Statement on Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

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Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming higher education across the Nordic and Baltic countries. AI systems already influence admissions, assessment, feedback, academic integrity procedures, accessibility tools, research practices and institutional governance. These developments affect students directly and reshape how higher education is experienced, organised and evaluated.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement recognises the potential of AI to improve accessibility, flexibility and learning support. At the same time, AI creates growing concerns related to educational quality, inequity, digital rights and cybersecurity, concentration of power, democratic resilience and the public responsibility of higher education institutions.

The Nordic and Baltic countries have historically built their education systems on trust, equity, strong public institutions and meaningful student participation. These principles must guide the development and governance of AI in higher education.

AI governance must include students as equal decision-makers

Students must participate in all major institutional decisions related to AI implementation.

Governments and higher education institutions increasingly introduce AI tools through procurement processes or pilot projects, where students are informed only after implementation decisions have already been made. This creates a democratic deficit in institutional governance despite students being directly affected by these technologies.

Students must therefore be represented in:

- national and institutional AI strategy development;
- procurement and contracting discussions;
- ethics and data governance bodies;
- quality assurance processes;
- development of assessment and academic integrity policies.

Institutions must publish transparent information regarding:

- AI systems and their specifications which are in use;
- how and what student data is processed;
- AI-related decisions;
- which external technology providers are involved.

AI governance cannot rely solely on technology providers or institutional leadership. Democratic accountability within higher education institutions must remain central.

AI changes learning and assessment

AI tools increasingly affect how students learn, write, search for information and develop academic skills. Traditional assessment models based heavily on the reproduction of information no longer fully reflect contemporary learning environments.

Higher education institutions should therefore redesign assessment methods to prioritise:

- critical analysis;
- application of knowledge;
- oral discussion and reflection;
- source criticism;
- problem-solving;

- collaborative learning;
- ethical use of AI tools.

Assessment policies must remain clear, transparent and understandable for students. Students across the Nordic and Baltic region currently face inconsistent expectations where some courses encourage AI use while others prohibit it entirely without clear reasoning or guidance.

Institutions should develop coherent institution-wide principles on AI use in teaching and assessment while allowing disciplinary flexibility where appropriate.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement also stresses that educational quality cannot be reduced to efficiency gains. AI should support teaching and learning outcomes rather than accelerate standardisation or weaken meaningful interaction between students and teaching staff.

Academic integrity requires trust-based approaches

The rapid spread of AI has intensified debates around cheating and misconduct. Many institutional responses have focused on surveillance technologies and AI detection systems despite growing evidence that such systems are unreliable and discriminatory.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement is critical of:

- invasive online proctoring systems;
- biometric surveillance technologies;
- opaque “AI detection” software;
- automated suspicion-based integrity systems.

While noting that some forms of digital monitoring may give some practical benefits for distance learners in assessments, we emphasise that these measures raise serious concerns that outweigh their potential advantages.

These approaches undermine trust between students and institutions while creating serious risks towards students' safety and legal safeguards. Furthermore, the current legal frameworks in many countries do not take into account the implementation of said measures. Expanding any legislation to ensure widespread digital surveillance in education would go against students' legal safeguards.

Academic integrity policies should instead focus on:

- assessment redesign;
- clear communication;
- ethical AI use guidance;
- support for responsible AI use;
- teaching adaptation.

Students and staff must retain academic freedom to decide when and how to use AI tools in educational contexts.

Equal access must remain a core principle

AI risks deepening educational inequalities between students, institutions and regions.

Students with greater financial resources already benefit from access to premium AI tools and paid digital services that provide measurable academic advantages. Unequal access to technology creates unequal learning conditions and outcomes.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement therefore supports:

- access to necessary AI tools for students without direct student-borne costs;
- increased investment in digital infrastructure across all higher education institutions;

- open and interoperable educational technologies;
- accessibility standards for all AI-supported learning environments.

Special attention must be given to:

- students with disabilities;
- students from rural and remote regions;
- international students;
- students facing socioeconomic hardship.

AI systems used in higher education must comply with universal design and accessibility requirements throughout their development, selection and implementation.

AI literacy is part of democratic resilience

AI literacy is becoming a core civic competence.

Students require the ability to understand critically:

- how AI systems function;
- their limitations and biases;
- data collection practices;
- algorithmic influence on information environments;
- misinformation and synthetic media;
- societal and environmental impacts of AI systems.

Higher education institutions carry the responsibility for preparing students to navigate increasingly AI-driven societies and labour markets.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement also recognises the broader democratic implications of AI. AI systems increasingly shape public discourse, political communication and access to information. Higher education, therefore, plays an important role in strengthening democratic resilience, critical thinking and media literacy.

Nordic and Baltic higher education institutions should integrate AI use and literacy across study courses in all disciplines.

Student data and public responsibility

The expansion of AI in higher education increases dependence on private technology companies that collect and process large amounts of student data.

Students must retain meaningful control over their personal data and receive clear information regarding:

- data collection;
- storage and retention;
- third-party access;
- algorithmic decision-making processes;
- automated profiling.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement stresses that higher education institutions have a public responsibility to ensure that the use of AI serves students, education, and society, rather than being driven primarily by market interests.

Educational institutions should avoid technological dependency on a small number of commercial actors. Procurement decisions must prioritise:

- transparency;
- privacy protection;

- interoperability;
- democratic accountability;
- long-term institutional autonomy.

Student data must never become a commercial asset.

Well-being and sustainable digitalisation

Digitalisation increasingly affects student and staff well-being.

Constant connectivity, increased screen exposure and pressure for continuous productivity can negatively influence concentration, stress levels and mental health. AI implementation strategies should therefore consider their long-term impact on learning conditions and community life within higher education.

Institutions should ensure:

- balanced digital learning environments;
- opportunities for meaningful in-person interaction;
- accessible mental health support;
- sustainable workloads for both students and staff.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement supports approaches to digitalisation that strengthen community, inclusion and educational quality.

Nordic-Baltic cooperation

The Nordic and Baltic region has the opportunity to become an international example of democratic, student-centred and rights-based AI governance in higher education.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement calls for strengthened regional cooperation on:

- ethical use of AI standards;
- digital accessibility;
- interoperability and student mobility;
- public digital infrastructure;
- AI literacy and democratic resilience;
- student participation in AI governance;
- establishing national and regional strategies for AI use in higher education.

Regional cooperation should support an open and inclusive European Higher Education Area where technological transformation strengthens equality, trust and educational quality.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence will continue shaping the future of higher education across the Nordic and Baltic countries. Decisions made during the coming years will determine whether AI strengthens accessibility, digital rights and cybersecurity, equality and educational quality or deepens inequality, risks and commercial dependency.

The Nordic and Baltic student movement supports a human-centric democratic approach to AI that protects student rights, academic freedom, and the public responsibility of higher education.

Students must remain central participants in shaping the future development and governance of AI in higher education.