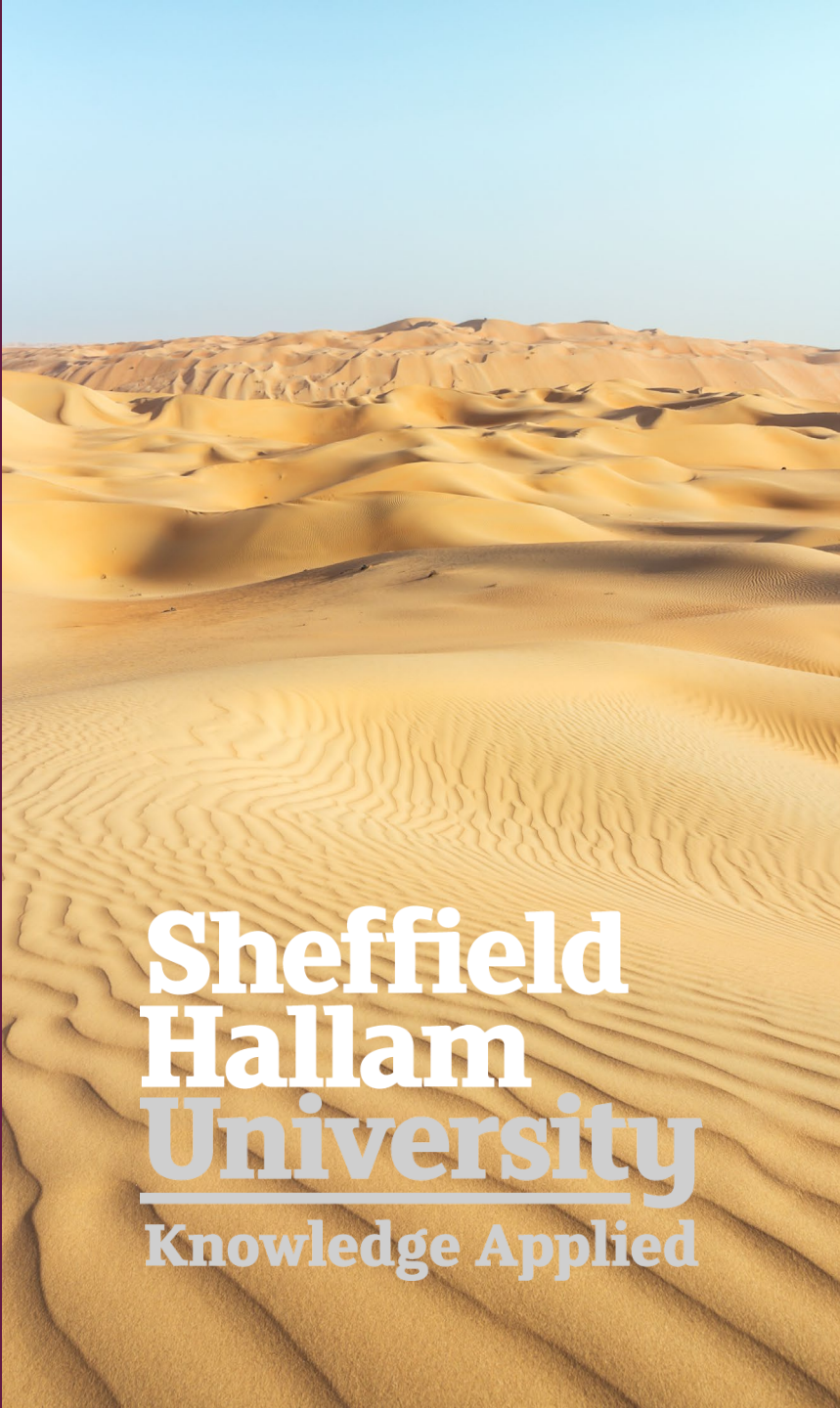


Generative Artificial Intelligence for Learning in a Shifting Educational Landscape

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**Sheffield
Hallam
University**
Knowledge Applied

Why are we talking about GenAI?

Rapid adoption by students

Increasing staff interest and concern

Sector-wide changes in assessment

Growing expectations from employers

Changing digital capability expectations



GenAI is an Ethical Challenge

We must consider

Fairness

Bias

Inclusion

Accessibility

Transparency

Accountability

Environmental impact

Human agency



Moral Decisions in Everyday Practice



Decisions staff make every day

- ? When should GenAI be used?
- ? When should it not be used?
- ? How much transparency is enough?
- ? What level of human oversight is needed?
- ? How do we support critical GenAI literacy?

Themes from SHU AI Change Forums

Common positives

- Opportunities
- Efficiency
- Creativity
- Personalisation
- Accessibility
- Innovation

Common concerns

- Integrity
- Assessment validity
- Staff confidence and workload
- Data security
- Equity, digital poverty
- Ethics and sustainability
- Reduced critical thinking

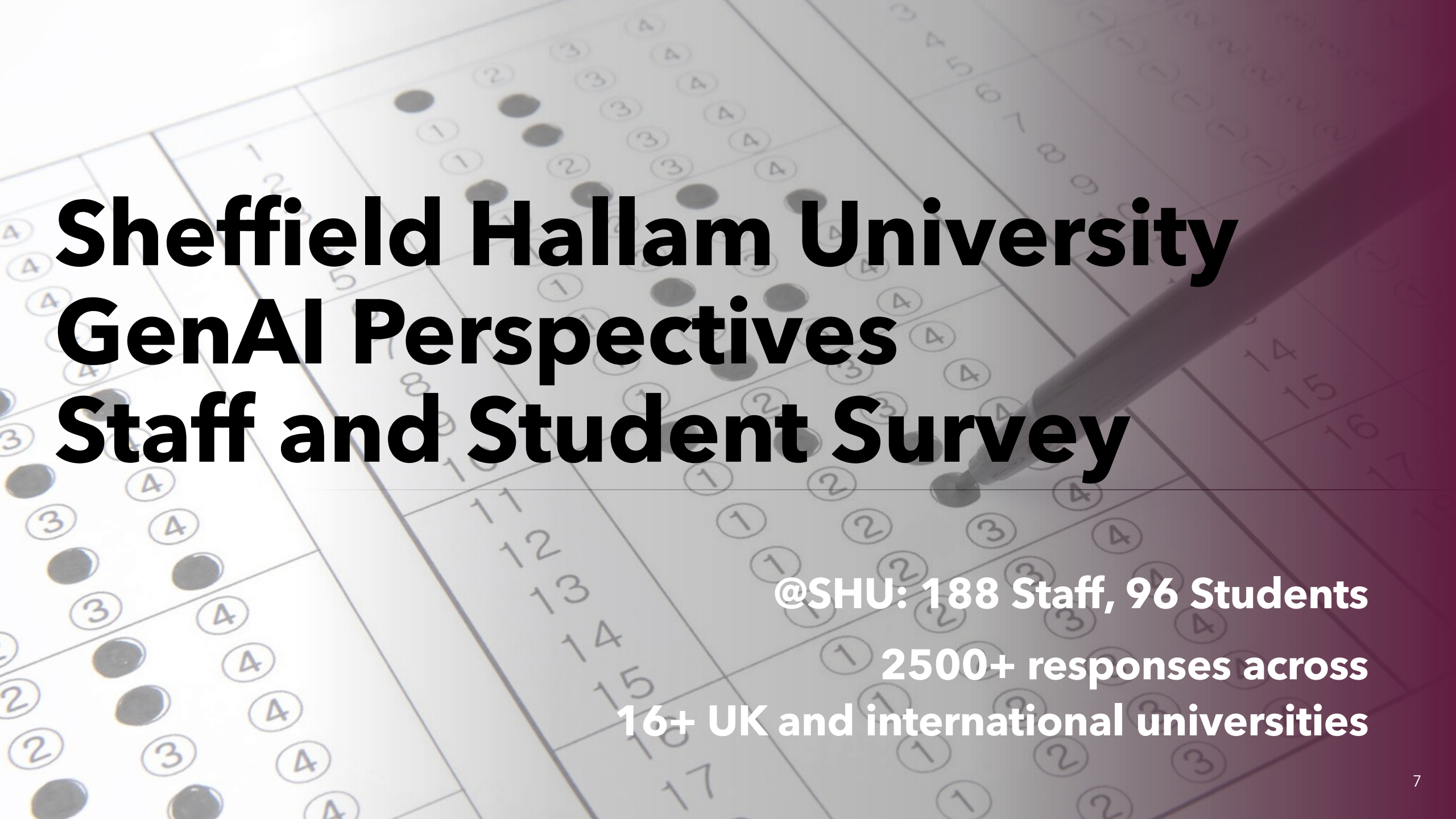
The Reality Check

GenAI can...

- Generate ideas
- Explain concepts
- Support drafting
- Provide feedback
- Personalise learning

GenAI cannot...

- Guarantee accuracy
- Replace expertise
- Understand context fully
- Make ethical judgements
- Replace human relationships



Sheffield Hallam University GenAI Perspectives Staff and Student Survey

@SHU: 188 Staff, 96 Students

**2500+ responses across
16+ UK and international universities**

How GenAI is being used by SHU Students and Staff



1. Administrative and organisational support
2. Search and information retrieval
3. Educational support and assessment-related exploration
4. Personal advice and wellbeing
5. Creative uses
6. Non-use and resistance

Using GenAI for feedback



SHU staff and students see GenAI and human feedback as serving different purposes rather than being direct substitutes.

GenAI feedback is perceived as immediate, detailed, non-judgemental, accessible, and easy to engage with repeatedly.

Human feedback is perceived as more trustworthy, contextualised, nuanced, and meaningful – but perhaps more burdensome for those being asked.

How should universities allow students to use GenAI for assessments?



Highly polarised but nuanced responses from SHU staff and students. A very small number of respondents hold absolute positions, while most fall into one of three groups:

1. **Conditional supporters** who believe GenAI should be allowed within clear parameters.
2. **Conditional opponents** who believe GenAI threatens learning, critical thinking, and academic integrity, but appreciate some uses in specific circumstances.
3. **Pragmatists** who argue that whether universities approve or not, students will use it, therefore assessment, policy, and practice must adapt.

How should universities allow students to use GenAI for assessments?

Key Themes

1. Conditional Acceptance and Guided Use (Dominant Theme)
2. Employability and Future-Work Arguments
3. Threats to Critical Thinking and Learning (Dominant Opposition Theme)
4. Assessment Integrity and Authenticity
5. Assessment Redesign Rather than AI Policing
6. Inevitability and Pragmatism
7. Environmental and Ethical Concerns
8. Accessibility and Inclusion
9. Context Matters

What are the ways GenAI has **positively** impacted your university experience? Please share any specific instances or examples.

1. Productivity and efficiency

"Helped me complete tasks faster." (staff)

2. Overcoming the "blank page" and idea generation

"It unblocks my thinking." (staff)

"when I do my assignments I ask what this question fully means when I feel lost about it" (student)

3. Support

"It also makes life easier for me as a dyslexic person." (staff)

"It helps me clarify my thoughts when I'm tired" (student)

4. Teaching enhancement

"Creative activities for use in the classroom." (staff)

5. Learning, problem solving, and skills development

"Allowed me to learn new topics/processes." (staff)

"Developed a skill, also helps when I have mental blocks on how to write something" (student)

6. Emotional and reflective support

"Helped me understand difficult emotions/stress." (student)

"gives opinions and advice" (student)

7. Several negative responses

"NONE!" (staff)

"I do not believe that AI has enhanced my university experience, as I have not and will not be using it." (student)

What are the ways GenAI has **negatively** impacted your university experience? Please share any specific instances or examples.

1. Academic integrity and student misuse

"Lots of cheating in assignments." (staff)

"I fear I may overuse it when I realise it is available" (student)

"teachers have used AI responses for feedback on assignments which have been inconsistent with the grade received" (student)

2. Increased workload for staff

"I spend hours investigating academic misconduct." (staff)

3. Concerns about student learning and critical thinking

"It's creating laziness not intelligence." (staff)

"I think it is really affecting the intelligence of my students and fellow students in some instances" (PhD student)

4. Lack of institutional guidance

"The university has been taken by surprise." (staff)

"Anxiety around what I can and can't use. It would really help me as I struggle with dyslexia, autism and PTSD" (student)

"[a policy should be] created to stop people from being lazy and creating misinformation"

5. Ethical and Equity concerns

"Unreliable, hurts the environment, placing money into GenAI when it could be placed in people." (staff)

"It gives others an unfair advantage." (student)

Examples of practice at SHU



- AI transparency scale (Purvis, 2025a)
- Staff development activities - GenAI Day
- Student guidance and staff guidance (SHU, 2026)
- Assessment redesign focus
- Learning and teaching strategic conversations (Purvis, 2025b)

References

- Purvis, Alison (2025a). Artificial Intelligence Transparency Scale (AITS). National Teaching Repository. Educational resource.
<https://doi.org/10.25416/NTR.28806449.v1>
- Purvis, Alison (2025b). Beyond Blended Strategic Lens for Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning. National Teaching Repository. Educational resource. <https://doi.org/10.25416/NTR.29400137.v1>
- Sheffield Hallam University (2026). Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning <https://lta.shu.ac.uk/high-quality-teaching/digital/ai-in-teaching-and-learning>