
Auditable AI Literacy Interventions: Embedding Regulatory Principles into Higher Education

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Abstract

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become an integral part of education, work, and governance, making AI literacy a critical competency for higher education. Yet, in today’s higher education landscape, courses and programmes involving AI literacy tend to focus primarily on teaching knowledge and skills while overlooking a crucial element: *auditability*—the capacity to document, assess, and demonstrate responsible AI use in ways that align with regulatory standards. In this paper, we introduce the concept of *Auditable AI Literacy Interventions*, which incorporate audit instruments into AI literacy education to parallel standard regulatory practices such as conformity assessments, provenance tracking, and oversight structures. We outline a conceptual framework for designing these interventions, propose practical tools for classroom use, and illustrate how they can be integrated into tertiary level course modules. The main contribution of this work is to reconceptualize AI literacy: it should serve not only as an educational objective but also as a means of preparing institutions for regulatory compliance, thereby aligning higher education with emerging standards for regulatable machine learning.

1 Introduction

As AI systems become increasingly integrated into everyday life, their governance has emerged as a pressing societal challenge [18, 21, 35]. Recent regulatory initiatives, such as the EU AI Act [9] and other emerging national policies [4], emphasize the principles of transparency, accountability, and auditability in AI development and deployment. While these requirements are typically directed at industry and research, higher education plays a critical role in preparing future practitioners, policymakers, and citizens to operate in a regulatable AI ecosystem.

AI literacy, defined as the knowledge and critical capacities required to understand, evaluate, and responsibly use AI systems, has become an urgent educational priority [1, 7, 16, 19]. Yet most interventions focus on skill acquisition or ethical awareness without addressing auditability—the ability to generate evidence of conformance, traceability, and oversight [22]. Without embedding such practices, educational interventions risk producing learners who are knowledgeable but unprepared for regulatory realities.

In this paper, we propose the concept of *Auditable AI Literacy Interventions*, in which curriculum designs integrate audit instruments that mirror common regulatory practices such as conformity assessments [11, 29], provenance tracking [14, 30], and oversight structures [13, 33]. We contribute:

1. A conceptual framework for defining audit objectives and instruments in AI literacy education;
2. An illustrative example of how these instruments can be embedded into a higher education course module;
3. A discussion of implications for educators, students, and policymakers in aligning AI education with regulatable machine learning.

Our aim is to position AI literacy not only as an educational goal but also as a regulatory readiness strategy, ensuring that higher education contributes directly to the broader challenge of building trustworthy and accountable AI systems.

2 Auditable AI Literacy Intervention Framework

In this section, we present the concept of *Auditable AI Literacy Interventions*, highlighting how curriculum designs can embed systematic auditing mechanisms aligned with standard regulatory requirements, including conformity assessments, provenance tracking, and oversight structures. The framework is structured around four components: audit objectives, audit instruments, curriculum integration, and regulatory alignment.

2.1 Audit Objectives

We define AI literacy auditability across four key dimensions, derived from prior AI literacy frameworks [5, 8, 16, 23, 26, 27, 34]:

1. **Awareness:** Understanding the capabilities, risks, and regulatory context of AI.
2. **Ethics:** Ability to recognize potential harms, bias, and accountability of AI systems.
3. **Evaluation:** Critical capacity to assess the reliability and limits of AI outputs.
4. **Use:** Practical competence in deploying AI tools responsibly.

2.2 Audit Instruments

To operationalize these objectives, we propose the following instruments:

- **Pre/Post Surveys:** Surveys adapted or modified from established instruments—including MAILS [3, 17], AICOS [20], GLAT [15], ABCE [28], and AIERS [36]—to measure students’ AI literacy growth across the dimensions of awareness, ethics, evaluation, and use (Table 1).
- **Reflective Logs:** Structured templates—drawing inspiration from documentation practices such as Datasheets for Datasets [12], FactSheets [2], and Model Cards [24]—that guide students in documenting their interactions with AI tools, critically identifying observed risks (e.g., bias, hallucination), and outlining corresponding mitigation strategies. These logs act as *provenance records*.
- **Assignment Rubrics:** Derived from the AIAS scale [31] and the Transparency Index Framework [6], these rubrics assess coursework across multiple dimensions, including the quality of content, transparency in the use of AI tools, ethical reflection, and completeness of documentation.
- **Peer/Faculty Audit Checklists:** Structured review forms grounded in principles of AI auditing [10, 25], designed to simulate third-party audits by evaluating whether AI tool usage was transparently disclosed, potential risks were adequately addressed, and regulatory or ethical implications were taken into account [32].

2.3 Curriculum Integration

Audit checkpoints can be embedded within standard course modules:

1. **Pre-course:** Survey to establish baseline AI literacy and regulatory awareness.

Table 1: Representative survey instruments mapped to AI literacy dimensions

Dimensions	Associated Instruments
Awareness	MAILS Understand AI, AICOS Understanding AI, ABCE Cognitive, GLAT Know & Understand
Ethics	MAILS AI Ethics, AICOS Ethics AI, ABCE Ethical, GLAT Ethics, AIERS
Evaluation	MAILS Create AI, AICOS Create AI, ABCE Cognitive, GLAT Evaluate & Create
Use	MAILS Apply AI, AICOS Apply AI, GLAT Use & Apply

2. **Mid-course:** Reflective logs and assignments with disclosure requirements.
3. **End-course:** Post-survey combined with a peer audit exercise, providing traceable evidence of growth and oversight.

2.4 Regulatory Alignment

This framework reflects regulatory mechanisms that are fundamental to regulatable machine learning:

- **Conformity Assessments:** Pre/post surveys function as educational analogues of conformance testing [11].
- **Provenance Tracking:** Reflective logs parallel documentation requirements for high-risk AI systems [30].
- **Oversight Structures:** Peer/faculty checklists simulate external audits and human-in-the-loop oversight [33].

Overall, this framework positions AI literacy interventions as auditable, conformance-aware structures that prepare higher education institutions and learners for participation in a regulatable AI ecosystem.

3 Illustrative Example

To demonstrate feasibility, we sketch the design of a short AI literacy module within an undergraduate social science course. The module lasts two weeks and introduces students to both the technical and regulatory dimensions of generative AI systems.

3.1 Learning Activity

Students are asked to use a large language model (LLM) to generate a short essay on the topic of “Social Mobility in Education”. The goal is not only to familiarize students with generative AI, but also to develop their ability to critically evaluate, document, and reflect on the use of such tools.

3.2 Audit Instruments in Practice

The proposed audit instruments are embedded throughout the module:

- **Pre-survey:** Prior to the activity, students complete a brief AI literacy questionnaire, developed in accordance with the illustrative instruments in Table 1, to establish a baseline across the four dimensions of AI literacy: Awareness, Ethics, Evaluation, and Use.
- **Reflective log:** During the task, students complete a structured log template documenting the AI tools they used, the prompts issued, and any risks observed (e.g., biased examples, hallucinated references, or lack of transparency in outputs). The log also includes a section where students align their observations with relevant regulatory categories such as transparency and accountability.
- **Assignment rubric:** The essay is evaluated on both content quality and auditability, requiring students to disclose their AI usage, justify the role of the AI system in their workflow, and critically reflect on its limitations.

- **Peer audit checklist:** Each student’s work is reviewed by a peer using a structured checklist, including items such as “*Was AI use properly disclosed?*”, “*Were risks documented?*”, and “*Did the reflection address regulatory implications?*”. This process is designed to simulate a third-party audit.
- **Post-survey:** At the conclusion of the module, students complete the same questionnaire administered at the beginning. Comparing pre- and post-survey results provides evidence of growth across the four AI literacy dimensions and serves as a conformity-style assessment.

3.3 Expected Outcomes

This example illustrates how auditability can be embedded into AI literacy interventions without requiring significant curricular overhaul. The process generates traceable evidence of learning, familiarizes students with conformance-style documentation, and cultivates awareness of AI risks in a manner aligned with regulatory expectations. While conceptual, such a module provides a template for empirical pilot studies in higher education settings.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper introduced the concept of *Auditable AI Literacy Interventions*, arguing that AI education in higher education should cultivate competencies while integrating mechanisms for auditability, transparency, and regulatory alignment. By framing AI literacy development through the lens of regulatable machine learning, we highlight how educational practices can contribute to broader governance ecosystems.

4.1 Implications

The proposed framework suggests several implications:

- **For educators:** Audit instruments provide practical ways to integrate regulatory principles into existing curricula without extensive redesign. They can also serve as scaffolds for assessment, helping instructors move beyond evaluating technical proficiency to evaluating responsible and transparent use of AI.
- **For students:** Exposure to audit-style practices fosters both technical competence and regulatory awareness, preparing learners for future conformance contexts. It also encourages habits of documentation and reflection that are increasingly expected in professional AI development.
- **For policymakers:** Higher education can act as a site of alignment between AI literacy and regulatory readiness, producing evidence that educational interventions can emulate regulatory tools such as conformity assessments and provenance requirements. Universities adopting such practices could serve as testbeds that inform the evolution of standards and certification schemes.

Beyond higher education, these instruments could also inform professional training, certification schemes, and organizational governance, extending the reach of AI literacy into broader regulatory contexts.

4.2 Limitations and Future Work

Our framework is conceptual and has yet to be empirically validated. Future work should pilot these audit instruments in classroom settings, examine their psychometric reliability, and investigate how students engage with conformance-style practices. Longitudinal research could further explore whether fostering auditability in education translates into greater accountability in professional AI use. At the same time, adoption challenges such as faculty workload, student resistance, or concerns about introducing “audit culture” into learning environments need careful consideration.

4.3 Conclusion

Auditable AI literacy interventions bridge the gap between education and regulation by equipping learners with both knowledge and practices of oversight and accountability. Embedding auditability into AI literacy course modules offers a low-cost, high-value strategy for aligning higher education with the principles of regulatable machine learning. By extending existing AI literacy frameworks with an explicit focus on auditability, this work positions universities as educators of future practitioners while simultaneously preparing institutions and learners for a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape.

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