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Author(s)

Name: Stanisław Zabandżała

Position: Student / Student Expert

Organisation: University of Warsaw / Polish Accreditation Committee

Country: Poland

Short bio: Stanisław Zabandżała is a law and philosophy student at the University of Warsaw and a Quality Assurance Expert with a particular interest in the legal and ethical aspects of AI in higher education.

He contributes to national and European policy as a Member of the Polish Ministry of Digital Affairs' Working Group on Artificial Intelligence, Member of the Cyber Academic Council at the Polish Command of the Cyber Defence Forces, and Member of the European Students Union Task Force on AI and Digitalisation. He is also a student expert in the Polish Accreditation Committee and a member of the ESU Quality Assurance Students Experts Pool.

Within the University of Warsaw's Student Government and as a Student Representative to the University Council for Teaching and Learning, he initiated and co-authored recommendations for institutional AI regulations as part of quality assurance processes.

Paper

Title: Redefining "Proactive QA" in the AI Era: a student-driven policy model within international AI Governance frameworks

Abstract

The proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) across higher education systems presents new challenges and opportunities for quality assurance (QA), calling for more anticipatory, inclusive, and adaptive approaches. This paper examines the integration of AI governance into QA mechanisms through a comparative analysis of institutional policies, with particular attention to stakeholder engagement, academic integrity, and policy coherence within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The core of the study is a multi-institutional review of AI-related frameworks adopted by European universities, identifying common regulatory patterns such as the requirement for disclosure of AI-generated content, restrictions on AI use in student assessment, the emergence of dedicated oversight bodies, and the varying degrees of involvement of academic staff and students in policy formation. The analysis reveals both innovation and fragmentation in current practices, highlighting the need for more harmonised and student-inclusive models of governance.

Within this broader landscape, the paper presents a detailed case study of the University of Warsaw. In September 2023, the Student Parliament initiated and adopted a resolution on the responsible use of AI in education, which subsequently formed the basis of a university-wide policy officially adopted by the University Council. This instance of student-led governance not only underscores the potential of learners as co-creators of QA frameworks but also exemplifies proactive institutional adaptation. The policy is now undergoing formal review, further reflecting a dynamic QA process. The case has gained international visibility through its discussion during a 4EU+ Alliance student conference, illustrating its potential for cross-border learning and transferability.

The paper concludes with recommendations for embedding AI governance within QA systems through participatory design, digital oversight tools, and multi-level engagement, thereby strengthening institutional resilience and academic values in the face of rapid technological transformation.

1. Introduction

The development of advanced AI tools is rapidly transforming higher education worldwide. New technologies, which can automatically create complex content, bring new possibilities for teaching and research. However, they also challenge the basic principles on which higher education has relied.

As a result, traditional ways of maintaining quality have become less effective, pushing institutions to adopt more forward-looking, open, and flexible strategies. In response to these emerging concerns, higher education institutions have adopted a number of regulations, resolutions, and guidelines to govern the use of AI in education, certification, and scientific research.

Within this context, the aim of this article is to examine and compare these institutional policies to identify dominant regulatory patterns and assess their potential to redefine 'Proactive QA' within the ongoing transformation of the higher education landscape. Through this analysis, the study identified key innovations in proactive quality management, but it also reveals significant fragmentation in different academic standards and verification methods, posing challenges to the consistency and fairness of the system.

2. Methodology:

The study was based on a comparative analysis of institutional documents, embedded within qualitative research. The main objective of the method was to identify, describe, and compare regulatory patterns concerning the management of artificial intelligence in European higher education institutions. The analysis aimed to understand how AI tools affect higher education and how universities are adapting to changes.

The research material consisted of collected normative documents (binding) and recommendations in the form of non-binding guidelines adopted by selected Polish universities (universities and technical universities) during the period of dynamic development of GenAI tools (2023–2025).

These documents included, in particular: Rectors' decrees, resolutions of collegial bodies, recommendations and guidelines of other entities, novelisations of previously applicable regulations/codes of ethics (to the extent that they have been updated to include AI issues).

A qualitative content analysis was used to identify key regulatory and thematic patterns that directly relate to the research objectives. After identifying the common regulatory patterns, a comparative analysis was conducted to determine:

Convergence: Areas where universities apply a uniform, more rigorous approach.

Diversification (Fragmentation): Areas where there are significant methodological or procedural differences between universities.

This structural analysis enabled conclusions about the degree of innovation and the consistency of the policies adopted in the context of the need for harmonisation in the EHEA.

3. Key observations:

A comparative analysis of legal frameworks adopted by several European universities confirms that higher education institutions are actively seeking to integrate AI governance mechanism with quality assurance procedures, while facing challenges arising from rapid technological development. The key findings of the analysis point to common regulatory patterns that form the basis of institutional policies in the areas of teaching and research, in particular:

a. Requirements related to transparent disclosure and labelling of AI-generated content. This is one of the most common and most stringent regulatory elements. Authors, including students, doctoral students, and academic staff, are required to disclose the use of AI content generators. In academic papers, theses, and scientific publications, the purpose, scope, and use of the AI tool must be clearly stated. In cases involving a high degree of AI interference, it may be necessary to collect and, if required, share the prompts and responses with the supervisor. Ensuring transparency and trust between authors and recipients is a priority.

b. Strict restrictions in assessment processes and key stages of intellectual creation. Policies largely impose restrictions on the use of AI in student assessment. Many regulations prohibit the use of AI systems during exams and tests, unless the exam instructions explicitly allow it. The automatic generation of essays, theses, and research projects is unacceptable, and in the field of scientific research, the generation of key research conclusions and interpretations of calculation results is mostly prohibited.

c. Creation of dedicated AI ethics oversight and management bodies. In response to technological challenges, universities are establishing specialised bodies that are responsible for coordinating policy, reviewing implementations, and educating on the ethical and safe use of AI.

d. Content generators may be used as an aid in activities considered to be low-level interference. This applies in particular to: language, style and grammar correction, text translation, automatic bibliography formatting, generating diagrams or visualisations based on detailed instructions from the author, as well as preliminary ideation and brainstorming.

e. Authors bear full responsibility for the content of their work. In the context of research, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the accuracy and integrity of results. Violations of the rules (e.g., concealing the use of AI or presenting its work as one's own) result in disciplinary responsibility.

f. Institutions unanimously emphasise that AI-generated information may be inaccurate, untrue (hallucinations), or biased (AI bias). For this reason, it is strongly recommended that the results obtained from content generators be critically evaluated and verified using reliable scientific sources.

g. Many regulations underlines that it is essential to comply with personal data protection regulations (GDPR) and standards regarding the protection of Intellectual Property. There is a general prohibition on entering confidential, sensitive, classified, or personal data into publicly available GenAI tools, as it may be disclosed or used by third parties for model training.

h. In most institutions, lecturers have the right to set more detailed, transparent rules (including the scope and manner) for the use of GenAI tools in their classes or as part of the work being prepared. In certain situations, an academic teacher may completely prohibit the use of GenAI.

In summary, the regulatory framework demonstrates innovation in adapting to technological change, but at the same time points to the need to harmonise approaches. The new policies act as an academic, designed to protect key values such as integrity, critical thinking, and scientific rigour from the risks posed by the automation of the creative process.

4. Detailed case study of the University of Warsaw

In the context of the evolving framework for managing AI in European higher education, the University of Warsaw provides a detailed case study of proactive student involvement in shaping academic policy. It is this example that demonstrates the potential of students as co-creators of change in quality assurance procedures.

The involvement of students at UW started as a legislative initiative - in September 2023, the Student Parliament of the University of Warsaw (PSUW) initiated and adopted Resolution No. 40/2022/2023 on education using artificial intelligence. This resolution then served as the key factor influencing the final shape of the university-wide policy officially adopted by the University Council for Teaching and Learning.

5. The proposed measures focused on incorporating technology while maintaining ethics and the quality of education. Key demands and the position of students included:

a. Strong opposition from the Student Parliament to the concept of a total ban on the use of AI tools in the education process, pointing out that the greatest threat is precisely the prohibition on the use of these solutions.

b. It was proposed that university regulations be introduced that would enable the use of new technological solutions to the greatest extent possible, while respecting the law and ethical principles, and maintaining the learning outcomes envisaged for a given field of study.

c. The need for education in the ethical use of AI tools was emphasised, as the skilful use of new technologies will become the norm in professional and scientific work in the near future. It was proposed that publicly available courses and training (introductory and advanced) be created to enable the acquisition of knowledge and practical skills related to the field of new technologies.

d. Creation of a dedicated university-wide team with their participation. The competence of this team would be to develop binding regulations related to the implementation and use of new technologies.

e. It was proposed that the University of Warsaw purchase and make available content generators and other AI-based tools as part of its library and information system in order to promote their use in scientific research and adapt them to the needs of teaching. Attention was also drawn to the need to clearly define the scope of AI use that is not permitted, while promoting education on the ethical use of these tools.

6. Practical recommendations and best practices for the future

The recommendations below represent the author's opinion based on experience and observations from previous practice. This catalogue serves as a starting point for further discussion and the possibility of adapting or refining specific solutions.

a. Create co-governed structures for AI and quality (with students as partners).

Universities should embed a standing, officially mandated forum for AI and quality that includes students as voting members. Treat students not as consultees but as partners who bring situated knowledge about actual study practices and risk trade-offs. This new body should be embedded within existing quality assurance structures so that AI policy could be reviewed alongside assessment and curriculum.

b. Publish clear institutional norms for AI use, translated to course level.

An institution-wide framework that distinguishes permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses reduces ambiguity while still leaving room for disciplinary differences. Course-level “AI guidelines” should interpret the framework for specific tasks, explaining both why and how AI may (or may not) be used during particular classes. Clarity at these two levels minimises disputes and supports consistency across programmes.

c. Redesign assessment for AI-pervasive contexts.

Where AI can meaningfully contribute to outputs, assessment needs to safeguard construct validity and authenticity. Emphasise tasks that elicit reasoning, interpretation, and professional judgement; require process evidence (draft trails, method notes, short viva/oral checks) to demonstrate authorship and learning. Avoid over-reliance on detection tools after the fact; build integrity into task design.

d. Develop critical AI literacy as part of obligatory courses.

Treat AI literacy as a scholarly competence, not only a technical skill. Short, stackable modules should cover model affordances and limits, citation/attribution, data protection, disciplinary norms, and ethical use. If framed this way, AI literacy supports independent learning, not tool dependence, and aligns with graduate attributes.

e. Check the integrity and compliance procedures to AI-specific challenges.

Procedures should distinguish between misunderstanding of expectations, negligent practice, and intentional misconduct. Set transparent evidentiary standards and maintain due process. Where detection tools are used, document their limitations and require human judgement before any sanction. The aim should be the educational justice, not maximum punishment.

f. Share materials openly and invite peer comparison without enforcing uniformity.

Open templates, and evaluation methods enable cumulative knowledge-building across institutions and light convergence across the EHEA. Peer commentary and cross-institutional review can surface blind spots and support proportionate, context-sensitive practice.

7. Conclusions

This paper argues that quality assurance in the age of generative AI should shift from retrospective control to proactive, shared design. The comparative reading of institutional policies, together with the University of Warsaw case, indicates that student-initiated action can trigger system-level improvements.

Proactive approach to quality assurance should be viewed as a pragmatic framework organised around five connected domains: co-governed structures with students, assessment design that remains valid in AI-capable contexts, critical AI literacy for the academic community, proportionate compliance and data protection, and AI monitoring embedded in standard QA cycles. The recommendations translate these domains into steps that a typical university can begin within a single semester while respecting disciplinary autonomy and institutional differences.

The study has limitations. It draws on policy texts within a specific national and temporal window. Future research should test transferability across disciplines and jurisdictions, include designs that track student learning and staff practice, and examine how regulatory requirements evolve alongside AI capabilities.

Despite these constraints, the evidence supports a clear conclusion: institutions that include students in governance, redesign assessment for the realities of AI, and maintain transparent, proportionate rules could be better placed to realise the educational benefits of AI while safeguarding integrity, fairness, and public trust in academic standards.

8. Acknowledgement of the use of AI

The following AI tools were used in the project:

Perplexity:

The tool was primarily used to support the search for publicly available information, such as legal regulations at universities or relevant scientific studies that may be helpful for the topics being discussed. If no data was found, a manual review was performed to confirm that it was indeed impossible to find the relevant publicly available regulations.

NotebookLM:

The tool was used to better manage sources. Publicly available files containing the content of university regulations were uploaded to the tool, making it much easier to search for specific text fragments within a large dataset.

ChatGPT:

The tool was used to help discuss specific issues, point out gaps in my reasoning, and identify areas worth further exploration that I might otherwise have overlooked.

DeepL and Grammarly:

The tools were used in the process of translating sources and other materials between different languages (mainly Polish and English) and correcting punctuation, spelling and grammar mistakes.