

Applying Artificial Intelligence in Teaching General Law for Non-Law students at Colleges and Universities in Vietnam

Vo Song Toan¹, Nguyen Thi Tam², Nguyen Ngoc Anh Tien³, Nguyen Le Phuong Anh⁴

¹Faculty of Economic Law, Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, Vietnam

²Faculty of Economic Law, Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, Vietnam

³Faculty of Economic Law, Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, Vietnam

⁴Faculty of Economic Law, Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT:

General Law is a compulsory course for non-law students in Vietnamese colleges and universities, usually delivered in large classes with limited contact hours. This study examines how artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, can be applied in teaching this course and what legal and pedagogical conditions such application requires. A qualitative design was adopted, combining document analysis of Vietnamese legal instruments issued in 2025–2026 and international guidance with a narrative review of studies on AI in legal and higher education. The analysis identifies five themes: a newly formed regulatory framework that permits AI as a supporting tool while imposing integrity and disclosure duties; concrete pedagogical uses across lesson design, classroom activity, and feedback; documented risks of inaccurate legal output; a gap in lecturer and student AI competency; and the need to redesign assessment. The paper proposes a human-centred integration model for General Law and recommends institutional codes of conduct, lecturer training, verification-based learning tasks, and empirical classroom research.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, generative AI, non-law students, General Law.

1. Introduction

The course General Law occupies a distinctive place in Vietnamese post-secondary education. In line with the Law on Legal Dissemination and Education (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2012), which makes legal education part of the national education system, most colleges and universities require students of non-law majors,

such as economics, finance, engineering, tourism, and health sciences, to complete an introductory law course. The course covers the theory of state and law and then surveys the main branches of Vietnamese law. It is commonly taught in a small number of credits to large, heterogeneous classes, and learners often regard it as abstract, text-heavy, and remote from their future professions. Lecturers therefore face a persistent tension

between wide content coverage and the goal of developing legal awareness and the ability to apply rules to everyday situations.

The rapid diffusion of generative AI since late 2022 has changed the conditions under which this course is taught. Large language models can explain concepts, summarise texts, generate case scenarios, and answer questions in Vietnamese within seconds. International scholarship describes considerable opportunities for personalised explanation, formative feedback, and active learning, alongside concerns about accuracy, bias, over-reliance, and academic integrity (Kasneji et al., 2023; Miao & Holmes, 2023). In legal education specifically, an early experiment found that ChatGPT could pass four law school examinations at the University of Minnesota, although with a low average grade of C+ (Choi et al., 2022). Bliss (2024) subsequently argued that generative AI should be integrated across the law curriculum, from first-year doctrinal courses to clinics, while noting that teachers worry about students outsourcing foundational work.

Law, however, is a field in which fluent but wrong answers are particularly hazardous. Dahl et al. (2024) reported that general-purpose language models hallucinated in a majority of the specific legal queries they tested, and Magesh et al. (2025) showed that even commercial legal research tools built on retrieval-augmented generation still produced incorrect or misgrounded answers in a substantial share of queries. In Vietnam, Đăng et al. (2025) tested several generative AI models on a multiple-choice General Law examination and found that, although some models reached high rates of correct answers, the models could give false but convincing responses. Studies of Vietnamese students also indicate that adoption of ChatGPT is driven largely by perceived ease of use, which underlines the need for guidance on responsible use (Maheshwari, 2024).

At the same time, Vietnam has moved quickly to regulate AI. The Law on Artificial Intelligence was passed in December 2025 and took effect on 1 March 2026 (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2025). In mid-2026, the Ministry of Education

and Training issued Circular No. 49/2026/TT-BGDĐT on the application of technology in higher and vocational education, which for the first time addresses the use of AI in training and research, and Circular No. 54/2026/TT-BGDĐT, which requires AI-related content in the learning outcomes of higher education programmes (Ministry of Education and Training, 2026a, 2026b).

Despite these developments, the literature on AI in legal education concentrates on professional law degrees in common law jurisdictions, and Vietnamese studies of generative AI in higher education focus mainly on language learning and technology acceptance. Little attention has been paid to introductory law courses for non-law students, where learners lack the legal background needed to detect errors in AI output. This study addresses that gap. Its objectives are (1) to identify the legal and policy framework currently governing the use of AI in teaching at Vietnamese colleges and universities; (2) to synthesise the opportunities and risks of applying AI in teaching General Law; and (3) to propose a model and recommendations for responsible integration.

2. Methodology

Design: The study uses a qualitative design that combines document analysis (Bowen, 2009) with a narrative literature review. No survey, interview, or experimental data were collected; the findings are derived entirely from published documents.

Participants/Sample: As the study involves no human participants, the sample consists of documents selected purposively. The corpus comprises thirteen sources in three groups: four Vietnamese legal instruments (the 2012 Law on Legal Dissemination and Education, the 2025 Law on Artificial Intelligence, and Circulars No. 49/2026/TT-BGDĐT and No. 54/2026/TT-BGDĐT); two UNESCO guidance documents on generative AI and on AI competencies for teachers; and seven scholarly studies on AI in legal education, on the reliability of AI for legal tasks, and on generative AI use among Vietnamese students. Sources were included if they were published between 2012 and 2026,

were publicly accessible, and addressed AI in education, AI in law, or legal education for non-specialists.

Instruments: A document analysis matrix was used to record, for each source, its type, issuing body or authors, year, provisions or findings relevant to teaching and learning, and implications for General Law. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) and the UNESCO AI competency framework for teachers (Miao & Cukurova, 2024) served as analytical lenses.

Procedure: The study proceeded in four steps: (1) identifying legal instruments through official gazettes and legal databases, and scholarly sources through academic search engines using

3. Results

Five themes emerged from the analysis. Table 1 summarises them, and the paragraphs that follow present each in turn.

Table 1. Themes identified from the document analysis

Theme	Main content	Principal sources
1. Regulatory framework	AI is permitted as a supporting tool; duties of transparency, integrity, and disclosure; AI content required in programme learning outcomes	National Assembly of Vietnam (2025); Ministry of Education and Training (2026a, 2026b)
2. Pedagogical uses	Lesson and scenario design; in-class explanation and practice; formative feedback; personalised support	Bliss (2024); Kasneci et al. (2023); Miao & Holmes (2023)
3. Accuracy risks	Fabricated or misgrounded legal content; outdated law; convincing but false answers in Vietnamese law	Dahl et al. (2024); Magesh et al. (2025); Đặng et al. (2025)
4. Competency gap	Use driven by ease rather than critical evaluation; teachers need AI-specific pedagogical competencies	Maheshwari (2024); Miao & Cukurova (2024)
5. Assessment	Unsupervised written tasks are vulnerable; AI can pass law examinations at a modest level	Choi et al. (2022); Bliss (2024); Ministry of Education and Training (2026a)

Theme 1: A newly formed regulatory framework. The Law on Artificial Intelligence adopts a risk-based approach, classifies AI systems by level of risk, and requires that users be

English and Vietnamese keywords; (2) screening sources against the inclusion criteria; (3) extracting relevant content into the matrix; and (4) comparing the content across the three groups of sources.

Data Analysis: The extracted content was analysed thematically following the phases described by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, and defining them. Legal instruments were additionally read using conventional methods of legal interpretation, attending to their scope, addressees, and binding force. Because the review is narrative rather than systematic, the themes are interpretive and are not presented as exhaustive.

informed when they interact with AI systems or AI-generated content (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2025). Circular No. 49/2026/TT-BGDĐT, issued on 3 July 2026 and effective

from 15 August 2026, applies to both higher education and vocational education and therefore covers universities and colleges. It states that the application of technology must be learner-centred and that AI is a tool supporting, not replacing, the responsibilities of lecturers. It requires institutions to issue internal codes of conduct on the use of AI in training and research, and it treats the use of AI for cheating, plagiarism, or falsification of data, and the failure to disclose AI use when disclosure is required, as violations of academic integrity (Ministry of Education and Training, 2026a). Circular No. 54/2026/TT-BGDĐT requires the learning outcomes of higher education programmes to include digital competence and AI content, with the scope and depth determined by each institution and field of study (Ministry of Education and Training, 2026b).

Theme 2: Pedagogical uses. The reviewed sources describe uses of generative AI at three stages of teaching. In preparation, AI can draft case scenarios, questions, and explanatory materials adapted to learners' fields. In class, it can provide alternative explanations of abstract concepts, support role-play and hypothesis testing, and enable practice with immediate responses. After class, it can offer formative feedback and individual support at a scale that lecturers of large classes cannot provide alone (Bliss, 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). UNESCO's guidance frames these uses within a human-centred approach in which the teacher retains pedagogical control (Miao & Holmes, 2023).

Theme 3: Accuracy risks specific to law. Dahl et al. (2024) found hallucination rates ranging from 58% to 88% across the general-purpose models they tested on specific legal queries. Magesh et al. (2025) reported that leading commercial AI legal research tools hallucinated in roughly 17% to 33% of the queries tested. For Vietnamese law, Đặng et al. (2025) observed that performance on a General Law multiple-choice test varied considerably between models and that the models struggled with detailed statutory provisions while presenting incorrect answers persuasively.

Theme 4: Competency gap. In a study of 108 students at Vietnamese universities, Maheshwari (2024) found that perceived ease of use directly influenced the intention to adopt ChatGPT, while trust did not show a significant effect. The UNESCO framework specifies that teachers need competencies in five aspects: a human-centred mindset, the ethics of AI, AI foundations and applications, AI pedagogy, and AI for professional development (Miao & Cukurova, 2024). Circular No. 49/2026/TT-BGDĐT likewise assigns institutions responsibility for developing the AI competencies of lecturers and learners (Ministry of Education and Training, 2026a).

Theme 5: Assessment. Choi et al. (2022) showed that ChatGPT achieved passing grades on law school examinations consisting of multiple-choice and essay questions. Bliss (2024) reported that law teachers are concerned about students delegating assessed work to AI. The new Vietnamese rules respond by defining AI-related integrity violations and by requiring identity verification and anti-fraud measures in digital learning environments (Ministry of Education and Training, 2026a).

4. Discussion

The results indicate that the question for General Law lecturers in Vietnam is no longer whether AI may be used but how it should be used. The 2026 circulars legitimise AI as a supporting tool and simultaneously place duties on institutions, lecturers, and students. This is consistent with UNESCO's human-centred position (Miao & Holmes, 2023) and with the argument of Bliss (2024) that integration, rather than prohibition, is the realistic course. For General Law the regulatory change has a further meaning: the course itself is a natural place to teach students about the legal rules governing AI, so that AI becomes both a teaching instrument and a subject of legal awareness. This also offers one pathway by which non-law programmes can meet the AI-related learning outcomes required by Circular No. 54/2026/TT-BGDĐT.

The accuracy findings carry particular weight for this course. Law students in professional

programmes can be expected, over time, to check AI output against primary sources. Non-law students taking a single introductory course generally cannot. Vietnamese law also changes frequently, and models trained on older data may reproduce repealed provisions. The evidence of *Đặng et al. (2025)* that models answer General Law questions convincingly but sometimes wrongly suggests that unguided use may entrench misconceptions. The implication is not avoidance but redesign: AI output should be treated as material to be verified, not as an authority.

On this basis, the study proposes a human-centred integration model with three layers. In the first layer, the lecturer uses AI to prepare materials, especially profession-specific scenarios, such as a consumer credit contract for banking students or a tour service contract for tourism students, and personally verifies every legal statement against the current legal text before use. In the second layer, students use AI in structured activities in which verification is the learning task: for example, comparing an AI-generated answer with the relevant code article, identifying errors, and explaining the correct rule. Such tasks turn the weakness of the tool into an exercise in legal reasoning and develop the habit of consulting official sources. In the third layer, assessment combines supervised components, oral explanation, and applied tasks with a clear, proportionate AI-disclosure rule, so that grades reflect the student's own understanding. In TPACK terms (*Mishra & Koehler, 2006*), the model requires lecturers to combine legal content knowledge, which allows them to detect errors, with pedagogical and technological knowledge, which allows them to design tasks around the tool.

The findings have implications at three levels. Theoretically, they suggest that frameworks for AI in legal education developed for professional law degrees need adjustment for non-specialist learners, for whom the verification capacity must be built into the task rather than assumed. Practically, lecturers need training aligned with the UNESCO competency aspects, and departments need shared, verified question banks and scenario libraries. At the policy level, colleges

and universities should promptly issue the internal codes of conduct required by Circular No. 49/2026/TT-BGDĐT, with course-level guidance stating which uses of AI are permitted, which must be disclosed, and which are prohibited. Institutions should also consider equity of access, since students differ in their access to paid AI tools, and the protection of personal data entered into AI systems.

The study has limitations. It is based on documents and published studies and does not include primary data from lecturers or students of General Law; the proposed model has therefore not been tested in the classroom. The literature review is narrative and purposive, so relevant studies may have been omitted, and much of the international evidence comes from common law professional programmes that differ from the Vietnamese setting. Finally, the legal framework is new, implementing guidance is still being issued, and both the rules and the capabilities of AI tools are likely to change.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the application of AI in teaching General Law at colleges and universities in Vietnam through an analysis of legal instruments, international guidance, and scholarly studies. It found that Vietnam now has an explicit regulatory basis for using AI in teaching, that generative AI offers concrete benefits for lesson design, classroom interaction, and feedback in large introductory law classes, and that these benefits are conditional on managing the risk of inaccurate legal content, closing the AI competency gap, and redesigning assessment.

Four recommendations follow. First, institutions should adopt codes of conduct and course-level AI policies in accordance with Circular No. 49/2026/TT-BGDĐT. Second, lecturers of General Law should receive training in AI pedagogy and should verify all AI-generated legal content before use. Third, learning activities should make verification against official legal texts an explicit task, and content on the law governing AI should be added to the course. Fourth, assessment should combine supervised and applied components with transparent

disclosure rules. Future research should test the proposed model empirically, through surveys of lecturers and students, classroom experiments comparing AI-supported and conventional instruction, and evaluations of the accuracy of AI tools on current Vietnamese law.

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8. Author Declaration

The authors confirm that this manuscript is original work, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.