ongoing conversations regarding AI, ethics, governance, and institutional transformation within higher education.

Conclusion

The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence within higher education has generated significant institutional concern, particularly regarding academic integrity, assessment authenticity, and student misuse. While these concerns remain important, this chapter has argued that framing AI primarily as a student problem fundamentally underestimates the scale and complexity of the transformation currently confronting universities.

AI doesn't just introduce new tools into existing educational environments; it is reshaping how knowledge is produced, interpreted, governed, communicated, and legitimised across the broader higher education ecosystem.

Central to this discussion is the recognition that AI fluency cannot be reduced to technical competence alone. Meaningful engagement with AI requires critical judgment, ethical reasoning, contextual awareness, institutional coherence, and the ability to navigate increasingly complex relationships between technologies, knowledge systems, and social structures.

The Six Domains for AI Fluency in Higher Education framework was introduced as a means of making these interconnected dynamics visible. By exploring AI through the perspectives of learners, workforce preparedness, institutional systems, educators, societal leadership, and knowledge ecosystems, the framework moves beyond fragmented or compliance-driven narratives towards a more holistic understanding of AI as a socio-technical and institutional phenomenon.

The chapter has argued that fragmented institutional responses frequently fail because AI cuts across every major dimension of university life. Policies developed without pedagogical support create uncertainty. Calls for innovation without investment in educator capability generate institutional strain. Expectations of student responsibility without shared institutional understanding undermine trust.

Universities must curate more than isolated interventions. Coherent institutional cultures capable of responding thoughtfully, ethically, and adaptively to technological transformation are what is essential.

Interestingly too, AI presents higher education with an opportunity. Although generative AI disrupts established assumptions, it creates possibilities for rethinking learning, accessibility, interdisciplinary inquiry, and global participation within knowledge systems.

The future of AI in higher education will not be determined solely by technological capability, but by the choices institutions make regarding how these technologies are interpreted, governed, and integrated into academic life. The challenge for universities is therefore not simply to adapt to AI, but to determine what forms of higher education they wish to preserve, transform, or reimagine in response to it.

Practically, the Six Domains Framework could be used by institutions as a diagnostic and/or planning tool for AI engagement. Rather than beginning with isolated policies or student-facing compliance measures, universities could use the framework to map strengths, gaps, and tensions across the six domains. This may involve auditing AI policies, identifying staff development needs, reviewing assessment practices, aligning graduate capabilities with workplace expectations, and establishing cross-institutional forums for ethical AI governance. In this sense, the framework becomes a structured

means of supporting institutional dialogue, coordination, and strategic decision-making.

In this sense, AI in higher education is not a student problem. It is a collective institutional challenge requiring coordinated, ethically grounded, and ecosystemic engagement across the entire university environment!

References

1. Almosiamani, Y. (2025). Factors affecting AI-innovation adoption in a higher education institution's learning management system. *The International Journal of Technology in Learning*, 32(2), 101–116. doi: 10.18848/2327-0144/CGP/v32i02/101-11
2. An, Y., Yu, H., & James, S. (2025). Investigating the higher education institutions' guidelines and policies regarding the use of generative AI in teaching, learning, research, and administration. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 22, Article 10. Doi: 10.1186/s41239-025-00507-3
3. Aslam, S., Shahidi Hamedani, S., and Shahidi Hamedani, S. (2026). Circular economy to circular societies: Universities as mindset infrastructures for transformative change. *Frontiers in Sustainability*, 7, Article 1780982. doi: 10.3389/frsus.2026.1780982
4. Buriak, J. M., Akinwande, D., Artzi, N., Brinker, C. J., Burrows, C., Chan, W. C. W., Chen, C., Chen, X., Chhowalla, M., Chi, L., & Chueh, W. (2023). Best practices for using AI when writing scientific manuscripts: Caution, care, and consideration: Creative science depends on it [Editorial]. *ACS Nano*, 17(5), 4091–4093. doi: 10.1021/acsnano.3c01544
5. Crawford, I., & McGuire, R. (2026, March 30). *Making sense of AI in higher ed: A leadership briefing for an unsettled field*. The HELIOS Report. heliosreport.com
6. Dabis, A., & Csaki, C. (2024). AI and ethics: Investigating the first policy responses of higher education institutions to the challenge of generative AI. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, Article 1006. doi: 10.1057/s41599-024-03526-z
7. Hedquist, A., Castillon, M., Cooper, M., Keim, V., Mohseni, T., & Purcell, K. (2025). Reflections on AI implementation in research administration: Emergent approaches and recommendations for strategic and sustainable impact. *The Journal of Research Administration*, 56(2), 75–87. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1491791.pdf>
8. Marcinkevage, C., & Kumar, A. (2025). Generative AI in higher education constituent relationship management (CRM): Opportunities, challenges, and

- implementation strategies. *Computers*, 14(4), Article 101. doi: 10.3390/computers14030101
9. Munsch, A. (2025). Pedagogy in the age of AI: Exploring generative AI for higher education. *Journal of Technology and Information Management*, 33(1), Article 9. doi: 10.58729/1941-6679.1609
 10. Nakazawa, E., Udagawa, M., & Akabayashi, A. (2022). Does the use of AI to create academic research papers undermine researcher originality? *AI*, 3(3), 702–706. doi: 10.3390/ai3030040
 11. Parker, J., & Becker, K. (2026). Defining and assessing AI literacy for researchers across the research lifecycle. *Frontiers in Education*, 11, Article 1827603. doi: 10.3389/educ.2026.1827603
 12. Song, N. (2024). Higher education crisis: Academic misconduct with generative AI. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 32(1), Article e12532. doi: 10.1111/1468-5973.12532
 13. Sweeney, S. (2023). Who wrote this? Essay mills and assessment – considerations regarding contract cheating and AI in higher education. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 21(3), Article 100818. doi: 10.1016/j.ijme.2023.100818
 14. Valdivieso, T., & Gonzalez, O. (2025). Generative AI tools in Salvadoran higher education: Balancing equity, ethics, and knowledge management in the global south. *Education Sciences*, 15(2), Article 214. doi: 10.3390/educsci15020214
 15. Yin, Y., Liu, H., & Chau, T. (2025). A systematic review of AI ethics in education: Challenges, policy gaps, and future directions. *Journal of Global Information Management*, 33(1), 1–50. doi: 10.4018/JGIM.386381
 16. Zhang, J., & Ali, H. (2025). AI-enhanced decision support systems for strategic higher education management: A framework for improving decision-making efficiency and stakeholder trust. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 15(10), 1153–1168. doi: 10.6007/IJARBS/v15-i10/26819

Acknowledgements

This chapter emerged out of hosting a Professional Development Forum for UTAR and Partium Christian University early in 2026. In trying to create a bridge between our expert speakers (Professor Graham Kendall, Professor Eniko Maior, Dr Roland-Atilla Szabo, and Jeevamalar Kumarasamy), I reflected on five (of the six) domains presented as an integrating and integrated force. Later, discussions with William Loh from Emerald Publishing pushed me to think about the role that internal and external knowledge production plays in this ecosystem. Special thanks go to Dr Hooi Chee Mei (Esther) for encouraging me to present these ideas live, even though I was somewhat

unwell at the time; and to Azhar Khairi for converting Figure 1 from an AI image output into a clearer and more aesthetic image.

Generative AI Statement

Chat-GPT was utilised in the preparation of this chapter strictly for language editing and enhancing word choice. All intellectual content, research design, and data analysis was conducted solely by the author.

Figure 1 was initially created using generative AI based on ideas and instruction from the author, and subsequently edited manually for content and style. All content was verified by the author for accuracy.