AI and the Global Student Experience

Opportunities and challenges

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Introduction

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How are students currently using AI technologies?

Emotional

How do students feel about AI's current and future impacts?

Conclusion

What is the AI Paradox?

Introduction by Joe Persechino, Yugo's Chief Operating Officer

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Yugo's Global Insights Program is our annual survey-based student research initiative. It compiles responses from 7,274 students around the globe, each with their own unique circumstances, living situations, study pathways, and demographics – painting a full picture of what it means to be a student today.

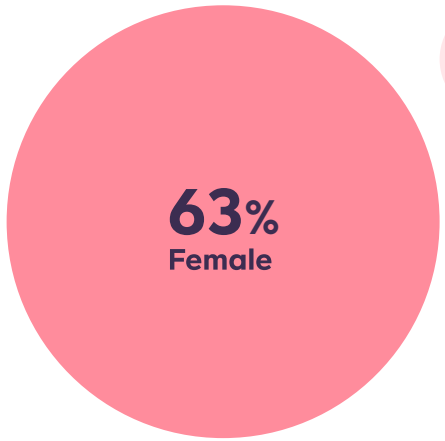
Student market data and intelligence continually inform Yugo's approach, shaping our service offerings, enhancing both customer and investor outcomes, and most importantly, enriching the student experience.

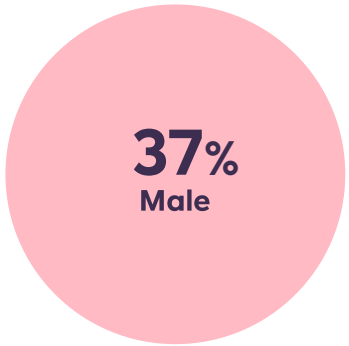
Our Global Insights Program is at the heart of this. It helps us understand how the latest developments in technology, culture and geopolitics impact students' needs, and our role in meeting them.

This year, many of the questions included in Yugo's Global Insights survey delved into the intricate relationship between students and AI technologies. Our findings reveal a nuanced perspective: while students are enthusiastic about the possibilities AI offers in their academic, career, and personal lives, they also express thoughtful concern about its broader implications for society and their future careers.

At Yugo, we're privileged to receive honest, unfiltered feedback from the students who live in our spaces. This insight is invaluable - not only for us, but also for universities and partners - as we work together to ensure student voices are heard and meaningful actions are taken to meet their evolving needs and aspirations for a successful future.

Yugo's 2024 Global Student Insights in numbers





7,274 students surveyed

50+ survey questions

Students studying in **9** countries

148 nationalities represented

Practical

How are students currently using AI technologies?

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The results of 2024's Global Student Insights survey reveal interesting demographic divisions of confidence and concern amongst students' who are already using AI for:

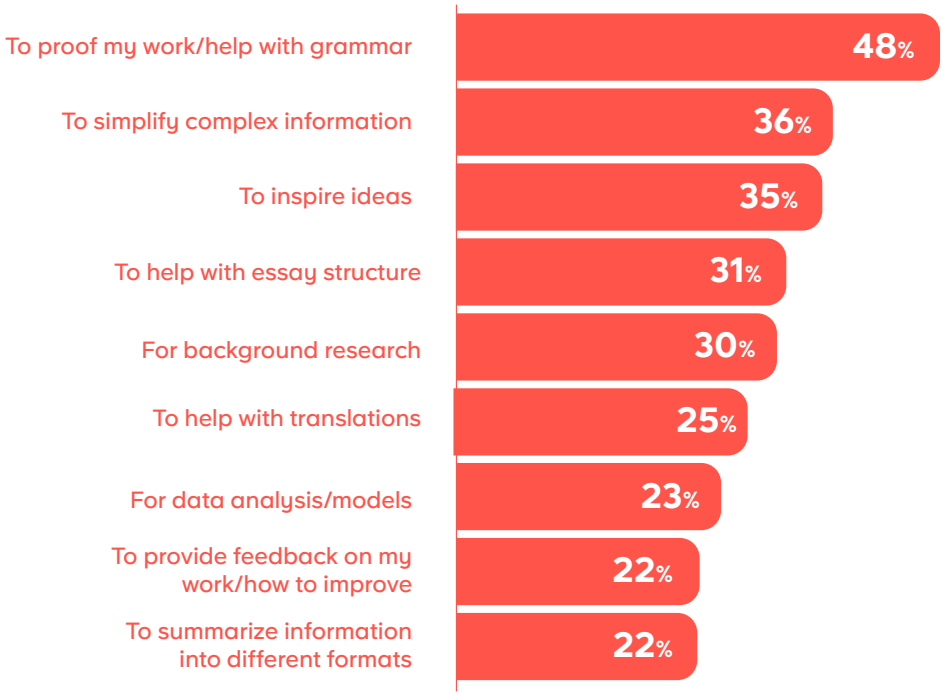
Academic and career support

From aiding study and revision to streamlining the job application process, AI tools designed to boost performance and ease the transition from university to the workplace are increasingly common – but are students on board?

Wellbeing technology

Wearable health trackers and digital assistants are transforming the daily routines of many – but is this a space that students are stepping into, and what technologies are compatible with a student lifestyle?

How students are using AI at university



The new study buddy

Students are leveraging AI to help boost the efficiency and effectiveness of study. Grammar checking tools are the most popular use case (48%).

Additionally, the new techology is used to inspire ideas (37%) and cover background research (34%). It is proving an efficent resource and productivity booster.

48% **Checking grammar**

36% **Inspiring ideas**

30% **Background research**

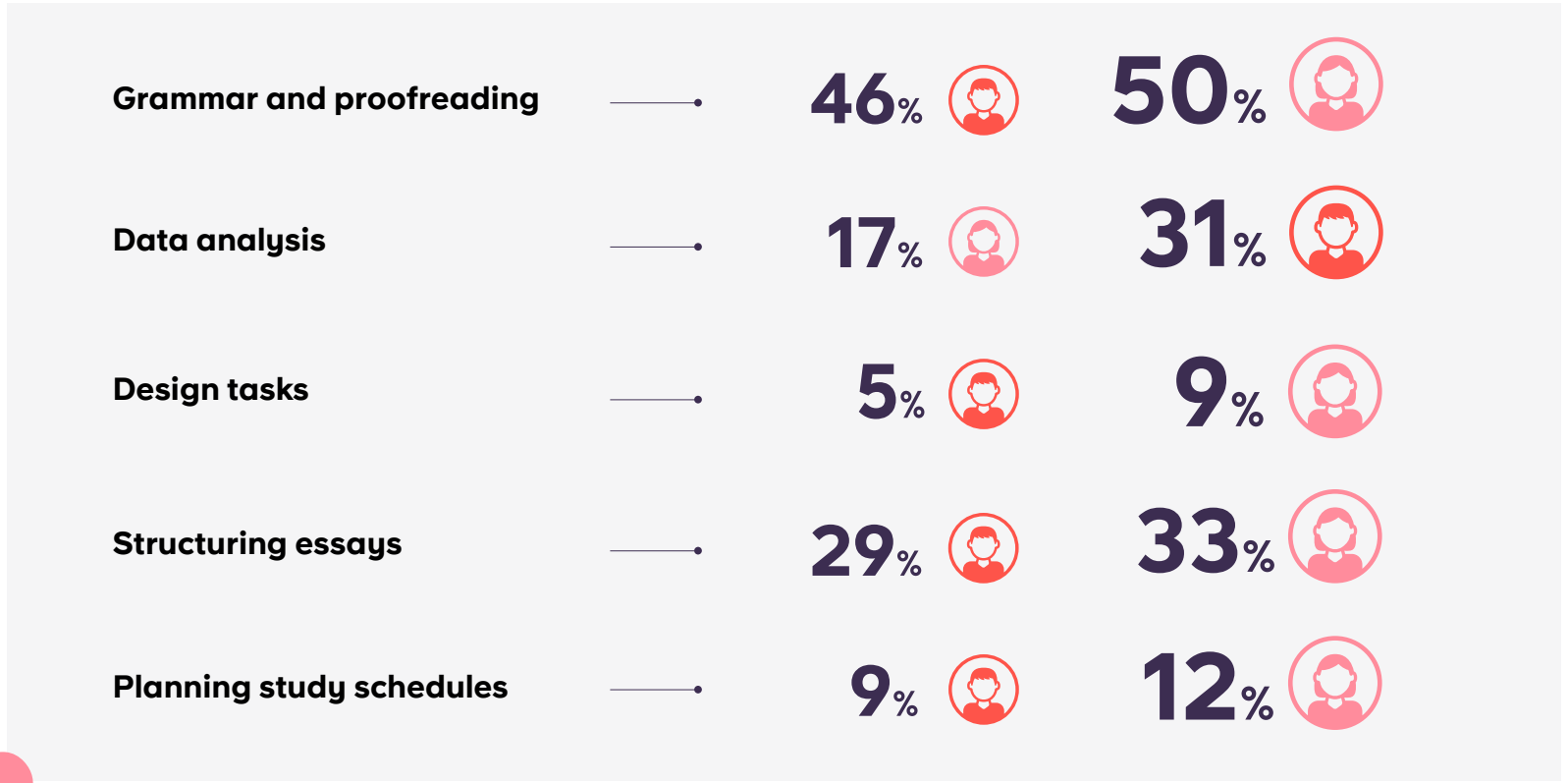
"I frequently use AI to format my essays and reports as it saves me so much time. I also use it to summarise articles that are difficult to understand especially scientific papers.

Dario Labrador Alonso
Computer Science student,
Newcastle University

AI study tools
Gender differences in use

Both male (46%) and female (50%) students rely on AI for grammar and proofreading, but female students slightly lead, hinting at a prioritization of polished academic work. Male students dominate in technical applications, being twice as likely to use AI for data analysis (31% vs. 17%) and more likely to use it for design tasks (9% vs 5%), suggesting greater confidence in receiving technically-sound, high-quality results.

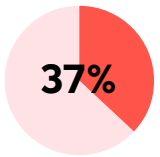
Female students prefer to use AI for structuring essays (33% vs 29%) and planning study schedules (12% vs 9%), reflecting a focus on organization and academic preparation.



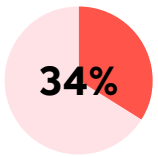
Bridging language barriers with translation

Regional patterns reveal the varied significance of AI tools for translation support among students. AI technology is used heavily for translation in Poland (37%), Portugal (34%), Italy (34%), and Germany (33%), making it a valuable cross-country toolkit. Despite this, only 27% of Spanish students report using AI for translation purposes, which is in line with Spain's minimal AI uptake for personal use or academic tasks.

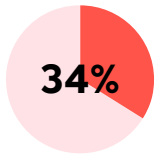
AI technology is used heavily for translation in:



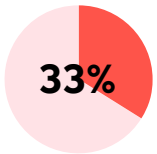
Poland



Italy

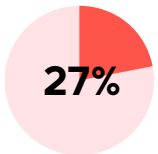


Portugal



Germany

Despite this useful application, only:



Spanish students report using AI for translation purposes.

Wellbeing automation
How students are using AI to thrive

It's clear that students are applying AI technology to their studies, but what about improving and managing their daily lives and health? From AI-assisted meditation apps and chatbot therapists to fitness tracking, AI is heavily influencing the wellness market and our personal care habits. Despite this, 48% of students report they do not use them at all. This reflects an untapped opportunity to raise awareness, educate, and break down access barriers, enabling more students to benefit from AI's potential for personal health and organization.

Uses of AI for wellbeing

1. Fitness tracking and physiological monitoring

Wearable technology leads among current applications, with tools for tracking steps, workouts, and sleep gaining traction with 18% of students.

2. Reminders and time management

Time management and organizational apps resonate across demographics. 14% use AI time management apps, while 10% use AI reminders.

3. Online therapy and support

Emotional and mental wellbeing tools see limited adoption, with usage rates as low as 3-8% across demographics. This may reflect a lack of trust in the quality and privacy of these tools, or a lack of exposure to wellbeing apps and their potential benefits.

Regional trends

Adoption

German students stand out for their above-average use of AI for wellbeing, particularly in fitness tracking (13%) and time management (17%).

Hesitancy

In the US and Ireland, students show some of the lowest adoption rates for AI wellbeing tools (less than 50%).

Universal appeal

Fitness tracking is the most popular use case across all countries (18%), showcasing its universal appeal. It is most popular in Portugal (27%) and Poland (24%).

Gendered contrasts

Male students are more likely to use AI wearables for physiological monitoring, with 13% tracking sleep and 8% monitoring stress or anxiety, compared to 9% and 7% of female students.

Female students prioritize holistic health, leading in applications for tracking workouts/steps/fitness (20% vs 14%), mindfulness or meditation apps (5% vs 4%), and positive reminders (6% vs 4%).

Both genders show equal use of AI for personal organization tasks (10%).

Emotional

How do students feel about AI's current and future impacts?

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Students from all walks of life are employing AI technology to aid their everyday lives – from boosting their academic performance to guiding their purchasing decisions.

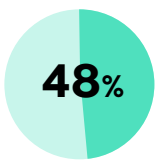
But that doesn't mean they're entirely comfortable with the technology.

For this section of the report, we questioned students across the globe about their thoughts and feelings on AI, its potential benefits and drawbacks, and who they think will be most impacted.

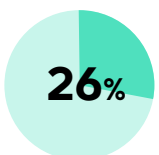
The results reveal interesting contradictions across regions, genders, and age groups.

A world of possibilities

Student views on AI's possibilities highlight the dual nature of technology as a force for progress and disruption. While some embrace its potential to fuel innovation and growth, others remain cautious about its societal and ethical implications – reflecting the diverse impacts of geography, gender, economy, and culture.
When asked how they felt about the possibilities When asked how they felt about the possibilities AI provides:



48% **Feel excited about AI**



26% **Feel indifferent about AI**

20% **Feel worried about AI**

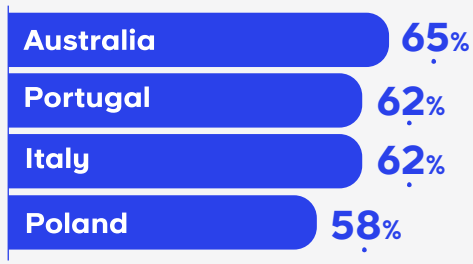
> AI isn't a bad thing - it's actually an amazing tool made to help people. I've also started implementing AI into businesses and creating custom AI systems - it's becoming a real part of my professional work.
>
> **Mateusz Rożek**
> **University of Salamanca**

A driver of growth or a social and economic threat?

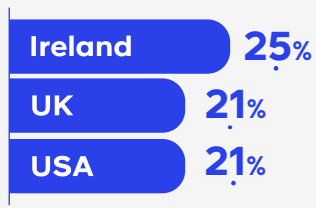
Students in Australia (65%), Portugal (62%), Italy (62%), and Poland (58%) are excited about AI, seeing it as a driver of innovation and growth. In contrast, those in countries with more tech-based economies express more worry – the UK (21%), US (21%), and Ireland (25%) – reflecting greater public discourse around AI's risks, such as heightened awareness of ethical and job security challenges.

German students buck all trends, remaining pragmatic and adopting a cautious 'wait-and-see' approach – 47% are indifferent to the advent of AI and the possibilities it provides.

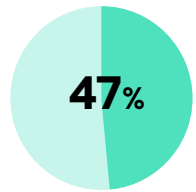
International students are optimists in a changing world, emerging as the most positive student group – 51% are excited, rising to 53% amongst UK-based international students. They may view AI as a global equalizer that opens opportunities beyond borders. In countries like the UK, international students' excitement levels are nearly double those of domestic students (29%), reflecting the perceived potential of AI in existing technological innovation hubs.



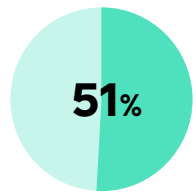
Students who see AI as a driver of innovations and growth



Students who reflect greater public discourse around AI's risks



German students are indifferent to the advent of AI



Of international students are excited about AI

Students' top 3 AI benefits

Though some anxieties were raised, students' overall outlook remained positive. Those from countries that showed the most excitement about AI's possibilities – like Australia, Portugal and Poland – saw the widest range of potential benefits. While certain advantages are universally agreed upon, most vary according to students' age, gender, and location.

1. Productivity increases

61% of global respondents identify productivity increase as one of the biggest AI benefits, making it the most popular answer.

- Men are more enthusiastic about productivity increases than women (68% vs. 57%).
- Italy (68%), Portugal (67%), Spain (65%), the US (64%) and Germany (62%) lead in enthusiasm.

2. Improved work-life balance

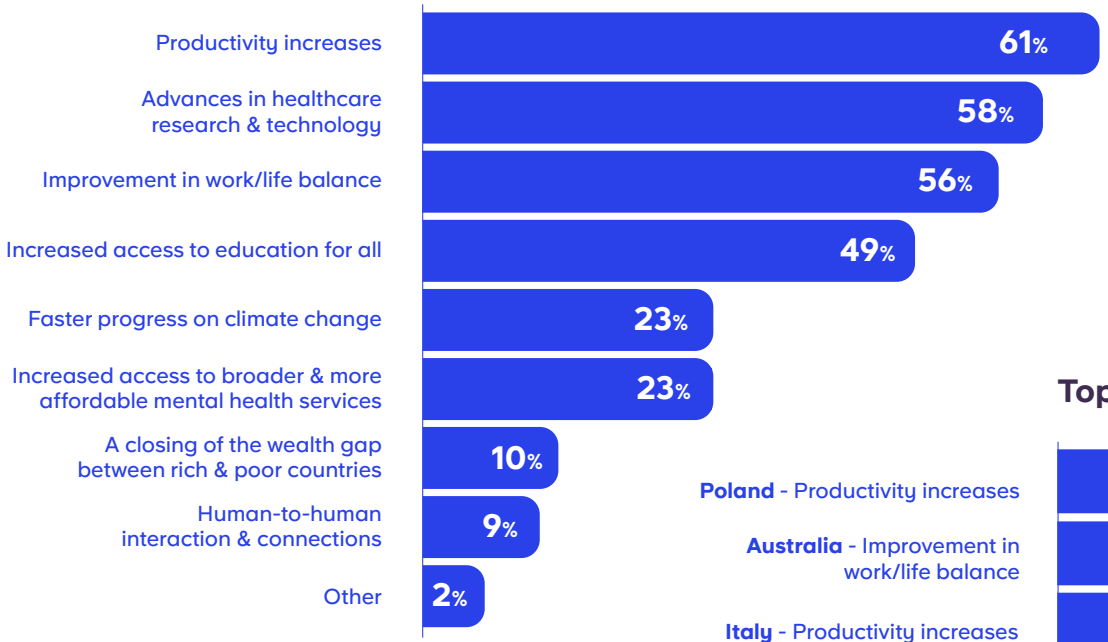
56% of all students anticipate an enhanced work-life balance due to AI.

- Male students are slightly more optimistic about work-life balance than female (60% vs. 55%).
- Mature students are particularly enthusiastic (83%) about this benefit.

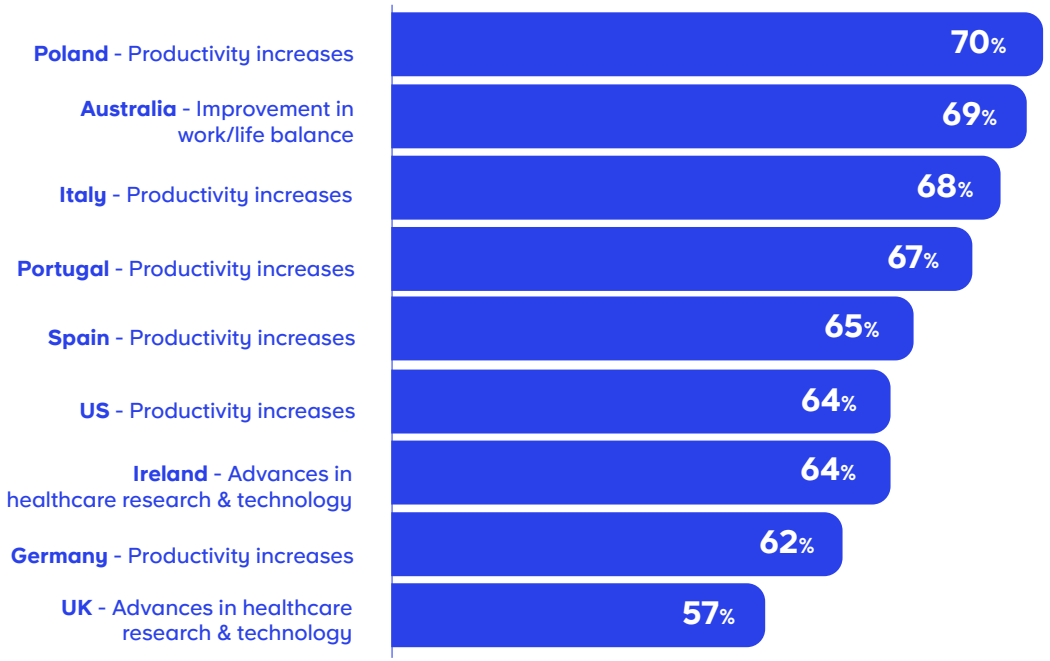
3. Healthcare advancements

58% of respondents highlighted 'advancements in healthcare' as a key AI benefit. 23% identified 'increased access to broader and more affordable mental health care.

Benefits of AI



Top benefit for each country



Students' top 3 AI concerns

Despite overall excitement about AI, students also demonstrate a broad and holistic understanding of potential social, environmental, and economic threats.
When we asked, 'What do you see as the biggest concerns about AI?', these were the top three responses across regions, genders, and age groups.

1. Job losses

Job losses are the mostly common concern amongst students (76%), and shared across demographics.

- Female students are more anxious about job losses than males (79% vs. 72%).
- Younger students (18-25) are the most concerned age group.
- Students in the US (79%), UK (79%), Ireland (78%), and Portugal (75%) lead anxious sentiment globally.

2. Social decline

59% of students are concerned that AI will lead to 'a loss of human-to-human interaction'.

- Female students are particularly worried - 64% are concerned about social interaction, compared to just 51% of males.
- A quarter (25%) of students go further, worrying that 'genuine friendships will be replaced by 'AI companions'.

3. Political and economic threats

The most common political and economic worries are 'increased cybersecurity threats' (57%), 'AI being negatively harnessed for political purposes (52%), and 'the spread of fake news' (51%).

- Geographically, political misuse is a particular concern for students in Ireland (60%), the US (56%), and the UK (52%).
- Cybersecurity threats dominate in Portugal (62%), the UK (56%) and the US (63%).

Job prospects

We wanted to dive deeper into students' views of the future job market, so we asked, 'How concerned are you about the rise of AI and how it might impact your job prospects?'.

52% **German students who 'are indifferent'**
Compared to a global average of 32%

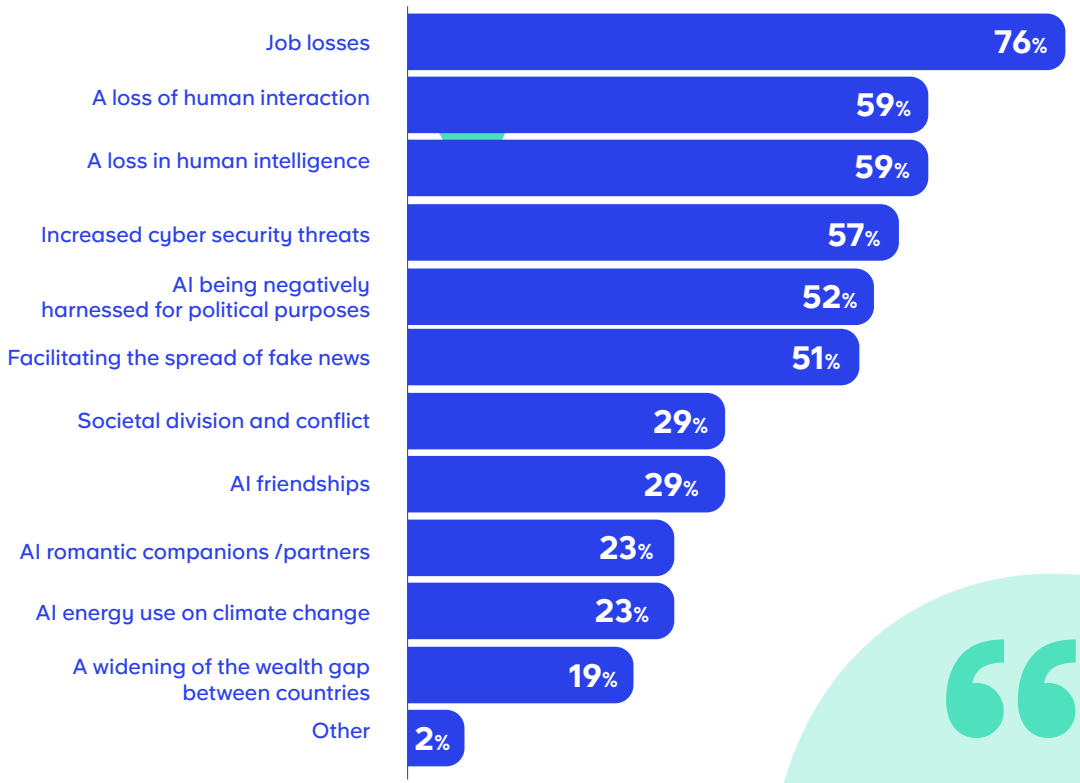
42% **Female students who 'are concerned'**
Compared to just 34% of males

20% **Male students who 'are not concerned'**
Compared to just 15% of females

10% **UK students who 'are extremely concerned'**
Compared to a global average of 8%

9% **International students who 'are extremely concerned'**
Compared to a global average of 8%

Students' top AI concerns



I use AI to improve my workflow, from organizing research to refining creative projects. While I appreciate how AI streamlines tasks, I also wonder how it will impact future job opportunities.

Mady Aulicino
Communications & Digital Media student,
University of Arizona

Losing connection

Beyond employment market disruption, students expressed concerns about growing disconnection as AI becomes more widely used. Female students are significantly more worried, suggesting a heightened sensitivity to AI's emotional and social implications, and a broader fear of the devaluation of human skill and creativity.

59% **Concerned with a loss in human intelligence**

59% **Concerned with a loss of human-to-human interaction**

29% **Concerned with friendships being replaced by AI**

23% **Concerned with romantic relationships being replaced by AI**

AI can help with drafting content or analyzing trends, but presenting an idea with confidence and connecting with people is something AI can't replace.

Sunjaya Phillips
Marketing Communications Management student,
Oxford Brookes University

The future is now

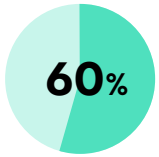
After exploring students' thoughts on AI's benefits and challenges, we asked them which generation they believe will benefit most from the technology.

Optimism for the future

Most respondents (60%) believe future generations will benefit most from AI. Students in Portugal (69%), Italy (65%), and Spain (65%) show the highest optimism. Very few think AI will benefit older generations (1-2%), suggesting it's seen as a tool for the young or that it will evolve too late for older people to benefit. Male students (61%) are more confident than females (50%) in AI's long-term transformative power.

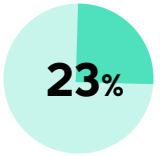
The waiting game is on

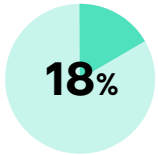
Although optimistic about AI's future, students recognize its current limitations and are willing to wait for further advancements. Only a quarter (23%) think their generation will benefit most, with just 18% of female students agreeing. Most see future generations as the primary beneficiaries of AI, indicating a belief that we are not yet in the golden age of AI.



Believe future generations will benefit the most from AI

Selected their own generation as the one to benefit most





Female students who indicated a belief that we are not yet in the golden age of AI

Some cynical and neutral outliers

Not all students share this positive outlook on the future of technology. In the UK (7%), US (7%), and Ireland (8%), some students are more cynical, believing no generation will benefit from AI. In Germany, not a single female respondent said they thought their grandparents' generation would benefit from AI. However, none selected 'no generation will benefit' either. This suggests a uniquely neutral perspective with a realistic view of the timelines of technology development.

Yugo's conclusion

Our latest research reveals a generational crossroads: just over half of students globally are optimistic about AI, recognizing its potential to transform productivity, healthcare, climate solutions, and mental health. Yet, a significant minority express concern – highlighting fears around job security, the erosion of human connection, and the long-term implications for our collective intelligence.

Their reflections are timely and justified. We're witnessing the emergence of a technological shift that will redefine not just industries, but also the way we live, connect, and grow.

At Yugo, we're privileged to hear these unfiltered insights from the students who live with us. They guide us – not to instruct, but to understand, relate, and respond with empathy and cultural intelligence.

As AI continues to evolve, so do student expectations. Our responsibility is clear: to listen deeply, act thoughtfully, and create living environments where students feel seen, supported, and empowered to thrive in an unpredictable future.

Where do we go next

Yugo is for students, by students and with students. Each year, we explore the issues that matter to them and stay closely aligned to reflect their feelings and support their growth. Our latest AI research, from over 7,000 students living in Yugo spaces, highlights how we can better support those in further education.
University is a time of rapid emotional development – when students are balancing ambition, uncertainty, and the pressure of preparing for the future.
One thing is clear: much of the fear around AI stems from knowledge gaps and the overwhelming speed of technological change.

In response, we launched The Power of AI – a new initiative designed to equip students with the skills and confidence to engage with emerging tech. Through interactive online workshops and practical training, the course comes under the YuPro pillar of our award-winning Live Your Best Life (LYBL) program. Alongside internships, graduate support, and career tools, it's another way Yugo is preparing students for what comes next - and encouraging others in the sector to do the same.

Millie de Santis,
Senior Global Brand Manager,
Yugo

Thank you.

For further insight please visit yugo.com