THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DATA SCIENCE INSTITUTE

Course syllabi are one of the main places where students learn course rules about attendance, deadlines, academic integrity, accommodations, and AI use. However, these policies are often scattered across long documents and written in different ways, making them difficult to review or compare by hand. The team organized 1,249 University of Chicago syllabi into a structured dataset, allowing common policy areas to be searched and compared across courses, departments, and years.

To make this comparison possible, the team built a language-model-assisted classification workflow. After extracting policy sections from each syllabus, the workflow generated candidate labels from the text, merged overlapping labels into readable categories, and assigned each section to the best-fitting category. This approach was useful because syllabi often describe the same rule in different words. The team also classified each section's tone as neutral, supportive, or directive, allowing the analysis to compare both policy content and communication style.

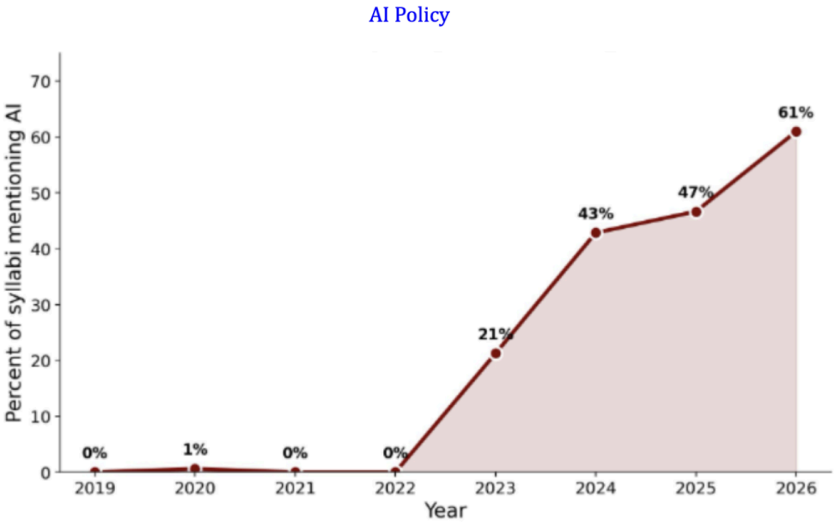

Figure 1. AI policy adoption increased after 2023

Figures 1 and 2 show that syllabus policies were both changing and uneven. AI policy language rose sharply after 2023, while attendance and late work policies more often emphasized consequences than recovery options. The workflow helped identify where student-facing guidance was emerging, unclear, or incomplete.

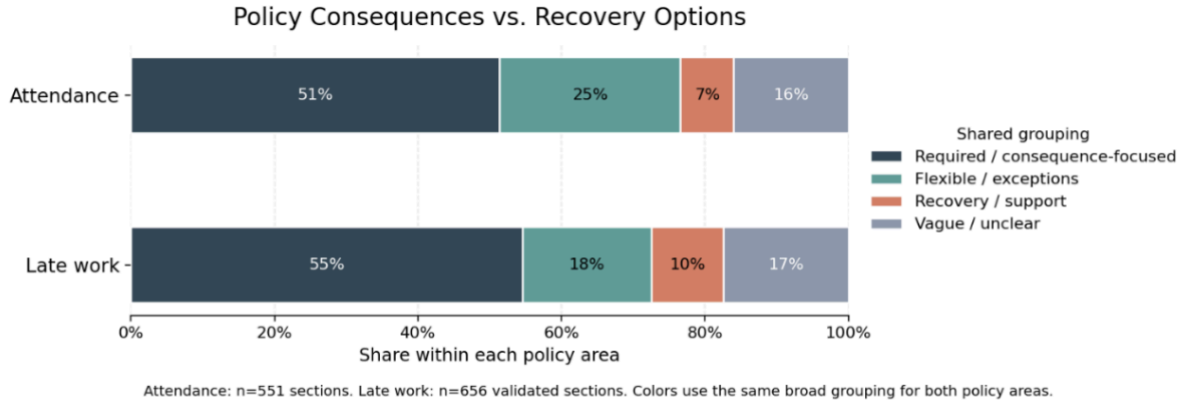

Figure 2. Attendance and late work policies are grouped into shared broad categories.