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Educating the Digital Lawyer: Selected Challenges of AI-Powered Systems in Training Law Students*

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Abstract

The article discusses selected challenges related to the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools into legal education. The motivation for addressing this topic is the dynamic development of AI technologies, which increasingly influence the educational process, combined with the lack of systematic reflection on their consequences in this field. The text is based on a review of the available literature as well as ongoing academic and institutional debates. It first identifies areas in which AI-based systems may support teaching and learning. The discussion then focuses on three main categories of challenges: pedagogical, organizational, and ethical. The analysis covers both the evolving role of the academic teacher in the face of new technologies and the institutional consequences of implementing AI at universities, as well as issues of academic integrity and equal access. The article concludes with recommendations for the sustainable and responsible use of AI in training future lawyers.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI in Law Studies, Legal Education, Law Students

Introduction

The development of artificial intelligence (AI)1 ranks among the most significant technological phenomena of recent decades. From the earliest experiments in machine reasoning in the 1950s, through the emergence of more advanced programs in the following decades, to today's deep learning algorithms, the history of AI is a history of gradually expanding the boundaries of what machines can generate, analyze, and predict.

A breakthrough that has recently drawn particular public attention has been the advent of so-called language models2. Tools capable of sustaining coherent conversations (chats) and producing human-like texts have moved the debate on AI from research laboratories into everyday life.

The rapid expansion of AI has reached a wide range of sectors - from medicine, industry, and engineering to administration, finance, culture, and entertainment. Education, however, could not remain unaffected. It is a domain that is both socially significant and institutionally complex, and in which the potential and risks of AI become especially evident. What only a few years ago appeared to be an experimental tool for language learning or simple quizzes is now becoming a genuine component of higher education. At the same time, the presence of new technologies raises the question of how their potential can be harnessed while safeguarding the integrity of the teaching process.

This challenge takes on particular weight in disciplines where education is formative rather than merely informative - legal education being a prime example. Training future lawyers involves not only transmitting

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theoretical knowledge but also cultivating the ability to analyze legal texts, interpret norms, construct arguments, and think critically. These competencies are indispensable for independent and responsible professional practice.

Undoubtedly, AI-based technologies can support the development of key legal skills. Yet they also carry the risk of diluting them and undermining intellectual independence.

This leads to a further, fundamental question: what role should AI play in legal education?

The present article reflects on the challenges posed by introducing AI-based tools into legal education. It should be emphasized, however, that this paper does not take a technical or empirical perspective. Its aim is rather to structure and highlight the principal areas of concern that call for particular attention within the academic community.

The analysis addresses three main dimensions: pedagogical, organizational, and ethical. The pedagogical dimension considers the impact of AI on students' learning processes and the role of the human lecturer. The organizational dimension examines institutional consequences, including the need for investment in infrastructure, training of academic staff, and the development of new university policies. Finally, the ethical dimension explores academic integrity, the transparency of interactions with AI, and equality of access to new technologies.

Chalkboard or chatbot: selected applications of ai in legal education

Although models of legal education differ depending on academic traditions, legal systems, and professional requirements3, the fundamental goal of legal studies remains universal and unchanged: to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for the responsible practice of law. Achieving this goal is a gradual process. Students first acquire a theoretical foundation and a general understanding of the legal system, and only later develop competencies in more specialized areas and fields of expertise.

Alongside the deepening of normative knowledge, legal education has always encompassed the cultivation of a set of general competencies that form the foundation of the lawyer's craft. These include above all analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to construct arguments, precise use of language, as well as ethical sensitivity and a sense of social responsibility. Such elements distinguish a professionally trained lawyer from someone relying merely on a superficial acquaintance with legal provisions or pre-prepared content available online.

Legal education has developed a repertoire of teaching methods that-despite variations arising from local traditions-retain a general character and find application across most systems. Among the most representative are:

- lectures - the primary form of knowledge transmission. They provide a structured presentation of doctrinal issues, situate law within its systemic context, and create intellectual frameworks for independent analysis,
- case studies - enabling the application of legal provisions (norms) to concrete factual scenarios (subsumption). They foster interpretive skills, logical reasoning, and the development of legal argumentation and academic debate[4],
- practical simulations (e.g., moot courts[5], drafting pleadings, legal clinics[6]) - allowing students to confront theoretical knowledge with practice, refine written and oral advocacy, and prepare for the realities of professional work[7].

These methods have for decades proven to be effective tools for training lawyers and remain the cornerstone of legal pedagogy.

However, one cannot ignore the fact that, in light of the rapid development of technology and the evolving profile of new generations of students-who are far more familiar with digital tools and expect interactive learning experiences-there is a natural drive to seek new forms and means of instruction.[8] In this context, AI-based tools come to the forefront. Their capacity to process vast datasets, adapt content to the user's level, and enable personalized interaction makes them not only a supplement to traditional methods but also a gateway to a qualitatively new dimension of legal education.

The capabilities of AI systems developed thus far can support legal education in a variety of ways. Illustrative examples include:

- personalization of learning - AI systems can monitor student progress, identify areas requiring improvement, and recommend tailored materials, thereby enabling individualized instruction even within large groups[9],

- searching and organizing legal sources - AI can rapidly scan vast databases of statutes, case law, and scholarly literature, pointing students to the most relevant provisions, judgments, or doctrinal views, thus saving time and enabling a focus on substantive analysis[10],
- summarizing and analyzing legal texts - AI tools can generate concise versions of lengthy documents, helping students navigate complex materials and providing starting points for deeper inquiry[11],
- interactive quizzes and exercises - algorithms can generate assessments tailored to the student's knowledge level, reinforcing retention and enabling real-time error correction[12],
- simulations - AI systems can act as "virtual parties" in moot court proceedings or simulate negotiations, offering students realistic environments in which to practice legal argumentation and procedural strategy,
- virtual tutors - intelligent systems capable of engaging in dialogue with students, answering questions, clarifying difficult concepts, and providing ongoing support in the learning process[13].

It should be emphasized that this list is conceptual in nature. The sheer variety of potential applications of AI in teaching makes it impossible to present a comprehensive account within the scope of a single article. Nonetheless, even the examples cited above allow us to identify several key benefits of implementing AI in legal education, including improved access to knowledge, time efficiency, effective information management, enhanced quality in large-scale instruction, greater student engagement in the learning process, and support for the development of practical skills.

Navigating the challenges of ai in higher education

Naturally, even the most promising benefits of employing AI must be subject to critical reflection. Such reflection reveals not only challenges but, at times, also risks associated with introducing AI into the education of future lawyers. The following sections of the article present what the author considers to be the most significant of these challenges.

Educational Challenges: Between Support and Substitution

The use of AI in higher education gives rise above all to a dilemma between its function as a tool supporting the learning process and the risk of substituting for students' own effort. Excessive reliance on AI solutions threatens to erode the very foundations of legal education outlined above.

One of the key risks is the potential weakening of students' intellectual independence. In the traditional model, analyzing a case requires students to locate the relevant legal norms, apply them to the facts (subsumption), and support their conclusions with appropriate argumentation. In an AI-dominated learning environment, this process may be reduced to simply posing a question to the system and accepting the generated response. Such "outsourcing of thinking" undermines the natural learning process, which depends to a large extent on making mistakes, correcting them, and gradually arriving at a solution. Even if the student receives a correct answer, their analytical and interpretive skills remain underdeveloped. Instead of cultivating the legal craft, the student acquires little more than the ability to use an algorithm.[14]

Closely connected to this is another issue that becomes particularly evident in the context of assessing students' knowledge and skills. As AI becomes increasingly accessible, traditional methods of evaluation - such as essays, written assignments, or projects - lose much of their reliability. It is becoming ever more difficult to determine whether a given text was produced by the student or generated by an algorithm. This situation risks devaluing standard assessment tools and compels instructors to search for alternative methods of evaluation.

The introduction of AI tools also necessitates a redefinition of the lecturer's role. In the classical model, the lecturer is primarily a source of knowledge and a guide through the legal system. In the era of widespread access to AI tools, this role may undergo a dangerous transformation. Students may prefer the convenience of generative systems over attending classes or engaging in independent analysis of recommended sources. Such a scenario could marginalize the lecturer, reducing an authority figure to a mere add-on whose expertise students believe can be "replaced" by technology. [15]

This trajectory leads directly to a loss of real control over the learning process. When the primary source of information becomes the algorithm, it is no longer the lecturer who determines what content students absorb and in what sequence. A gap emerges between the intended curriculum and the actual educational practices of students, who rely on material generated by systems operating on opaque foundations.

The didactic style of each lecturer is shaped by their unique experience, interpretation of the law, emphasis on specific problems, and individual approach to students. It is precisely this diversity that constitutes the richness of academic teaching and enables law students to form their own intellectual toolkit. However, if the point of reference shifts to an algorithm that operates by averaging data and reproducing recurring patterns, the natural plurality of perspectives risks being flattened.

In consequence, this may lead to the dehumanization of teaching and, in the longer term, its uniformization.

Organizational Challenges: Implementing AI in the University Ecosystem

The implementation of AI systems in teaching necessitates a restructuring of the institutional framework of universities, which in turn gives rise to a range of organizational challenges.

The first concerns infrastructure and cost. Modern AI-based systems require adequate technical resources: powerful servers, stable networks, robust data protection tools, and regular software updates. The high costs of deploying and maintaining such solutions may pose a significant barrier for institutions lacking sufficient financial resources. As a result, there is a risk of an "academic digital divide" where access to advanced teaching tools becomes the privilege of wealthier universities alone. This phenomenon may be further exacerbated by growing dependence on commercial technology providers - global corporations - raising questions about institutional sovereignty and the risk of monopolization in the education sector.[16]

A second area of concern is the adaptation of academic staff to these new conditions. The integration of AI tools into teaching requires lecturers to understand how digital technologies function and to be aware of their limitations. Without adequate systemic preparation, there is a risk that adaptation will proceed selectively: some lecturers will acquire the necessary skills, while others will lag behind. This risk is particularly acute for older generations, who - absent access to training and institutional support - may experience digital exclusion.17

The final dimension of organizational challenges relates to regulation. Introducing AI into teaching requires the establishment of clear rules governing its use within the university. A lack of coherent regulations may result in different organizational units developing divergent practices, thereby creating normative confusion and uncertainty regarding applicable standards. Such a situation fosters perceptions of arbitrariness and may trigger interpretative disputes between students and faculty.[18]

Ethical Challenges: Integrity, Transparency, and Equity

Ethical aspects constitute a particularly sensitive dimension of the use of AI in legal education. Whereas technical or organizational issues can be addressed in terms of resources and means, ethical questions touch upon the foundation of mutual trust within the academic community. The introduction of AI into teaching raises serious concerns about whether the educational process will continue to rest on such values as honesty, transparency, and fairness, or whether it will instead be subordinated to the logic of technological efficiency.

One of the most significant challenges arises in the area of academic honesty and integrity. As noted in section 3.1, higher education presupposes that students' work is the result of their own intellectual effort. Yet generative systems are capable of producing legal texts, case analyses, and arguments in ways that are nearly indistinguishable from human work. As a result, traditional assessment tools - essays, written assignments, or reports - lose their reliability. It is no longer possible to determine with certainty whether a given piece of work was produced by a student or generated by an algorithm. This creates the risk of widespread relativization of plagiarism and "honest work" thereby eroding the basic ethos of academia. If the contribution of technological tools becomes impossible to measure, the entire didactic structure risks losing its meaning, since it would be unclear whether what is being assessed are the student's knowledge and skills or merely their proficiency in using an algorithm.

A second major concern is the lack of transparency. AI systems often operate as "black boxes": their internal mechanisms cannot be clearly reconstructed. A student inputs a prompt and receives an answer but remains unaware of the reasoning process behind it or of the sources on which it is based.19 Consequently, neither verifiability nor meaningful control over teaching material is possible. This fosters an uncritical acceptance of AI outputs, with responses treated as "objective truth" regardless of their conformity with positive law or doctrinal views.20 Lack of transparency also raises difficulties in assigning responsibility for errors: it is often unclear whether the student, the lecturer, or the algorithm itself should be held accountable.

Equally significant is the issue of equality and fairness in access to advanced tools. The use of sophisticated AI systems often requires financial resources, appropriate hardware, or proficiency in English, which remains the dominant language of most leading solutions. In practice, this means that students at wealthier institutions may

gain a substantial advantage over their peers without such opportunities. Rather than leveling educational opportunities, AI may thus exacerbate existing inequalities. This problem extends beyond students to include faculty and institutions: universities with sufficient resources can integrate AI into teaching in a systematic way, while less affluent institutions are left on the margins. In this sense, equality in legal education may increasingly depend not only on the quality of curricula but also on the accessibility and distribution of technological tools.

Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis conducted demonstrates that the introduction of AI into legal education is multidimensional and ambiguous. AI is neither a neutral tool nor merely an external threat; it is a transformative factor whose impact depends on how it is embedded and managed within the academic environment.

The identification of the risks outlined above shows that the implementation of AI cannot be reduced to technical issues alone but entails structural and axiological consequences for higher education. On the didactic level, concerns arise about the erosion of students' intellectual independence and the marginalization of the lecturer's role in the educational process. On the organizational level, the deployment of advanced technologies exposes disparities between well-resourced institutions and those without such means, while also raising questions about regulatory coherence and institutional autonomy. Finally, on the ethical level, the presence of AI challenges long-standing academic values by blurring authorship criteria, limiting the transparency of technological processes, and deepening inequalities in access to education.

All of this leads to a fundamental tension: while AI can enrich models of training future lawyers, it simultaneously threatens to transform the very foundations of legal education. At stake is not merely the effectiveness of teaching methods but the preservation of the formative character of legal studies, in which interpretation, critical reflection, and responsibility remain essential. Any strategy for implementing new technologies should therefore safeguard these values, ensuring that AI serves as a supportive rather than substitutive tool in academic formation.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations should be considered:

- universities should adopt clear and consistent rules on the use of AI in teaching. This would help avoid normative confusion, arbitrariness, and interpretative disputes, while also enhancing transparency in academic relations (e.g., institutional codes of AI use),
- to prevent the emergence of an academic "digital divide," adequate technical infrastructure must be ensured. Equal educational opportunities require that access to AI tools not be limited to the best-financed institutions,
- the teaching process must recognize that technology changes the profile of demands placed on lecturers. Systematic training and institutional support are indispensable to prevent digital exclusion, particularly among older generations,
- responsible use of AI by students should be actively promoted. AI must not replace intellectual effort but support the development of legal skills. Students should therefore be taught to approach technology with critical distance, distinguishing between constructive use of tools and unreflective copying of content,
- the development of AI-based teaching should go hand in hand with efforts to ensure equal opportunities. This involves not only institutional access to technology but also addressing linguistic or financial barriers that may limit the possibilities of some students and staff.

Endnote

In this article, the term "artificial intelligence" is understood in the broadest possible sense - as a set of technologies and tools employing methods of automated data processing, machine learning, and generative techniques that may be applied in legal education.

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prawnicze), such as those for advocates, notaries, or judges. These programs, however, are not run by universities but by separate institutions - for instance, professional self-governing bodies or the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution. Alternatively, graduates may pursue careers in a wide range of public institutions or private organizations requiring legal expertise.

[1] The education of law students through the case study method has a particularly long tradition in common law systems. See further: Patterson, E. W., (1951), "The Case Method in American Legal Education: Its Origins and Objectives", *Journal of Legal Education*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1–24. [Online], [Retrieved October 29, 2025], https://www.jstor.org/stable/42890542.

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[1] These trends are evident, for instance, in the growing popularity of distance learning, which intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic. A study conducted among students at the Deggendorf Institute of Technology in Germany indicates that, although preferences regarding the mode of instruction are not uniform, students' needs may be best met through more flexible and digital teaching models. See: Fischer, S., Fisch, K., Hobelsberger, C. and Jung, S., (2025), " Students' preferences for online learning formats – Results of a latent class analysis", *The Internet and Higher Education*, vol. 68. [Online], [Retrieved October 29, 2025], https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2025.101053.

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[1] It is also worth noting the phenomenon of so-called “hallucinations” in language models. This occurs when AI systems generate content that appears coherent and credible but is in fact false - such as fabricated data, quotations, sources, or bibliographic references. This phenomenon is particularly dangerous in academic work, as it undermines the reliability of scholarly texts and makes it more difficult to verify the accuracy of cited literature. Empirical research conducted in 2023 showed that, of 178 citations generated by ChatGPT, as many as 39% contained incorrect or non-existent DOI identifiers, while another 16% referred to publications that could not be located in available databases. See: Athaluri, S. A., Manthena, S. V., Kesapragada, V S R K. M., Yarlagadda, V., Dave, T. and Duddumpudi, R. T. S., (2023), „Exploring the Boundaries of Reality: Investigating the Phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence Hallucination in Scientific Writing Through ChatGPT References”, *Cureus*. [Online], [Retrieved October 29, 2025], https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.37432.

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[20] It is also worth noting the phenomenon of so-called "hallucinations" in language models. This occurs when AI systems generate content that appears coherent and credible but is in fact false - such as fabricated data, quotations, sources, or bibliographic references. This phenomenon is particularly dangerous in academic work, as it undermines the reliability of scholarly texts and makes it more difficult to verify the accuracy of cited literature. Empirical research conducted in 2023 showed that, of 178 citations generated by ChatGPT, as many as 39% contained incorrect or non-existent DOI identifiers, while another 16% referred to publications that could not be located in available databases. See: Athaluri, S. A., Manthena, S. V., Kesapragada, V S R K. M., Yarlagadda, V., Dave, T. and Duddumpudi, R. T. S., (2023), „Exploring the Boundaries of Reality: Investigating the Phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence Hallucination in Scientific Writing Through ChatGPT References", *Cureus*. [Online], [Retrieved October 29, 2025], https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.37432.

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