ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΑ

13ο Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση

ISBN: 978-618-5335-29-8

Ανοικτή & Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση:
Οι Δεξιότητες του 21ου Αιώνα & η Πρόκληση της Τεχνητής Νοημοσύνης

ΤΟΜΟΣ 3

📅 **5-7/12** 2025
📍 ΕΑΠ Πάτρα & Εξ Αποστάσεως

Ελληνικό Δίκτυο Ανοικτής & Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης

Μια πρώτη Επισκόπηση Πολιτικών για την ΤΝ και την Ακαδημαϊκή Ακεραιότητα στα Πανεπιστήμια της Σύμπραξης OpenEU

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An Initial Review of AI and Academic Integrity Policies in the OpenEU Alliance Universities

Μια πρώτη Επισκόπηση Πολιτικών για την ΤΝ και την Ακαδημαϊκή Ακεραιότητα στα Πανεπιστήμια της Σύμπραξης OpenEU

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Abstract

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) enters higher education—and particularly distance learning—at an accelerating pace, the formulation and implementation of policies for its responsible use, coupled with the safeguarding of academic integrity, becomes critical to ensuring the credibility and quality of teaching. Partnerships such as OpenEU represent an organized effort by universities to address this challenge, aiming to develop shared and effective solutions. This research evaluates the progress of the 14 universities participating in the consortium, nearly one year after signing their joint mission statement, by examining both the existing regulatory frameworks for the ethical use of AI and the practices adopted for its integration into teaching, assessment, and student support. Through a targeted information search using the "Deep Research" tool of ChatGPT-4o, the study offers a concise mapping of these areas, providing a substantial foundation for the further development of common policy guidelines within the OpenEU framework.

Keywords

artificial intelligence, higher education, distance learning, academic integrity, regulatory frameworks, usage policies, OpenEU

Περίληψη

Καθώς η Τεχνητή Νοημοσύνη (ΤΝ) διεισδύει δυναμικά στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση, και ειδικότερα στην εξ αποστάσεως, η ανάγκη για διαμόρφωση και εφαρμογή πολιτικών υπεύθυνης χρήσης της, σε συνδυασμό με την προστασία της ακαδημαϊκής ακεραιότητας, καθίσταται κρίσιμη για τη διασφάλιση της αξιοπιστίας και της ποιότητας της διδασκαλίας. Συμπράξεις όπως η OpenEU αποτελούν οργανωμένη προσπάθεια των πανεπιστημίων να ανταποκριθούν σε αυτή την πρόκληση, επιδιώκοντας την ανάπτυξη κοινών και αποτελεσματικών λύσεων. Η παρούσα ερευνητική εργασία αποτιμά την πρόοδο των 14 πανεπιστημίων που συμμετέχουν σε αυτήν την σύμπραξη, σχεδόν έναν χρόνο μετά την υπογραφή της δήλωσης κοινής τους αποστολής, εξετάζοντας αφενός τα ισχύοντα κανονιστικά πλαίσια για την ηθική χρήση της ΤΝ και αφετέρου τις πρακτικές ενσωμάτωσής της στη διδασκαλία, την αξιολόγηση και την υποστήριξη των φοιτητών. Μέσα από μια στοχευμένη αναζήτηση με το εργαλείο «Έρευνα σε βάθος» του ChatGPT-4o, επιχειρείται μια συμπυκνωμένη χαρτογράφηση των παραπάνω αξόνων, προσφέροντας ένα ουσιαστικό υπόβαθρο για την περαιτέρω ανάπτυξη κοινών κατευθύνσεων πολιτικής στο πλαίσιο της OpenEU.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά

τεχνητή νοημοσύνη, τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση, εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευση, ακαδημαϊκή ακεραιότητα, ψηφιακός μετασχηματισμός, πολιτικές χρήσης, OpenEU

Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the landscape of higher education (Bahroun et al., 2023; Bobula et al., 2024), particularly in open and distance learning (ODL) universities, where technology is not merely a tool to support learning but an integral component of the pedagogical process (Amin et al., 2025). In this context, AI innovations can significantly enhance writing, research, and educational assessment practices; however, they also raise critical concerns about

preserving academic integrity and maintaining the quality of teaching (Bozkurt et al., 2025).

Recognizing the urgent need to address these challenges, ODL universities emphasize the importance of early adoption of intervention strategies and adaptation to emerging conditions by incorporating policies and practices that meet the complex demands of the digital transition. In this context, the OpenEU partnership was established as a collective initiative aimed, among other objectives, at developing and implementing such strategies, bringing together 14 European universities with extensive experience in digital learning environments (Olcott, 2025; Hellenic Open University, 2025).

Although these universities share the goal of digital transformation promoted by OpenEU, they differ significantly in their institutional, pedagogical, and technological frameworks — differences that have not been systematically examined to determine the extent of their convergence toward a common trajectory. This review addresses this gap by mapping these differences through an analysis of the current state of AI integration in the educational process, a critical factor in achieving digital transformation in higher education. Specifically, it seeks to answer three key research questions:

1. To what extent have OpenEU member institutions established formal policies and institutional frameworks for the responsible use of AI in education, thereby advancing digital transformation and reinforcing the European dimension of higher education?

2. What pedagogical strategies, technological tools, and faculty training programs are being implemented to integrate and manage AI effectively in teaching, assessment, and student support?

3. What similarities and differences exist among institutions in these dimensions, and how do they influence their collective progress toward a student-centered, digital, and open university at the European level?

To address these research questions, the article is structured as follows: first, it outlines the framework of the OpenEU partnership; next, it describes the

methodology used to collect the required data; this is followed by the presentation of the findings, and finally, the discussion and conclusions of the study.

The OpenEU alliance

As part of the European Union's strategy to strengthen transnational cooperation and foster innovation in higher education, the OpenEU partnership was selected in June 2024 as one of the 14 new alliances of the European Universities Initiative (ENGAGE.EU, 2024). The initiative's central objective is to promote the digital transformation of higher education by leveraging advanced technologies and innovative pedagogical practices to enhance quality, accessibility, and cross-border collaboration (OpenEU, 2024). Notably, OpenEU is the only European alliance that focuses exclusively on open and distance education, addressing the specific characteristics and requirements of a model based on the pervasive use of technology and the flexibility of learning (UOC, 2024a).

This alliance brings together fourteen universities from across Europe (Open University of Cyprus, 2024):

1. Open University of Catalonia (UOC)
2. National University of Distance Education, Spain (UNED)
3. Distance University of Hagen, Germany (FernUni)
4. Open University of the Netherlands (OU/NL)
5. Open University of Cyprus (OUC)
6. Open University of Portugal (UAb)
7. Hellenic Open University, Greece (HOU)
8. Bifröst University, Iceland (Bifröst U)
9. Daugavpils University, Latvia (DU)
10. Saints Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria (VTU)
11. Fan S. Noli University of Korçë, Albania (FSNU)
12. MIT University of North Macedonia (MIT/NM)
13. Ukrainian Engineering Pedagogics Academy (UEPA)
14. The Open University, United Kingdom (OU/UK)

As can be seen, these member institutions bring diverse institutional, pedagogical, and technological backgrounds, which provide both opportunities and challenges for

collective action within OpenEU. This diversity forms the backdrop for the present study's examination of AI-related policies and practices across the alliance.

Research Methodology

To investigate critical dimensions that underpin the digital transformation of open and distance higher education—namely, academic integrity, plagiarism prevention, and the responsible use of AI—this study implemented a systematic approach to document and compare current policies and practices across the OpenEU alliance. Recognizing that much of the relevant information is not captured in peer-reviewed literature but is instead dispersed across official websites, internal documents, press releases, and institutional reports, the research employed Deep Search by OpenAI as its core methodological tool.

Deep Search enabled the targeted, in-depth retrieval of publicly available digital sources and contributed to the structured mapping of institutional policies, implementation practices, and regulatory frameworks related to AI in distance higher education. This advanced search engine allowed for a uniform and replicable data collection process across all 14 member institutions.

To ensure consistency and comparability, the same search terms were applied to each university. These included:

(1) Official institutional AI policy;

(2) Measures addressing plagiarism and unauthorized AI use;

(3) Plagiarism and AI detection tools;

(4) Faculty training and workshops on AI;

(5) Integration of AI tools in teaching and student support;

The data collection was conducted between April 17 and April 30, 2025. This process yielded a substantial body of material—338 unique sources in total—which was subsequently analyzed to identify trends, commonalities, and institutional gaps. The table below (Table 1) presents the number of sources analyzed per university within the OpenEU alliance.

Table 1: Number of sources per OpenEU university

University	Sources
UOC	18
UNED	22
FernUni	25
OU/NL	20
OUC	22
UAb	33
HOU	20
Bifröst U	31
DU	23
VTU	20
FSNU	45
MIT/NM	3
UEPA	39
OU/UK	17
Total	**338**

Results

The results of the analysis of the above sources are presented below, organized within a comparative framework across universities, with the aim of capturing the current state and deriving useful conclusions for the development of strategies that leverage artificial intelligence as a driver of the digital transformation of distance higher education.

Existence of Official Policies on the Use of AI

According to the research data, the universities participating in the OpenEU initiative adopt diverse strategies for regulating AI use by students and faculty (see Table 2), with approaches ranging from fully developed regulatory frameworks to a complete absence of such policies.

Among the institutions demonstrating a high degree of institutional readiness, OU/NL and OU/UK stand out for having adopted formal regulatory frameworks. Their policies explicitly prohibit the use of AI in examinations without prior permission, while permitting its use in study and research, provided that transparency and proper attribution are ensured (Open Universiteit, 2023; The Open University, 2024). A similar

approach is followed by Bifröst U (Iceland), whose policy clearly defines the circumstances under which AI use in the educational process is permitted or prohibited (Háskólinn á Bifröst, 2023). Likewise, UNED has published detailed guidelines that include explicit prohibitions on the use of AI in final assessments, along with a mandatory declaration of technological contribution (UNED, 2023; 2025a). Within the same broader context of national mobilization, but with a distinct approach, UOC has adopted an official policy that emphasizes the critical and responsible integration of AI, encouraging its use with transparency and oversight rather than imposing blanket bans (UOC, 2024b). Similarly, FernUni (Germany) has issued an official AI usage guide (KI-Leitfaden) that promotes responsible adoption based on the principles of open technology, ethics, and instructor autonomy (FernUniversität in Hagen, 2024).

Table 2: *Overview of Formal AI Policies in OpenEU Universities*

University	Official Policy	Characteristics
OU/NL	Yes	Explicit prohibition without permission; allowed with transparency in study/research
OU/UK	Yes	Regulation with transparency and exam ban
Bifröst U	Yes	Detailed policy specifying when AI use is permitted
UNED	Yes	Detailed guidelines with strict rules and mandatory disclosure
OUC	Partial / Indirect	Guidance provided through pedagogical strategies and training
UOC	Yes	Supports responsible use with transparency, no blanket bans
FernUni	Yes	Guide based on open technology and transparency
UAb	No	Participation in institutional dialogues
HOU	No	Governed by general academic integrity regulations
DU	Partial / Indirect	Strategic foresight and implementation of general integrity rules
VTU	No	Possible alignment with national standards
FSNU	No	No indication of policy or institutionalization plans
MIT/NM	No	No indication of policy or institutionalization plans
UEPA	No	General ethical guidelines but no specific AI policy

Other universities, while not yet possessing a fully institutionalized regulatory framework, are moving toward regulation through internal principles or pedagogical guidelines. OUC favors guiding teachers and students on the boundaries of AI use, emphasizing the need for a formal policy and consistent communication (Open

University of Cyprus, 2023a). Similarly, UAb (Portugal), DU (Latvia), and VTU (Bulgaria) do not have specialized regulations governing AI use but participate in institutional discussions or align with broader national and European guidelines (Universidade Aberta, 2023; Daugavpils University, 2024; Eurydice Unit Bulgaria, 2024).

Finally, there are institutions for which no evidence of a policy or institutional plan for the use of AI has been identified to date. Examples include the Hellenic Open University (HOU), FSNU (Albania), MIT/NM (North Macedonia), and UEPA (Ukraine), where no official regulations or announcements have been issued, and no signs of active institutional mobilization are evident. In such cases, it is likely that only general academic ethics regulations are in effect.

Practices for Addressing Plagiarism and Unauthorized AI Use

Although most OpenEU partner universities lack a formal, structured policy on the use of AI in higher education, their efforts in applied practices are far from negligible—particularly in preventing plagiarism and the unauthorized use of AI tools. In this area, all institutions employ a wide range of measures that reflect both the challenges of the current era and the specific needs of distance education.

These practices can be classified into five key areas of action:

1. technological tools for AI text detection,
2. pedagogical design,
3. regulatory frameworks,
4. teacher training, and
5. integration of AI tools into teaching and student support.

The analysis begins with the technological dimension, as detection tools are the starting point for any effort to limit the unauthorized use of AI.

Tools Used for Plagiarism Detection

Detecting inauthentic or AI-generated content is one of the first areas in which OpenEU universities are investing to safeguard academic integrity. The relevant technologies fall into two main categories: (a) traditional plagiarism detection tools, which identify copying from known sources, and (b) AI-generated content detection tools, which attempt to identify unnatural style or textual features that may originate from language models. Although most tools belong to the first category, several now

incorporate basic features for flagging potentially AI-generated text.

The most widely used tool is Turnitin, employed by institutions such as OU/UK (Open University, 2024a), OUC (Open University of Cyprus, 2024), UAb (Carvalho, 2017), Bifröst U (Bifröst University, 2023a), FSNU (Çeliku, 2024), and HOU (Hellenic Open University – Office of Internet & IT Services, n.d.). This tool compares submitted papers against extensive databases—including published material, internet sources, and previous student papers—with recent versions featuring an AI detection function that provides indications of possible language model use. However, the reliability of this function has been questioned by many institutions due to high rates of false positives and false negatives (Silió, 2024; Richards et al., 2024).

In addition to Turnitin, several universities use specialized tools. Compilatio, a French-origin tool, serves as the primary plagiarism detection system at UNED, integrated into the Agora platform. It is used both to detect plagiarism and to analyze writing style, structure, and repetition. In addition, the Spanish software Verificatio is employed, particularly for smaller assignments (PEC), within the framework of continuous assessment (UNED, n.d.).

Also noteworthy is the StrikePlagiarism.com tool, used by VTU and UEPA. It includes a dedicated "AI Content Search Module" that analyzes submitted texts and calculates an "AI plagiarism probability" index, triggering review procedures when a predefined threshold is exceeded (StrikePlagiarism.com, 2025). In Bulgaria, its use has been institutionalized at the national level for all universities (StrikePlagiarism.com, n.d.).

At DU in Latvia, the WCopyFind tool is used to check undergraduate and graduate theses (Daugavpils University, 2022). Meanwhile, at FSNU in Albania, the Akademia.al platform is employed alongside online tools such as plagiarismdetector.net and textcortex.com, which use AI techniques to detect violations (Çeliku, 2024).

Finally, although tools such as GPTZero and the OpenAI Classifier have been promoted as specialized detectors of AI-generated text, most universities in the partnership—including UOC, UNED, OU/NL, and OU/UK—emphasize that these tools provide only indications and cannot be used as evidence, owing to their low accuracy rates and the inability to verify results (Jarodzka, 2023; Silió, 2024; Infobae, 2024; Richards et al., 2024).

Pedagogical Strategies to Prevent Unauthorized AI Use

Beyond technological measures, the design of assessments also plays a crucial role in preventing the unauthorized use of AI tools. Universities in the OpenEU partnership are implementing diverse pedagogical strategies aimed at reducing the likelihood of authentic student work being replaced by automated outputs.

A typical example is the UOC, which promotes the design of assignments that incorporate the student's personal style, critical reflection, and questions that intentionally reduce the usefulness of AI tools in generating responses (Silva, 2023; UOC, 2023). The use of varied deliverables and open-ended questions requiring empirical or experiential knowledge limits the ability of AI tools to produce answers that may be technically correct but are superficial in substance.

At OU/UK, empirical studies have been conducted to examine the resilience of different forms of assessment against AI use. These studies found that written assignments lacking a clear context or personal involvement—especially when formulated in general terms—are more vulnerable to automated writing. In contrast, activities requiring documentation, critical analysis, or connections to previous submissions are considered more resistant (Wheeler, 2024; Richards et al., 2024). Based on these findings, emphasis has been placed on redesigning assessment procedures to ensure active participation and cognitive engagement from students.

In universities such as DU and VTU, institutional vigilance is expressed through standardized procedures for detecting and evaluating misconduct, relying on pre-approved plagiarism detection software (such as WCopyFind or StrikePlagiarism.com, as mentioned earlier) and involving special committees in the review process. These structures enable transparent handling of potential violations and strengthen the legitimacy of subsequent academic decisions (Daugavpils University, 2022; StrikePlagiarism.com, 2025).

In addition to planning such activities, several universities conduct oral examinations or interviews as a complementary means of confirming the authenticity of submitted work. At UOC, for example, when there are indications of AI use, the instructor may request oral clarifications or organize a face-to-face examination (Silió, 2024). The same is reported at OU/NL, where the focus is on identifying "technically flawless" answers lacking depth of understanding or adequate bibliographic documentation—elements that trigger further pedagogical checks, such as short discussions or

interviews with the student (Jarodzka, 2023; NOS, 2024). Similar practices are found at FernUni, where confirmation of a student's contribution through dialogue is preferred, particularly when inconsistencies in style or content are detected (FernUniversität in Hagen, 2024).

Finally, a complementary practice at UOC involves continuous assessment methods, such as portfolios, staged submissions, and formative feedback. These approaches encourage consistent student engagement and limit opportunities for fragmented or unfair use of AI tools. At the same time, they not only serve as a preventive measure against academic misconduct but also cultivate a more active, responsible, and reflective approach to learning (UOC – eLearning Innovation Center, 2023).

Regulatory Framework and Sanctions for Unauthorized AI Use

Clear regulations are essential for effectively managing the use of AI in education. In addition to the universities in the partnership that have adopted uniform, institution-wide policies, several have incorporated rules or practices that define the permissible use of AI and specify the consequences of student violations.

OU/NL in the Netherlands has established a clear regulatory framework in which the undeclared use of AI is classified as academic fraud. The institution prescribes relevant sanctions while reinforcing the role of instructors as supervisors of submitted work (Open Universiteit, 2023; Jarodzka, 2023). Similarly, UNED equates the undeclared use of AI tools with plagiarism, explicitly stating that concealing the use of such technologies violates the rules of academic ethics (UNED, 2025b).

The framework at Bifröst U in Iceland is even stricter, treating the use of AI tools without prior approval as a form of prohibited third-party assistance. The university's policy allows for penalties up to and including expulsion from the study program (Bifröst University, 2023a; 2023b). At FernUni, each student is required to sign a declaration of authenticity (*Eigenständigkeitserklärung*), confirming that the submitted work is their own and has been prepared in accordance with permitted guidelines for the use of tools and sources (FernUniversität in Hagen, 2024).

Furthermore, DU applies a formal review process in which a special committee makes the final determination on violations, based on the results of WCopyFind and an administrative evaluation (Daugavpils University, 2022). In Bulgaria, where StrikePlagiarism.com is widely used, the provider recommends implementing national

regulatory practices, such as mandatory checks of all papers and the activation of control procedures when the probability of AI use exceeds a predetermined threshold (e.g., 70%) (StrikePlagiarism.com, 2025).

Finally, institutions such as UEPA apply the principle of not accepting content without documentation, even when it is produced with the assistance of AI tools. Failure to cite such sources results in the rejection of the paper for non-compliance with academic ethics standards (V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, n.d.).

Efforts in Teacher Training

Beyond technical, pedagogical, and regulatory measures, organized institutional vigilance is emerging as a crucial factor in the responsible integration of AI into higher education. In this context, several universities in the OpenEU partnership have invested not only in policy development but also in the systematic training of their teaching staff.

For example, OU/NL has established the Regieorgaan GenAI, which coordinates awareness-raising and training activities on the responsible use of generative AI in education. It also offers the online course *AI4OU* to university staff and organizes conferences and lectures on AI-related topics (Open Universiteit, 2025).

Similarly, at UOC, through the eLearning Innovation Center (eLinC), guides, resources, and seminars are developed to support teachers in understanding both the uses and the risks of AI. Emphasis is placed on maintaining pedagogical autonomy and ethical standards in its use (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2023; Perez, 2023). UNED, also in Spain, promotes extensive training programs, including thematic workshops on ChatGPT, AI-based plagiarism detection, and data protection in the educational use of AI (UNED, 2024a; 2024b).

Faculty training initiatives are also found in several other institutions of the partnership. FernUni offers specialized seminars and conferences through the ORCA.nrw program and the *TechTalk* series (FernUniversität in Hagen, 2024; 2025). OU/UK has developed the *OU Critical AI Literacy Framework* and produces AI-generated text recognition materials for teachers (The Open University, n.d.-a; n.d.-b). UAb provides thematic micro-credentials on AI and organizes seminars such as the roundtable *ChatGPT and Other Intelligent Technologies in the Transformation of*

Teaching (Universidade Aberta, 2023). OUC also participates in initiatives such as the Erasmus+ International Staff Week 2023 (Open University of Cyprus, 2023b; 2024).

Integration of AI Tools into Teaching and Student Support

Although much of the academic debate around AI focuses on preventing misuse, a number of initiatives also approach AI as a supportive tool for learning and teaching. Several universities in the OpenEU partnership are gradually integrating AI into the educational environment with the aim of enhancing the learning experience, providing personalized feedback, and supporting students' learning journeys.

In Spain, both universities in the partnership are moving in this direction. The UOC explicitly states that it adopts AI as a tool to add value to learning, integrating it in ways that align with learning objectives. Activities that foster the critical use of AI are encouraged—for example, assignments in which students use a chatbot to generate initial ideas and are then asked to identify weaknesses in the output, suggest improvements, and enrich the content with personal, evidence-based contributions (UOC, 2024b). Similarly, UNED systematically incorporates AI into its educational scenarios. It employs intelligent systems such as *Edubots* for academic guidance via personalized assistants, *Recomendador Académico* for tailored learning suggestions, and *IDIOMAI* to support foreign language learning through automatic translation and voice chat. A dedicated guide to integrating AI into teaching supports faculty in making lawful and effective use of these technologies (UNED, 2024a).

At FernUni, the creative use of AI tools—such as chatbots or DeepL-type translators—is encouraged in various learning activities. Particular emphasis is placed on students' critical evaluation of AI-generated results, and a pilot integration of a ChatGPT plugin into Moodle for controlled experimental use is planned (FernUniversität in Hagen, 2024). The institution's approach focuses not only on using AI as a tool but also on cultivating assessment skills and promoting responsible use of technology.

The OUC, in addition to using tools like Turnitin, promotes the redesign of assessments to emphasize analytical skills and the guided use of AI as a creative tool for idea generation or self-assessment (Open University of Cyprus, 2024). This strategy is supported by institutional research laboratories that develop and disseminate AI-related expertise. The example of OU/UK is also noteworthy. In addition to risk management, the university uses AI in positive and inclusive ways—for example, via

the *Taylor* digital assistant, which supports students with disabilities, and through *AI Critical Literacy* activities, in which students are asked to evaluate and revise ChatGPT-generated responses (Moule, 2021; Pontika, 2024).

At FSNU, AI is gradually being integrated into student support through digital applications on its website, while research initiatives explore the integration of AI into teaching in computer science (Korca Boom, 2024).

Finally, at HOU, AI integration is primarily linked to specialized courses and skill development in areas such as data science and machine learning. Within undergraduate and postgraduate programs—such as the "Artificial Intelligence – Applications" course—students are trained in modern programming languages and frameworks (e.g., R, Python, Jupyter Notebooks, TensorFlow, Keras), developing competencies in designing innovative applications. The institution also systematically invests in digital technologies to support distance learning and foster international collaboration (Study in Greece, 2024).

A summary table follows, presenting an overview of plagiarism detection tools, AI-related training initiatives for teaching staff, and integration practices implemented across OpenEU partner universities (see Table 2).

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a highly diverse picture regarding the adoption and management of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education across OpenEU member universities. Some institutions, such as OU/NL, OU/UK, UNED, Bifröst U, UOC, and FernUni, have already moved towards formal policies and regulatory frameworks for the responsible use of AI, thereby strengthening their digital transformation and contributing to the development of a European dimension in education. In contrast, other universities, such as HOU, FSNU, MIT/NM, and UEPA, have not yet established specific regulations, relying mainly on general rules of academic ethics. This disparity indicates that, while some institutions are leading the way in this area, the absence of a minimum common framework at the alliance level may slow down collective progress.

At the practical level, a wide range of approaches is evident, combining technological tools, pedagogical strategies, and staff training. The technological dimension remains focused primarily on plagiarism detection systems—such as Turnitin,

Compilatio, StrikePlagiarism.com, and WCopyFind—often supplemented with AI detection functions, which, however are used with caution due to reliability concerns. At the same time, pedagogical practices are being redesigned to emphasize authentic and context-rich tasks, activities requiring empirical data, and continuous assessment, thereby reducing the likelihood of unauthorized AI use. The training of teaching staff also emerges as a critical factor, although its implementation is uneven: some institutions have developed comprehensive programs and detailed guidelines for the use of AI, while in others, relevant training is incorporated indirectly through existing courses or general professional development initiatives.

Table 2*: Indicative AI Training Initiatives for Teaching Staff at OpenEU Partner Universities*

University	Plagiarism Tools	Training Actions	
OUC	Turnitin (with AI detection), unofficial GPT detectors	Advisory services through eLinC; participation in international dialogues on education and AI	Integration of AI for personalized feedback; development of skills through critical analysis using ChatGPT
UNED	Compilatio, Turnitin, Verificatio, AI Detectors (with reservations)	Specialized seminars on ChatGPT, plagiarism, and data protection; courses from IUED on AI tools and machine learning (ML)	Use of Edubots, Recomendador, IDIOMAI, ARCDU, GEONA; personalized learning; integration guidelines
FernUni	Conventional plagiarism tools (not AI-specific)	Online AI courses through the *Fortbildung* program; collaboration with ORCA.nrw; thematic TechTalks on the pedagogical use of AI	Educational scenarios using ChatGPT; trial plugin use; OpenAI Whisper for accessibility
OU/NL	No specific AI detection tool; traditional plagiarism tools	Internal training programs (AI4OU); conferences on AI in education; participation in the ADMIT project; lectures by faculty members such as Jarodzka	Official use of ChatGPT by students and faculty; ADMIT project; student needs analysis
OUC	Turnitin (without AI detection); GPTZero/OpenAI classifier	Online seminars on the ethical use of AI; workshops via Erasmus Staff Week; collaboration with organizations such as the Commonwealth of Learning.	Thematic AI courses; supported use of AI tools; student support from library and advisory services
UAb	Turnitin (with AI detection)	Thematic seminars on AI; development of micro-credentials within lifelong learning programs	Use of AI in academic writing; AI-related modules in curricula; planned use of tutoring chatbots
Bifröst U	Turnitin (with AI detection), Canvas integration	Institutional policy includes training seminars for faculty and students on AI uses and risks	AI tools for student support; use in the LMS to monitor teaching and learning
HOU	Turnitin (without AI detection)	No official information found on specialized AI training programs	Courses in AI, Data Science, and Machine Learning; training in R, Python, and AI frameworks; investment in digital tools for distance learning
DU	WCopyFind (without AI detection)	Seminar for deans on AI; use of regulatory handbooks; invitations to participate in external digital skills courses	Plans for using AI technologies; monitoring of students' digital skills

VTU	StrikePlagiarism.com (with AI Content Search Module)	No specific internal AI training seminars identified	New curriculum including AI and cybersecurity; collaboration with industry
FSNU	Akademia.al, plagiarismdetector.net, textcortex.com	Symposium on AI in education; faculty participation in seminars on digital tools and AI	AI-based applications on the university website; new courses with AI components; AI in education symposium
MIT/NM	No mention of tool use	No official information found on specialized AI training programs	No official AI tool integration reported in the educational process
UEPA	StrikePlagiarism.com (via Karazin Univ.)	No official information found on specialized AI training programs	No information found on the use of AI tools in teaching or student support
OU/UK	Turnitin (with AI detection), CopyCatch, GPT detectors	Developed training programs, including online seminars, workshops, and the AI Literacy Framework (OU AI Literacy Framework)	Use of the digital assistant *Taylor* for students with disabilities; AI Critical Literacy activities involving evaluation and revision of ChatGPT responses by students

The above findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations of this study. The analysis relied primarily on publicly available documents, institutional websites, and official reports, which may not fully capture internal practices, pilot initiatives, or unpublished policies. Moreover, given the rapid evolution of AI in education, the results represent only a "snapshot" of the situation at the time of data collection, and developments may have already taken place since then.

Future research could offer a more up-to-date picture of how closely the partnership's member institutions are converging towards the shared goal of digital transformation. Such an analysis would make it possible to track progress, highlight areas requiring further alignment, and identify good practices that can be transferred across institutions. In parallel, longitudinal monitoring would deepen understanding of the factors that accelerate or hinder the journey towards a digital, open, and student-centred European university.

Conclusion

This initial review of AI and academic integrity policies across the OpenEU alliance highlights both promising advances and significant disparities among member

universities. While a number of institutions have already implemented robust regulatory frameworks, integrated pedagogical strategies, and invested in staff training, others remain at an early stage, relying mainly on general academic ethics provisions. The absence of a shared minimum policy baseline at the alliance level risks slowing collective progress towards the digital transformation goals set out in the partnership's mission. Nevertheless, the variety of practices identified offers a rich resource for mutual learning, policy transfer, and the co-creation of adaptable guidelines. By fostering closer collaboration, ongoing monitoring, and the exchange of proven approaches, OpenEU has the potential to shape a cohesive, student-centred, and ethically grounded model for the responsible use of AI in European open and distance higher education.

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