

# The Role of the Faculty Member as an Ethical mentor in the Use of AI in the Academic Field. Ethical perception using ChatGPT in the writing of academic essays

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## Abstract

New technologies for use in the classroom are posing more and more challenges, the repercussions of which are visible both in the academic, personal and social contexts. Tools to assist in academic text writing, such as Grammarly, online translators and ChatGPT, are breaking into the daily teaching life of university students, transforming, to a large extent, not only the process of acquiring knowledge and skills, but also the necessary linguistic abilities for the production of academic essays. This generates concerns in teachers regarding the teaching process (what, how and why to teach), in addition to reflections on the ethical use of AI. Through this research article, it is proposed, on the one hand, to determine the ethical perception of students in relation to its use in the academic field, specifically the use of ChatGPT; and, on the other hand, to reflect on the role of the faculty member in the inclusion of this tool in the teaching-learning process. To this end, a field work was carried out with first-year undergraduate students of the Degree of Teaching and Social Work at the Public University of Navarra (UPNA), Spain. Lastly, this work concludes

with a proposal that provides a teaching performance model for future teachers to manage the impact of AI in the daily classroom.

**Keywords:** AI, academic writing, ethical use of AI, faculty role, university education.

## 6.1. Introduction

AI is present in the daily life of any human being today. It is the field of computer science that deals with developing computer tools for data processing in order to perform functions similar to those performed by humans: translating, writing texts, generating solutions, etc.

AI certainly offers benefits, but also risks of misuse or simply erroneous or inaccurate results that must be reviewed by a human being.

Its undeniable arrival in the university environment has sparked a debate among teachers, since more and more students turn to AI as a convenient resource and inexhaustible source of the academic work they must complete and write. The need arises to raise the hypotheses of whether or not it should be included in university programs, if its use is ethical, if faculty members should remake or rethink their teaching role, what use is considered appropriate, what is not, why; what is plagiarism and what is not...

This study aimed to collect the opinions, impressions and evaluations that a group of university students made about the use of AI, specifically ChatGPT, in the academic field, in order to draw conclusions that facilitate a guidance on the consideration of AI in university classrooms and its application in writing academic papers.

In this way, based on the collection of these data, an analysis was carried out and a reflection is offered on the direction that the academic field can and should take for the inclusion of AI in the development of academic writing.

### The ethical use of AI for academic purposes

It is clear that AI offers many solutions in the social and professional field, although it is evident that the ethical issue is necessary, since improper use of AI can have negative consequences.

Various philosophers and scholars have brought to light their reflections on the ethical use of AI. Floridi (2023), in his recent work, carried out an interesting analysis of the principles, challenges and opportunities of AI, and offers a reflection on the need to use AI ethically. In the fourth chapter of his recent book, he presents and analyzes five types of bad practices in the use of AI (ethics shopping, ethics bluewashing, ethics lobbying, ethics dumping and ethics shirking). These bad practices pose risks of unethical behavior in the use of AI. The clear solution for this philosopher is knowledge and self-regulation as complements to solid and adequate legislation.

Coeckelbergh (2021) remarks the effects and consequences of a society under the operation of AI where ethical discussion and debate become totally necessary. He demonstrates, with numerous examples, that the results of many AI algorithms offer erroneous solutions and negatively affect society. He questions the privacy of people exposed to AI and other points, such as, moral responsibility in tasks where AI replaces a human being who performed said task, or the question of treatment of AI considering it as if it were a human being.

For his part, Railton (2020) warns of the inevitable presence of AI as an innovative and fundamental technology, but with risks for society, since it questions the ethics of AI itself when it must make decisions that affect human beings, and it does so without any supervision or control by a person. The solution, according to this author, is cooperation between humans and AI without giving full action to AI.

In the university environment, the ethical question is reduced to whether students replace their work with the use of AI or use it as help and support for themselves. The specific question is whether students abandon their learning path, for example, in writing an academic paper, to unethically benefit from the convenience of AI completing the work and the student submitting a paper, without even reading it.

## An approach to the university teacher role

In an increasingly digitalized social context and with the increasingly evident introduction of the use of AI in the academic field, it is worth questioning what role the faculty member must play.

Should you change your pedagogy, your methodology? Should you get involved in favoring the use of AI at all costs? Should you reconsider the contents? Should content or only skills be taught? Regarding writing, should a faculty member teach writing in an academic record if an AI can do said work with the same quality as a human being? In that case, what should a faculty member teach in those moments at the university classroom?

“The role of the 21st century teacher, in their pedagogical practice, can be defined as a didactic relationship between personal factors, which occur in the technical, communicative, organizational and relational-affective areas of the teaching-learning process” (Rico and Ponce, 2022, p. 82). These authors also indicate that this definition of the role of the 21st century teacher can, according to Delgado and Vicianá (1999) and García, Llorens and Vidal (2024), be considered in the teaching-learning process, on the one hand, in decision-making by the student and, on the other hand, in the selection of the various ways of teaching by the teacher. For Rico and Ponce (2022), the common direction of both considerations must be drawn on the permanent motivation of the students to participate in said teaching-learning process in order to achieve the comprehensive training of the individual. To this question, it is interesting to add the capacities of autonomy, cooperation and critical thinking that provide responsibility and analysis to the proposal given above.

## 6.2. AI Use and Ethical Perception: A Study

### Objectives

The main goals to be achieved through this study are:

- To know the opinion and impression of university students about the presence, accessibility and use of AI in the academic environment.
- To extract data on the main use of it by the student body in the academic sphere and compared to the personal and family sphere.

- To record and understand the ethical perception of the use of AI in the academic field to draw conclusions of interest that can guide the teaching work in this regard at the university.

## Methodology and recipient

To obtain data and responses from students about the use of AI and their perception in the academic field, the survey methodology was applied. The survey is an effective tool for collecting opinions and evaluations that provide reviews with qualitative and quantitative content, which can be expressed in percentage values, to analyze them and draw solid conclusions for a specific study. In this case, the main interest is to know the main uses of AI among students, their ethical perception of it and, specifically, their access and habit of using ChatGPT.

The recipients are university students; specifically, the sample consisted of a group of 40 first-year Social Work students from the Public University of Navarra (UPNA). The survey was carried out in the first semester of the 2023/24 academic year between the months of November and December 2023.

## The survey: structure

The designed survey consists of a total of 27 questions of various types: open questions (short answer) and closed questions (rating scale; multiple choice or yes/no response). The questions raised are the following:

**Table 6.1.** List of issues raised in the survey on the use and ethical perception of AI

QUESTIONS
00 Define AI in your own words.
0 What do you think should be taught at university about AI in your degree?
1 Where is AI present at your university?
2 What is your opinion about the AI presence at your university?
3 Have you used any type of AI to complete university assignments?
4 How often do you use these AI tools for your university work or assignments?

- 
- 5 In the cases of having used ChatGPT  
Was it for a final result?  
Was it to obtain information?  
Was it to carry out part of the work?  
Has it been for all the previous options?
- 
- 6 Since when do you use ChatGPT?
- 
- 7 What type of academic questions do you propose to ChatGPT?
- 
- 8 For what type of tasks do you use ChatGPT?
- 
- 9 What level of satisfaction has this tool given you with the result of the text obtained in ChatGPT? From 1 (nothing) to 10 (total).
- 
- 10 What grade did you get in that assignment? Do you consider it a good or bad grade? Why?
- 
- 11 Do you think that an assignment written entirely by you would obtain...?  
Equal grade  
Lower grade  
Higher grade  
I do not know. Surely lower grade  
I imagine that an assignment with this tool would get a better grade, in the end it is a higher intelligence  
Other  
I do not know
- 
- 12 Why would there be a similar or different result?
- 
- 13 When you submit an academic work done with ChatGPT...?  
I feel very proud because it is a work done by me.  
It seems to me that I deliver good work, but I am aware that I have not done it myself.
- 
- 14 Writing an academic work with ChatGPT is plagiarism.  
Yes.  
No.
- 
- 15 In what contexts or academic uses do you believe that using ChatGPT is not plagiarism?
- 
- 16 Do you use ChatGPT for family or informal contexts, for example, to write to a family member or friend? Why?
- 
- 17 Do you have a reading habit? What type of books or texts do you read?
- 
- 18 Do you have a writing habit? What type of texts do you write? Manually or with the computer?
- 
- 19 If ChatGPT exists, do you think a university student should learn to write? Why? What types of texts should you know how to write?
- 
- 20 Do you think an AI has feelings, for example ChatGPT? Should we treat it like a person?
- 
- 21 Do you think that a text written with ChatGPT is as good as a text written by a person or a writer?
- 
- 22 What risks do you think there are in using ChatGPT at the university?
-

- 
- 23 Do you think that since AI is artificial, for example, ChatGPT, it is ethical to ask any type of question?
- 
- 24 Taking into account that the responses of ChatGPT are generated with texts previously written by humans and knowing news of complaints from writers, for example, for using their works to feed the chat, do you think that AI, in this case ChatGPT, can write its own texts, never written before, completely new and unique? Why?
- 
- 25 Do you think ChatGPT will be useful in your job? Give an example.
- 

Source: developed by author.

## 6.3. Results

Of the surveyed sample, 73% participated. Despite having provided the link by email and through the university platform, and having insisted several times on the encouragement to participate in a study on the use of AI and education, the majority of the students did not participate, verbally alleging in the classroom that, since they did not have positive compensation in the final grade, they did not consider the survey as a useful or necessary exercise and, therefore, did not complete it.

### AI impressions

The survey facilitated the recording of the following responses about the impression of AI in the academic environment of the surveyed students.

Regarding the first question about the concept of AI, the students responded with three different definitions reformulated below:

- Set of computer applications that make it easier to write papers or answer any question about daily life
- Computer tool drawn from human creation or other Internet sources
- Computer system that artificially recreates or copies real life

In general, students conceive Artificial Intelligence as a computer tool that takes information from human production to create other content that in turn facilitates the academic and daily lives of human beings.

Regarding the content about it in university educational programs, 20% of students consider that it is not necessary in the university environment to have knowledge of AI, while 80% consider that it is, with the following questions being the most relevant to the content of a course on AI or any course that requires the use of it:

- Dangers and benefits of AI
- Use and management of AI
- Specific uses for the specific degree studies of the surveyed group
- Making a good use of AI

The students also responded to the first question about the presence of AI in the university in a varied way: 20% considered that it is not present; 30% found its presence only in digital tools and devices when carrying out academic work; 10% indicated that AI is only present in ChatGPT; and 60% noticed that AI is present everywhere: screens, class sessions, libraries, mobile phones, bank tellers, etc.

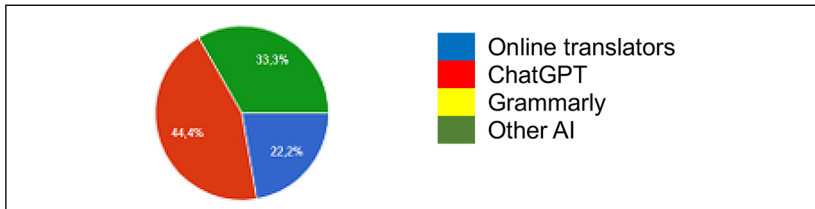
Regarding the opinion of its presence at the university, in the second question, 90% considered that its use is useful, very useful or beneficial, although it is not effective. They also commented that, in most cases, the use made of AI for academic purposes is appropriate by users. Furthermore, they recognized that tools like ChatGPT are of great help, but not for doing a complete assignment, as it entails allowing a machine to replace the student's work and, therefore, "it does not serve as learning if a machine does it for you".

## Use of AI

In the third question about admitting the use of AI for some university work, 10% said that they had not used it for this purpose, since they fear that it could be considered plagiarism; 60% stated that they had used it to carry out part of the work or find information about it; and 30% reported having used online AI tools to generate bibliographic citations, obtain ideas to inspire a start of their own work or decorate or complete presentation slides of academic works.



In the following graph, it can be seen that, regarding the fourth question about the frequency of use of AIs, specifically ChatGPT, Grammarly, online translators or other AIs, the students responded that they used some AI (33%), ChatGPT (44%) and online translators (22%).



**Figure 6.1.** Percentages of the frequency of AI tools used in academic works. Question 4. How often do you use these AI tools for your university work or assignments? Source: developed by author based on Google Forms.

The answer to question 5, about how students have used ChatGPT for their academic work, was 90% to make queries and 10% to complete the writing of the work.

Question 6 about the beginning of using ChatGPT indicates that most of the students did not know the specific AI tool of ChatGPT until they reached university. A total of 70% indicated that they did not know it or did not use it, 10% did know it from the previous year (last year of Bacalaureate), while the remaining 20% have known it and used it in the first semester of their degree through their classmates.

The seventh question includes the type of questions that students ask ChatGPT. The majority (70%) stated that they did not ask questions as such to the chat, but instead proposed orders such as requesting summaries, while the remaining 30% indicated that they asked specific questions to obtain specific answers, for example: definitions of scientific concepts in their field of study, e.g., “social cognition”, information on a specific topic or the updating of specific data or information.

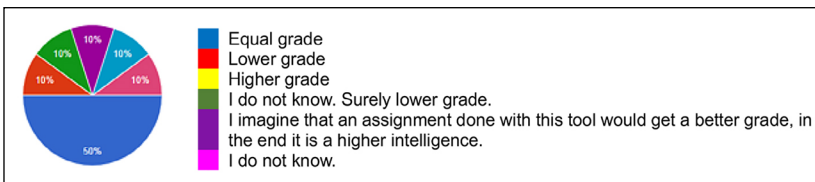
In the eighth question, about what type of tasks the students use ChatGPT for, 30% answered that they used the chat to write a paragraph or part of the academic work, while 70% answered that they used it for other questions, without specifying which ones.

It is interesting to observe the rating scale generated from the answers to the ninth question regarding the appreciation of the

degree of satisfaction of the result obtained by using ChatGPT: 30% answered without a doubt with a 1, the lowest score; that is, completely unsatisfactory, while the remaining 70% were between a score of 5 and 8, indicating satisfaction, but not full satisfaction.

Question ten regarding the grade obtained in the works delivered with the use of ChatGPT indicates that the majority of the students did not obtain a specific numerical grade, although 30% indicated that the grade was high or very high and good.

Regarding the eleventh question about a self-assessment comparing the final result of a work carried out with ChatGPT and the same one carried out entirely by the student, 60% responded that they did not know if the result would change, while 20% assured that a work carried out by themselves would obtain a lower grade than the one made by ChatGPT; 10% responded that a complete work done using ChatGPT would not only obtain a higher grade, but that the tool is superior to a student's production; another 10% responded that the work can obtain an identical grade whether it is done by ChatGPT or by the student.



**Figure 6.2.** Comparison percentages of grade assessment of academic works carried out entirely by ChatGPT or by students. Question 11. Do you think that a work written entirely by you would obtain...? Source: developed by author based on Google Forms

In the twelfth question, regarding the reasons why the results would be different, 70% of the students answered that it would be similar because ChatGPT text serves as a consultation and is not directly transferred to the final text that is delivered; 10% indicated that the result would be better if the work was written by the student because ChatGPT is an AI and, therefore, is not capable of reasoning like a human mind; 20% warned that the text written by ChatGPT would undoubtedly be better because an AI is a superior intelligence or because it simply has a greater amount of knowledge and access to information.

Question number 16 about the use of Chat GPT in everyday life reveals that 100% of students did not use this AI in everyday life because it is not necessary. Questions 17, on reading habits, and 18, on writing habits, show that 50% of the students had a reading habit (novels, scientific texts and books on psychology, i.e., varied readings) and only 30% had a writing habit, manual or with the computer; 70% stated that they did not have any type of writing habit.

Question 19 asked, in this scenario of lack of writing habits, whether it is necessary to learn to write at university and what types of texts; surprisingly, 100% responded that it is necessary to learn to write because it is important, essential and it is necessary to know how to write all types of texts, although they considered that academic texts should be a priority in the university educational curriculum.

## Ethical perception of the use of AI

In question 13, about the feeling after submitting an academic work completely written with the use of ChatGPT, 80% responded that they felt confident about submitting a good and quality work, but they are aware that the student has not written it, whereas 20% felt proud and considered that it is their own work, even though they have used an AI like ChatGPT.

In question 14, the same percentage is confirmed again when questioning whether or not the fact of writing an academic work entirely with ChatGPT is plagiarism: 80% clearly answered that yes, it is plagiarism, while 20% assured that it is not plagiarism.

In question 15, the possible contexts where the students (80%) did not consider the use of ChatGPT as plagiarism are the following:

- Information contrast
- Search for information, with subsequent textual reformulation
- Resolution of doubts
- Content learning
- Inspiration of ideas for carrying out academic work

A total of 20% considered that any use is ethical and is not considered plagiarism because it is just a tool and its use is completely legitimate, in any case.

In question 20, about the issue of feelings in ChatGPT and the treatment towards AI, 100% of the students considered that an AI does not have feelings and, therefore, it is not a relevant issue to question how to deal with AI. It is understood and interpreted that, according to the participants, the register used in ChatGPT may be neutral and must not be especially polite nor must any delicate or respectful treatment of feelings be considered, although no specific response was recorded.

In question 21, about the fact of considering a work written by a literary authority as an inferior production compared to that produced by ChatGPT, 10% of the students responded with indecision and doubt about it; 60% clearly responded that a writer produces, without a doubt, better texts, since they are works performed with a human essence and imprint that are irreplaceable by any machine or AI; and 30% responded that it is quite likely that a text written by an AI can be compared to a text produced by a human writer.

In question 22, the students were asked what types of dangers they can discern in the use of ChatGPT for academic purposes: 90% responded that the greatest danger is clearly the accusation or detection of plagiarism, and 10% also pointed out the lack of learning, since the production is not their own and there is no learning process in the creation of the text obtained with AI.

Question 23 addresses the ethical aspect of the point of view of the type of question asked to the AI. A total of 80% responded that they did not know if it is ethical to ask any type of question, while 20% indicated that it is ethical, since it is precisely a tool without feelings and to which you can ask any necessary questions.

Question 24 raises a reflection on the quality and authenticity of the texts generated by an AI, in this case, ChatGPT. The reflection is based on an exercise carried out in class on news regarding the complaints of writers who have discovered unauthorized use of their works to upload textual and registration models to ChatGPT. In this case, 80% of the students believed that the texts are not genuine, since they are based on models written by human beings and, in the case presented, by educated and cultured

writers, while 10% indicated that, although they are not authentic texts, they are unique, because the AI generates new texts from data dumped in its processor, and another 10% considered that ChatGPT generates completely new texts because, despite being based on other texts, the AI has the ability to create completely new and unpublished texts.

In the last question of the survey, about the usefulness of GPTChat or AI in future work, all students (100%) considered the use of ChatGPT useful for text writing issues in a professional context.

## 6.4. Didactic Proposal for the Ethical Use of AI in Academic Writing

Based on the study carried out and taking into account the considerations collected above about the role that the teacher must play in the current educational scenario, the presence of AI in the teaching-learning process must be considered.

However, the teacher-student dialogue must be supported on an ethical basis that provides solidity to the use and application of AI for the preparation of academic work both in the classroom and outside of it.

The foundations on which a teaching-learning process must be built should consider the use of AI as a didactic tool for consulting data, answering specific scientific questions, requesting registration use models, writing of paragraphs, text structure or examples of appropriate samples of text properties (adequacy, cohesion, coherence and correctness).

In no case, from an ethical perspective, should the complete writing of an academic work be considered for its final delivery, as students do not carry out the writing process, and this is where the lack of learning becomes evident. There is no learning to write where there has not been a writing process. Whether using AI or not, the student must go through a writing process that involves an evolution of the text from the conception of the idea to a final speech that has been transformed, expanded and reduced, evolving in different phases of drafts. It is a development. This is the crucial and most important part of writing an aca-

demical text: its evolution. The student must be aware of the evolution and transformation of their work from the prototype to the final product.

To this end, the faculty member, especially in the first academic year of a university degree, must establish preparation phases, differentiated parts and reference templates for the preparation of an academic work. In this sequencing, the use of AI, for example, ChatGPT, may be included as a consultation tool. However, it will be essential to use examples and perform critical analyses of them to consider the responses of this type of AI, since its results are not always optimal and a review of the writing, registration, content, etc., is necessary. This type of activity can also be an opportunity to develop critical thinking. Under no circumstances should the use of AI be provided or encouraged without the application of a critical filter that nullifies the student's decision-making capacity and leaves all the action in the hands of Artificial Intelligence, nullifying the student's reasoning potential and, likewise, their learning process.

## 6.5. Final Reflections and Conclusions

It is a reality that AI is present in all areas of today's society and, especially, increasingly in the academic field. Students have easier access to ChatGPT-like tools that they use to answer their questions (not raised in the classroom) or when they lack confidence in their own writing ability.

Many students confess to entrusting the writing of their papers to AI because they doubt their ability to write quality academic texts. They seem disoriented and not able to write using an academic record. The university teacher must provide a planned and structured guide so that the student achieves the necessary strategies for writing their own work. In this matter, the use of AI in an ethical manner is appropriate, that is, as support for the teaching-learning process, but never as a substitute tool that replaces the development of the creation of a text whose final product constitutes an academic work.

Naturally, there are benefits and also dangers in using AI. It will also be the faculty's duty to encourage students to use AI ethically, leaving the final decision to rest with the students

themselves, since it is part of their learning process. Of course, improper use should be considered plagiarism and penalized if detected. Both faculty and students perceive the need to establish an ethical code regarding the presence and access of AI that allows setting agreed limits, while enabling the use of this type of tools to make use of their potential and benefits.

Both the didactic proposal presented in this work and the conclusions drawn represent a suggestion that seeks to invite all teaching teams and Education professionals to reflect and debate the presence of AI in university classrooms.

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