Editorial

GENAI WITH ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE

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Previous issues of *Scope (Learning and Teaching)* have been published under an open theme. However, in keeping with our kaupapa of addressing topical matters, this 2025 edition focuses on two themes currently at the forefront of higher education: generative AI (GenAI) and academic integrity. These issues are both pressing and deeply interconnected. Educators now face the dual responsibility of equipping ākonga to use GenAI authentically and confidentially while safeguarding academic integrity.

Industries are rapidly embedding GenAI into everyday practice, and our graduates must be ready to step into that reality. When used well, GenAI can enrich learning, expand access, and support practice-based education. When used poorly, it risks undermining academic integrity and widening inequities. Leaders in the sector must set the direction: championing ethical, inclusive use of GenAI that builds both confidence and competence for the future.

The contributions to this edition offer thoughtful analyses, practical insights, and emerging frameworks to guide how we navigate, and shape, the fast-evolving GenAI landscape in higher education. The authors are kaimahi, kaiako, and ākonga from institutions across Aotearoa New Zealand directly engaged with questions of how to incorporate AI into their work in ways that benefit all users.

The issue opens with a literature review surveying the affordances and risks of GenAI in education. Sofia Chambers examines the impact of GenAI on academic institutions worldwide, focusing on the experiences of educators and students overseas as a foundation for further research into the situation in Aotearoa New Zealand. As Chambers notes, publications on GenAI uptake in the New Zealand context are still in short supply, a gap this issue of *Scope (Learning and Teaching)* also aims to address.

We then hear from Fenella Wilson on how AI can become "a tool to bridge tasks with solutions" from a disability and inclusion perspective. Wilson argues that traditional expectations around assessment are still not serving many ākonga, especially those with neurodivergence or disabilities, and posing unnecessary barriers to their understanding, academic achievement, and even their eventual careers. With a focus on teacher education, Wilson explores the potential for AI to support ākonga with time management, writing, and analysis of readings. Used ethically and well, AI can streamline access to information and make learning more accessible for the wider community of learners.

The next contributions are from educators sharing their experiences with AI in the classroom and reflecting on how they and their learners are adapting to these new tools and technologies. Two articles from teachers of predominantly international cohorts explore the pitfalls and advantages AI and GenAI for this group, who face particular challenges and pressures in adapting to education in Aotearoa New Zealand. For Lizzy Guest and colleagues at Toi Ohomai, teacher professional development is indispensable in preparing for AI. They report on their efforts to enable AI use by ākonga while tackling some of the issues around academic integrity that arose from the use of this technology. Cindy de Villiers and Ruth Thomas, also at Toi Ohomai, researched ākonga attitudes to and capabilities with AI tools before and after their introduction. This study found increased

confidence and reduced stress among ākonga using AI. However, the authors also emphasise the importance of professional development and clear guidelines around the ethical use of AI.

Taking a different approach, John Mumford describes a lesson in Information Technology using scenarios to develop soft skills in students without relying on AI tools. "People," as he points out, "are a central part of any IT system" and IT graduates need skills such as empathy as much as technical knowledge when entering the workforce. Tony Heptinstall's contribution continues this theme of "humanis[ing] the application" of technology. Heptinstall is both a researcher into AI adoption and an educator committed to improving the engagement of his students through GenAI. He shares the findings of a large-scale survey he conducted at Otago Polytechnic into how staff were adopting and using AI. His contribution also offers some practical ways to use GenAI to enhance teaching practice.

The two contributions that close this issue move from the adoption of existing AI tools to developing new tools and frameworks. Here again, the authors acknowledge the potential risk AI poses to academic integrity while proposing proactive ways to mitigate those risks. Bruno Balducci, Ana Terry, and Mairead Fountain report on a research project to create a user-friendly solution for designing AI-safe assessments in vocational education. Their conceptual framework and design tool aims to enable legitimate AI use and prevent AI misuse in non-exam assessments, such as those applied and authentic tasks most relevant to vocational education. Finally, two Learning and Teaching specialists share their practical, pedagogically grounded approach to teaching using AI: LARC and the Human and AI Sandwich. The LARC framework (Learning, Articulation, Research, and Creation) encompasses the contexts in which ākonga engage with GenAI. The memorable metaphor of the sandwich then guides learners in applying their ethical and critical faculties to that engagement.

As the contributions to this issue make clear, tertiary and vocational education institutions around New Zealand are exploring the potential of AI while experiencing similar challenges around its adoption. All the authors in this themed issue identify a shared need for clearer guidance and institutional policies on AI use, especially relating to academic integrity and ethics in teaching and research. Artificial intelligence is already enabling ākonga to grasp complex material more easily, assisting international students to express their understanding in English, and reducing barriers to entry and assessment success for neurodivergent learners and those with disabilities. Kaiako and researchers are also enjoying the benefits of these tools. Some are leveraging GenAI's capabilities to reduce its risks and produce guidelines and frameworks to guide its ethical use. These and many other positive outcomes can be found within this fifteenth issue of *Scope (Learning and Teaching)*. We welcome these contributions to the ongoing conversation around AI in education in Aotearoa New Zealand today.

Trish Chaplin-Cheyne is the Director of Te Ama Ako | Learning and Teaching Development (LTD), where she is responsible for developing and implementing the learning and teaching strategic direction and workplan to implement the goals and objectives of Otago Polytechnic's strategic plan. Te Ama Ako (LTD) are tasked with ensuring that Otago Polytechnic programmes and courses are designed to best practice standards, that our academic staff have the full range of knowledge and skills needed to facilitate learner success, and that learners enjoy an outstanding experience with Otago Polytechnic. She is the editor for *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Learning and Teaching)* and a member of various polytechnic-wide committees, task groups and panels. Trish joined Otago Polytechnic in 2015, as a Learning Facilitator involved in the Designing for Learner Success initiative. Her areas of particular interest are curriculum and assessment design.

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