

# ASCILITE 2024

## Navigating the Terrain:

*Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies*

### AI in higher education: Guidelines on assessment design from Australian universities

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This study explored publicly available guidelines from Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) universities as a convenience sample regarding assessment design in response to generative AI (GenAI) tools. The findings indicate common concern about the challenges GenAI tools pose to traditional assessments, with current AI detection tools deemed insufficient. However, GenAI offers opportunities to reassess and redesign assessments to enhance academic integrity and learning. The guidelines commonly focused around two main strategies: exploiting GenAI limitations to make assessments harder for AI to complete and increasing relevance to students to increase their engagement and reduce reliance on GenAI. Common recommendations included testing assessments' vulnerability to GenAI, emphasising critical thinking, incorporating contextual elements, designing authentic assessments, using alternative assessment formats, focusing on process-oriented and staged assessments, and using collaborative or in-class assessments. Potential challenges of redesigning assessments and limitations of recommended approaches in making assessments AI-proof were also acknowledged. However, ways of addressing these challenges particularly in specific educational contexts remained largely unaddressed and the specificity of the guidelines varied across institutions. The findings underscore the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of assessment practices to uphold academic integrity in the face of evolving GenAI technologies.

*Keywords:* Higher education, GenAI, Assessment design, Australian Universities

#### 1. Background

The release of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT has led to serious concerns regarding the academic integrity of assessments in higher education worldwide. These generative AI (GenAI) tools have the capability to produce various types of content, including text and code in a matter of seconds. The content generated by these tools is often indistinguishable from that created by humans, making it challenging for educators to identify instances of AI usage in student submissions (Lodge, et al. 2023).

Additionally, the ease of access to GenAI tools and their ubiquity, raises issues beyond plagiarism. There are worries that reliance on GenAI tools could hinder the development of critical thinking skills among students (Wu, 2024). Critical thinking is an essential component of higher education, contributing to the formation of well-rounded, analytical, and independent graduates. If students become overly dependent on AI-generated solutions, they may not engage deeply with the learning material or develop the necessary skills to analyse, evaluate, and create knowledge independently. This dependency could lead to sub-optimal graduate attributes, undermining the educational goals of fostering intellectual growth and preparing students for the complexities of the professional world. Such concerns necessitate a careful and considered approach to integrating GenAI tools in educational settings to ensure they “extend or augment human intellectual abilities and social skills, and not undermine them, conflict with them or usurp them” (Holmes, & Miao, 2023, P. 38).

Implications of GenAI for education is currently an area of focus in higher education with many institutions engaged in ongoing brainstorming and investigating potential and actual challenges and benefits of the application of GenAI tools in education. Although the landscape is rapidly changing, most higher education

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institutions have responded to the situation by developing guidelines or policies around approaches to use GenAI tools in learning and teaching.

A few recent articles have provided strategies and frameworks regarding assessment (re)design in response to GenAI. For example, Kadel, et al. (2024) provided an assessment classification (i.e. Learning-based and Action-based assessments) and proposed a five-step assessment design process and evaluation strategies to ensure students achieve learning outcomes while maintaining academic integrity in the era of GenAI. Their proposed steps included determining the assessment type, determining the use of GenAI, applying authentic assessment design, validating assessments against GenAI tools, and communicating expectations. Possible strategies recommended by Kadel, et al. (2024) for applying authentic assessment design included designing assessments promoting critical thinking and real-world application of learning, using interactive and competency-based assessments, utilising process-focused group assessments, assessments requiring students to evaluate peer or published work, including diverse, multi-modal assessments, and context-specific, problem-based tasks, as well as in-class individual or team assessments.

Similarly, Hsiao, et al. (2023) developed a framework prototype for redesigning written assessments considering the benefits and challenges presented by Large Language Models (LLMs) as a form of GenAI tools. Hsiao, et al.'s (2023) framework included six key dimensions of purpose, function, focus, grading criteria, modes, and authenticity. This framework emphasises on aligning assessment design with course learning goals considering when and how to integrate AI tools like LLMs, and ensuring assessments promote critical thinking rather than merely mechanical skills. It encourages to design assessments that balance both process and product, use formative and summative assessments strategically, and create authentic, relevant tasks to engage students and reduce academic misconduct. Additionally, it highlights the need for training educators and students on the responsible use of GenAI tool to maintain academic integrity.

In a recent study, Moorhouse, et al. (2023), reviewed guidelines developed by the world's 50 top-ranking higher education institutions (THE, 2023) to address the use of GenAI. They focused on the content and advice provided to instructors regarding using GenAI tools in assessment design. They found that just under half of the institutions had publicly accessible guidelines at the time. Where guidelines existed, they primarily addressed three areas of academic integrity, recommendations for assessment design, and communication with students. Their findings showed that the primary advice around assessment design consisted of designing assessments that require creativity and critical thinking, incorporating contextual elements and linking course content to students' real-life experiences, implementing authentic assessments replicating real-world situations, focusing on the process and staged assessment and using alternative non-text-based assessments. Their findings showed that regarding guidelines around effective assessment design, two main suggestions were put forward for the instructors which were testing assessment tasks with a GenAI tool to evaluate its effectiveness in completing the assessments and incorporating GenAI use as part of the assessment process for the students. Overall, Moorhouse, et al.'s (2023), review indicated that higher education institutions are beginning to accept incorporating GenAI into education and have drafted guidelines to assist instructors in its application.

In an attempt to extend research in this area, this paper intends to review the current publicly available guidelines developed by Australian Group of Eight (Go8) universities as a convenience sample on assessment design in response to GenAI. Go8 comprises eight of the largest and oldest higher education institutions in Australia renowned for their high educational standards and rigorous research practices nationally and internationally. The Go8 universities are highly influential in the development and delivery of higher education and research policy and standards in the Australian higher education system (Go8, n.d.).

Although this study provides a context-specific analysis of the Go8 universities, it can offer valuable insights and provide educational practitioners including academics, learning designers, and other learning and teaching professionals interested in assessment design with an overview of current advice and guidelines on

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assessment design in response to GenAI technologies and contribute to the broader discussions around assessment design in the digital age.

In the context of this study, flexible recommendations suggesting best practices and providing direction without enforcing strict compliance were considered as guidelines. On the other hand, enforceable rules establishing mandatory standards within an organisation were considered policies. This study only focused on guidelines offering advice and adaptability, rather than policies enforcing specific actions, and requiring adherence from the teaching staff.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology in this paper was adapted from Moorhouse, et al. (2023) to review the guidelines developed by Australian Go8 universities. The research question guiding this study was:

- What is the primary advice provided in the publicly available guidelines of Australian Group of Eight universities on assessment design in response to the emergence of GenAI tools?

### 2.1 Data collection

To locate the GenAI guideline in each university's website, following Moorhouse, et al. (2023), official website of the Australian Go8 universities (i.e., (in alphabetical order) The University of Adelaide, the Australian National University, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, the University of New South Wales, the University of Queensland, the University of Sydney and the University of Western Australia) were manually searched. The initial keywords used for the search included 'AI policy', 'Generative AI policy', 'ChatGPT policy', 'AI guidelines', 'Generative AI guidelines', 'GenAI guidelines', 'ChatGPT guidelines', 'AI guide', 'Generative AI guide', 'ChatGPT guide', and 'AI and Assessments'. Additionally, some related terms, such as 'academic integrity', 'academic dis/honesty' and 'plagiarism', were searched to ensure thorough coverage. In addition to the manual search using the above-mentioned keywords, relevant sections of each university's official website which could potentially include AI guidelines (e.g., central learning and teaching units) were investigated. Also, a general Google search including the name of each university followed by 'AI guideline' was conducted. As a result, 35 webpages were found to have content directly related to GenAI in teaching and learning on the official websites of the universities in question. The content of websites was extracted for analysis. The search and extraction were conducted on 21st June 2024.

### 2.2. Applying inclusion criteria

To ensure the identified webpages were relevant to the aims of this review, the following inclusion criteria was applied:

- Only publicly available documents or webpages were included due to access restrictions.
- Only the guidelines addressing the instructors or teaching staff were included (excluding guidelines for researchers and students).
- Only content which could be described as guidelines (excluding blogs, notes, memos and news) was included.
- Only guidelines issued at the whole university level (excluding faculty, school, and department level) were included.

After applying the inclusion criteria, four universities out of eight were excluded (University of Adelaide, University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, and University of Western Australia) as no public facing guidelines meeting the inclusion criteria were found on their official websites. The remaining four universities

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(i.e., The University of Melbourne (UoM), Monash University (MU), Australian National University (ANU) and the university of Queensland (UQ)) were included in the review. Table 1 lists the pages included in the review.

Table 1

*List of universities and websites included in the review*

University	Website
Australian National University	<a href="https://learningandteaching.anu.edu.au/resources/a-quick-start-guide/">https://learningandteaching.anu.edu.au/resources/a-quick-start-guide/</a>
Monash University	<a href="https://www.monash.edu/learning-teaching/TeachHQ/Teaching-practices/artificial-intelligence/ai-and-assessment">https://www.monash.edu/learning-teaching/TeachHQ/Teaching-practices/artificial-intelligence/ai-and-assessment</a>
The University of Melbourne	<a href="https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/ai-aai/home/ai-assessment">https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/ai-aai/home/ai-assessment</a>
University of Queensland	<a href="https://itali.uq.edu.au/teaching-guidance/teaching-learning-and-assessment-generative-ai?p=4#4">https://itali.uq.edu.au/teaching-guidance/teaching-learning-and-assessment-generative-ai?p=4#4</a>

Please note that the pages are active, and their content may have changed since they were accessed for this study on 21st June 2024). The webpages included in the review at times referred to resources or guidelines of other Australian Universities. However, analysing the content of the guides or resources referred to was beyond the scope of this study.

### 2.3. Data analysis

Both deductive and inductive data analysis approaches were used in this study. To begin with, the content of the websites included in the review, were read to identify information specifically relevant to assessment design. Then the identified content was deductively coded according to the coding framework developed by Moorhouse, et al. (2023). The content presented on the websites regarding assessment design was also inductively analysed to identify possible additional categories. Initially, the data was coded by the researcher and a peer from another Australian university independently. The codes identified by both coders were then discussed until consensus was achieved and minor areas of discrepancy were resolved.

The themes identified in the Moorhouse, et al.'s framework regarding assessment design proved to be largely relevant to the data included in this review. However, their coding framework was adapted as a result of the inductive review of the data.

### 3. Results

Unsurprisingly, the findings revealed a consistent concern about GenAI tools posing serious challenges to the integrity of traditional assessments. Guidelines of three Universities (MU, UoM and UQ) specified the primary challenge as the reduced ability to accurately evaluate students' competence and capabilities. For example, the UoM guidelines pointed out that *'it is increasingly difficult to determine whether an artefact was created by the student or by AI'*. Similarly, the UQ guidelines stated: *'As technology changes, we need to be mindful that the [student] work we sample [in assessments] continues to be representative of the [student] abilities we are interested in [assessing], and not a reflection of their ability to use Generative AI'*. The ANU guide, however, identified misuse of AI only as a partial challenge to the integrity of traditional assessments by acknowledging: *'The misuse of AI is a challenge to traditional assessments, but it is only one component of academic integrity and dishonesty.'*

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Guidelines of all four universities acknowledged that current AI-detection tools are not sufficiently reliable to identify breaches of academic integrity. The guidelines of UoM, MU and UQ also made a speculation that AI detection tools may never reach the point to reliably identify AI-generated text due to the fast pace of AI advancements. UQ guidelines advised instructors to use AI detection tools cautiously and discouraged instructors from solely relying on the GenAI indicator scores to identify academic misconduct. The UQ guidelines instead suggested that the instructors consider other signs of academic dishonesty in the assessment piece if it was flagged to have a high GenAI indicator score and take a supportive approach to enable students to use AI responsibly.

While MU and the UoM provided more detailed guidelines which were at times complemented by context-specific examples or case studies, the UQ guide provided broader information and insights around the current assessment landscape. The ANU guide was largely a curation of resources developed by other Australian higher education institutions.

All four universities highlighted the necessity of understanding the limitations and potential biases of GenAI tools. Additionally, the guidelines uniformly stressed clearly communicating the expectations to the students and the importance of the need for students to properly attribute any use of GenAI tools in their work to ensure that their assessments accurately reflect their individual capabilities.

### 3.1 Testing assessments using GenAI tools

Advice and recommendations provided in the UoM and MU guides on redesigning assessments, were mainly around two broad strategies. The first was taking advantage of the limitation of AI tools to make completing assessment tasks more difficult using GenAI tools, and the second was using approaches which make assessments more relevant to the students thereby increasing their engagement and lowering the chances of completing assessment tasks with GenAI tools.

The UQ guidelines suggested that exploring AI tools and experimenting with them is an important step in understanding how to support students use GenAI tools ethically and effectively. Similarly, MU guidelines, suggested exploring the capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT as a way of understanding how easily an assessment task can be completed using AI tools with the caveat that using platforms such as ChatGPT can further contribute to training of these tools. Both MU and the UQ resources outlined step-by-step instructions for testing assessment design using GenAI tools and adjusting according to the outputs. The UoM and ANU guides did not explicitly touch on testing assessments using GenAI tools.

### 3.2 Redesigning assessments

Despite acknowledging the challenges GenAI tools pose to assessments, all four universities identified the emergence of GenAI tools as a valuable opportunity for evaluating the suitability of the existing assessments and rethinking and redesigning them to make their integrity less vulnerable to GenAI tools. For example, MU guidelines outlined: *'The proliferation of AI in education provides valuable opportunities to consider why we are assessing our students, what is being evaluated, and how evidence of learning is being gathered.'* Similarly, the UQ guidelines highlighted the importance of ongoing evaluation of teaching and assessment designs by stating the University's position in this regard as follows: *'The ongoing advances in Generative AI technologies present both opportunities and challenges for teaching and assessment. Its availability requires ongoing appraisal of our teaching and assessment design, evaluation, and governance'*. Nevertheless, the guidelines provided by MU, UoM and UQ clearly argued against reverting to more traditional high stakes invigilated examination due to its pedagogical drawbacks and adverse impact on student wellbeing. Instead, they emphasised rethinking and redesigning assessments to make them more robust. The recommendations were not provided as a one size fit all approach though. For example, the UoM guide specified: *'How suitable a particular strategy is will depend on your teaching context, including the nature of your subject, year level of students and class size, among other*

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*considerations.* Similarly, MU guidelines point out that chief examiners are in charge of determining acceptable and unacceptable use of AI in their units.

The UQ guide provided some broad parameters and referred to the framework developed by Miller (2022) to assist academics determine appropriate use of AI by responding to the following three questions:

- Which uses would be considered cheating?
- Which uses are relevant to the students' future?
- Which uses would the academics use in their work as a professional?

The ANU guidelines admitted that '*At ANU, generative AI tools are permitted, and ethical use is encouraged*'. However, boundaries of use and who makes decision around what constitutes ethical use of AI were not explicitly mentioned.

The UQ guide did not make explicit practical suggestions around assessment redesign. Rather, it referred to the TEQSA resource entitled *Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence* (Jason, et. al., 2023) as a recommended resource. However, analysing this document is beyond the scope of this paper.

The common recommendations presented in the reviewed guidelines in terms of assessment redesign are presented as follows.

### 3.2.1 Emphasis on critical thinking

Incorporating assessments tasks which emphasise on critical thinking was commonly put forward as a practical suggestion for redesigning assessments in the UoM and MU guidelines. The UoM guidelines suggested incorporating tasks which require students to review or evaluate a piece of work against a set criterion as these tasks promote higher order skills, such as application of knowledge, evaluation and critical thinking.

MU guidelines also suggested using assessment tasks requiring skills such as critical thinking, evaluation or creativity which are more difficult for GenAI tools to produce.

Guidelines of UoM and MU commonly acknowledged that this approach may not be entirely foolproof. However, this approach was suggested as it is more difficult for students to complete such tasks using GenAI tools. UoM guide mentioned: '*While not impossible for students to outsource, these tasks make it more difficult for students to complete using generative AI.*'

### 3.2.2 Incorporating contextual elements and authentic assessments

Incorporating contextual elements into assessments and designing authentic assessment tasks were suggested as an effective strategy to minimise the relevance of AI tools and enhance the learning experience in the MU and UoM guidelines. MU recommended designing assessment tasks that are embedded, continuous, and highly contextualised, focusing on personal experiences of the students to make assessments less prone to the use of AI tool in assessments. By modifying questions to apply to each student's unique context, such as discussing the relevance of a topic to their local situation, educators can create assignments that are challenging for AI to complete without significantly redesigning the assessment. Authentic assessments were also mentioned as a recommended option for engaging students in meaningful ways to apply their knowledge and skills and reduce the likelihood of relying on AI tools to complete assessments.

Similarly, the UoM guidelines recommended incorporating more authentic, context-specific, or personal assessments. This approach was considered to increase students' engagement and motivation to complete the assessment on their own as it makes assessments more relevant to the students by mirroring the real-world tasks they would need to accomplish. It was acknowledged that while not entirely immune to cheating, such highly contextualised assessments make it more difficult for students to rely on AI for completion.

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MU guidelines also suggested future-focused or sustainable assessments (i.e., evaluating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for lifelong learning and developing students' abilities to make evaluative judgments about quality work) as an alternative.

### 3.2.3 Alternative assessment formats

MU guidelines suggested using assessments in non-text formats or those which are more difficult for AI tools to produce. The alternative format examples the guidelines provided included presentations, videos or multimedia resources (using the format as an alternative way of presenting ideas rather than just reproducing text in a different format), personal reflections tied to unit concepts, and face-to-face interviews. Although, it was acknowledged that some students might find face-to-face interviews more intimidating than other formats, this was compared to the anxiety the students might experience taking exams or writing essays.

Similarly, the UoM guidelines also suggested non-text-based assessments to be less vulnerable alternatives to academic misconduct using GenAI. Utilising diverse forms or multimodal assessments was recommended for both reducing the chances of reliance on AI tools to complete them as well as encouraging the students to be more creative and developing their oral communication skills. Similar to MU guidelines, heightened level of stress associated with live performance assessment formats was acknowledged, although this was compared to real-world tasks the students might need to perform. Scalability of the live performance formats was also raised as a concern, and it was suggested that such tasks might require careful planning including moderation meetings with assessors.

### 3.2.4 Focus on process and staged assessment design

Another approach for redesigning assessment was shifting the emphasis from assessing the final outcome or product to evaluating the process (e.g., the steps and strategies used) through which the students learn. The UoM guide recommended this approaches to evaluate how students think, approach problems, and reflect on their learning as well as enhancing academic integrity by making it more challenging for the students to outsource process-oriented assessments.

The UoM guidelines highlighted staged assessments or assessments which build on each other over a semester, culminating in a comprehensive piece of work reflecting student's learning, as a form of process-oriented assessments. The guidelines stated: *'This strategy [staged assessments] also emphasises process and involves designing assessments that build on each other over a semester so that they lead to a large complex piece of work that demonstrates students' achievement of the subject's intended learning outcomes'*.

MU also made similar suggestions around staged submissions, such as requiring students to submit outlines, research notes, drafts, and final versions. They suggested using iterative processes like student peer review, to encourage continuous improvement and students' deeper engagement with the material. It also suggested programmatic assessment (i.e., series of interconnected assessments evaluating broader attributes, rather than individual skills or knowledge across an educational program) as an alternative.

### 3.2.5 Use of in class and collaborative assessments

UoM guidelines suggested incorporating in-class assessments such as polls, quizzes, concept maps, short written tasks and presentations as a way of making assessment less vulnerable to GenAI tools. Group and collaborative tasks were also recommended as a way of enhancing learning and reducing chances of reliance on GenAI tools to complete assessments. MU guidelines, similarly, suggested group tasks where students are required to reflect on the process of completing the task and what they have learned as a possible solution to decrease use of GenAI tools in assessments.

## 3.3 Challenges of assessment redesign

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The UoM and MU guidelines briefly mentioned possible challenges of assessment redesign. The UoM guidelines stated: *'Redesigning assessments is not without its own challenges, especially in relation to scalability workload, and resourcing'*. MU guidelines also mentioned challenges of some alternative assessment formats, such as multimodal assessments and synchronous interviews in terms of requiring more academic time and resources (e.g., marker training or technical support) as well as drawback in terms of student wellbeing. However, no further information was provided on how these challenges might be addressed neither in the UoM nor in the MU guidelines.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

This study was an attempt to review publicly available advice and guidelines provided by Group of Eight universities as a sample of Australian higher education institutions on assessment design in response to the emergence of GenAI tools. While this study focused on reviewing advice and guidelines provided by Go8 universities, it can provide educational practitioners with an overview of current guidance on assessment design in response to GenAI technologies and add to the broader discussions on assessment practices in the digital age.

Advice and recommendations reviewed in this study in terms of assessment design, focused around two main strategies which are taking advantage of the limitation of GenAI tools in completing assessment tasks and approaches to make assessments more relevant to the students to increase student engagement and lower the chances of reliance on GenAI tools to complete assessments supporting the findings of Moorhouse et al. (2023). Common recommendations in the guidelines regarding assessment design were consistent with the findings of Moorhouse et al. (2023) and included testing assessments' vulnerability to GenAI, emphasising critical thinking, incorporating contextual elements, designing authentic assessments, using alternative assessment formats, focusing on process-oriented and staged assessments, and using collaborative or in-class assessments. These recommendations were also largely in line with the advice provided in the literature regarding (re)designing assessment in the age of AI (Hsiao et al., 2023; Kadel et al., 2024).

However, as acknowledged in the guidelines, recommended changes might not always be sufficient to totally immunise assessments against the use of GenAI tools in completing assessment by the students, and making assessments entirely AI-proof might be impossible due to the ubiquity and fast pace of AI advancements. Therefore, drawing on the limitations of GenAI may be a temporary measure to address the challenges posed by GenAI tools to assessments. It was suggested that an ongoing evaluation of the impact of the GenAI tools on the integrity of assessments and possible ways of integrating AI tools into the assessment process is necessary. The UQ guidelines also emphasised the importance of investigating how students use these tools and their impact on their learning process to determine appropriate and inappropriate uses of GenAI tools in education.

While the guidelines offer foundational recommendations on assessment design in response to GenAI tools to enhance academic integrity, the implementation of the guidelines in specific contexts, such as fully online courses, large-scale courses, and diverse disciplinary contexts requires further exploration. Additionally, the suitability and sustainability of alternative assessment formats need careful consideration. For instance, although using alternative assessment formats such as assessing students' live performance might enhance academic integrity, they can pose challenges to student wellbeing and be quite time and resource intensive to conduct raising concerns around their scalability. Further exploration of these limitations is crucial to assist academics in making informed context-specific decisions about their assessment redesigns.

Despite shared concerns and strategies provided in the guidelines to design more rigorous assessments less vulnerable to GenAI tools, the specificity of guidelines varied across institutions. This study highlights the importance of sustainable, discipline-specific approaches to assessment redesign in response to the challenges posed by GenAI tools. While existing guidelines provide valuable starting points, their implementation in diverse contexts needs further investigation. Institutions must continuously explore and adapt their assessment strategies to maintain academic integrity and support effective learning. Collaborative efforts to share best



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practices and resources will be crucial in navigating the evolving landscape of AI in education. Although making assessments entirely AI-proof may be unrealistic, ongoing dialogue, testing, and adaptation will be key to upholding the integrity of assessments in the age of AI.

This study is limited because of its small sample size and in that it included only publicly available guidelines due to access restrictions. It also did not include advice and guidance provided to the students and researchers which might be reviewed in the future studies. Also, due to the small scale of this research, only guidelines provided by Go8 universities were reviewed as a convenience sample. Future studies might also focus on reviewing the guidelines provided in the broader Australian higher education landscape including assessment design guidelines provided in response to GenAI tools by Australian regional universities which tend to rely more on technology as they cater for larger remote and dispersed cohorts studying online.

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