

Widener University

Staff AI Use and Literacy Survey

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AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and Curriculum Working Group

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AI Disclosure: ChatGPT was used in a variety of ways in the creation of this document.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary..... 3
Staff Familiarity with AI Tools..... 4

- Familiarity Levels with Generative AI Tools
- Frequency of AI Tool Usage
- Types of Tasks AI is Used For

Staff AI Training Interests.....5

- Interest in Additional Training
- Preferred Training Formats

Sources of Information about AI Tools..... 6
Expectations and Barriers to Adoption..... 7

- Impact of AI on Staff Workload
- Barriers to AI Adoption

Additional Comments from Staff Survey.....9

- General Comments on Generative AI in Higher Education

Feedback on Copilot..... 10
Where Do Respondents Work?..... 12
Appendix 1: Full Text of Additional Comments..... 13

1. Executive Summary

The **Staff AI Use and Literacy Survey** conducted by Widener University explores staff familiarity, usage, and perspectives on generative AI tools. The survey reveals a mix of engagement levels, with 54% of respondents expressing familiarity with tools like ChatGPT and Gemini, and 46% using AI at least a few times per week, indicating a growing comfort with AI technology.

Training Needs: A significant 83% of respondents see value in additional training, with preferences for diverse formats. Asynchronous videos, SharePoint resources, Zoom sessions, and in-person workshops were all noted as effective. Hands-on, practical learning opportunities are highly valued, suggesting that staff are keen on training that directly integrates AI tools into their daily workflows. Desired topics include ethical usage, tool integration, and AI training methodologies.

Learning Sources: Staff primarily turn to **Internet resources**, with 41% mentioning Google or YouTube. Formal institutional support, such as Widener's professional development, is also critical, while personal networks and hands-on experimentation play a key role in AI learning. Library resources and journals were mentioned less frequently, but they still serve as important sources for some.

AI Impact on Workload: There are mixed expectations about how generative AI will affect workload. While some staff foresee reduced workloads, others anticipate increased time demands due to editing AI-generated content and verifying its reliability.

Barriers to Adoption: The most significant barriers include the time required to learn the technology, ethical concerns (such as bias and misinformation), and the lack of reliable outputs. Many respondents expressed concern over the impersonal nature of AI-generated content and the risk of over-reliance on such tools, which could undermine academic quality and creativity.

Perspectives on AI in Higher Education: The attitudes toward AI in higher education vary. Around 23% of respondents are supportive, viewing AI as a necessary adaptation, while 15% believe it enhances productivity. However, ethical concerns and academic integrity issues are prominent, with 18% of respondents wary of misinformation and intellectual property challenges. Some staff are ambivalent or skeptical, expressing concerns about AI being forced upon them without sufficient nuance.

Recommendations: The survey findings highlight the need for a blended approach to AI training that includes both practical, hands-on sessions and conceptual learning. To address concerns, ethical guidance and clear policies are recommended to support staff in effectively and responsibly using AI tools. Widener should also focus on ensuring equitable access to AI training and resources across all divisions.

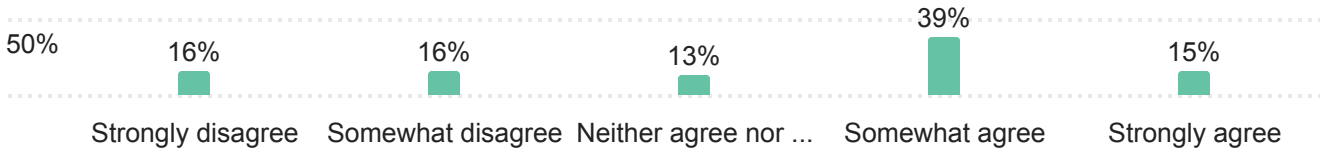
This preliminary report provides insights that will guide Widener University in fostering AI literacy among staff, supporting effective integration of AI into academic and administrative roles while addressing concerns about ethics and quality.

2. Staff Familiarity with AI Tools

Q: I have a strong understanding of and familiarity with generative artificial intelligence programs like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and other tools built on them.

About 54% of respondents indicated they have at least a moderate familiarity with generative AI tools, while 32% reported a lack of familiarity, suggesting a need for broader AI literacy efforts.

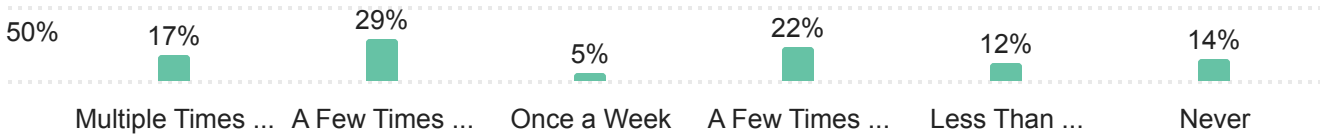
98 Responses



Q: How often do use use generative AI tools (personally or professionally)?

AI usage frequency varied, with 46% of staff using AI tools multiple times per week, while 26% use it less than once a month or never. This reflects a range of adoption levels across the staff.

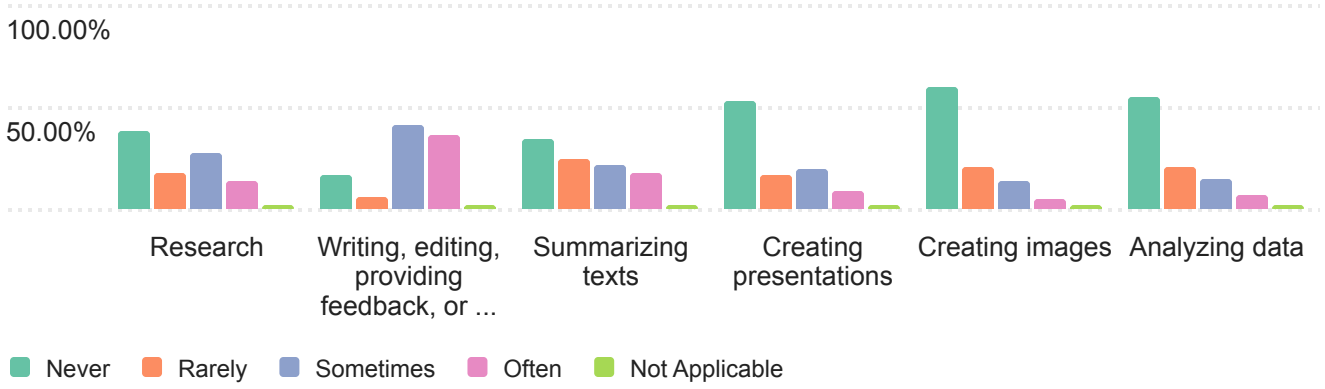
98 Responses



Q6 - How often do you use AI tools for the following kinds of tasks in your work...

Writing, editing, and summarizing are the most common tasks for which AI is used, with over 50% of respondents using AI for these purposes. Tasks like creating images or analyzing data were much less common.

92 Responses



3. Staff AI Training Interests

Q: I could benefit from additional training on generative AI.

An overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents agreed that they could benefit from additional AI training, showing a strong interest in enhancing AI skills for better utilization in their roles.

98 Responses



Staff responses on desired AI training formats and topics reveal a need for diverse training methods that are both flexible and interactive. Asynchronous training options, such as recorded videos or SharePoint resources, are popular due to their convenience (27%). However, many staff members also value synchronous Zoom sessions (25%) and in-person workshops (15%), particularly when these involve hands-on learning and practical exercises.

Staff members expressed a preference for training topics that are directly applicable to their daily work, including integrating AI tools like Copilot into office tasks, ethical discussions about AI use, and understanding how AI is trained. This highlights a need for not just conceptual training but also practical sessions that demonstrate real-world applications.

Overall, there is an openness to engaging in AI training, with a significant number of respondents indicating that any format would be helpful. This suggests that institutions should consider offering a blended approach that incorporates multiple formats to meet the diverse needs of their staff.

Quantification of Themes:

- **Training Format Preferences**:
  - **Asynchronous Online**: 28 responses (27%)
  - **Synchronous Zoom**: 26 responses (25%)
  - **In-Person Training**: 16 responses (15%)
  - **Hands-On Training**: 10 responses (10%)
- **General Preference for All Types**:
  - **All Training Formats**: 20 responses (19%)
- **Desired Training Topics**:
  - **Ethics and Special Topics**: 5 responses (5%)
- **Preference for Convenience**:
  - **Recorded or Flexible Resources**: 10 responses (10%)

4. Sources of Information about AI Tools

Q: Where do you turn to learn about AI tools?

The responses on where staff turn to learn about AI tools show a strong preference for easily accessible, flexible sources such as online search engines and social media. About 41% of respondents mentioned using **Google**, **YouTube**, or similar platforms, reflecting a desire for on-demand information that can be accessed quickly. In addition to these resources, a significant portion of respondents mentioned **Widener University's professional development offerings** and **LinkedIn Learning**, showing that formal institutional support plays an important role in AI learning.

Personal networks and colleagues were another key source, highlighted by 16% of respondents. This reflects the importance of informal peer learning and the value staff place on advice from trusted colleagues. Hands-on experimentation was also popular, with 10% of respondents learning by trying out AI tools themselves, often combining this with online searches.

Traditional resources such as **library services** and **journals** were mentioned less frequently but remain an important source for some staff members, indicating a need for diverse, well-rounded resource offerings.

Overall, the findings suggest a need for a blended approach that accommodates different learning preferences: easily accessible online content, formal training sessions, and opportunities for hands-on experimentation.

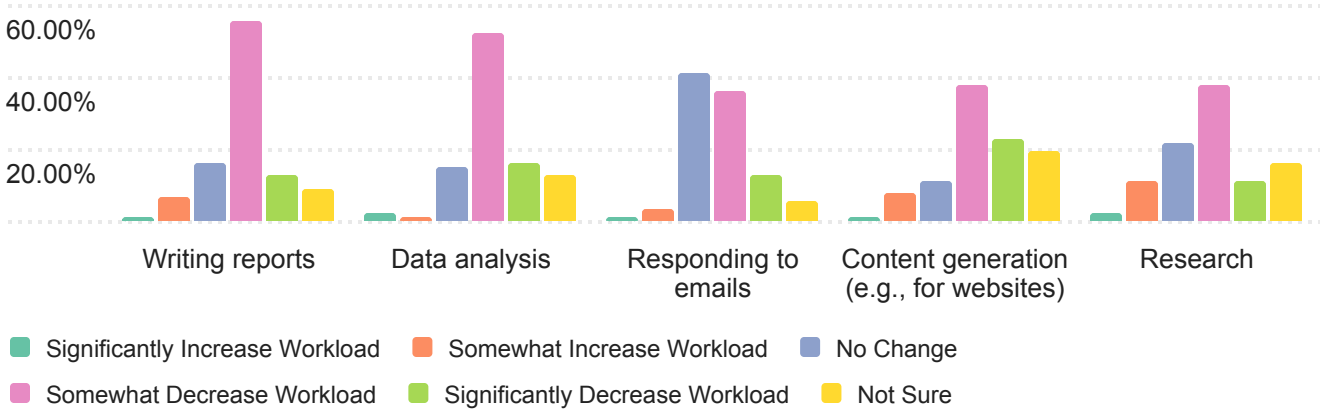
Quantification of Themes:

- **Internet Resources**:
  - **Search Engines and Social Media**: 35 responses (29%)
  - **Online Courses and Articles**: 15 responses (12%)
- **Professional Development**:
  - **Institutional Training**: 18 responses (15%)
  - **External Training**: 10 responses (8%)
- **Personal Networks and Colleagues**:
  - **Colleagues and Friends**: 20 responses (16%)
- **Experimentation and Self-Teaching**:
  - **Hands-On Experimentation**: 12 responses (10%)
- **Traditional Resources**:
  - **Library and Journals**: 10 responses (8%)

5. Expectations and Barriers to Adoption

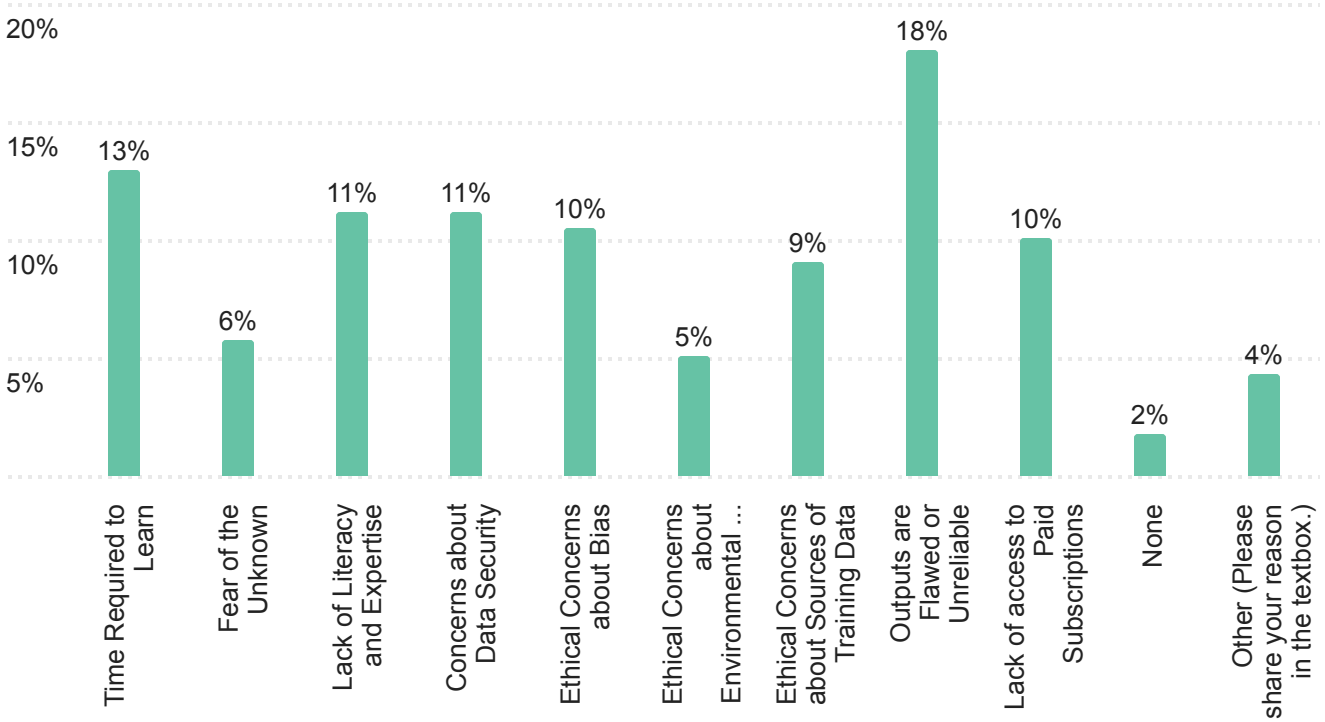
Q: How do you think generative AI tools and technologies will affect staff workload?

92 Responses



Q: What are the most significant barriers to your adoption of AI tools and technologies in your work? (You may select more than one.)

91 Responses



Q8_11_TEXT - Other (Please share your reason in the textbox.) - Text

12 Responses

Other (Please share your reason in the textbox.) - Text
Lack of human creativity
Limited applications
the technology is dangerous
I don't have tasks that require writing a lot.
Not sure where to apply this technology in my workload as Administrative Support
Limited to not having full access to some platforms
Concerns of implementation of organizational rules that prohibit AI
Outputs seem robotic and impersonal, and are easy to detect as AI-generated. In my mind, human brains produce more nuanced, personal writing.
Haven't had the need to look into it and use
sometimes it's just easier to do something then write a complicated prompt, that may not get you a good answer
Lack of proof reading and weakening analytical approach without clear training
the concern that it lies and provides false information

6. Additional Comments from Staff Survey

Q: Do you have any additional comments about the use of generative AI in higher education that you would like to share?

The responses regarding the use of generative AI in higher education reveal a mix of support, concern, and skepticism. Around 23% of respondents expressed positive attitudes toward embracing AI, viewing it as a necessary adaptation to modern educational environments. Another 15% saw AI as an effective tool to boost productivity and streamline certain tasks, such as generating content or providing initial drafts.

However, ethical concerns were prevalent, with 18% of respondents highlighting issues like misinformation, quality, and intellectual property rights. Concerns around academic integrity also emerged, with some respondents warning that over-reliance on AI could harm the credibility of academic institutions. A further 11% felt that the quality of AI-generated outputs was not yet sufficient, often requiring significant editing.

Training and support were frequently requested, with many respondents emphasizing the need for more comprehensive guidance on using AI effectively and ethically. Finally, a notable portion of respondents expressed ambivalence or outright reluctance toward AI adoption, worrying that AI tools were being forced upon them without sufficient consideration for the nuances of their work.

Quantification of Themes:

- **Positive Attitudes Towards AI**:
  - **Support for Adoption**: 15 responses (23%)
    - "We need to embrace it, not condemn it."
  - **Productivity Enhancements**: 10 responses (15%)
    - "I have found it helpful in getting me started."
- **Concerns About AI**:
  - **Ethical Concerns**: 12 responses (18%)
    - "I feel that misinformation is going to increase and make things harder."
  - **Academic Integrity**: 8 responses (12%)
    - "I don't believe that AI should be used to generate content in higher education."
  - **Quality of AI Output**: 7 responses (11%)
- **Training and Support Needs**:
  - **Desire for Training**: 10 responses (15%)
    - "We need more training - with all the available resources provided to us here at WU, there are many folks who haven't used it at all yet."
- **Ambivalence or Mixed Views**:
  - **Reluctance or Skepticism**: 6 responses (9%)
    - "It's a crutch that's beginning to feel forced on me, but I don't have a broken leg."

7. Feedback on Copilot

Q: Do you have any feedback to share about the access to Microsoft Copilot provided by Widener?

54 Responses

Do you have any feedback to share about the access to Micorosft Copilot provided by Widener?
Yes, sometimes it allows me to log in other times it doesn't recognize my password.
love it and use it!
thumbs up keep it up 👍
Could be better
There are better tools and the new version is not easy to use
No
I'm glad we have access to it.
I have liked Copilot so far. It's the only system I have learned though, so I'm not sure how it compares to others.
It will be helpful
Not at this time.
no
Most of the people in my group used this for the first time for Dr. Satterly's Queer History Mystery and found it to be helpful and easy to use.
No
I have the Pro license and find it useful in completing daily tasks and staying on task.
No
Copilot works for my needs
I haven’t figured it out
N/A

Haven't used it. Didn't realize it was available. But I did find it in Microsoft Edge just now.

It is great, mentioned above

8. Where do respondents work?

Advancement: 18 responses (15%)
Library & Information Services (LIS): 14 responses (12%)
Enrollment Services: 10 responses (8%)
College of Health and Human Services (CHHS): 9 responses (7%)
Academic Affairs: 8 responses (7%)
Administration & Finance: 8 responses (7%)
Law School: 7 responses (6%)
Student Success and Engagement: 5 responses (4%)
Office of the President: 2 responses (2%)
Other Divisions: 10 responses (8%)

Appendix 1: Full Text of Additional Comments

Do you have any additional comments about the use of generative AI in higher education that you would like to share?

50 Responses

Do you have any additional comments about the use of generative AI in higher education that you would like to share?
AI output is generally too rough to be useful, so it doesn't always save time because it has to be revised or edited.
We need to embrace it not condemn it
I tried to use to support correction of assignments and the result was not good
I'd love to learn how it use it correctly
No
Professors should encourage students to learn how to use AI efficiently and effectively rather than ban them from using it.
no
Not at this time.
no
No
No
We need to embrace the technology and not fear and block use to us.
I think we really need to monitor the use of AI in the classroom and learn as much as we can about it as it continues to change and improve.
Really want to learn. I fear for student usage, but think it could really be an asset to staff.
I still feel it's very controversial for student use.
Currently I feel as if students are more likely to use AI than faculty are to spot it when used inappropriately.
Enjoying Copilot

I don't believe that AI should be used to generate content in higher education. As an institution, we would lose credibility if students and their families discovered us using AI to communicate, rather than writing them ourselves. It's incredibly impersonal and defeats the point of what we do. While I believe it can have some benefits for accessibility (like producing transcripts of lectures or summarizing texts), I don't think it should be used to create lessons, presentations, or written works.

Allow more access to the platforms

I'd like to thank the university for putting out a statement discouraging faculty from using AI detectors. Not only are they unreliable but students notice the irony of faculty trying to detect AI with AI.