Session data report

AI in higher education

Civinc sample report · 16 November 2026

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An AI analysis was part of this session. The output may contain inaccuracies. For more information about our use of AI, click the link below

Our AI factsheet

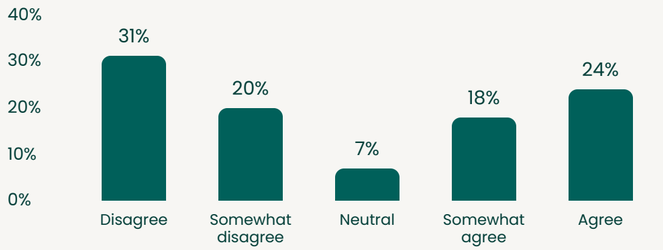
Overview of the session

84 people took part in the session. They discussed **130 thematic statements**, sending **1,126 messages** in **79 conversations**.

A few highlights

Exams should go back to pen and paper, in a hall without screens.

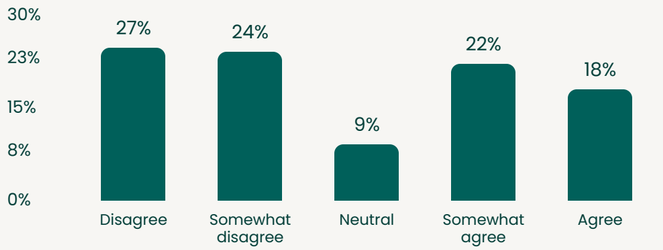
Distribution Spread 1.6



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AI makes students lazy, not smarter.

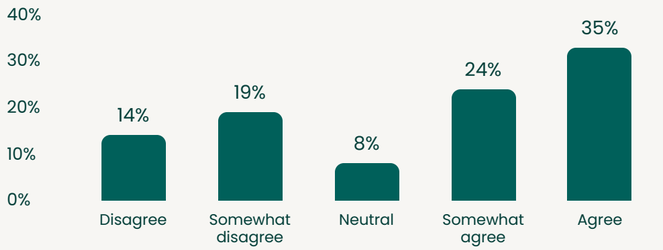
Distribution Spread 1.5



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Anyone who lets AI write their thesis does not deserve a degree.

Distribution Spread 1.5

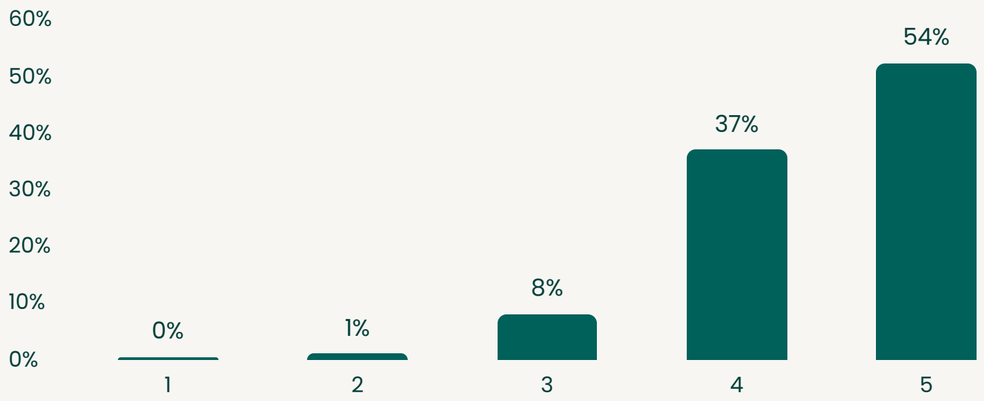


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Answers to survey questions

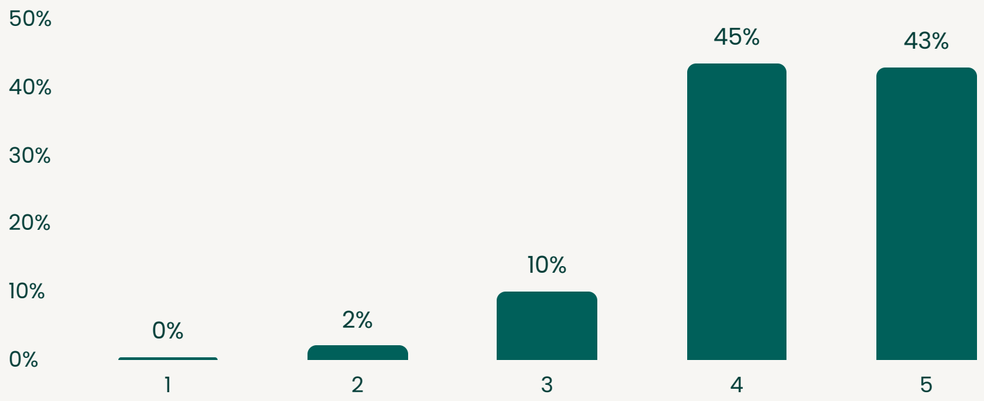
Safety

How safe did you feel sharing your opinion? (1 = not safe, 5 = very safe)



How was it?

Give a score between 1 (negative) and 5 (positive), and tell us more about your experience below.



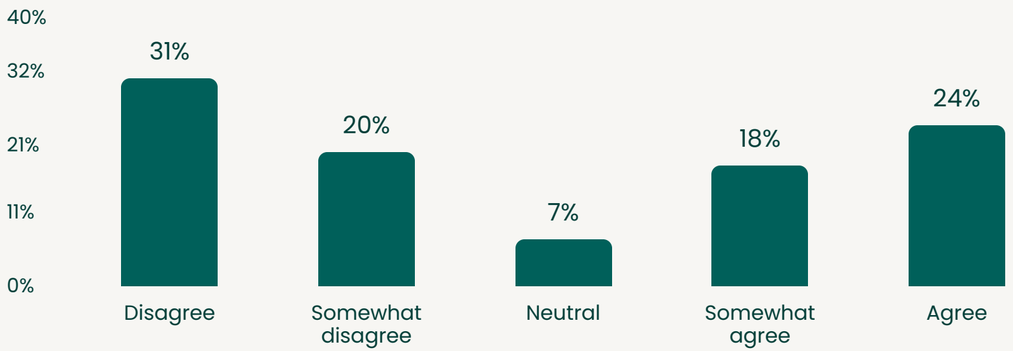
Appendix:

Data results per statement

Exams should go back to pen and paper, in a hall without screens.

Answers (%)

Times discussed: **22**



Summary

This is the statement on which the group is most divided, with hardly any neutral votes. Supporters call the exam hall the only moment when it is still certain what someone knows themselves. Opponents say this tests a situation that no longer exists outside university. In several conversations the discussion shifted from "pen or laptop" to the question of what an exam is actually meant to measure.

Why disagree

Nobody works like this

In no job do you solve a problem without sources, colleagues or tools.

Handwriting as a barrier

Slow writers and students with dyslexia are judged on the pen, not on knowledge.

Cramming wins again

Without tools you mainly test memory, not insight or application.

Why agree

Certainty at last

In the hall you know the answer comes from the student's own head.

A level playing field

Everyone has the same means, whatever AI subscription you can afford.

A calmer mind

Without a screen you study differently: you know you really have to understand it.

Prominent ideas & suggestions

A mix of formats: Combine an exam in the hall with an assignment where AI is explicitly allowed.

Bring back orals: Replace some written tests with short oral conversations.

Open book, open AI: Set questions that require insight even with every tool available.

Locked laptops: Use secured exam laptops instead of going back to paper.

Follow-up questions

What does an exam measure? What you remembered, or what you can do with knowledge when it matters?

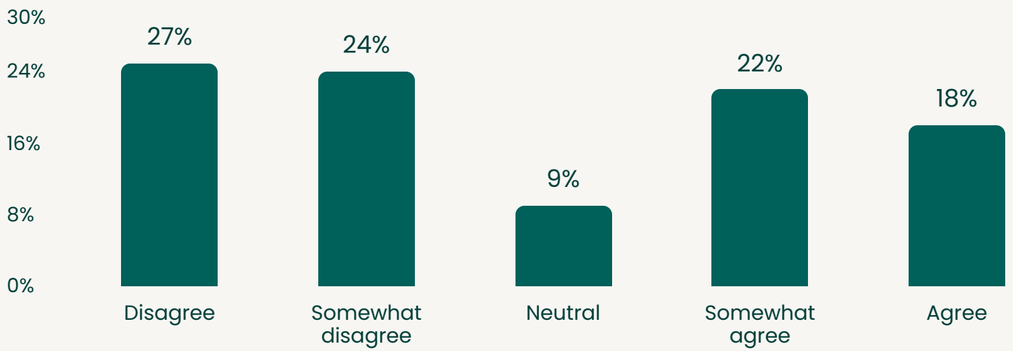
Is control the goal? Do we choose this format because it tests best, or because it is easiest to invigilate?

What do you take with you? Which knowledge do you still want at your fingertips in ten years, without looking it up?

AI makes students lazy, not smarter.

Answers (%)

Times discussed: **24**



Summary

Just over half disagree, but the agree group brought the most personal arguments. Several students described reading texts themselves less often now that a summary is one click away. Opponents say AI actually gets them to the hard questions faster. The conversations often arrived at the same distinction: AI as a shortcut around the work, or AI as a sparring partner during the work.

Why disagree

Faster to the core

With tailored explanations you have time left for the questions that really matter.

They said that about Google

Every new technology was supposed to make us stupid; each time we learned to think differently.

It depends on the task

An assignment AI solves in a minute was not a good learning task to begin with.

Why agree

I read less myself

Summaries replace reading, and with it the moment you truly get something.

Struggling is learning

Getting stuck is exactly what makes knowledge stick; AI takes that away.

You notice too late

Only in the exam do you find you recognised the answer but could not produce it.

Prominent ideas & suggestions

Yourself first, then AI: Make your own attempt before asking AI for feedback or a worked answer.

Learn to prompt well: Run a seminar on AI as a sparring partner instead of an answer machine.

Explain it to someone: Have students explain the material to each other; you cannot outsource that.

Discuss it openly: Ask in the seminar how everyone uses AI, without judgement.

Follow-up questions

Shortcut or sparring partner? When did AI last help you understand something better, and when did you skip the understanding?

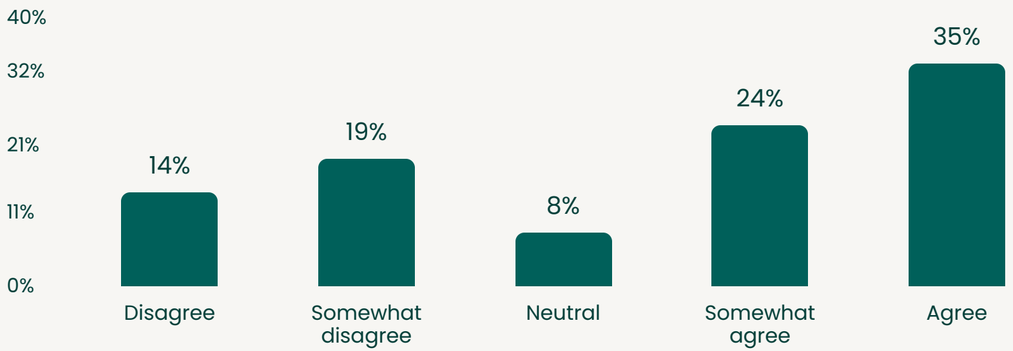
Is effort a goal? Does learning have to be hard to work, or is that a romantic idea?

What happens to the time? If AI saves you hours, where do those hours actually go?

Anyone who lets AI write their thesis does not deserve a degree.

Answers (%)

Times discussed: **27**



Summary

A majority believes a thesis should be your own work, but almost nobody could point to where "letting it write" begins. Supporters see the degree as proof that you can think for yourself. Opponents compare AI to a supervisor, a spellchecker or a fellow student who reads along. Notably, students who disagreed rarely defended full outsourcing; they mainly objected to a ban nobody can enforce.

Why disagree

The line can't be found

Between a spellcheck and a whole chapter lies a sliding scale nobody can police.

The idea is still yours

If you came up with the question, the data and the conclusion, you did the thinking.

Help has always existed

Supervisors, tutoring agencies and parents have co-written for years; we don't call that fraud.

Why agree

A degree is a promise

An employer must be able to trust that you can do this yourself, without the tool.

Writing is thinking

Skip the writing and you skip organising your own thoughts.

Unfair to the rest

Those who toil for months get the same paper as those who prompted for an afternoon.

Prominent ideas & suggestions

Defend your thesis: Have every student explain the work orally; that shows who understands it.

Show the process: Assess drafts and choices as well, not just the final product.

A mandatory AI section: Have students describe what they did and did not use AI for.

One clear rule: Agree per programme what is allowed, instead of something different per lecturer.

Follow-up questions

Where does it begin? With a first outline, with rewriting your paragraphs or only with a full chapter?

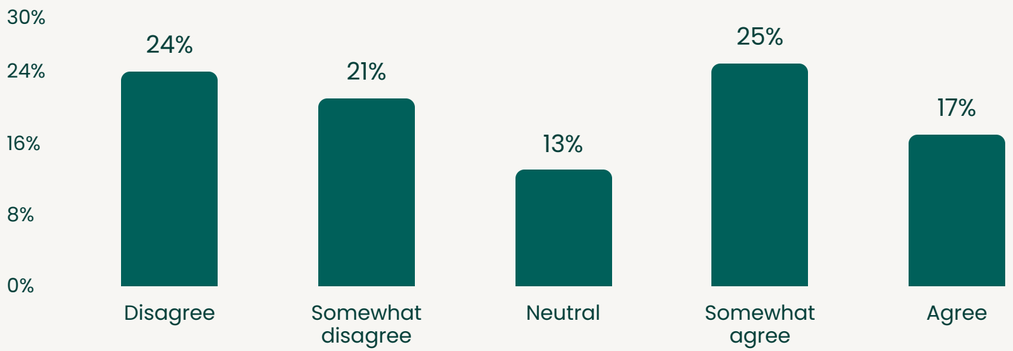
What does a thesis prove? That you can write, that you can do research or that you can think independently?

Who checks this? What is a rule worth if no lecturer can establish that it was broken?

An AI tutor explains things better than the average lecturer.

Answers (%)

Times discussed: **17**



Summary

Opinions vary, depending strongly on what participants mean by "explaining". Supporters value that AI never sighs, always has time and will answer the same question ten different ways. Opponents point out that a lecturer sees where you get stuck before you can put it into words. Widely shared was the idea that the two complement each other: AI for the explanation, the lecturer for the question you did not dare to ask.

Why disagree

A lecturer sees your doubt

A good lecturer notices what you don't get, even when you can't ask the question.

Confident isn't correct

AI explains convincingly, even when the answer is wrong.

Enthusiasm is contagious

You remember a subject because of the lecturer who loved it, not a chat window.

Why agree

Never a stupid question

You dare to ask AI what you keep to yourself in a full lecture hall.

Explained at your level

You get another example for as long as you need, with nobody waiting.

Always available

Even at eleven at night, the evening before the exam.

Prominent ideas & suggestions

Lecturer as coach: Use contact time for discussion and depth, and leave basic explanation to AI.

Anonymous question round: Collect questions beforehand, so quiet students are heard too.

Mark the AI's answers: Have students assess and improve an AI explanation as an assignment.

A programme-specific tutor: Offer an AI tutor that works with the course's own literature.

Follow-up questions

What is a good explanation? Getting the answer, or being able to continue on your own afterwards?

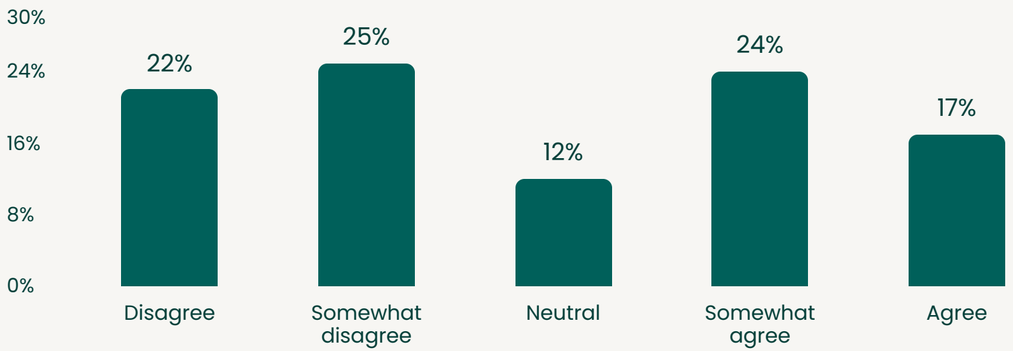
Which question goes unasked? What stops you asking a question in the hall, and does AI solve that?

What is the lecturer for? If explanations are available everywhere, what do you want from a lecturer?

In five years, a university degree will be worth less because of AI.

Answers (%)

Times discussed: **19**



Summary

The group is split into two almost equal halves. Those who agree expect employers to value a certificate less when it no longer shows what someone can do themselves. Those who disagree think critical thinking and judgement will become scarcer and therefore more valuable. Many conversations ended on the question of whether universities are changing fast enough to make that true.

Why disagree

Judgement becomes scarce

When everyone can produce text, judging what is right becomes the real skill.

More than knowledge

A degree also teaches collaboration, perseverance and doubt; AI does not replace that.

Employers want an anchor

In an uncertain job market, a degree remains the first filter.

Why agree

The proof gets weaker

If it is unclear who did the work, a transcript says less.

Knowledge is everywhere

What you learned in four years, a model delivers in four seconds.

Skills over paper

Employers will rather test what you can do than rely on a degree.

Prominent ideas & suggestions

Test what AI can't do: Shift the emphasis to judging, arguing and collaborating.

Practice in the programme: Have students work on real questions from real organisations.

Degree plus portfolio: Add an overview of what someone has demonstrably made.

Talk to employers: Ask the field every year what a graduate needs to be able to do now.

Follow-up questions

What does a degree buy? Knowledge, a network, proof of perseverance or something else?

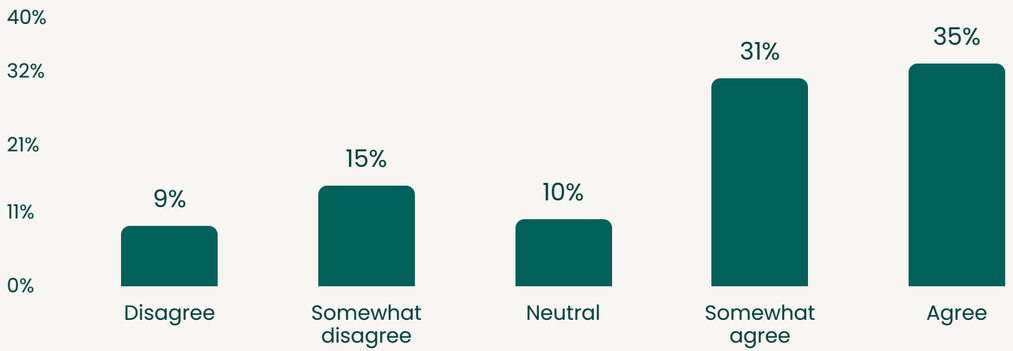
What stays human work? Which skill from your own studies will AI still lack in five years?

Who has to move? Should the student adapt, the programme or the employer?

Lecturers who ban AI are preparing students for a world that no longer exists.

Answers (%)

Times discussed: **21**



Summary

This is the statement with the clearest majority: two thirds agree. Students expect to work with AI from day one in their first job and want to learn that now. The smaller group that disagrees defends the ban not as an end point but as a temporary practice space: first learn the subject, then the tool. A striking number of participants asked not for freedom, but for clarity.

Why disagree

Basics first

You learn arithmetic before you get a calculator; that is not falling behind.

A ban is a lesson too

Sometimes you need to experience what you can do without the tool.

Subjects differ

In some subjects, wording it yourself is precisely the learning goal.

Why agree

The workplace won't wait

Employers expect you to work with AI; without practice you start behind.

Bans don't work anyway

Everyone already uses it, just secretly and without guidance.

Learn it properly here

University is the place to learn to use AI critically, under supervision.

Prominent ideas & suggestions

State it per assignment: Say for each assignment whether AI is banned, allowed or required.

AI skills as a learning goal: Include responsible AI use in the programme's learning outcomes.

Let lecturers practise: Give lecturers time to discover what AI can do in their subject.

Make rules together: Draw up the agreements with students, not just for students.

Follow-up questions

What comes first? Which basics from your studies do you want to master before reaching for AI?

Ban or practice space? Can a temporary ban make sense, and how would you explain it?

Who learns from whom? What do students know about AI that lecturers don't yet, and vice versa?

Thank you!

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Questions, comments, suggestions? Get in touch via **hello@civinc.co** or visit **www.civinc.co** for more information!

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