

# How are students using GenAI and how can we support them?

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# GenAI is everywhere, but do we understand how students are using?

- National surveys from Jisc and HEPI show that over 90% of students now use GenAI daily for studying, revision, and career preparation. Formal training and course-specific guidance remain limited.
- At Imperial Business School, we wanted to go beyond policies and platforms to understand how students are actually using GenAI, what support they need, and where the gaps are.
- Through the StudentShapers programme, we worked directly with students to co-design and conduct the research.





# Research objectives

- **Map current usage patterns**  
Understand how our students are engaging with GenAI in their studies.
- **Identify support gaps**  
Understand where current institutional support falls short of student needs and evaluate whether we need to provide support.
- **Develop targeted interventions**  
Develop evidence-based recommendations for enhanced student support and determine how we can better serve our students.



# Methodology: A mixed-methods approach

## Quantitative surveys

Two annual surveys (2023-24 and 2024-25) were distributed to all Business School students.

- Multiple-choice and 5-point Likert scale questions focus.
- Focus on usage patterns, tools, and support needs
- Comparative analysis between years

## Qualitative focus groups

Eight moderated sessions with students from diverse programmes

- Semi-structured discussion format
- exploration of the survey themes
- One strategy session
- capture of student narratives and experiences



The survey  
respondents  
came from  
across our  
PGT and UG  
degrees

Undergraduate

**18%**

Postgraduate

**82%**

Full-time

**80%**

Part-time

**20%**

On-campus

**86%**

Online

**14%**

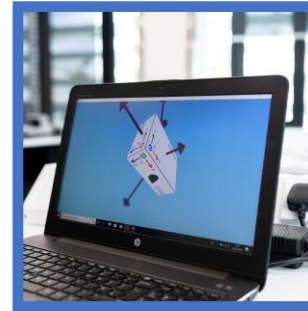
# Key findings: the headline messages

We're using these findings to shape practical guidance and support at the **programme** and **module** level. This includes helping students better understand **when and how** to use GenAI effectively, ethically, and with confidence in their specific learning contexts.



## Widespread adoption

Over 80% of students are now using GenAI tools regularly for their studies, a significant increase from the previous year. Students are generally comfortable with their usage and show apparent confidence.



## Tool diversification

Students are employing a mix of multiple GenAI tools for different purposes, demonstrating a better understanding of their relative strengths and limitations.



## Self-directed learning

Most students are self-taught, learning through experimentation rather than formal training. However, there's a sense of hitting a plateau in their learning curve for advanced GenAI use.



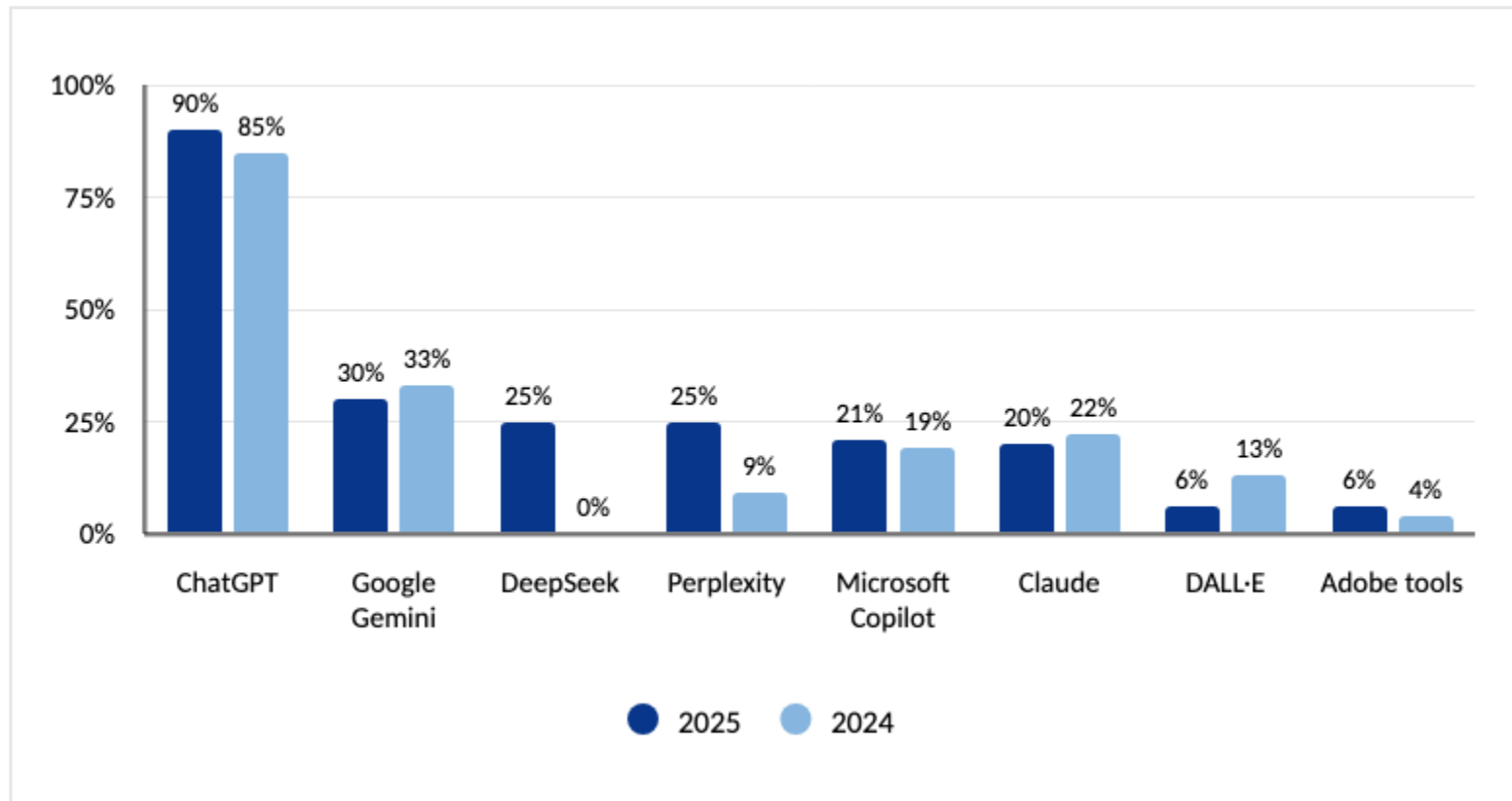
## Support gaps

Students express confidence in basic usage but identify gaps in knowledge around ethical considerations and advanced techniques. They seek support with specific tasks rather than basic "how-to-use" instructions.

Academics are in parallel sensing an over-confidence and potential over-reliance with AI output amongst students.

# ChatGPT use continues to grow as students explore a wider range of GenAI tools

*Which GenAI tools have you used to help with your studies? (Select all that apply)*

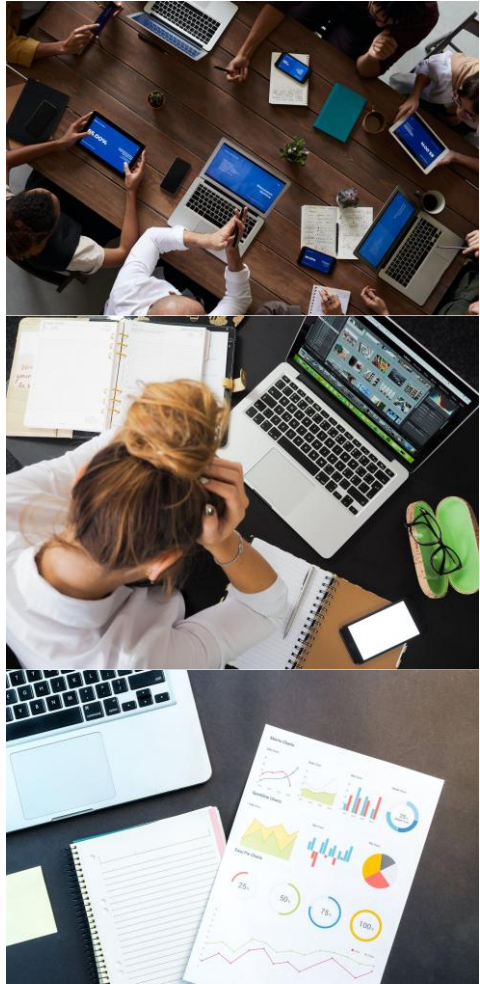


Daily usage increased from 25% (2024) to 40% (2025)

- "I only solely use ChatGPT, just because it's convenient cause I've been using it since it first launched."*
- "For me, I also take a look at Perplexity because it giving me like better sources, oxidations... they usually only give me like an original resource and site it directly."*
- "I would say I use Claude the most because I have a membership, and I think I find it the best for code."*

# Students are exploring a wider range of GenAI uses

*How have you used Generative AI in your studies? (Select all that apply)*



- **Understanding Concepts**

Simplifying complex ideas.

- **Generating ideas**

Brainstorming and creative tasks

- **Summarise articles**

Finding and synthesising information

- **Coding help**

Programming assistance and debugging

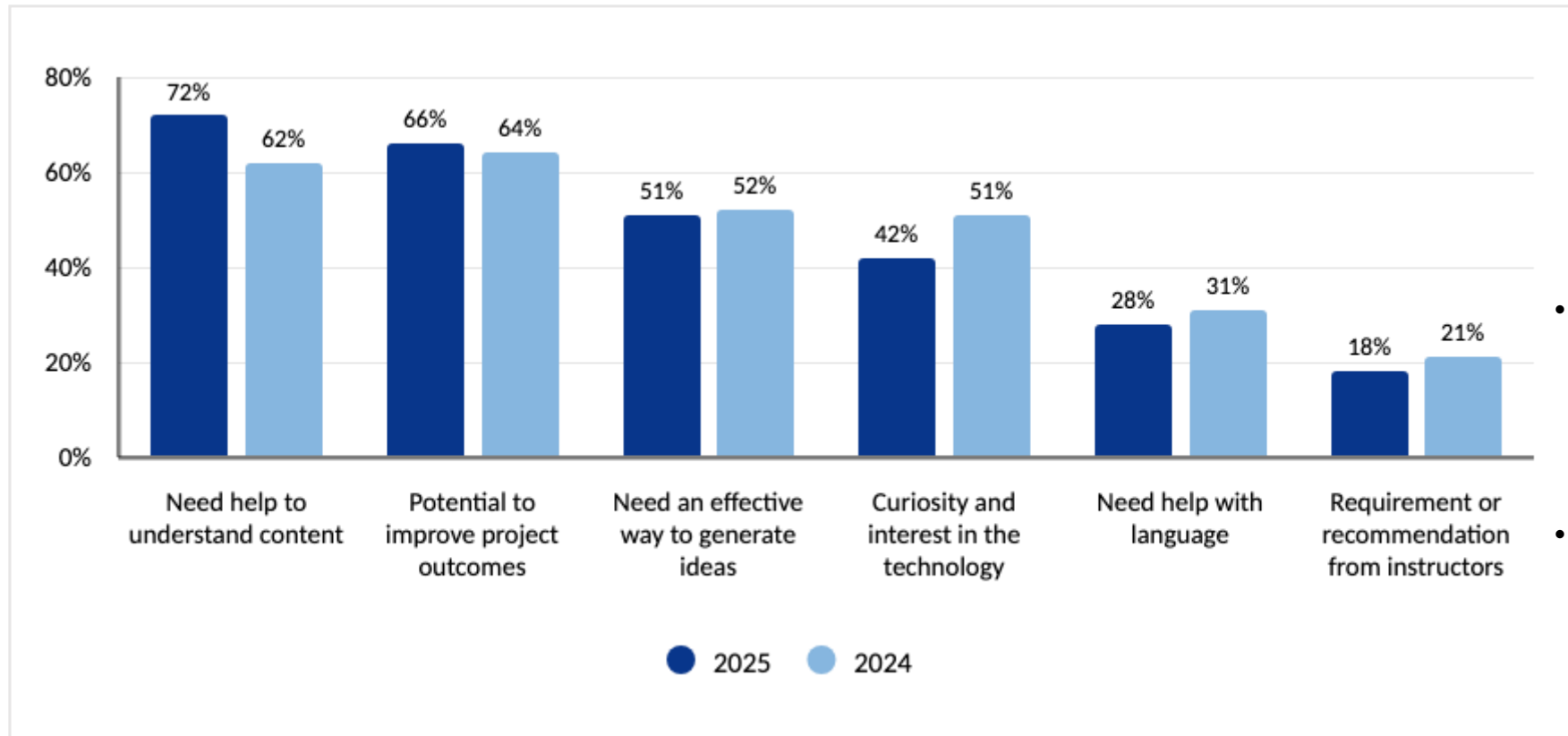
- **Generating drafts**

Drafting, editing, and polishing



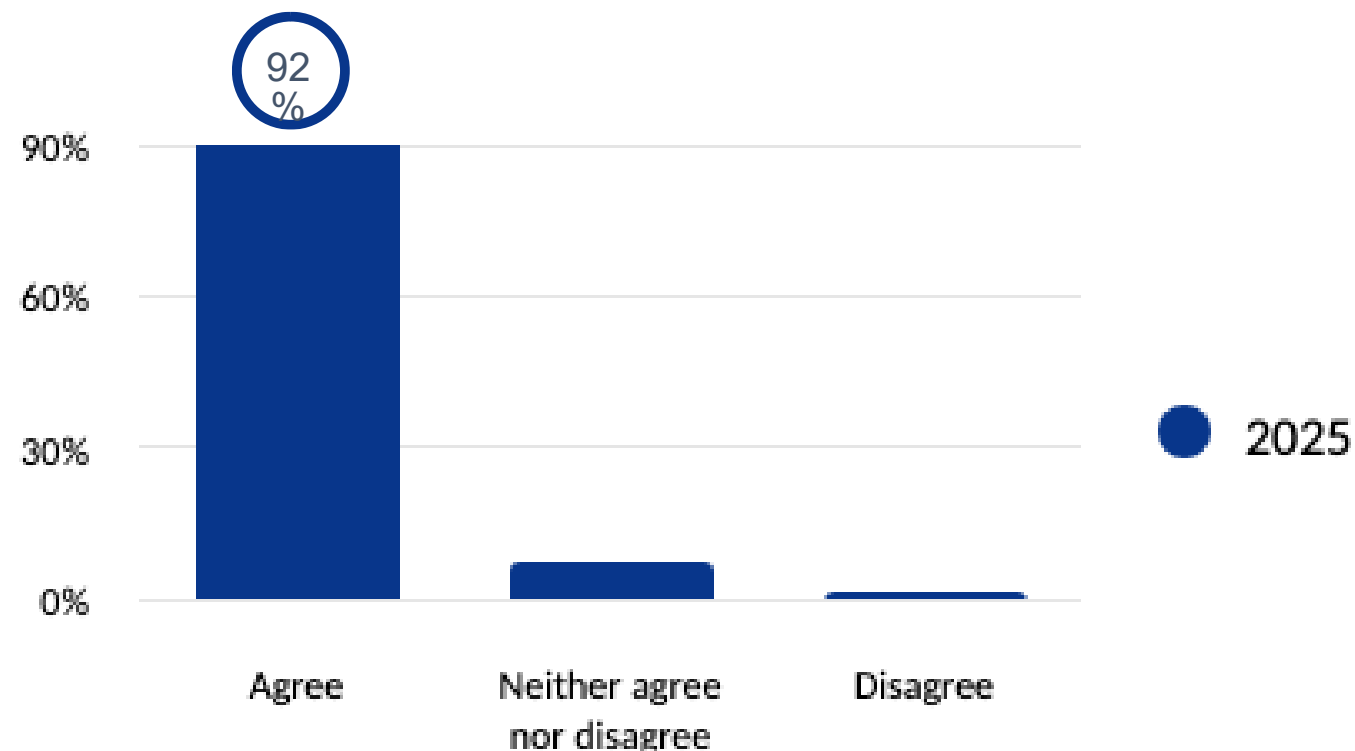
# Students are moving beyond novelty, using GenAI as a practical tool for learning.

*What factors influenced your decision to use Generative AI in your studies? (Select all that apply)*



- "I've got an exam tomorrow... I think of using ChatGPT this evening. I will be able to condense all the core topics and things I need to know into a single side of A4 paper... my revision that it would normally take me a couple of weeks is probably going to be able to be done in an evening."*
- "What would have previously taken hours of searching on YouTube or going back the next day? I could probably get it done in like 5 minutes with ChatGPT."*
- "If not using ChatGPT then I would need to search in repositories and online forums for guidance on what kind of methods to use. Using ChatGPT is very helpful. It's very time efficient."*

# Students are more familiar and comfortable with using GenAI tools

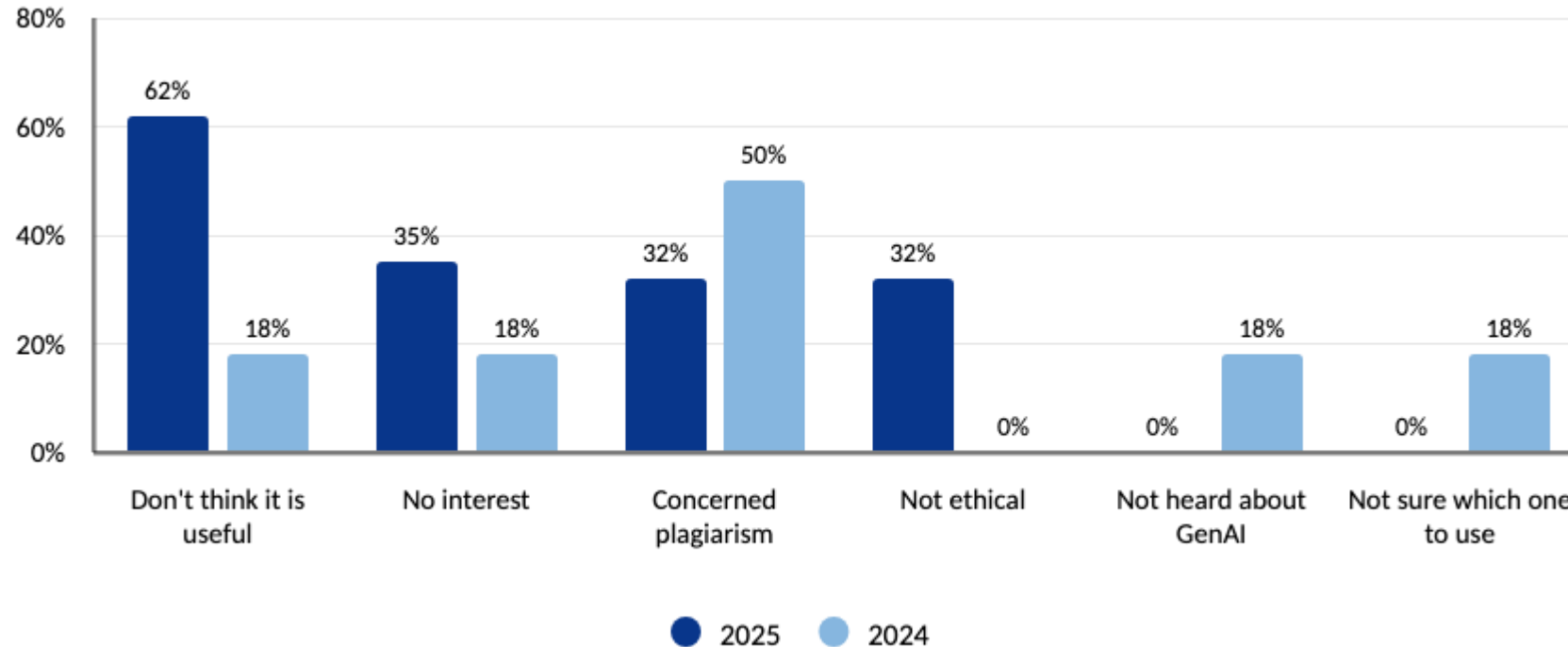


*I'm getting more familiar and comfortable with using GenAI tools in the past 6 months- How far do you agree with the statement?*

*(a new question in 2025)*

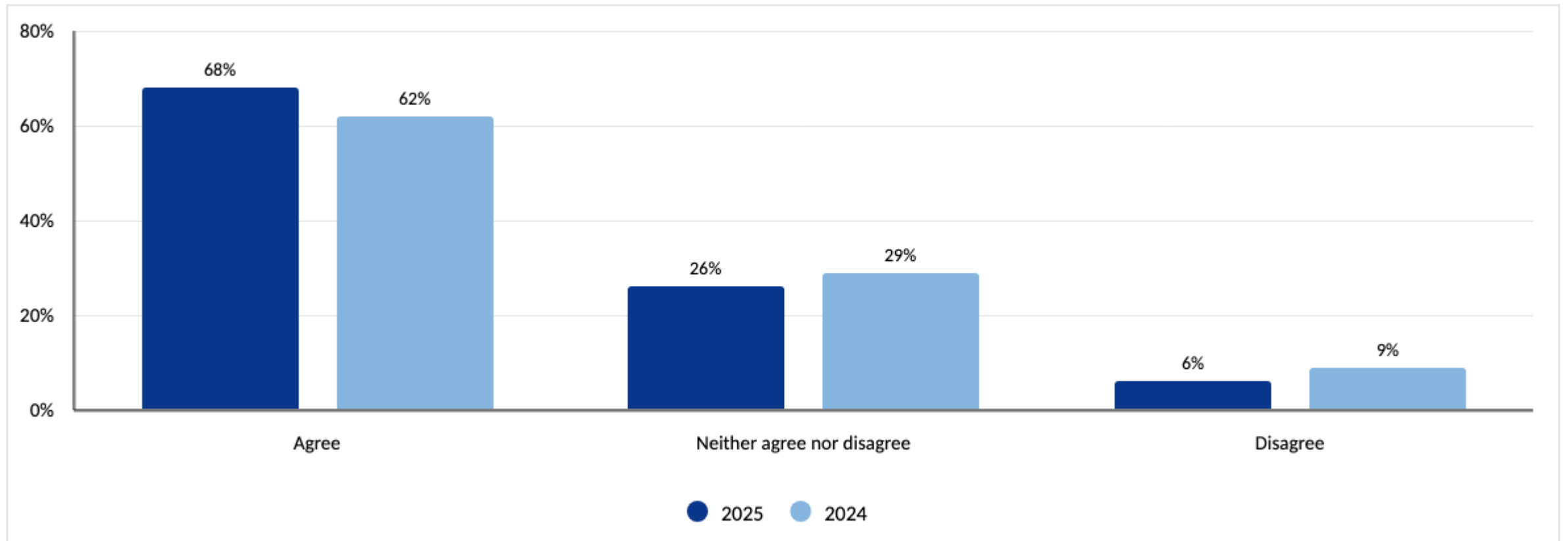
# Those students that avoid GenAI are concerned about its usefulness and ethics.

*Why do you not use GenAI tools? (Select all that apply)*



# Students believe GenAI helps improve their academic performance – speed and quality

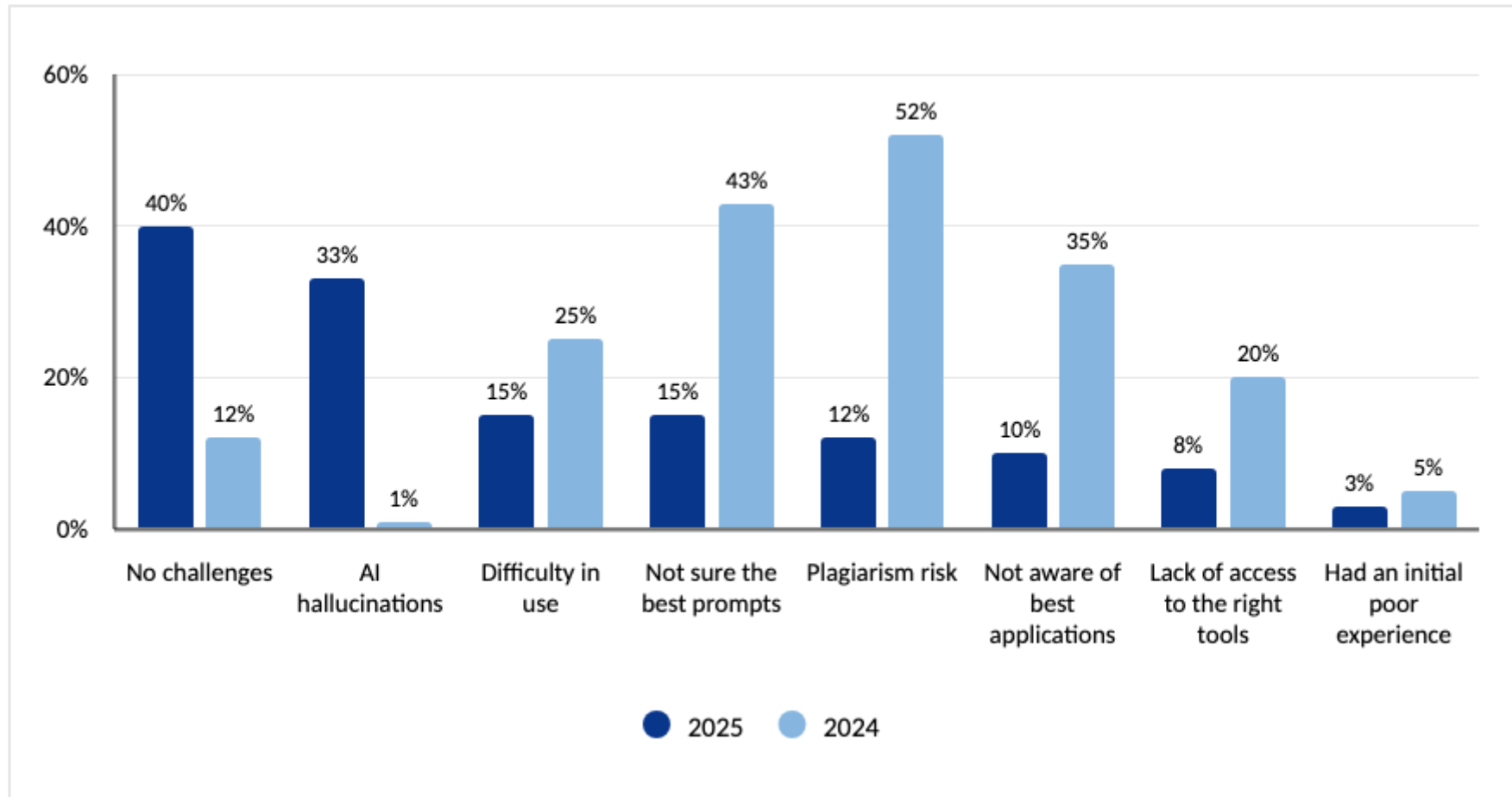
*Using Generative AI improves my academic performance. (How far do you agree with the statement? )*





# Students are challenged by AI hallucinations but in other areas are citing fewer barriers

*What challenges do you face when using Generative AI in your academic work? (Select all that apply)*

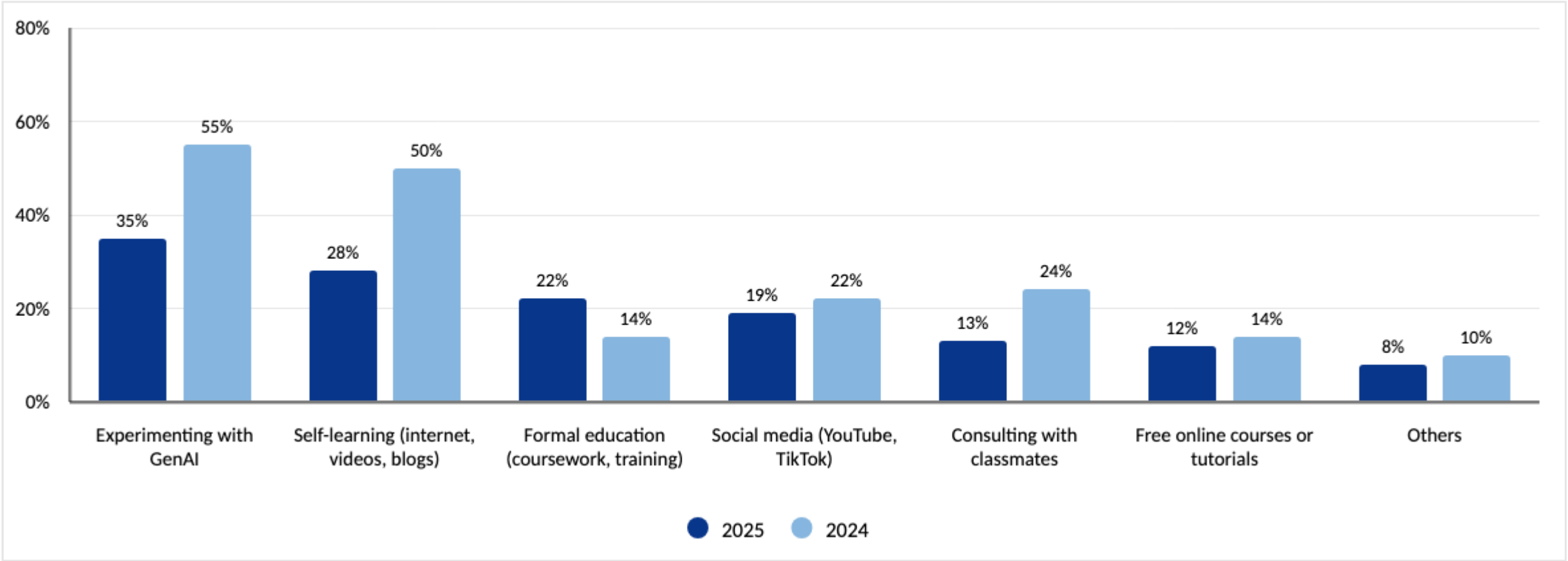


- "I realised over time that it makes mistakes and sometimes really random mistakes... I don't just rely on ChatGPT, but I also have to Google. And do fact checks while I go."*
- "I remember I had an accounting module and I tried verifying my answers with ChatGPT, and they would make mistakes, and I would then question if mine were correct, and then if I told ChatGPT after that. Oh, I think the answer is this. They would be like, oh, you know what? That's right. Which is kind of dumb."*
- "It hallucinates a lot. And also like when it comes to... if I wanted to give me specific sources, I've noticed that it often botches that up as well... it will send me a link to something which has no relation to what it just told me."*



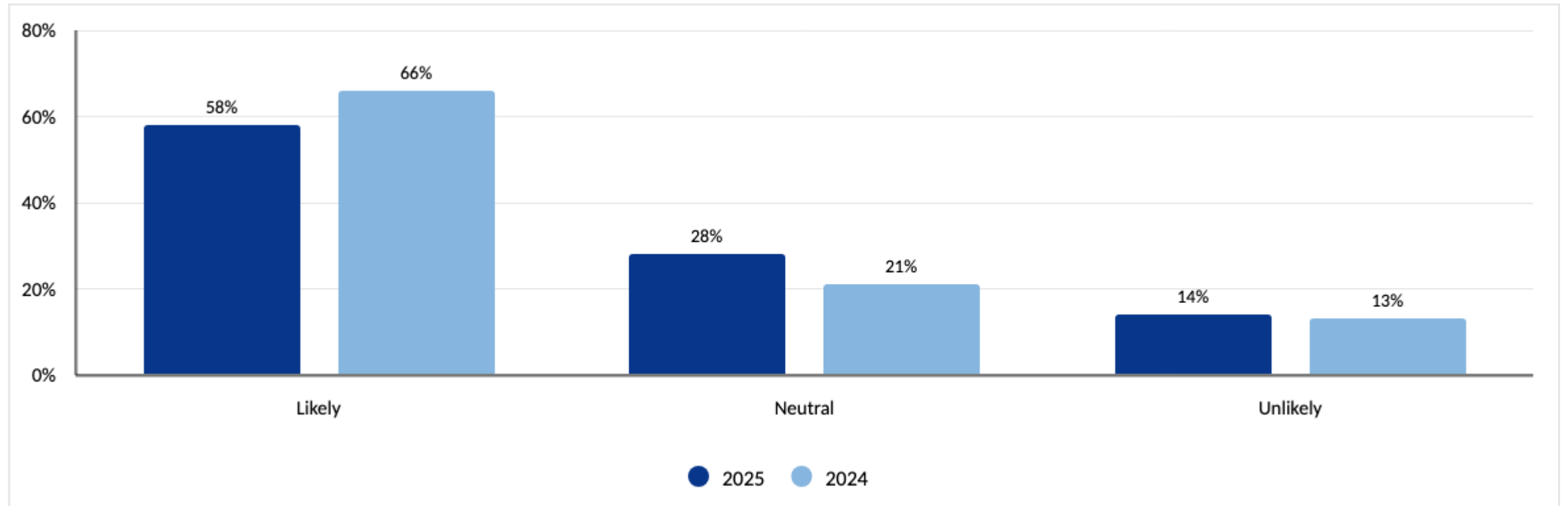
# Students still rely on experimentation and self-directed learning to develop their GenAI skills, but learning within education setting is increasing

How do you currently acquire knowledge and skills related to Generative AI? (Select all that apply)



# Students show high but mixed interest in expanding GenAI knowledge

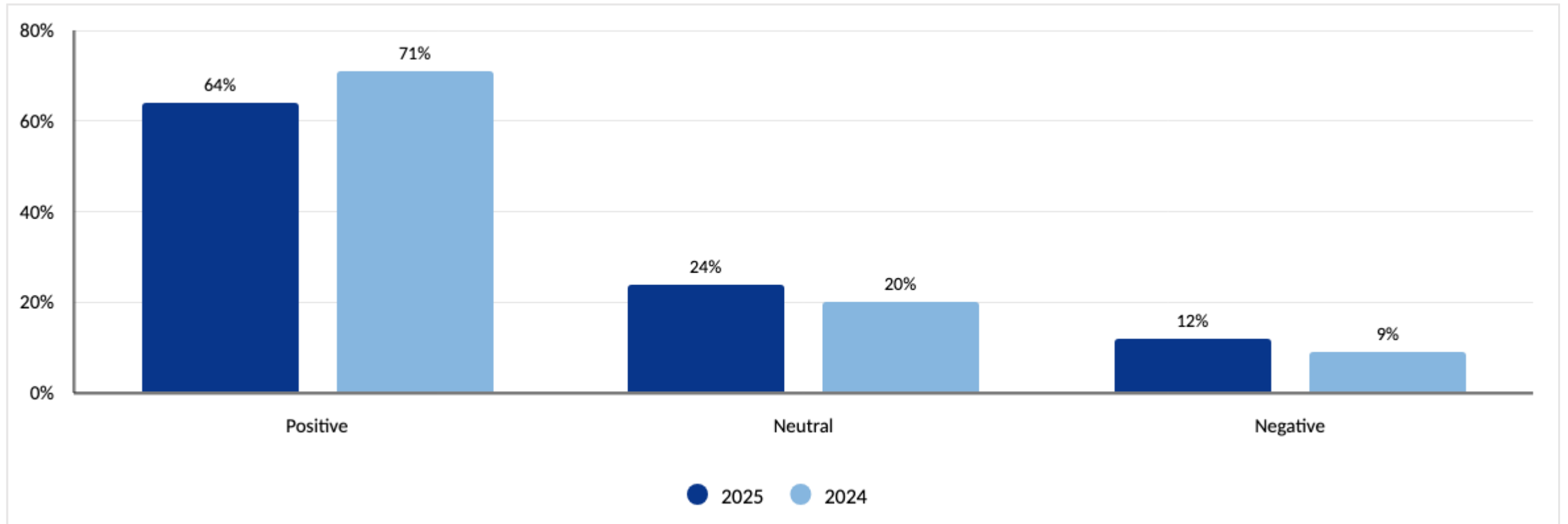
*How interested are you in expanding your knowledge of GenAI for your future assignments and career prospects?*





# Students generally welcome the integration of GenAI into the curriculum, but neutral and negative views are growing

*How would you feel if the Business School were to integrate GenAI further into the curriculum for your degree programme?*

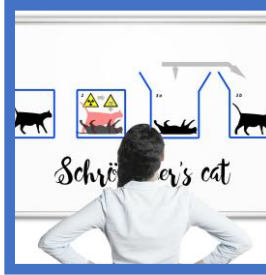


# Key takeaways



## Students are prolific AI users

They strategically employ different tools for different tasks while maintaining healthy skepticism about AI reliability.



## The learning paradox is real

Students see GenAI as a real time-saver and believe it helps boost their performance. At the same time, they're aware it can get in the way of deeper learning, and faculty have already noticed exam results slipping.



## Module-specific practical guidance needed

Students want clear, consistent guidance and support rather than reactive policing of AI use.



## Equity concerns should be addressed

Non-native English speakers face unique challenges that require specific policy considerations and support.

Move away from support on how to use tools to support on how to learn responsibly with AI, through induction sessions and embedded activities in modules

# Questions/Comments?

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