

**Empowering Students through Co-Creation: Building Ethical AI Literacy,
Guidelines and Resources for Languages, Culture and Employability**

*Capacitar os Estudantes através da Cocriação: Construção de Literacia Ética em
IA, Orientações e Recursos para Línguas, Cultura e Empregabilidade*

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Abstract

This article reports on a multi-phase project undertaken by the AI research group in the School of Modern Languages at Cardiff University with the aim to co-create institutional AI guidelines and pedagogical resources for language programmes. The first phases captured staff and student perspectives through surveys and workshops, which revealed strong motivation to engage critically with AI alongside a clear need for ethical clarity, structured training and coherent institutional guidance. Based on the findings of the initial stages of the project, the AI group subsequently focused on two main strands. The first was the creation of an AI Ethics Resource Bank, developed through an internship in which a student curated educational materials promoting ethical AI use in academic and professional contexts, aligned with the University's graduate attributes. The second internship focused on curriculum design, producing three exemplar modules demonstrating how AI can be embedded to enhance literacy and autonomy while fostering critical reflection on bias, authorship and integrity. Our contributions showed that the effective use of AI in teaching does not only depend on having access to the technology, but also on designing resources and practices with students, so that they genuinely meet learners' needs and assist teaching staff. This study therefore highlights how essential collaboration is in developing responsible and meaningful AI use across language and cultural modules and in shaping future curriculum design in higher education.

Keywords: AI literacy; ethics; cocreation; higher education.

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta um projeto multifásico desenvolvido pelo grupo de investigação em IA da School of Modern Languages da Cardiff University, com o objetivo de co-criar orientações institucionais para a IA e recursos pedagógicos para programas de línguas. As primeiras fases recolheram as perspetivas de docentes e estudantes através de inquéritos e workshops, que revelaram uma forte motivação para uma participação crítica na utilização da IA, a par de uma clara necessidade de maior clarificação ética, formação estruturada e orientação institucional coerente.

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Com base nos resultados das fases iniciais do projeto, o grupo de IA concentrou-se posteriormente em duas vertentes principais. A primeira consistiu na criação de um Banco de Recursos de Ética em IA, desenvolvido no âmbito de um estágio em que um estudante selecionou e organizou materiais educativos que promovem a utilização ética da IA em contextos académicos e profissionais, em alinhamento com os atributos de graduação da Universidade. O segundo estágio centrou-se no desenho curricular, produzindo três módulos exemplificativos que demonstram como a IA pode ser integrada para potenciar a literacia e a autonomia, promovendo simultaneamente a reflexão crítica sobre viés, autoria e integridade. As nossas contribuições demonstraram que a utilização eficaz da IA no ensino não depende apenas do acesso à tecnologia, mas também da conceção de recursos e práticas em colaboração com os estudantes, de modo a responder genuinamente às suas necessidades e a apoiar o corpo docente. Este estudo evidencia, assim, a importância fundamental da colaboração no desenvolvimento de uma utilização responsável e significativa da IA em módulos de línguas e culturas, bem como na definição do futuro desenho curricular no ensino superior.

Palavras-chave: literacia em IA; ética; cocriação; ensino superior.

1. Introduction

The swift development of generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has prompted substantial ethical and pedagogical concerns for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the globe. From assessment integrity to curriculum design and digital literacy, universities are being required to reconsider long-standing pedagogical assumptions in light of these new technologies that can easily generate text, visual content, translate languages or simplify complex ideas at scale just to name a few. In this rapidly evolving landscape, the debate has centred on whether AI should be permitted in education and how it might be integrated in ways that are ethical, critical and pedagogically purposeful.

Leading HEIs have articulated principles that foreground ethical engagement and AI literacy. In our own context, the Russell Group (2023), a consortium of 24 UK research-intensive universities, including Cardiff University, has set out sector-wide principles advocating the responsible and efficient use of GenAI tools in Higher Education. Their guidance emphasises the development of clear institutional frameworks, the enhancement of AI literacy among both staff and students and the positioning of AI not as a tool to be banned, but as one to support and enhance learning. Such statements indicate a move away from prohibition towards integration, encouraging institutions to promote informed, context-specific AI practices.

At national level, policy frameworks are likewise beginning to formalise strategic approaches to AI in education. The UK Government is seeking to shape AI through the *AI Opportunities Action Plan*, which prioritises building AI skills by training and attracting the next generation of AI specialists as part of a broader innovation agenda. In Wales, the Welsh Government (2025) in its report *A new era: how artificial intelligence (AI) is supporting teaching and learning*, sets the framework to develop national guidance for the strategic implementation

of AI across educational sectors. This policy direction aligns with the longer-term ambitions articulated in the *Future Generations Commissioner for Wales*' strategy (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2023), which emphasises harnessing the benefits of AI while ensuring ethical, transparent and equitable governance for the well-being of future generations. Taken together, these policies position AI not merely as a technological development but as a revolutionary movement that forces us to rethink how HEIs currently work and how the sector will drastically change in the near future.

Yet policy statements and institutional principles, while necessary, do not automatically translate into coherent pedagogical practice. Emerging evidence suggests that undergraduates are navigating this terrain with considerable uncertainty. A recent report by Jisc, the UK's designated technology and digital agency for tertiary education, research and innovation, on student perceptions of AI indicates that students perceive an urgent need for clearer institutional guidance while concerns around transparency, equity and fairness are intensifying. Crucially, the report highlights that students do not wish to be passive recipients of policy decisions; rather, they seek meaningful partnership in shaping how AI is embedded within their learning environments. In their own words, they want to be "partners, not passengers" (Attewell, 2025). Complementing these findings, surveys conducted by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and Kortext in 2024 and 2025 with undergraduates in the UK reveal a substantial rise in students' reported use of generative AI in assessments (88%), while only 36% indicated that they had received institutional support to develop their AI skills (Freeman, 2025). This disparity between widespread student adoption and limited structured institutional guidance exposes a critical implementation gap between policy aspiration and pedagogical reality.

Within this context and taking into account the disciplinary specificities of Modern Languages, we recognised the need to move beyond generic guidelines towards a contextualised, student-informed approach to the ethical and pedagogical integration of AI in language programmes. We acknowledge that this is not a challenge academic staff can or should face in isolation. It requires a collective response developed in partnership with the universities' most important stakeholders: the students themselves. In doing so, we sought to build on the established successes of co-creation, drawing on growing evidence that this approach promotes broader inclusion, enhances learning outcomes, strengthens staff-student relationships, and fosters increased motivation, confidence, self-regulation, communication and collaboration skills (see Omland et al., 2025). It was with this goal in mind that we established the MLANG AI Group in the School of Modern Languages, conceived not merely as a consultative body, but as a collaborative space in which students and staff could critically examine challenges, articulate shared principles and co-develop practical guidance tailored to the realities of Modern Languages teaching, learning and assessment in the AI era.

In parallel, the Cardiff University Learning and Teaching Academy, the institutional unit responsible for promoting educational excellence and supporting staff development,

provided the project with an additional strategic dimension through the creation of funded student internships. These internships extended the initiative beyond dialogue, AI guidelines and AI assessment co-creation to enable students to assume active, research-informed roles in the exploration and creation of AI resources for the MLANG community. This approach ensured once again the project's commitment to partnership by positioning students at the heart as co-creators and innovators rather than as passive recipients.

This article presents a critical reflection on the conceptual foundations, design, implementation and outcomes of the MLANG AI project. Situated within the praxis section of this special issue, it does not seek to offer a large-scale empirical study of AI adoption, but to provide a grounded account of a HE innovative initiative rooted in student co-creation. By analysing both successes and challenges, the article contributes to ongoing discussions about ethical AI integration in HE and proposes a transferable model for student-partnered development of AI guidance within language programmes and beyond.

In an era in which AI policy is evolving at pace and in which students are calling for clarity, transparency and partnership, praxis-based initiatives that bridge policy and practice are essential. The AI MLANG project responds directly to this current need by promoting responsible AI innovation through collaboration and dialogue with students. It creates a much-needed space for critical discussion. We believe that establishing and nurturing these structures and mechanisms is the only way forward to respond with greater confidence and awareness to future change.

2. Presentation of the project

ChatGPT, launched by OpenAI on 30th November 2022, officially reached 100 million monthly active users in just two months, making it the fastest-growing consumer application in history (Milmo, 2023). By comparison, it took TikTok about nine months after launching globally to reach the same number of users and Instagram more than two years (Milmo, 2023). We quickly realised that academia was on the brink of a major transformation and that only a united, coordinated response would allow us to address these new challenges effectively. While universities are necessarily thoughtful and deliberative institutions, and therefore often require time to embed structural change, the speed of AI meant that waiting for fully formed institutional frameworks was not a viable option. Faced with new demands, uncertainties and constraints, we decided to create an AI forum to foster initial conversations and share concerns at School level.

After circulating a call for expression of interest across our School of Modern Languages, the MLANG AI Team was established by three lecturers in French, Italian and Spanish with the aim of better understanding how our own Modern Languages students perceived AI as well as identifying the most effective ways to navigate its opportunities and challenges

together. Central to this initiative was a commitment to co-creation, drawing on Bovill et al. (2016), who position it within the continuum between student engagement and partnership. In this sense, co-creation represents a meaningful collaboration between students and staff, in which students move beyond passive participation to become active contributors to the learning process, working alongside academics to construct understanding and develop learning resources. In line with this principle, we structured the project in two phases centred on active student involvement. First, we invited students to participate in a survey designed to explore their attitudes and perceptions regarding AI use as Modern Languages students. Second, we organised a series of reflective workshops to facilitate open discussion about the uses and challenges of AI, alongside practical workshops aimed at supporting students' ethical and effective engagement with these tools. A further strand of this work involved collaborating with students and staff to develop AI assessment guidelines and assessment type tables.

2.1 Project Activities

2.1.1 First phase: Student recruitment and AI survey

The MLANG AI team designed and distributed a survey with 19 questions (8 closed-ended and 11 open ended questions) targeted to Year 2 undergraduate students of Italian, Spanish and French in the first instance as the three main staff members of the project were, at the time, Year 2 language coordinators for these programmes. Because of the existing pedagogical relationship with these cohorts, we had already fostered trust, regular interaction and an environment conducive to open dialogue. As a result, students felt more comfortable sharing their perspectives and engaging in relaxed, honest conversations about their experiences with AI. This existing connection enabled us to gather richer and more nuanced insights during the exploratory stage of the project. Based on the 19 responses received we extracted the following information which we split into 5 categories:

1. Student usage and knowledge

Survey findings showed that AI tools were already embedded in students' academic routines.

- 72% of respondents reported using chatbots at least sometimes, 22% regularly, with only a small minority (6%) indicating they never used them.
- However, 67% described their knowledge of chatbots as limited or non-existent and only 6% claiming high knowledge.

2. Patterns of use in Modern Languages

Students reported using AI primarily for:

- Writing cultural essays (22%)
- Grammar clarification, summaries, references and exam preparation (22%)
- Translation support (19%)

- Personal research (16%)
- Language essays (13%)
- Speaking practice (9%)

Word cloud data further highlighted the prominence of essay writing, structuring ideas, grammar support, revision tools and exam preparation. Students also used AI for brainstorming, summarising texts, paraphrasing and generating outlines.

3. AI tools used and language preference

Students referenced a wide range of tools, including: ChatGPT, Grammarly, DeepL, Notion, Quizlet, Snapchat AI, Claude and Perplexity.

Participants who had used chatbots for language learning primarily interacted in: French, Spanish and English, with isolated mentions of Japanese, Portuguese and German.

4. Perceived benefits

Qualitative responses indicated that students valued AI for:

- Reducing stress and providing a 24/7 support mechanism
- Acting as an accessible “personal tutor”
- Supporting brainstorming and structuring of ideas
- Clarifying tricky linguistic concepts
- Enabling conversational practice

5. Concerns, ethics and institutional guidance

At the same time, concerns were evident:

- 56% believed AI may negatively impact academic integrity.
- 55% expressed concerns regarding privacy and data use.
- 45% were concerned or very concerned about potential data misuse.

Students also demonstrated nuanced thinking in open responses. While many supported greater integration of AI, they expressed reservations about its use in assessments and emphasised the importance of guidance, transparency and responsible use particularly in summative assessments. Interestingly, 56% of students indicated they would welcome a more integrated university approach to AI use in both class exercises and assessments while 38% stated that would embrace AI but only for in class exercises.

These findings directly informed the development of phase 2, in which we moved from data collection to co-creative engagement through reflective and practical workshops.

2.1.2 Second phase: Reflective and practical workshops

The reflective workshops revealed that students largely viewed AI as a valuable support mechanism that can increase confidence and autonomy in language learning. Participants highlighted the usefulness of AI tools for clarifying grammar, explaining complex concepts and supplementing traditional instruction. At the same time, they expressed a balanced awareness of AI’s limitations, stressing the importance

of maintaining human-led teaching and critical engagement with machine-generated content.

Students identified DeepL as the most reliable tool for translation and contextual rewriting, noting its ability not only to translate accurately, but also to offer alternative phrasing options. Other tools such as ChatGPT, Quizlet Plus, Reverso, and Snapchat AI were recognised for their versatility and ease of use in independent study. While AI was predominantly associated with individual learning, students also acknowledged its potential value in collaborative tasks. Suggested applications included generating debate prompts, providing questions for group discussions and supporting brainstorming activities.

Participants embraced the incorporation of a wide range of AI-supported in class activities. These included the creation of language games, error analysis and prompt refinement, translation exercises as well as conversational simulations. Regarding assessment, students noted that AI was most beneficial as a preparatory tool for formative work (for grammar practice, spelling tests, gap fill exercises and planning written work) rather than as a complete substitute for human led assessments.

Ethical considerations emerged as an important theme. Students emphasised the need for explicit, accessible guidance on the responsible use of AI, particularly in assessment contexts. Many felt uncertain about acceptable boundaries and requested clearer explanations of what constitutes appropriate academic practice. In this regard, training needs were strongly articulated across groups. Students viewed AI literacy as essential, with some advocating for mandatory training embedded within modules. They preferred support delivered by a named staff member rather than relying solely on online documents. Practical aids, such as help sheets in module handbooks, were suggested as valuable resources.

The practical workshop introduced students to a suite of AI tools, including ChatGPT, Perplexity, Elicit, Gencraft, Gamma and Videogen. Activities focused on speaking development, writing and grammar revision and the creation of visual and presentation materials. Students engaged actively with the tools and reported increased confidence in selecting and evaluating AI applications for specific language tasks.

Workshop feedback was highly positive. Participants rated the sessions as eye-opening (4.3/5), useful (4.7/5) and informative (4.8/5). They also indicated that they were more likely to use AI regularly, more effectively and for revision and independent practice. Notably, all students expressed willingness, either fully or conditionally, to cocreate guidance on AI use in language learning and assessment, with an emphasis on partnership approaches.

In summary, the survey responses and workshop activities showed that students were highly motivated to engage with AI in thoughtful, critical and constructive ways. Their enthusiasm for learning how to use AI effectively, combined with their desire for ethical clarity, structured training, and hands-on exploration, made it clear that this

engagement could only be supported through a coherent co-created framework. This provided us with a solid foundation for developing our own institutional resources, directly addressing the themes identified through the survey and reflective workshops.

2.1.3 Third phase: Co-creation of MLANG AI Guidelines and Assessment Types table

To ensure the guidelines reflected the realities of student practice, we recruited two representatives from every year group at undergraduate level, from first year through final year, as well as students on their Year Abroad, and postgraduate students. This cohort, namely MLANG AI Champions, intentionally included students with previous involvement in earlier project phases and others entirely new to the initiative, ensuring both continuity and fresh perspectives. Bringing together a multilingual, multi-cohort group was essential for capturing the diversity of language combinations, assessment types and learning contexts across the School.

We began by presenting this group with the findings from the reflective and practical workshops, alongside the survey data. Students were invited to question the recurring issues, identify gaps and articulate what they believed should be prioritised in institutional guidance. Their feedback revealed a need for clearer definitions, more concrete examples of ethical versus nonethical AI use and explicit explanations of acceptable AI support for each type of assessment. This shaped the creation of the AI Assessment Table, which offers a five-tier model ranging from “No AI” to “Full AI,” with detailed explanations and examples of permissible use at each level. The table was informed by the published *AI Assessment Scale (AIAS)* in the *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* (Perkins et al., 2024) but was adapted to our specific disciplinary institutional context. This adaptation enabled us to move beyond binary notions of permitting or prohibiting AI, providing a progressive scaffold to help both students and staff understand how AI can be integrated responsibly across different assessment types. Students valued the transparency of this structure and emphasised that it helped them understand expectations across diverse assessment formats.

Table 1
MLANG AI Assessment Type Table

NO AI Assessment Type 1	AI-ASSISTED Assessment Type 2	AI-ASSISTED Assessment Type 3	AI TASK SUPPORT Assessment Type 4	FULL AI USE Assessment Type 5
The assessment is done entirely without AI assistance. Students can rely on their knowledge only, and/or skills or understanding.	AI can be used during the assessment for brainstorming, creating structures and generating ideas for improving work. <u>NO AI content is allowed in the final submission.</u>	AI can be used to improve the clarity or quality of student-created work. <u>AI content can be submitted although with clear understanding of what work has been done with AI.</u>	AI is used to complete specific elements of the task, with students citing the AI-generated content. <u>Any AI-created content must be clearly cited.</u>	AI should be used for a collaborative approach; AI exploring and stimulating creativity. <u>Students may use AI throughout the assessment to support their work and do not have to specify which content is AI-generated.</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class grammar test • In class grammar or vocabulary exercises. • In class translations. • Specific Vocabulary exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Ideas, scenarios, situations for specific or thematic writing composition, i.e. topics for Historical events, French Revolution, Italian Renaissance etc. • Generating dialogues for writing or talking exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class presentation, single presentation/group presentation. • Role plays or any scenarios when students must speak in class or in an oral assessment; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay in a target language. • Writing composition, and/or grammar or writing compositions and exercises for homework or revision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Project using specific AI tools, i.e. Elicit for research, Virtual Lab/ Augmented Reality for specific tasks such as images generated project, virtual dialogues, language practice with holograms.
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming/ generate ideas, provide suggestions and/or complete explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating images, generating videos, second voices, music, background filling to improve the final presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI to be used to support exercises, essays, writing compositions or homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI to be used to do the specific task in research or create background for the assessment, i.e. Virtual Lab.

Source: School of Modern Languages. (2025). *MLANG AI assessment type table*. Cardiff University. Adapted from Perkins et al. (2024), *AI Assessment Scale (AIAS)*, Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice.

The guidelines themselves were also significantly informed by student dialogue. Feedback from the AI Champions meetings showed that students particularly expected:

- Greater clarity and more relatable explanations (e.g., real-world examples, scenarios, and illustrations),
- a visually accessible, “leafletlike” format,
- clearer advice on prompting, editing, and identifying AI errors,
- a stronger focus on academic integrity (including declarations),
- and acknowledgement of AI’s limitations, cultural biases and potential inaccuracies.


These conversations directly shaped the final guidelines, which uniquely combined ethical considerations, assessment specific rules for formative and summative assessments, examples of permitted and prohibited uses as well as instructions for citing AI, discipline specific advice for class preparation and independent learning. According to student feedback, the resulting document stood out not only for their clarity and practicality but also, as it was our intention from the beginning of this project, for its cocreated nature.

Figure 1

Extract from guidelines: Guidance on the use of AI for summative assessments

Guidance submitted to staff and students: examples when AI can be used and what it should not be used for:

Summative assessments



Type of assessment	You can use AI to do the following	You can't use AI to do the following
Class tests	No use	No use
Online language tests	No use	No use
Translation with commentary	Translation: vocabulary help, in context (cultural, situation) suggestions Commentary: organise your ideas, brainstorming. You may be asked to use AI for specific translation assignments for comparison and reflective purposes. This will be indicated specifically in the translation brief.	Do the whole translation for you or extensive parts of the translation. You cannot submit AI work as your own.
Year Abroad reflective task (in target language)	Organise your ideas; brainstorming; vocabulary help, in context (cultural, situation) suggestions, spell checking.	Write the reflective task for you or translate a reflection that you have written in English/L1. You cannot submit AI work as your own.
In class presentation/end of year presentation	Brainstorming; organise your ideas; vocabulary help, check register level, creating images and visuals (always acknowledge AI authorship).	Write and create the presentation for you. You cannot submit AI work as your own.
Written language task (e.g. short essay in target language, review, summary)	Brainstorming; organise your ideas; get feedback on your draft; get feedback on the language in order to improve; vocabulary and syntax help; spellcheck.	Write the work for you. You cannot submit AI work as your own.
Cultural essay	Brainstorming; organise your ideas; help with format of referencing; spellcheck; suggestions on expression, use of synonyms.	Write the whole essay for you. You cannot submit AI work as your own.

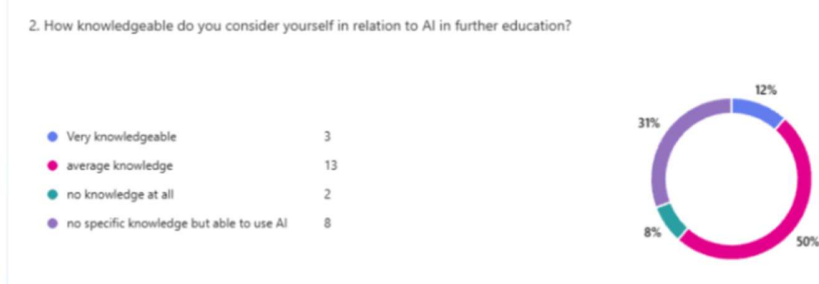
Source: School of Modern Languages. (2025). MLANG AI guidelines for UG and PGT students Cardiff University

As we collaborated closely with students in the development of both the AI Guidelines and the AI Assessment Table, it became essential to understand how our colleagues perceived

AI and whether they were prepared to embrace these changes. For the guidelines to be meaningful and implementable, they would ultimately need to be reviewed, discussed and approved within the School. Circulating a survey and a draft version of these resources among academic colleagues for feedback was therefore a vital step to ensure not only student needs were reflected but also staff perspectives, concerns and professional realities.

In the survey, which included 8 questions, amongst which we considered AI knowledge and the importance of AI training, 26 of our colleagues indicated that they did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable about AI and the majority had never received training related to generative AI or AI literacy more broadly. This lack of confidence highlighted even more the importance of providing clear, accessible guidance that could serve both students and staff.

Figure 2
Knowledge of AI among members of staff



Source: Internal survey data collected by the authors, School of Modern Languages, Cardiff University (2025).

Figure 3
Training needs among members of staff



Source: Internal survey data collected by the authors, School of Modern Languages, Cardiff University (2025).

While students were generally open to using AI, with only a small minority expressing reluctance, the picture among colleagues was more divided. Approximately 30% of teaching staff viewed AI primarily as a threat rather than a resource as per the illustration below.

Figure 4
Perception of AI among members of staff

5. Do you perceive AI as a threat or a resource?



Source: Internal survey data collected by the authors, School of Modern Languages, Cardiff University (2025)

In this context, it was equally important to understand how staff perceived the proposed AI Guidelines and Assessment Table and whether they were willing to adopt them in their teaching practice. We therefore sought to hear directly from colleagues about whether they considered the guidelines useful, if they felt confident using them and whether they were keen to integrate them into their assessment design and classroom practice. The overwhelming majority of our colleagues considered the guide useful and pragmatic and certainly a step forward in the right direction with some adding *these resources are extremely valuable. Both students and staff benefit from having clear guidance and it is great to see that colleagues in MLANG are leading the way in developing this work.*

3. The Learning and teaching Academy Internships

Following our examination of both student and staff perspectives, findings showed that further co-created resources were needed to support the ethical and effective use of AI in our programmes. While students were willing to integrate AI into their academic journey their feedback also highlighted several areas where additional support was essential. They emphasised the need for greater clarity and more relatable explanations with real-world examples. They requested clearer advice on prompting, editing and identifying AI-generated errors, alongside a stronger focus on academic integrity. The evidence also revealed that while staff embraced the guidelines, they did not feel confident in their skills or in providing further AI guidance to students. This lack of confidence created a clear barrier to embedding AI within modules and risked widening the gap between student expectations and staff willingness to work with AI. It also raised an important question: which AI tools are genuinely relevant and pedagogically appropriate for our language-learning context and how can they enhance students' academic and linguistic development and future employability skills? To

address these needs, we secured funding to create targeted resources through student internships focusing on two key areas:

- **Internship 1:** The development of an AI Ethics Resource Bank: A curated collection of educational resources promoting the ethical use of AI in both academia and professional settings. This resource bank would align with the university's graduate attributes and provide students with a framework for responsible AI engagement, enhancing their digital and employability skills.
- **Internship 2:** Curriculum design and module development: the design of structured, multi-unit modules to introduce students to basic AI literacy and gradually expand towards practical AI applications in different aspects of their academic and professional journey. This would guide students and staff from non-use to full integration of AI tools, ensuring both would be equipped with ethical awareness and interdisciplinary AI knowledge.

3.1 The creation of an AI Ethics Resource Bank

The core of this internship was to explore the role of AI in education and employability, with the specific responsibility for the creation of the AI Ethics Resource Bank. Students graduating in the coming years will face a job market in which AI literacy is crucial for securing employment and where the very structure of work will be significantly transformed (Borthwick, 2025). This strand of the project highlighted just how urgent this need is within HE and why students must develop a basic level of AI proficiency to navigate the current UK job market effectively.

The AI Ethics Resource Bank consisted of two phases and was closely aligned with the Assessment and Feedback practices in Cardiff University's School of Modern Languages, Cardiff University's Graduate Attributes and the MLANG AI Guidelines to ensure that the technologies explored were not only useful but also employed ethically and responsibly.

The first phase focused on identifying AI tools currently on the market. The intern examined what the AI tools were designed to do, how they supported students' learning experiences and employability skills. Each tool was evaluated against a set of criteria and took into consideration ethical implications, accessibility, data privacy and the importance of maintaining independent critical thinking. The second phase involved shortlisting the most suitable and effective AI tools and transforming the findings into a practical, accessible and evolving resource. Throughout the research, it was recognised the importance of inclusivity and accessibility within learning, and it was guaranteed that these values were reflected in the final piece, thus two versions of the resource were created to allow students to choose a format that best complemented their learning styles and preferences.

The Ethical AI Resource Bank was organised into five categories of AI tools (Conversational AI, Research and citation AI, Writing assistant AI, Miscellaneous AI, App-creation AI) and

designed as a practical guide, enabling students to select the most appropriate tools for the type of task or revision activity they are undertaking. For every tool listed, the resource provides academic tips and strategies, guidance on how to use it in accordance with the 'MLANG AI Guidelines' for assessments and an overview of the ethical issues that may arise. Each entry also explains how the tool can help students develop Cardiff University's graduate attributes, supporting their broader academic and professional growth.

During the research stage of the internship, a critical challenge that we encountered was the fast-paced development of AI and the inaccessibility of AI tools due to paywalls. Updates and new features were constantly released, which required us to continuously review information, check accuracy and adjust the shortlist accordingly. Furthermore, many AI tools were dependent on paid subscriptions, which we concluded was not financially viable for the consensus of students. As a result, we prioritised tools with strong free versions and framed recommendations around features available without payment, ensuring the resource remained inclusive and equitable for all learners.

A challenging aspect of the creation of the resource was to ensure it remained evolving and open. Initially, it was difficult to approach and visualise this element of the AI Ethics Resource bank. This is where collaboration and co-creation proved useful and vital. We discussed the use of different platforms, deciding that a shared Padlet would enable the resource to fulfil this aspect. It permitted students to suggest new AI tools that emerge and share alternative academic uses of the existing tools within the Resource Bank. This collaborative approach supported ongoing relevance and continued to allow students to be active contributors to the resource.

3.2 Curriculum design and module development specialist

This second internship centred on designing exemplar modules that demonstrated how AI tools could be embedded meaningfully and ethically into modern languages education. This involved analysing pedagogical needs, identifying opportunities for AI-enhanced learning that would be beneficial to students. These modules would then align with principles of responsible AI use, in accordance with the MLANG AI guidelines. The modules created were intended to equip students with the knowledge, practical skills and critical awareness needed to navigate the growing presence of AI in language learning, the humanities and cultural studies.

During the placement, three separate exemplar modules were created: an introductory school-wide module entitled "AI, ethics, and the humanities: Navigating Culture, Language, and Creativity in the Digital Age"; a first-year culture module on "Transnational Perspectives on Hispanidad: Language, Culture, and Identity"; and a final-year "High Proficiency in French" language module. Each was designed to demonstrate how AI could enhance immersion, comprehension, production and learner autonomy, all whilst fostering critical reflection on issues such as bias, authorship, and academic integrity. Additionally, an

exemplary assessment model that encouraged ethical AI use and supported second language acquisition through structured journal writing and vocabulary reinforcement was developed.

The introductory module aimed at teaching students how AI systems process language and data, whilst also prompting them to critically evaluate AI's role in the humanities and cultural contexts. Students would also be encouraged to analyse current debates around bias, authorship, plagiarism, intellectual property, and cultural representation (e.g. dialects, customs).

In the culture module, AI was integrated tools to support comprehension, vocabulary development and cultural analysis, such as using AI to generate timelines of historical events, analyse books and create summaries, produce quizzes or simulate debates.

In the language module, AI was embedded into grammar correction, translation critique, pastiche creation, pronunciation analysis and writing development. These integrations were carefully chosen to enhance learning without encouraging overreliance, reflecting the principle that AI should be there to support, not bypass learning outcomes.

A further aim of this role was to design assessments that modelled ethical and transparent AI use. The exemplar assessment created explicitly challenged students to avoid the unwilling tendency learners often have as they resort to translating large chunks of texts, or the entire text itself, from their first language (L1) into the target language (TL), instead of encouraging them to use AI tools solely for single word, short phrases or idiomatic expressions.

Conclusion

The rapid emergence of Gen AI in late 2022 placed HEIs in an unprecedented position. These were required to respond to an integral technological change before they fully understood it. This project began at precisely that moment of uncertainty. When Gen AI tools became widely available to students, our School identified a significant gap: there were no discipline-specific resources, no shared institutional guidelines and no established pedagogical models that could support staff or learners in navigating this challenge. Rather than treat AI as a threat, we chose to approach it as an opportunity, one that demanded critical engagement, ethical awareness, and, above all, collaboration. This article has demonstrated how co-creation, grounded in evidence and partnership, became our most powerful tool for moving forward.

Across each phase of this project, co-creation proved not only beneficial but essential. Data collected revealed that students were not passive consumers of AI. They were thoughtful, curious and motivated to understand the technology critically. They articulated the need for

structured support, ethical clarity, and transparent assessment guidelines. Staff, however, expressed a different set of challenges, primarily a lack of confidence and limited exposure to AI training. This division highlighted the need for resources that could meaningfully bridge differing levels of expectations. Engaging effectively with staff and students ensured that the outputs of the project, the AI Guidelines, the AI Assessment Table, the Ethical AI Resource Bank and AI Modules, responded directly to the real challenges in language programmes.

One of the most significant outcomes of this work is the demonstration that co-creation must be a central principle for AI adoption in HE. Students, especially in language learning contexts, engage with AI daily in ways that are faster and more agile than institutional processes allow. Their insights were indispensable in shaping guidance that felt realistic, usable and pedagogically sound. Similarly, staff perspectives were vital for ensuring that the resources aligned with assessment practices, academic integrity expectations and broader disciplinary values. Co-creation therefore functioned as a democratic model: it validated student expertise, respected staff concerns and positioned both groups as collaborators in shaping the future of AI literacy.

Moreover, the resources created through this partnership have already begun to increase confidence among both staff and students. Staff now have concrete tools to reference when discussing AI with students, assessing work created with or alongside AI or designing tasks that incorporate generative technologies in meaningful ways. Students, in turn, have access to clear explanations of what is permitted, what is not, and how to use AI responsibly and reflectively. The move from uncertainty to empowerment is perhaps the clearest indicator of the project's impact.

The success of the Ethical AI Resource Bank and the creation of AI modules further illustrate this point. Dividing AI tools into accessible categories, offering discipline-specific guidance, providing ethical checkpoints and linking each tool to Cardiff's graduate attributes made this resource both practical and ambitious. Similarly, aligning modules with responsible AI principles demonstrates how students can engage with AI in a way that deepens linguistic and cultural competence, sharpens critical judgement and develops digital confidence. These materials are designed to model a pedagogical approach where AI is not a shortcut but a facilitator for deeper learning, empowering students to make informed, critical decisions. In this way, they reflect the broader ethos of the project: AI in higher education should not be controlled through fear but understood through literacy.

Another important achievement of this study is its pioneering nature. At the moment when generative AI tools entered mainstream HE, our School was the first at Cardiff University to take deliberate, structured action in response. We did not wait for centralised guidance, we built the first version of it ourselves. This proactive stance positioned us as leaders within the institution. As the project developed, other Schools and central University services began requesting access to our resources, seeking to adapt the work for their own disciplines. This uptake has wider significance. It shows that discipline-driven,

student-centred responses can catalyse institutional change. It also demonstrates that the model we developed can be replicated across the University and beyond. In a landscape where AI literacy is still emerging, our work has become a foundation on which others can build upon.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that this project represents a beginning, not an endpoint. It is still early days, and the tools we have created must now be tested, refined, and implemented in real teaching contexts. The next stage of this study will explore how effectively these resources support staff and students in practice, which elements of the guidelines require further clarification and how the assessment table operates within the diversity of language and cultural modules. It will also examine how staff confidence evolves with training and use and how students continue to engage with AI as they develop more advanced literacy skills.

Generative AI will continue to evolve, and HE must evolve alongside it. The strength of this project lies in its capacity to adapt. The frameworks, resources and partnerships we have built are not static, they are designed to grow. As new tools appear, as disciplinary needs shift, and as institutional expectations change, these materials can be expanded and updated. Co-creation will remain central to this evolution, ensuring that future iterations continue to reflect the real needs of our community.

Ultimately, the impact of this project rests on a simple but powerful belief: meaningful AI literacy in HE cannot be developed for students or staff, but with them. Co-creation is not only the most effective response to the rapid rise of generative AI, but also the only one capable of ensuring ethical, sustainable and inclusive integration. This project shows what is possible when students and staff work together in response to immediate change. It demonstrates that the challenges posed by AI can also be perceived as opportunities for innovation and community building.

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