

Session 5 – Swimming between the flags: Workshop scenarios

1.

You work at a university with a well-funded theatre studies program, known for the participation of industry professionals as adjunct supervisors. Last week, a research misconduct complaint was received from a promising doctoral candidate working on a play manuscript as a significant creative component of her doctorate. Her industry supervisor, enthused by the university's embracing of everything AI, had run a scene her draft play through an online LLM for feedback – something he and all his peers were already doing regularly with their own creative work. The university has recently developed an AI use policy, but it has not been communicated to adjunct staff just yet. The candidate is worried that her doctorate is now compromised, and that her work may now be stolen by others. She can't bear to speak to the supervisor. Meanwhile, the supervisor is distraught by the whole matter and doesn't know what to do next.

As Dean of graduate studies, the Faculty has reported the matter to you for advice. What would you like to say?

2.

Your university has entered into a commercial agreement with a major LLM. Full professional licenses have immediately been issued to all staff and students. This is good news - many staff and students already use the free version of this LLM, and this has led to some past problems. The licensed version offers additional protections: data is stored on shore, can't be shared with external entities, and can't be used for AI training. A committee has been formed to develop guidance on how the free and licenced version of the LLM differ, and how they can and can't be used for research purposes, including for graduate research. Here is an excerpt of what they have provided:

Use case	Free version	Licensed version
Data shared under a non-disclosure agreement	No	No
De-identified information related to human research participants	No	Yes

You are the final approver of this document. Do you have any concerns about the second use case? What might have been missed?

3.

A day long anticipated has finally arrived. Last Friday, TEQSA quietly issued a rare public statement on GenAI and research training. "The capabilities of GenAI now surpass the standard of thesis presentation achievable in the timeframe of the doctoral degree" the message states. It continues: "As a result, universities will be required to implement, without delay, new examination processes in which the traditional thesis is no longer treated as independent assurance of learning". The statement goes on to note that "This does not imply any change to AQF level 10 expectations. Graduates must still demonstrate systemic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice, and have the ability to knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar".

As PVC for Graduate Research, you have been asked to present a response to your senior leadership group. What will you propose?