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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND MISCONDUCT RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH GAI IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Bernardo Corona Domínguez[1], Salvador González Flores[2]

[1]Universidad Nacional Rosario Castellanos, Mexico
bernardocorona70@rcastellanos.cdmx.gob.mx
[2]Universidad Nacional Rosario Castellanos, Mexico
salvador.gonzalez@rcastellanos.cdmx.gob.mx

Abstract:
Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) has emerged as one of the most disruptive technologies in higher education, transforming how students learn, write, research, and complete assessments. While GAI offers significant academic benefits, including improved access to information, writing support, personalized assistance, and productivity enhancement, its rapid use in higher education has generated serious concerns regarding academic integrity and misconduct. The ability of GAI tools to produce essays, summaries, code, answers, and other forms of academic content has challenged long-standing assumptions about authorship, originality, independent learning, and fair assessment. This article examines the academic integrity and misconduct risks associated with GAI in higher education. Using a narrative literature review approach, the study synthesizes recent scholarship on institutional policies, student behaviors, misconduct patterns, personality predictors, ethical concerns, and preventive strategies related to GAI use in academic contexts. The review finds that GAI-related misconduct is not limited to plagiarism but includes unauthorized assistance, concealed authorship, fabrication, contract-like substitution of academic labor, manipulation of assessments, and misuse of AI-generated content in research and publication. The findings further show that misconduct risks are shaped by institutional ambiguity, weak policy enforcement, assessment design flaws, student perceptions, personality traits, and uneven AI literacy. The article argues that academic integrity in the age of GAI must be addressed through a comprehensive framework that combines authentic assessment, clear governance policies, ethical literacy, early-warning systems, due process, and context-sensitive enforcement mechanisms. It concludes that higher education institutions must move beyond narrow anti-cheating responses and adopt a broader academic integrity strategy that recognizes the complexity of GAI use while preserving fairness, originality, trust, and educational purpose.

Keywords: Generative artificial intelligence, academic integrity, academic misconduct, higher education, assessment, educational policy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Emergence of GAI in Higher Education

Generative artificial intelligence has rapidly become part of the everyday academic environment in higher education. Students increasingly use GAI tools to generate text, refine writing, summarize readings, produce code, explain concepts, and support project development. Faculty members also use these tools for lesson preparation, feedback generation, content design, and administrative communication. As Xu and Wang (2025) observed, GAI is no longer a speculative technology in higher education but a practical reality reshaping academic processes across multiple domains.

This expansion has brought a new level of urgency to discussions about academic integrity. Unlike earlier digital tools that mainly supported information access or formatting, GAI can produce original-seeming academic outputs that closely resemble student-authored work. This feature has intensified concerns about whether submitted assignments represent genuine learning, independent reasoning, and authentic scholarly effort. Gallent Torres et al. (2023) argued that GAI poses one of the most significant recent challenges to ethics and academic integrity in higher education because it affects the very meaning of authorship and originality.

1.2 Why Academic Integrity Is Now Under Pressure

Academic integrity has traditionally rested on principles such as honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, respect, and courage. In higher education, these principles shape assessment systems, classroom expectations, and scholarly practice. However, GAI complicates these foundations by making it easier for students to outsource intellectual tasks without leaving obvious signs of misconduct. Sharma and Panja (2025) noted that GAI has substantially altered the landscape of academic dishonesty by enabling sophisticated forms of unauthorized support that are more difficult to detect than conventional plagiarism.

This means the challenge is not only technological but also conceptual. Institutions must now reconsider how integrity is defined, taught, assessed, and enforced in academic settings where human and machine contributions are increasingly entangled. GAI does not simply increase the volume of cheating opportunities; it changes the structure of academic work itself.

1.3 Rising Misconduct Risks in the Age of GAI

The widespread use of GAI in higher education has created serious risks of misconduct. These risks include plagiarism, ghost authorship, fabricated references, hidden paraphrasing, AI-generated assignment submission, unauthorized problem-solving assistance, and misuse in examinations or research tasks. Lichtenauer and Weible (2025) found that GAI has significantly intensified academic integrity concerns by enabling students to generate work that appears original while reducing the amount of direct intellectual engagement required.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that not all GAI use is unethical. Students may use these tools for grammar support, brainstorming, clarification, and study guidance in ways that can support learning. As a result, the line between ethical assistance and misconduct has become increasingly blurred. Institutions must therefore distinguish between acceptable use, questionable use, and dishonest use, yet many have not fully developed the policy clarity or assessment design needed to do so effectively.

1.4 Inadequate Institutional Preparedness

Another dimension of the problem is that institutional responses have not always kept pace with the speed of GAI adoption. Jin et al. (2025) showed that higher education institutions worldwide have adopted varied and uneven policies for GAI use, reflecting differences in strategic readiness, cultural context, and governance maturity. Dabis and Csáki (2024) similarly found that early policy responses were often reactive, fragmented, and uncertain.

This creates a situation in which students, instructors, and administrators operate under inconsistent expectations. Ambiguous rules may encourage misuse, undermine fairness, and complicate disciplinary procedures. Nagpal (2024) questioned whether universities are effectively ensuring academic integrity in the era of generative AI, suggesting that many institutions still lack sufficiently robust procedures, guidelines, and enforcement systems.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

1.5.1 Main Aim

The purpose of this article is to examine the academic integrity and misconduct risks associated with GAI in higher education and to propose a structured response framework grounded in current scholarship.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

This article has four objectives. First, it identifies the major academic integrity risks associated with GAI use in higher education. Second, it reviews empirical and conceptual literature on student misconduct behaviors, institutional policy responses, and risk factors. Third, it synthesizes the major themes emerging from the literature regarding prevention and control. Fourth, it proposes an academic integrity response framework suitable for higher education institutions.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Importance for Higher Education Institutions

This study is important because academic integrity remains central to the legitimacy of higher education. When students receive credit for work that does not reflect their own understanding or effort, the credibility of qualifications, assessment processes, and institutional standards is undermined. The rise of GAI makes this problem more urgent because the technology can imitate legitimate academic performance with increasing sophistication.

1.6.2 Contribution to Current Scholarship

The article contributes to the growing literature on GAI in higher education by focusing specifically on integrity and misconduct risks rather than general ethical adoption. While broader discussions of GAI often include innovation, teaching enhancement, and institutional governance, the present study concentrates on how GAI affects misconduct behavior, detection challenges, disciplinary procedures, and educational trust. This narrower focus provides a useful basis for policy and pedagogical reform.

Table 1: Overview of Generative AI and Academic Integrity Concerns in Higher Education

Dimension	Description	Relevance to Higher Education	Academic Integrity Concern
Student Learning Support	GAI is used by students for summarizing texts, explaining concepts, drafting responses, and solving academic tasks	Supports learning efficiency and quick access to academic help	May encourage overdependence and reduce independent critical thinking
Academic Writing	Students use GAI for essay drafting, paraphrasing, editing, and restructuring written assignments	Improves writing speed and language support	Creates risks of hidden authorship, plagiarism, and misrepresentation of original work
Assessment Tasks	GAI can assist with take-home assignments, discussion posts, coding tasks, and project responses	Challenges traditional methods of evaluating student performance	Makes it harder to confirm whether submitted work reflects genuine student effort
Research and Referencing	GAI supports topic generation, literature summaries, citation suggestions, and draft development	Helps students and researchers organize academic work more quickly	May produce fabricated references, inaccurate claims, and false scholarship
Institutional Policy	Universities are developing policies and guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable AI use	Helps institutions regulate academic conduct and maintain standards	Weak or unclear policies may increase misuse and inconsistency in enforcement

Student Behavior Factors	Individual attitudes, motivation, demographics, and personality traits influence how GAI is used	Affects the likelihood of ethical or unethical engagement with AI tools	Certain user patterns may increase the risk of misconduct behaviors
Faculty and Assessment Design	Instructors influence integrity through task design, supervision, and feedback structure	Important for maintaining authentic learning and reliable evaluation	Poorly designed assessments may become highly vulnerable to AI misuse
Integrity Governance	Academic integrity procedures include prevention, detection, investigation, and disciplinary response	Essential for protecting trust, fairness, and institutional credibility	Institutions may struggle to investigate and manage AI-related misconduct fairly

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Traditional Meaning of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity has long been understood as the commitment to honest and responsible scholarship. It involves original work, proper attribution, truthful representation of effort, and respect for academic rules. In higher education, integrity is not only about avoiding cheating but also about cultivating an ethical academic culture that supports learning and trust. Nowak (2026) emphasized that academic misconduct investigations are deeply shaped by institutional interpretations of integrity, fairness, and due process, showing that integrity is both a moral and procedural issue.

2.2 How GAI Disrupts Conventional Integrity Models

GAI disrupts conventional integrity models by enabling a form of intellectual outsourcing that may be difficult to classify under traditional categories. Conventional plagiarism policies often focus on copying existing human-authored material without attribution. GAI, however, produces new text on demand, making the resulting output less easily traceable. Mansoor (2026) argued that GAI raises new legal and ethical questions concerning plagiarism, originality, and liability because machine-generated content does not fit neatly into earlier academic integrity doctrines.

This means institutions can no longer rely solely on old definitions and detection mechanisms. Academic integrity frameworks must adapt to forms of misconduct that involve generation, concealment, hybrid authorship, and unverifiable contributions.

2.3 AI-Assisted Plagiarism and Hidden Authorship

One of the most widely discussed forms of GAI-related misconduct is AI-assisted plagiarism. This occurs when students submit AI-generated or AI-revised text as their own work without disclosure. Unlike traditional plagiarism, this form may not involve direct copying from published sources. Instead, it involves concealed authorship and misrepresentation of independent academic effort. Sharma and Panja (2025) identified this as a major integrity challenge because many institutions lack the means to distinguish between legitimate support and improper substitution.

Karkoulian et al. (2025) found that perceptions of academic integrity are increasingly shaped by concerns over whether students are still the true authors of the work they submit. In this context, hidden authorship becomes a central issue. Even when text is original in a technical sense, it may still violate integrity if it does not reflect the student's own thinking.

2.4 Fabrication and Hallucinated Scholarship

GAI systems are known to produce fabricated references, inaccurate claims, and false citations. In academic work, such fabrication can mislead students into including nonexistent sources or unsupported

statements. Xu (2025) identified risk assessment and prevention as essential because GAI use in college education may generate misinformation and false academic content that students are unable or unwilling to verify.

This risk is especially serious in research writing, literature reviews, and professional programs where evidence-based reasoning is essential. Fang et al. (2025), in discussing publishing policies on AI-generated content in nursing, highlighted the importance of maintaining integrity standards in fields where false claims may have educational and practical consequences. Fabrication therefore represents both a scholarly and ethical violation.

2.5 Unauthorized Assistance in Assessment

GAI also enables unauthorized assistance during essays, take-home assignments, coding tasks, problem-solving exercises, and even exam preparation. The technology can function like an always-available academic assistant, blurring the boundary between support and substitution. Wei and Wei (2024) described the deep integration of GAI into higher education as carrying significant potential risks, including the erosion of independent student problem-solving and authentic performance.

When students rely excessively on GAI for assignments that are meant to measure their own competence, the validity of assessment is weakened. This problem is particularly serious when institutions do not clearly specify what forms of AI assistance are allowed.

2.6 Misuse in Research and Publication

Misconduct risks extend beyond coursework to research and publication. Students and academics may use GAI to generate abstracts, literature summaries, paraphrased content, or draft sections without proper disclosure. This raises concerns about authenticity, accountability, and scholarly responsibility. Mansoor (2026) highlighted the legal implications of such practices, especially where liability for inaccurate or plagiarized content becomes unclear.

This issue is not limited to authorship. GAI can also be used to generate plausible but false research narratives, references, or methodological claims. As a result, integrity risks extend into the broader scholarly ecosystem of higher education.

2.7 Student Behavior and Risk Factors

2.7.1 Attitudes, Perceptions, and Justifications

Student behavior plays a major role in GAI-related misconduct. Some students may view GAI as a legitimate productivity tool, while others may see it as a shortcut that reduces academic burden. Mokdad (2024) found that students' ethical use of generative AI is influenced by their perceptions of legitimacy, convenience, and academic pressure. Where institutional guidance is unclear, students may normalize practices that would otherwise be considered dishonest.

Karkoulian et al. (2025) also found that perceptions of academic integrity in the context of ChatGPT are shaped by how students understand fairness, effort, and modern technology use. This suggests that misconduct may sometimes arise not only from intent to deceive but also from ethical ambiguity and cultural normalization.

2.7.2 Demographic and Behavioral Patterns

Shomotova et al. (2025) validated the GenAI Usage Scale and examined the role of demographics in academic dishonesty, showing that patterns of use and misconduct are not uniform across student groups. Their work suggests that background variables, levels of exposure, and patterns of engagement with GAI tools can influence the likelihood of dishonest behavior.

This means institutions should avoid simplistic assumptions that all students use GAI in the same way. Effective interventions require more precise understanding of behavioral diversity, including how risk patterns vary across educational levels, disciplines, and demographic groups.

2.7.3 Personality Traits and Misconduct Tendencies

A significant body of recent work has explored the relationship between personality traits and GAI-related misconduct. Liang et al. (2025) found that attitudes and misconduct behaviors related to GAI can be predicted through personality models such as the HEXACO and Dark Triad frameworks. Their study suggests that certain personality characteristics may increase susceptibility to dishonest or manipulative GAI use.

Liang and Reiss (2026) further explored how personality traits influence GAI academic misconduct behaviors using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis. Their findings indicate that misconduct does not arise from a single factor but from combinations of personal traits and contextual conditions. This is important because it shows that prevention cannot rely only on surveillance or punishment. It must also address motivation, ethical development, and environment.

2.8 Global Growth of Institutional Guidelines

Institutional guidelines on GAI are expanding globally. Jiao et al. (2024) documented the global landscape of academic guidelines for generative AI and large language models, showing that universities are increasingly developing rules concerning acceptable use, disclosure, authorship, and assessment. Jin et al. (2025) similarly showed that institutions worldwide are responding through policies, position statements, and instructional guidelines.

However, policy presence does not automatically mean policy effectiveness. Many institutions remain in the early stages of refining definitions, procedures, and support systems. The growth of guidelines shows awareness, but not necessarily maturity.

2.9 Weaknesses in Existing Policy Frameworks

Despite this progress, several studies indicate that existing policy frameworks remain incomplete. Nagpal (2024) argued that many universities have not yet ensured AI-related academic integrity effectively because procedures and guidelines often lack operational clarity. Dabis and Csáki (2024) found similar weaknesses in early institutional responses, especially in the form of fragmented policy language and uncertain implementation.

Weak frameworks create multiple risks. They make enforcement inconsistent, confuse students and staff, and may undermine confidence in disciplinary procedures. Policies that are too vague can leave instructors to interpret expectations on their own, resulting in uneven educational practice.

2.10 Prevention and Control Strategies in the Literature

2.10.1 Authentic Assessment Design

One of the strongest themes in the literature is the role of authentic assessment in protecting academic integrity. Lehane et al. (2024) argued that academic integrity can be improved through authentic assessment design that prioritizes process, reflection, application, and personal engagement. When assessments require students to demonstrate contextual understanding, iterative thinking, oral defense, or lived application, it becomes more difficult to misuse GAI as a substitute for learning.

This approach does not depend entirely on detection. Instead, it redesigns assessment to preserve educational authenticity. In the age of GAI, authentic assessment appears increasingly important.

2.10.2 Risk Assessment and Early-Warning Systems

Another prevention theme is the use of analytical and early-warning models. Yao (2025) proposed an integrated analytical model for early warning of GAI risks in higher education, emphasizing the need for institutions to identify patterns of misuse before problems escalate. Xu (2025) also recommended risk assessment and prevention-control strategies for the use of GAI in college education.

These approaches suggest that academic integrity management should be proactive rather than merely punitive. Risk mapping, behavioral monitoring, and policy review can help institutions identify weak points in assessment and governance systems.

2.10.3 Policy, Education, and Enforcement Integration

The literature suggests that no single intervention is sufficient. Effective integrity protection requires integration of policy, education, and enforcement. Students need guidance on acceptable use. Faculty need training on assessment redesign and policy application. Institutions need fair disciplinary procedures. Sharma and Panja (2025) concluded that addressing academic dishonesty in the era of GAI requires coordinated and systematic institutional responses rather than isolated measures.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a narrative literature review design. A narrative review was selected because the study aims to synthesize conceptual, empirical, and policy-oriented scholarship on academic integrity and misconduct risks associated with GAI in higher education. The topic is rapidly developing, and the literature includes different forms of evidence such as systematic reviews, qualitative studies, conference papers, dissertations, conceptual chapters, and policy analyses. A narrative approach allows these diverse sources to be examined together in a coherent thematic structure.

3.1 Rationale for the Design

The review approach is suitable because the article does not seek to measure prevalence statistically through primary data collection. Rather, it aims to identify major risk patterns, misconduct forms, institutional responses, and prevention strategies from the existing literature. This design supports the development of a synthesized response framework grounded in current scholarship.

3.2 Literature Base

The article draws on the twenty references supplied for the study topic. These sources were selected because they focus directly on GAI, academic integrity, misconduct behavior, institutional policies, risk prevention, assessment design, and related higher education concerns. The literature spans publications from 2023 to 2026 and includes peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, a dissertation, an SSRN paper, and book chapters.

3.3 Relevance of the Sources

The relevance of the sources lies in their direct treatment of core themes related to the article. These include institutional policy responses (Jin et al., 2025; Dabis & Csáki, 2024; Jiao et al., 2024), misconduct behavior and predictors (Liang et al., 2025; Liang & Reiss, 2026; Shomotova et al., 2025), academic integrity implications (Gallent Torres et al., 2023; Sharma & Panja, 2025; Lichtenauer & Weible, 2025), procedural and legal perspectives (Nowak, 2026; Mansoor, 2026), and prevention strategies (Lehane et al., 2024; Xu, 2025; Yao, 2025).

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

3.4.1 Thematic Synthesis

The literature was analyzed using thematic synthesis. First, each source was reviewed for its major arguments, findings, or recommendations related to GAI and academic integrity. Second, recurring themes were identified across the studies. Third, the themes were grouped into broader analytical categories. These categories included forms of misconduct, student behavior and risk factors, policy responses, assessment vulnerabilities, procedural issues, and prevention strategies.

3.4.2 Development of the Analytical Framework

After identifying the major themes, the findings were organized into a structured academic integrity response framework. This framework was derived from the repeated patterns in the literature, especially the need for policy clarity, authentic assessment, ethical literacy, due process, and risk monitoring. The resulting framework is presented in the Results and Discussion sections as a synthesis of the literature rather than as a separate empirical model.

3.5 Scope of the Review

The review is limited to higher education and does not address GAI-related integrity issues in primary or secondary education. It focuses specifically on academic integrity and misconduct rather than all ethical concerns associated with GAI. The emphasis is on institutional and student-facing issues rather than technical tool development.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

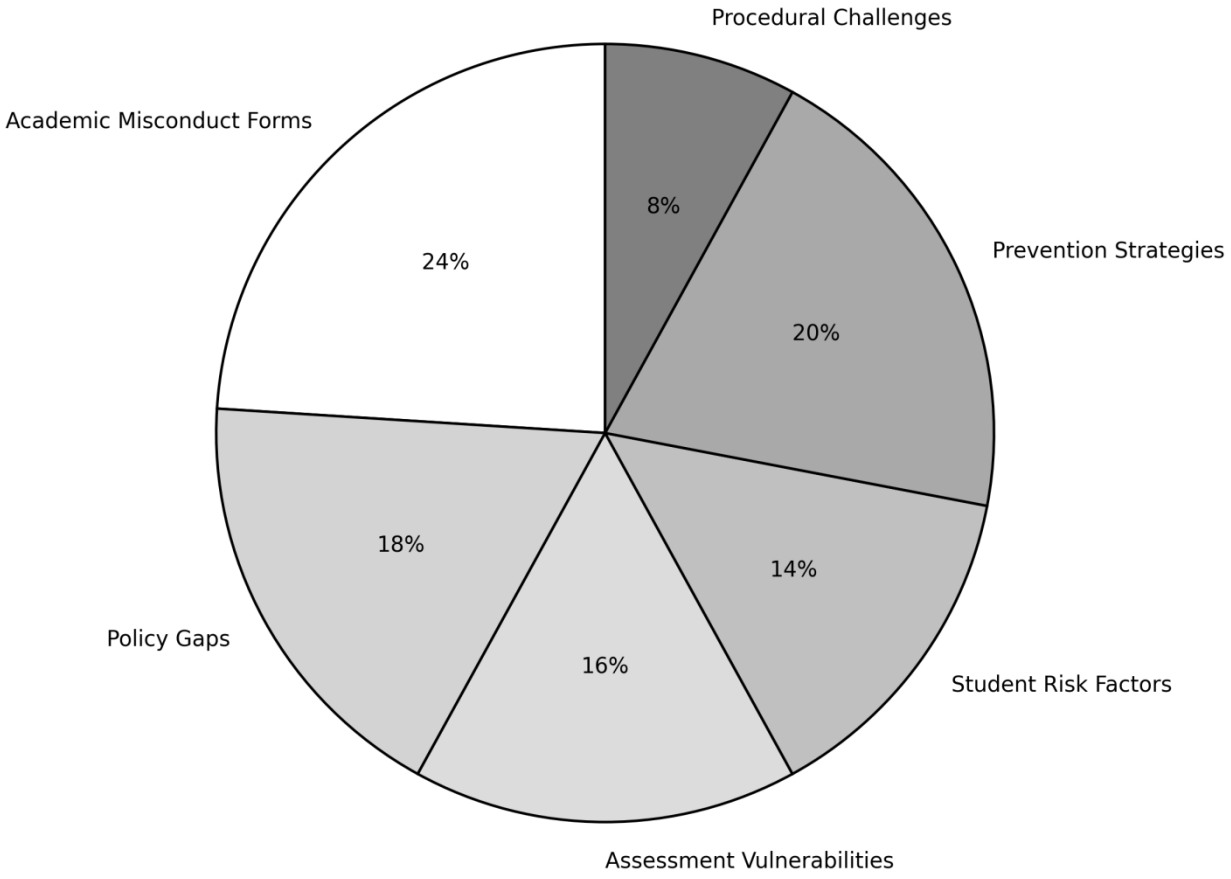
The first limitation is that the field is changing rapidly, which means that institutional policies and user behaviors may evolve quickly after publication. The second limitation is that the review relies on secondary sources and does not include original fieldwork from a particular institution. The third is that some of the literature reflects emerging rather than mature evidence. Despite these limitations, the review provides a timely and coherent synthesis of a fast-growing field.

4.0 RESULT

4.1 Major Findings From the Literature

- **Finding 1: GAI Has Expanded the Range of Academic Misconduct:** One of the clearest results from the literature is that GAI has expanded the range of academic misconduct beyond conventional plagiarism. The reviewed studies show that GAI-related misconduct includes hidden authorship, fabricated references, unauthorized content generation, automated paraphrasing, AI-assisted problem solving, and misrepresentation of independent effort (Gallent Torres et al., 2023; Sharma & Panja, 2025; Lichtenauer & Weible, 2025). This indicates that academic misconduct in the GAI era is broader, more subtle, and harder to categorize than earlier forms of cheating.
- **Finding 2: Misconduct Risk Is Influenced by Individual and Contextual Factors:** The literature also shows that misconduct risk is not uniform. It is influenced by a combination of personal attitudes, personality traits, demographic factors, institutional ambiguity, academic pressure, and accessibility of GAI tools. Liang et al. (2025) and Liang and Reiss (2026) demonstrate that personality factors can shape misconduct tendencies, while Shomotova et al. (2025) show that demographic and behavioral differences also matter. This suggests that GAI misuse arises from layered conditions rather than from technology alone.
- **Finding 3: Institutional Policy Responses Remain Uneven:** Another major result is that institutional responses remain inconsistent across higher education systems. Jin et al. (2025), Jiao et al. (2024), and Dabis and Csáki (2024) all show that institutions vary significantly in how they define acceptable use, disclosure rules, and assessment policies. Some have detailed guidelines, while others rely on temporary statements or fragmented instructions. This inconsistency creates uncertainty and may weaken integrity enforcement.
- **Finding 4: Authentic Assessment Is a Strong Preventive Strategy:** The literature strongly supports authentic assessment as one of the most promising responses to GAI-related misconduct. Lehane et al. (2024) show that assessment redesign can protect integrity by requiring context, process, reflection, and personal application. This reduces the effectiveness of generic AI-generated responses and increases the visibility of student learning. The evidence suggests that prevention through design may be more sustainable than dependence on detection alone.
- **Finding 5: Effective Response Requires Combined Policy, Education, and Monitoring:** A final major result is that no single intervention is sufficient. The literature supports an integrated response that combines policy clarity, ethical education, assessment reform, early-warning systems, and fair disciplinary procedures (Nagpal, 2024; Yao, 2025; Xu, 2025). Institutions that rely only on punitive enforcement or AI detection are unlikely to respond effectively to the complexity of GAI-related misconduct.

Figure 1: Distribution of key result themes on GAI-related academic integrity risks in higher education.



4.2 Key Misconduct Risks Identified

4.2.1 Concealed AI Authorship

The most prominent risk identified is the submission of AI-generated or AI-modified work without disclosure. This undermines originality and makes it difficult to assess whether students actually understand the material.

4.2.2 Fabrication and False Scholarship

Another major risk is the inclusion of hallucinated facts, invented references, and inaccurate academic claims. This threatens both learning quality and research integrity.

4.2.3 Assessment Invalidity

The literature repeatedly shows that unsupervised and generic assessment tasks are especially vulnerable to GAI misuse. This weakens the reliability of assessment outcomes.

4.2.4 Procedural Uncertainty

Nowak (2026) highlights that institutions also face procedural difficulty in investigating GAI-related misconduct. Staff may be uncertain about evidence standards, fairness, and due process when AI use is suspected.

4.3 Proposed Academic Integrity Response Framework

- **Pillar 1: Clear Institutional Rules on GAI Use:** Institutions should define acceptable, restricted, and prohibited uses of GAI across assignments, exams, research tasks, and publication contexts. These rules should be transparent and discipline-sensitive.
- **Pillar 2: Mandatory Disclosure Norms:** Students and staff should be required to disclose when and how GAI has been used in academic work. Disclosure creates accountability and reduces ambiguity.
- **Pillar 3: Authentic and Process-Oriented Assessment:** Assessment should be redesigned to include drafts, oral defense, reflective commentary, supervised components, and individualized application.
- **Pillar 4: Ethical Literacy and Student Orientation:** Institutions should teach students how to use GAI responsibly, how to verify outputs, and why integrity still matters in AI-supported learning environments.
- **Pillar 5: Staff Capacity and Procedural Fairness:** Faculty and academic staff need training on assessment design, policy interpretation, and fair investigation of suspected misconduct.
- **Pillar 6: Early-Warning and Risk Monitoring Systems:** Institutions should use non-intrusive methods to identify high-risk assessment patterns, repeated misuse trends, and policy gaps before they become widespread.
- **Pillar 7: Proportionate Enforcement and Continuous Review:** Enforcement should be fair, consistent, and educationally grounded. Policies should also be reviewed regularly as GAI tools and misconduct patterns evolve.

Table 2: Major Findings on Academic Integrity and Misconduct Risks Associated With GAI in Higher Education

Theme	Key Finding	Implication for Higher Education Institutions
Expanded Forms of Misconduct	GAI has broadened academic misconduct beyond traditional plagiarism to include concealed authorship, fabricated references, AI-generated assignments, and unauthorized assistance	Universities need updated definitions of misconduct that reflect AI-assisted academic behavior
Hidden Authorship Risk	Students may submit AI-generated or AI-edited work without disclosure, making authorship difficult to verify	Institutions should require transparency and disclosure of AI use in academic tasks
Assessment Vulnerability	Generic essays, take-home tasks, and unsupervised assignments are especially exposed to misuse of GAI	Assessment design should be revised to include authentic, process-based, and reflective tasks
Fabrication and False Content	GAI may generate false citations, hallucinated facts, and misleading academic claims	Students and staff need training in source verification and critical evaluation of AI-generated outputs
Policy Inconsistency	Institutional guidelines on GAI vary widely in clarity, scope, and enforcement	Higher education institutions need clearer and more consistent academic integrity policies
Student Behavioral Differences	Misconduct risks differ according to attitudes, demographics, motivations, and personality	Prevention strategies should consider behavioral diversity

	traits	rather than assume uniform student use
Procedural Challenges in Investigation	Academic staff may face difficulty investigating AI-related misconduct fairly and consistently	Institutions should strengthen procedural guidance and due process in misconduct investigations
Need for Ethical Literacy	Students often lack adequate understanding of the ethical limits of GAI use in academic work	Universities should provide academic integrity training and AI-use orientation programs
Preventive Role of Authentic Assessment	Authentic assessment reduces the likelihood of misconduct by emphasizing process, application, and personal reflection	Faculty should be supported to redesign tasks that are less vulnerable to AI misuse
Need for Integrated Response	Effective control of GAI-related misconduct requires policy, education, monitoring, and fair enforcement working together	Institutions should adopt a comprehensive academic integrity framework rather than isolated measures

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Academic Integrity Has Entered a New Risk Environment

The findings indicate that academic integrity in higher education has entered a qualitatively new risk environment. GAI does not merely make cheating easier; it reshapes the nature of academic work and obscures the boundaries between support, collaboration, and substitution. This means institutions can no longer depend solely on traditional plagiarism frameworks. Academic integrity now requires a broader understanding of authorship, authenticity, and fair use.

This interpretation is supported by Mansoor (2026), who shows that legal and doctrinal understandings of originality and liability are under pressure in the GAI era. It is also consistent with Gallent Torres et al. (2023), who identify GAI as a major ethical turning point for higher education.

5.2 Misconduct Is a Systemic Rather Than Isolated Issue

A second key interpretation is that GAI-related misconduct should not be treated as simply a matter of dishonest individual students. The literature shows that misconduct is shaped by system-level conditions, including policy ambiguity, weak assessment design, absence of ethical orientation, and institutional inconsistency. This means academic integrity failures are partly organizational failures.

Nagpal (2024) and Dabis and Csáki (2024) both support this interpretation by showing that institutions have often been underprepared and uneven in their procedural responses. Therefore, protecting integrity requires institutional maturity, not only student compliance.

5.3 Implications for Higher Education Practice

The findings imply that higher education institutions need more precise and practical policies. Policies should explain what counts as acceptable assistance, what must be disclosed, how different assessment types are treated, and how violations will be investigated. General statements such as “use AI responsibly” are insufficient because they leave too much room for interpretation.

5.4 Need for Discipline-Sensitive Regulation

Another implication is that policies should be sensitive to disciplinary differences. The appropriate use of GAI in programming, design, nursing, education, or legal analysis may vary. Fang et al. (2025) show that publishing policies on AI-generated content can help shape educational policy in discipline-specific ways. A one-size-fits-all approach may therefore be too rigid or too vague.

5.5 Pedagogical Implications

The strongest pedagogical implication is that assessment design must evolve. If institutions continue relying heavily on generic essay prompts, remote unsupervised responses, and tasks that can be completed through simple text generation, misconduct risks will remain high. Lehane et al. (2024) make a strong case for authentic assessment design, and the current review reinforces that argument.

5.6 Learning Should Include Ethical AI Use

The discussion also suggests that integrity education must include instruction on ethical AI use. Students should be taught not only what is forbidden but also how to use GAI as a support tool without undermining learning. Ethical literacy may reduce misconduct by replacing uncertainty with informed judgment.

5.7 Investigations Must Be Fair and Evidence-Based

Nowak (2026) shows that investigating academic misconduct is procedurally sensitive, and this is even more true in cases involving GAI. Institutions should avoid weak or speculative accusations based on unreliable detection tools alone. Due process, staff training, and evidence-based procedures are essential.

5.8 Detection Alone Is Not a Solution

A further implication is that detection technology is not enough. GAI detection systems may produce false positives or fail to recognize nuanced use. Therefore, institutions should avoid overdependence on technical surveillance and instead build layered systems combining disclosure, design, dialogue, and fair enforcement.

5.9 Proposed Response Framework in Practice

- **Step 1: Establish Clear Use Categories:** Institutions should categorize GAI use into permitted, restricted, and prohibited forms. This should be communicated in course outlines, policy documents, and orientation materials.
- **Step 2: Redesign Vulnerable Assessments:** High-risk assessments should be reviewed and redesigned using authentic and process-based methods. Draft submissions, viva-style questioning, annotation of writing process, and reflective explanation of AI use can all strengthen assessment validity.
- **Step 3: Build a Culture of Ethical Disclosure:** Students and staff should be encouraged to disclose AI use honestly. Disclosure should be normalized where appropriate rather than treated only as evidence of wrongdoing.
- **Step 4: Strengthen Staff Readiness:** Faculty need concrete examples, marking guidance, and procedural support. Without staff confidence, even strong policies may fail in practice.
- **Step 5: Monitor and Review Continuously:** Institutions should review policy implementation, track common misuse patterns, and revise guidance as new tools and practices emerge.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Restatement of Purpose

This article examined academic integrity and misconduct risks associated with GAI in higher education through a narrative review of recent scholarship. The aim was to identify the major forms of misconduct, the factors shaping misuse, the state of institutional policy responses, and the most effective strategies for prevention and control.

6.2 Summary of Main Findings

The review found that GAI has expanded academic misconduct beyond conventional plagiarism to include concealed authorship, fabricated scholarship, unauthorized assistance, and assessment

manipulation. It also found that misconduct risk is influenced by student attitudes, personality traits, demographics, policy ambiguity, and weak assessment design. Institutional responses remain uneven, but the literature strongly supports integrated solutions involving policy clarity, authentic assessment, ethical literacy, due process, and continuous monitoring.

6.3 Academic Integrity Must Be Reframed for the GAI Era

Higher education can no longer defend academic integrity through old assumptions alone. GAI has changed what students can produce, how they produce it, and how difficult it is to determine genuine authorship. As a result, academic integrity must be reframed not merely as the prevention of plagiarism but as the protection of authentic learning, fair evaluation, responsible use, and honest scholarship.

GAI is likely to remain a permanent part of higher education. The key question is not whether institutions can eliminate its use, but whether they can govern its academic consequences wisely. Institutions that respond with clarity, fairness, pedagogical innovation, and ethical seriousness will be better positioned to preserve integrity in an AI-shaped academic future. Those that fail to adapt risk weakening trust in assessment, scholarship, and the value of higher education itself.

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