


# Chapter 10

## Maintaining Ethics in ODeL Teaching and Learning in Higher Education With the Rise of AI

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The growing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher education has created new opportunities for learning but also serious ethical concerns. In Open Distance e-Learning (ODEL), students often depend on digital tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot to complete academic tasks. While these tools can improve writing and provide useful support, they also raise questions about honesty, fairness, and equal access to resources. This chapter draws on a review of recent studies, policies, and reports to examine how AI is influencing teaching and learning in ODeL. Key issues include the risk of academic dishonesty, the widening digital divide, and the lack of clear guidance for both students and lecturers. Using ethical theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics, the chapter highlights the need for stronger policies, training, and assessment methods that encourage responsible use of AI and protect the integrity of higher education.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education across the world is rapidly evolving due to the continuous advancement of digital technologies (Saaida, 2023). One of the most significant developments influencing teaching and learning is AI (Saaida, 2023). AI refers to systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, and language processing. In institutions of higher learning, AI tools are being integrated into teaching, assessment, and administrative functions (Zouhaier, 2023). These tools range from automated grading systems and plagiarism detectors to writing assistants like ChatGPT and Grammarly. In ODeL environments, where learning takes place outside traditional classrooms, the use of AI is becoming increasingly common (Boogere et al., 2022). ODeL higher institution of learning, such as University of South Africa (UNISA), are designed to offer flexible and inclusive education to students who may not be able to attend in-person classes. These higher institutions of learning rely heavily on online communication, virtual platforms, and self-directed learning. Because of this model, students in ODeL settings are more likely to use digital tools to complete academic tasks (Boogere et al., 2022).

While AI can help students enhance their writing, conduct research more efficiently, and access information quickly, it also creates new ethical concerns. One of the main concerns highlighted by Luckin et al., (2016) and Boogere et al. (2022) is academic integrity specifically, how lecturers and supervisors can determine if students' work is truly original when it is produced with the help of AI. Onesi-Ozigagun et al. (2024) adds that there are still challenges, such as data protection, bias in algorithms, and the need to train lecturers to use these tools effectively. This chapter explores these ethical concerns and the role of AI in shaping academic integrity in ODeL. It highlights the challenges and benefits of using AI in distance education and suggests ways that institutions can maintain ethical standards while embracing innovative technology. By focusing on current literature, this study provides a foundation for understanding the ethical implications of AI in higher education, especially in ODeL and offers recommendations for creating a balanced and fair learning environment. Given the rapid evolution of AI and its growing role in higher education, it is essential to explore how these technologies can be integrated ethically and effectively in ODeL settings. By combining theoretical insights from UTAUT with ethical frameworks, the chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI's impact on teaching and learning, while offering practical recommendations for higher education institutions.

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