BIOMENTOR - PERSONALIZED E-LEARNING PLATFORM FOR ENGLISH MEDIUM A/L BIOLOGY SUBJECT STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

(LLM-BASED PLATFORM PROVIDING ANSWERS FOR STRUCTURED AND ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS AND EVALUATING ANSWERS BASED ON APPROVED RESOURCES)

24-25J-257

Project Final Thesis

Sajeevan S - IT21204302

B.Sc. (Hons) in Information Technology
Specializing in SoftwareEngineering

Department of Computer Science & Software Engineering

Sri Lanka Institute of Information
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April 2025

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DECLARATION

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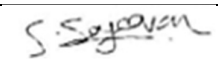
Sajeevan S	IT21204302	

The above candidate has carried out this research thesis for the Degree of Bachelor of Science (honors) Information Technology (Specializing in Software Engineering) under my supervision.

Signature of the supervisor
(Dr. Sanvitha Kasthuriarachchi)

10/04/2024
Date

Signature of co-supervisor
(Ms. Karthiga Rajendran)

10/04/2024
Date

ABSTRACT

E-learning has revolutionized contemporary education by allowing students to access information remotely via sophisticated systems and digital platforms. Nonetheless, the challenge persists in effectively evaluating subjective answers such as structured or essay-type responses. This study tackles this issue by creating a holistic Question Answering and Evaluation System specifically tailored for Advanced Level (A/L) Biology students in Sri Lanka. The system utilizes advanced Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine learning methods to automate the tasks of answer generation, assessment, and feedback provision.

At the center of the system lies a precisely adjusted LLAMA 3-Instruct model, designed to produce answers tailored to the complexity and context of both structured and essay-type questions in the A/L Biology curriculum. To assess student responses, a hybrid scoring algorithm is utilized, which merges semantic similarity based on SciBERT, TF-IDF cosine analysis, and Jaccard similarity. This approach guarantees a comprehensive evaluation that transcends basic matching. The evaluation workflow also incorporates grammar checking, keyword extraction via spaCy, and contextual enhancement using the Gemini API to ensure both linguistic accuracy and conceptual thoroughness.

A MongoDB-backed data infrastructure stores user responses, evaluation results, and analytics. Additionally, FAISS-based semantic search enables the retrieval of relevant study materials and notes to support answer generation and personalized feedback. The system also features an intelligent moderation layer using BERT-based classifiers to ensure the acceptability of user-generated questions.

The findings demonstrate a strong level of dependability in automated assessment, with semantic and lexical scores closely matching human evaluations. In addition, the platform provides real-time analytics that emphasize students' strengths, weaknesses, and mastery of keywords, while also recommending tailored learning resources and activities.

This thesis presents a unified framework combining NLP and pedagogy for automated answer generation, evaluation, and adaptive learning, advancing fair, effective e-learning tailored to Sri Lankan A/L Biology education standards.

Keywords: Sri Lankan A/L Biology, Question Answering System, Structured and Essay Answer Generation, Structured and Essay Answer Evaluation, Scoring, LLAMA 3-Instruct, Semantic Similarity, SciBERT, FAISS, TF-IDF, Jaccard Similarity, Grammar Evaluation, Adaptive Learning, Educational Technology, MongoDB Analytics, Intelligent Feedback System, Student Performance Monitoring

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I sincerely convey my sincere thanks to our module coordinator Dr. Jayantha Amararachchi who helped us and gave us enough motivation and ideas to carry forward the project further and involve ourselves to our best with the project with much enthusiasm. I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Sanvitha Kasthuriarachchi, and co-supervisor Ms. Karthiga Rajendran for their valuable time, guidance, and support throughout the project and for helping me from the very start till the end and for giving a variety of ideas to develop the project in many aspects and also bearing up with all the mistakes that were made by and stood with me for the entire period of time with a lot of patience and care. Also, I thank the lecturers, assistant lecturers, instructors, my group members, and academic and non-academic staff of SLIIT who were always there to support me and help me to complete the requirements of the module. Finally, I thank my beloved family and friends who stood by me throughout the project period as pillars and provided moral support to me at points where I felt like giving up on the project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Description
SLIIT	Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology
A/L	Advanced Level
ML	Machine Learning
API	Application Programming Interface
LMS	Learning Management System
NLP	Natural Language Processing
LLAMA	Large Language Model Meta AI
LoRA	Low-Rank Adaptation
PEFT	Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning
FP16	16-bit Floating Point Precision
FAISS	Facebook AI Similarity Search
JS	JavaScript
BERT	Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers
SFT	Supervised Fine-Tuning
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure
IDE	Integrated Development Environment
TF-IDF	Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency
DB	Database
UAT	User Acceptance Testing
AI	Artificial Intelligence
VM	Virtual Machine
Nginx	Engine X (High-Performance Web Server)
SSH	Secure Shell
CI/CD	Continuous Integration and Continuous Deployment

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Study and Literature Review

1.1.1 Background Study

In recent years, the integration of computational tools and digital platforms into education has significantly altered the way students engage with academic content. With the expansion of e-learning environments and self-paced online education models, the need for tools that support independent learning, and assessment has become more critical than ever. Traditional systems fall short when it comes to evaluating subjective answers, especially in subjects requiring conceptual depth and structured explanations such as Sri Lankan A/L Biology.

This research addresses this limitation by developing a comprehensive Question Answering and Evaluation System that empowers students to learn and assess themselves without constant mentor support. It is specifically designed for the Sri Lankan A/L Biology curriculum, focusing on enhancing independent learning through automatic answer generation, evaluation, and personalized feedback delivery.

The system enables students to input a structured or essay-type question and receive a relevant, curriculum-aligned model answer generated by a fine-tuned LLAMA 3-Instruct model. It then allows students to submit their own responses for comparison and evaluation. A hybrid similarity scoring engine integrating SciBERT-based semantic similarity, TF-IDF analysis, and Jaccard keyword overlap ensures that the system provides accurate, multi-dimensional evaluations. Complementing these features are grammar and keyword analyses powered by spaCy, grammar correction tools, and polishing mechanisms using the Gemini API.

By integrating MongoDB for storing evaluation data and FAISS for semantic search, the platform can retrieve relevant study material, deliver personalized feedback, and track learning patterns over time. Additionally, it employs BERT-based models to

moderate question input, ensuring appropriateness and relevance within the learning context.

The unique strength of this project lies in its ability to simulate the feedback and guidance a student might receive from a human educator. Through real-time evaluation and analytics, the system identifies conceptual gaps, common grammatical errors, and missing keywords, and then recommends study resources accordingly. This fosters a self-guided, continuous learning process that aligns with modern educational needs.

In summary, this system contributes to the advancement of educational technology by offering a self-sustaining learning and evaluation platform for A/L Biology students in Sri Lanka. It enhances autonomy in student learning, supports preparation for national examinations, and lays the foundation for scalable virtual learning tools in secondary education.

1.1.2 Literature Review

The domain of automated answer evaluation and generation has seen significant advancements in recent years due to the growing capabilities of Natural Language Processing (NLP) and deep learning models. Several studies have focused on automating short answer grading, leveraging various similarity metrics such as cosine similarity, Jaccard index, and more recently, transformer-based semantic embeddings.

Traditional approaches primarily utilized keyword matching and rule-based techniques to evaluate responses, which lacked flexibility and failed to capture contextual understanding. With the introduction of embedding models like Word2Vec and BERT, semantic similarity became a central feature in evaluating textual responses. However, domain-specific applications such as secondary school-level biology in the Sri Lankan Advanced Level (A/L) curriculum remain underexplored.

Kumar et al. [1] demonstrated the effectiveness of using BERT embeddings combined with TF-IDF in automating answer scoring in university-level courses, showing improvements in scoring fairness and reducing instructor workload. Similarly, SciBERT a BERT variant fine-tuned on scientific texts has been applied in educational contexts where scientific and technical accuracy is critical [2]. These models enable deeper semantic understanding of complex academic language, making them well-suited for biology-related content.

In terms of answer generation, transformer-based models such as GPT and T5 have been utilized to produce fluent, context-aware responses to open-ended questions [3]. However, their general-purpose nature limits their effectiveness in education-specific domains. Fine-tuning such models on curriculum-aligned datasets, as done in this research using the LLAMA 3-Instruct model, allows for more accurate, syllabus-specific responses tailored to the A/L Biology subject.

For answer evaluation, a hybrid approach that combines multiple similarity scores with grammar and keyword analysis has been proposed in recent literature [4]. These

methods allow for a more balanced assessment, incorporating both lexical overlap and conceptual accuracy. Additionally, spaCy has been widely adopted for linguistic feature extraction [5], while tools like LanguageTool help assess grammar correctness [6].

Feedback generation is another key area of research. Adaptive learning systems increasingly rely on detailed feedback to improve student engagement and self-correction. Some systems use attention mechanisms to highlight which keywords were missed or incorrectly used [7]. Yet, few systems fully integrate keyword extraction, grammar correction, and semantic scoring into one pipeline, particularly in the context of secondary education.

Moreover, studies on adaptive learning platforms emphasize the importance of formative assessment and immediate feedback. By providing real-time scoring and study material suggestions, systems like the one developed in this research enhance students' self-learning capabilities, which is crucial in environments with limited teacher availability.

1.2 Research Gap

Numerous developments have taken place in automated question answering and answer assessment; however, the majority of current systems are designed for general-purpose datasets or higher education settings. These systems often lack the necessary fine-tuning to accurately assess responses at the secondary school level, particularly in subjects like Sri Lankan A/L Biology. There exists a distinct shortage of domain-specific, curriculum-aligned systems capable of evaluating both structured and essay-type answers that demand scientific precision, proper biological terminology, and conceptual understanding..

A key research gap identified in this project is the lack of intelligent educational tools tailored specifically for the Sri Lankan A/L Biology curriculum sanctioned by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and other governmental educational bodies. Most existing systems are generalized and do not cater to the localized content, structure, and teaching standards anticipated within the national examination framework. Consequently, students do not have access to learning platforms that are directly aligned with their syllabus, which hampers their ability to receive effective and relevant support during exam preparation.

Additionally, current answer generation tools either rely on generic language models that do not reflect the local curriculum or require teacher intervention for interpretation and correction. There is a pressing need for a system that empowers students to self-assess their answers without mentor support, especially in under-resourced learning environments. This research addresses these gaps by developing a self-evaluation and adaptive learning system tailored specifically to the Sri Lankan A/L Biology curriculum, enabling students to receive meaningful, syllabus-aligned feedback and track their progress independently.

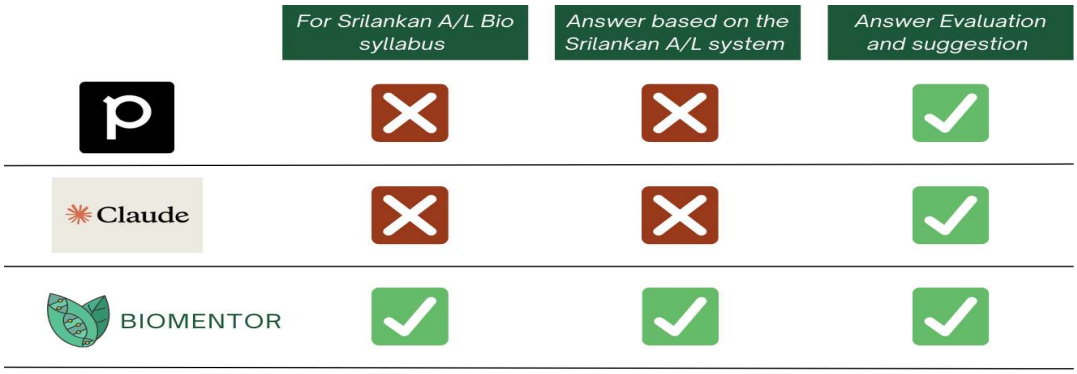

Figure 1: Competitive Analysis

1.3 Research Problem

The growth of digital education has spurred an increasing need for intelligent systems that can facilitate autonomous learning, especially in situations where students do not have continuous access to teacher feedback. In Sri Lanka, learners preparing for the Advanced Level (A/L) Biology exam encounter a distinct obstacle: although the national curriculum is rich in content and heavy in concepts, there is a scarcity of infrastructure for self-assessment and tailored feedback. Current e-learning platforms and answer assessment systems tend to be generic, concentrating on global curricula, multiple-choice formats, or general-purpose AI solutions. These systems do not match the structure, terminology, or depth required by the Sri Lankan A/L Biology syllabus. Consequently, students frequently depend solely on the availability of teachers, textbooks, or past examination papers, which restricts their capacity to independently gauge and enhance their conceptual understanding.

When it comes to answering structured and essay-style questions, biology students frequently struggle to grow into independent learning and self-assessment skills. Furthermore, due to financial limitations and other issues, not all Sri Lankan students have access to qualified biology teachers, particularly in the English-medium Advanced Level Biology stream. This lack of access exacerbates existing educational disparities and prevents students from receiving the individualized feedback they need to improve. Many depend heavily on teacher-provided feedback and evaluation, which may not always be timely or sufficient to help them achieve their academic goals.

Apart from these difficulties, many students find it challenging to identify and address their personal weaknesses without professional support. The traditional approaches to evaluation and feedback frequently don't scale effectively, leaving students without the necessary tools to meet their learning objectives. The challenge of achieving academically is further increased by the difficulty of locating proper answers to structured and essay-style questions. As such, there is a significant need to explore how technology-based tools can be effectively developed and utilized to support students in finding relevant answers, as well as in independently improving and evaluating their work.

This study aims to address these challenges by creating a question answering and evaluation system that is aligned with the Sri Lankan A/L Biology syllabus, as sanctioned by government authorities. By implementing a fine-tuned LLAMA 3-Instruct model for generating answers and utilizing a combination of similarity metrics (including SciBERT, TF-IDF, and Jaccard) for evaluation, the system allows students to receive immediate, accurate, and explanatory feedback. Additionally, it provides individualized analytics that pinpoint areas needing improvement and suggests study resources tailored to identified weaknesses. The system acts as a virtual mentor, empowering students to prepare more efficiently for their national examinations, independently address learning gaps, and excel in a digital learning environment.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

To design and implement an intelligent self-learning platform that assists **Sri Lankan A/L Biology students** in independently answering and evaluating structured and essay-type questions aligned with the national syllabus. This system aims to bridge the gap in personalized academic support by integrating natural language processing, curriculum-specific answer generation, and a hybrid evaluation model empowering students to receive automated, real-time feedback and improve without constant teacher intervention.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The following are the sub-objectives of conducting this research.

- To develop a real-time answer evaluation system for structured and essay-type questions tailored to the Sri Lankan A/L Biology syllabus.

- To enable curriculum-aligned model answer generation using the LLAMA 3-Instruct model, enhanced with contextual polishing via the Gemini API.

- To implement a hybrid scoring algorithm combining SciBERT-based semantic similarity, TF-IDF, and Jaccard similarity for accurate answer assessment.

- To provide personalized feedback based on missing keywords, grammar errors, and content overlap to support self-learning.

- To deliver adaptive learning recommendations and study material suggestions based on individual performance analytics.

- To design a user-friendly API and backend architecture using FastAPI, MongoDB, and FAISS for semantic search and analytics storage.

- To incorporate intelligent question moderation using BERT-based classifiers to ensure appropriateness and relevance of user queries.

- To empower students with a dashboard that visualizes their strengths, weaknesses, trends, and progress over time.

- To promote independent learning and equitable access to exam preparation tools in resource-constrained environments.

1.4.3 Business Objectives

➤ **Promote Independent Learning at Scale:**

Enable educational institutions and e-learning platforms to offer automated, curriculum-aligned evaluation tools that reduce dependency on human evaluators. Empower students to self-assess and improve using real-time feedback, even in areas with limited access to qualified educators particularly in the English-medium A/L Biology stream.

➤ **Improve Educational Equity and Access:**

Bridge the gap in quality education for students across urban and rural Sri Lanka by providing an affordable, technology-driven solution. Make high-quality feedback and learning support available to all A/L Biology students, regardless of socioeconomic background or teacher availability.

➤ **Enhance Instructional Efficiency:**

Reduce the workload on educators by automating the generation of model answers, answer evaluation, and feedback generation. Allow teachers to focus on higher-order teaching tasks, while the system handles repetitive evaluations and personalized support at scale.

➤ **Deliver Competitive Advantage to EdTech Providers:**

Position e-learning platforms and tutoring services as pioneers in offering intelligent, personalized, curriculum-specific educational tools. Increase student retention, engagement, and trust through timely insights, analytics, and adaptive learning recommendations.

➤ **Facilitate Data-Driven Academic Support:**

Equip institutions with actionable analytics on student performance, weaknesses, and improvement trends. Enable administrators and educators to tailor interventions, allocate resources effectively, and measure the impact of academic strategies in real time.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodology

Methodology in research refers to the comprehensive plan and systematic set of strategies, frameworks, and tools that guide the execution of a study. It serves as the blueprint for how research is conceptualized, how data is collected and analyzed, and how conclusions are drawn. A well-articulated methodology ensures that the research is scientifically rigorous, replicable, and capable of yielding reliable and meaningful results. In this research, the methodology was carefully selected to address both the technical requirements of natural language processing (NLP)-based automation and the educational goals of facilitating self-directed learning among Sri Lankan A/L Biology students.

Given the multi-dimensional nature of the problem spanning answer generation, semantic evaluation, feedback design, and system scalability the research adopted an Agile methodology. Agile, originally rooted in software engineering, is increasingly utilized in research and system development where adaptability, user feedback, and incremental improvement are critical. It allows for project flexibility and iterative refinement, aligning with the dynamic and evolving needs of educational software systems.

In the context of this study, Agile enabled the development of a fully functional, curriculum-aligned answer evaluation platform through iterative development cycles known as sprints. These sprints helped the team manage various modules of the project including answer generation using a fine-tuned large language model, hybrid evaluation mechanisms utilizing semantic similarity, keyword analysis, and grammar checking, and feedback logic built on concept coverage and content comparison. Each component was progressively improved through repeated testing, feedback collection, and alignment with user expectations.

The Agile process was applied over a seven-stage development framework, beginning with feasibility analysis and moving through requirement gathering, system design, implementation, testing, deployment, and continuous improvement. The research team refined system components incrementally improving the quality of generated answers,

tuning evaluation scoring, and enhancing the feedback engine. Semantic search and topic-matching were supported by an integrated similarity search system, while a robust NoSQL database was used to store evaluation records, feedback reports, and user analytics. A lightweight API framework was used to connect system components and provide scalable endpoints for user interaction and future integrations.

To ensure accessibility and ease of use, a responsive front-end interface was also developed using React and Tailwind CSS. This interface allows students to interact with the platform intuitively across devices, view real-time feedback on their answers, and track their performance trends. The front-end design emphasizes clarity, responsiveness, and mobile compatibility, ensuring a seamless experience for users in both urban and rural learning environments.

Importantly, the methodological foundation of this research was not just technical but also pedagogical. The development process was guided by the practical needs of students preparing for the national A/L Biology examination in Sri Lanka. As a result, the system was continuously evaluated for both computational performance and educational relevance, with strong emphasis on user experience, curriculum alignment, and adherence to government-approved academic standards.

1. Agile Methodology for Research Development:

Agile principles guided this research throughout its life cycle. The dynamic and evolving nature of educational needs and NLP model performance made Agile an ideal fit. The development was structured into seven stages: planning, requirement gathering, system design, implementation, testing, deployment, and continuous improvement. At each stage, regular review sessions and testing iterations ensured that the platform remained aligned with the intended goal delivering a curriculum-specific, student-friendly answer evaluation system.

Each Agile sprint was focused on a specific core function, such as implementing semantic similarity scoring (using SciBERT, TF-IDF, and Jaccard similarity), polishing generated answers with the Gemini API, or integrating MongoDB and FAISS for response storage and semantic search. Feedback loops between the

development, testing, and educational validation stages ensured incremental improvements.

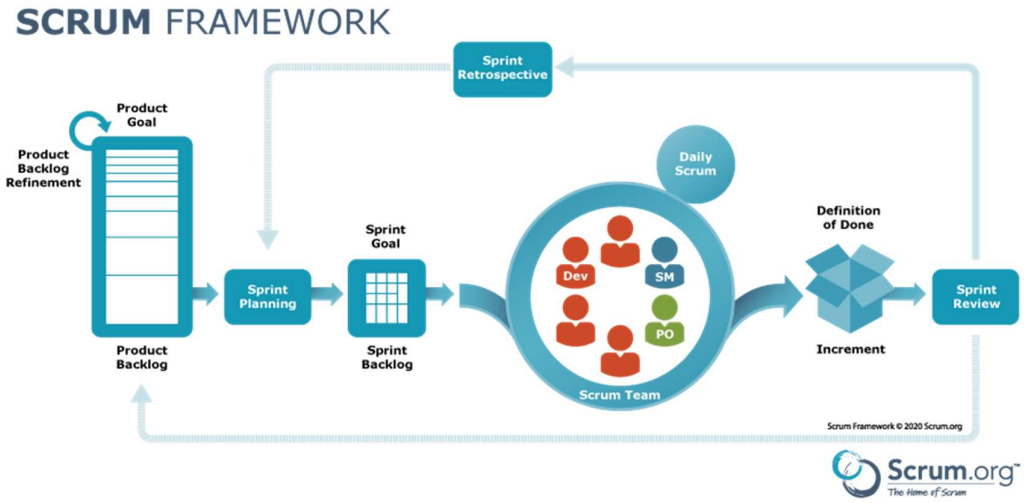

Figure 2: Agile Scrum Framework

2. Seven-Stage Development Framework:

This research adopted a structured seven-stage Agile development framework to systematically design, develop, and deploy a modular and scalable e-learning system tailored for A/L Biology. Each stage played a crucial role in ensuring the system's feasibility, functionality, accuracy, and real-world applicability. The framework facilitated iterative improvements, incorporating expert feedback, AI-driven automation, and performance tracking to enhance learning outcomes. Additionally, a strong emphasis was placed on scalability, real-time evaluation, and commercial viability, enabling seamless integration with EdTech platforms and individual learners through subscription models and advertising-based monetization.

1. Feasibility Study & Planning – Assessed existing e-learning systems and validated dataset alignment with the syllabus.
2. Requirement Gathering & Analysis – Conducted mock API interactions and expert consultations to define key features like automated scoring and feedback.

3. System Design – Developed a modular architecture with components for answer generation, hybrid scoring, and feedback delivery, using FAISS for semantic retrieval and MongoDB for data storage.
4. Implementation – Integrated LLAMA 3-Instruct, SciBERT, TF-IDF, Jaccard similarity, and LanguageTool to enhance evaluation, feedback, and real-time assessment.
5. Testing – Employed manual and unit test cases to validate accuracy, reliability, and efficiency across answer evaluation, scoring, and API endpoints.
6. Deployment & Maintenance – Ensured scalability and real-time evaluation support, optimizing for future growth and feature expansions.
7. Commercialization – Monetized through subscription-based access and advertising, targeting EdTech providers and individual learners for sustained growth.

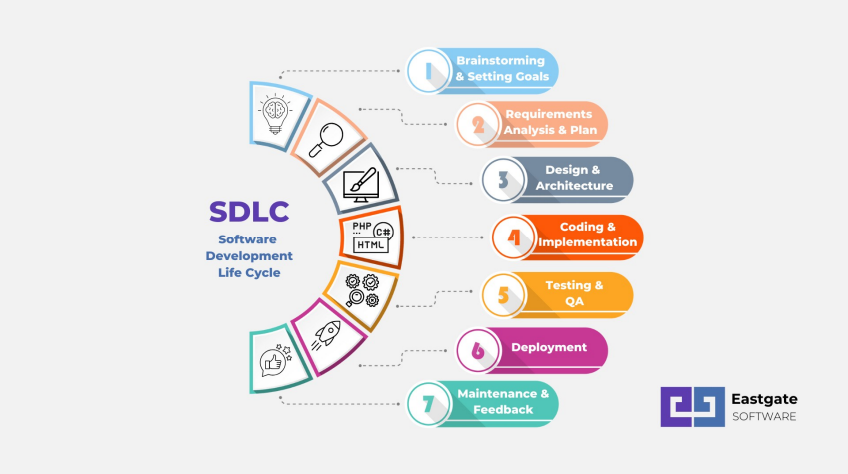

Figure 3: Seven Stage Development Life Cycle

3. Iterative Development and Collaboration:

Each development sprint contributed to enhancing the system's core functionalities. Early efforts focused on improving the quality and clarity of generated model answers to ensure alignment with the official A/L Biology syllabus approved by the Sri Lankan government. The answer evaluation mechanism was progressively refined through

careful tuning of weights across different scoring dimensions, including semantic similarity, keyword matching, and grammar correctness, to deliver more accurate and balanced assessments. Feedback generation was improved to provide students with detailed insights, highlighting missing and additional keywords, grammar issues, and overall answer quality compared to the model response. A key component of development also included implementing a question filtering mechanism to ensure that students could only submit academic, syllabus-related questions preventing any inappropriate, irrelevant, or illegal content from being processed. Continuous collaboration with A/L Biology students ensured that the platform's evaluations reflected real-world marking schemes. In parallel, language model performance and dataset coverage were iteratively enhanced through fine-tuning and expansion using structured curriculum-aligned content.

4. Flexibility and Responsiveness:

The flexibility and responsiveness of the Agile methodology played a crucial role in overcoming unexpected challenges and adapting the system to the evolving demands of educational technology. Throughout the development process, several unforeseen issues were encountered such as inconsistencies in generated responses, variability in question phrasing, and the need to continuously align outputs with the Sri Lankan A/L Biology curriculum. Agile principles enabled swift, iterative refinement at each stage of the project, allowing improvements to be implemented without significant delays or disruption.

When initial answer outputs lacked structural clarity or subject-specific depth, adjustments were made to enhance fluency, conceptual accuracy, and alignment with marking schemes. The question moderation logic was also expanded to ensure that only appropriate, syllabus-relevant questions could be submitted, thereby preventing off-topic or inappropriate content from entering the evaluation pipeline. Additional refinements were applied to scoring mechanisms, grammar correction logic, and feedback generation modules to deliver more meaningful and accurate evaluations.

The modular system architecture, supported by version control and continuous testing, allowed for focused updates to specific components such as the answer generator, evaluation engine, and feedback processor without impacting the overall workflow. This level of adaptability was key to ensuring that the platform evolved effectively in response to challenges, ultimately resulting in a comprehensive, curriculum-aligned self-learning tool for Sri Lankan A/L Biology students.

2.1.1 Feasibility Study/ Planning

This phase evaluated the overall feasibility of designing and implementing an intelligent, curriculum-aligned answer evaluation and feedback system to support Sri Lankan A/L Biology students in their self-learning journey. The study examined technical, economic, legal, operational, temporal, social, and risk-related dimensions to ensure the viability and sustainability of the research project.

1. **Technical Feasibility**:

Data Availability: The system requires a high-quality, curriculum-aligned dataset of structured and essay-type questions and model answers. For this research, data was collected from government-approved sources, including Sri Lankan A/L Biology resource books, past examination papers, and school term test papers. These sources ensured that the data reflected real academic expectations, marking standards, and topic relevance. The availability of both questions and high-quality reference answers made it feasible to fine-tune the answer generation model and evaluate student submissions effectively.

Hardware and Software Requirements: The research utilized widely accessible, open-source technologies including Python, MongoDB, FastAPI, and FAISS for backend operations, and React with Tailwind CSS for frontend development. A personal computer with at least 8GB RAM and a stable internet connection was sufficient for building and testing the application locally. However, for compute-intensive tasks like language model fine-tuning, Google Colab Pro was used to leverage high-performance GPUs and extended runtime capabilities. This allowed efficient processing of large datasets and model checkpoints without requiring dedicated high-end local hardware.

Model Development: Answer generation was implemented using a fine-tuned LLAMA 3-Instruct model, selected for its ability to generate context-aware and syllabus-aligned responses. The evaluation system was built with hybrid scoring logic that included SciBERT-based semantic similarity, TF-IDF cosine analysis, and Jaccard similarity, ensuring both conceptual and lexical assessment. Grammar

correction and keyword analysis were performed using LanguageTool and spaCy respectively. All components were trained, tested, and integrated into a real-time evaluation pipeline, demonstrating strong technical feasibility for building a scalable and intelligent self-assessment platform for A/L Biology students.

2. **Economic Feasibility**:

Budgetary Considerations: The financial feasibility of this research was carefully assessed to ensure that all necessary components such as data collection, model fine-tuning, software development, and deployment could be executed within a modest budget. Costs were minimized by utilizing free and open-source libraries for model development (e.g., Transformers, spaCy, FAISS, FastAPI), while more compute-intensive tasks like fine-tuning the LLAMA 3-Instruct model were handled using Google Colab Pro, which offered affordable access to GPU acceleration without the need for expensive local hardware.

Resource Allocation: As this was an individually conducted research project, no additional personnel costs were incurred. The necessary technical skills for programming, model training, and frontend/backend development were self-managed. Time and task allocation were scheduled using an Agile approach, which ensured that every stage of the project data preparation, system design, implementation, and testing was delivered effectively within scope.

Return on Investment (ROI): The outcomes of this project offer significant academic and societal value. By enabling automated, personalized feedback for A/L Biology students, the system addresses gaps in teacher accessibility and supports independent learning. It particularly benefits students in under-resourced areas and contributes to the national goal of improving digital education equity.

Given its low development cost and high potential impact, the return on investment is considered highly favorable.

Type	Cost
Internet use and web hosting	5000 LKR
Google Colab Pro Subscription	3000 LKR
Publication costs	12110 LKR
Stationary	1500 LKR
Azure Cloud Hosting (via Student Pack)	**0** *(covered by credits)*
TOTAL	***21,610 LKR***

Table 1: Cost Management

3. **Legal and Ethical Feasibility**:

Since the platform focuses solely on academic content and does not collect or process personal data, it poses minimal legal or ethical risks. All educational materials used in this research were sourced from **publicly available and government-approved resources** including past A/L examination papers and resource books published by the Ministry of Education. Ethical safeguards were implemented to ensure students could only submit relevant academic questions; the system includes a filtering layer that blocks inappropriate, irrelevant, or misleading input. This preserves the educational integrity of the platform and aligns it with responsible technology use in education.

4. **Operational Feasibility**:

Data Collection and Processing: The data collection process for this project was highly practical and focused on educational content rather than biometric or video-based inputs. All questions and model answers were manually curated from government-approved A/L Biology textbooks, past papers, and school term tests. This made data collection straightforward, secure, and scalable. The system processes text-based inputs from students' questions and their written answers and uses lightweight natural language processing tools to generate evaluations and feedback in real time. Since the input and output data volumes are relatively small and text-based, the processing requirements are modest and highly manageable.

Model Deployment: The deployed models including LLAMA 3-Instruct for generating model answers and the hybrid evaluation pipeline (incorporating semantic

similarity, lexical scoring, and grammar analysis) are optimized to run on standard computing hardware. The backend infrastructure, built with FastAPI and MongoDB, supports low-latency operations and handles multiple simultaneous requests without performance degradation. The frontend interface, developed with React and styled using Tailwind CSS, is fully responsive and compatible with both desktop and mobile devices, enabling wide accessibility for students.

Additionally, the **BERT-based question acceptability model**, which ensures that only academically relevant and syllabus-aligned questions are processed, was deployed using **Hugging Face Spaces**. This allowed for scalable, cloud-hosted moderation and ensured that question validation could be performed efficiently and securely in real-time. The entire system has been tested under realistic educational scenarios, confirming its operational readiness for ongoing use in both individual learning environments and classroom applications.

5. **Time/Schedule Feasibility**:

Project Timeline: The project was planned and executed using an Agile approach, divided into well-defined phases with continuous progress tracking. A structured timeline was followed to ensure that each critical stage data collection, model development, system implementation, testing, and deployment was completed within the academic period allocated for the research.

The timeline began with the data collection phase, where relevant questions and answers were compiled from government-approved A/L Biology textbooks and past exam papers. This was followed by model fine-tuning and development, including the integration of the LLAMA 3-Instruct model for answer generation and the hybrid evaluation system incorporating semantic, lexical, and grammatical scoring. Midway through the project, the frontend and backend systems were developed in parallel using React, Tailwind CSS, FastAPI, and MongoDB.

Testing and optimization were conducted in iterative sprints, allowing for ongoing improvements based on simulated student input and academic feedback. The question filtering module, powered by a BERT-based classifier hosted on Hugging Face Spaces,

was deployed during this stage to ensure that only relevant academic questions were accepted.

Finally, system deployment, documentation, and final presentations were completed within the designated timeframe. All major milestones including proposal submission, progress reviews (PP1, PP2), and the final demonstration were met as scheduled. The project timeline confirms that the scope of work was manageable and successfully delivered within the academic year, validating its schedule feasibility.

Figure 4: Gantt Chart

6. **Social and Cultural Feasibility**:

Acceptance and Impact: The proposed system addresses a real and growing need within the Sri Lankan educational landscape specifically for A/L Biology students in the English medium who often lack access to timely, personalized academic feedback. The platform is socially acceptable and educationally relevant, as it is built around government-approved learning materials and tailored to the national syllabus. By offering automated answer evaluation and personalized feedback, the system empowers students to become more independent learners, which aligns with national goals of enhancing digital literacy and self-directed education. It is particularly impactful for students in rural or under-resourced schools, where access to qualified Biology instructors may be limited. The intuitive interface and language familiarity make it more culturally appropriate and likely to be embraced by both students and educators.

Bias and Fairness: To ensure cultural and educational fairness, all data used in model training was sourced from official textbooks and past papers, minimizing external bias. The evaluation algorithms comprising semantic, lexical, and grammatical scoring were rigorously tested across various question types and answer styles to ensure consistency. Furthermore, the question moderation system was designed to filter out inappropriate or irrelevant content, not based on user identity or location, but solely on academic validity. The system does not collect or process personal data, ensuring neutrality and inclusiveness in its operation. By focusing exclusively on curriculum-aligned content and avoiding subjective human grading, the system helps reduce unintentional bias and promotes equal academic opportunity for all users.

Besides these feasibility studies, the risk management plan and communication management plan have already been completed.

- Risk Management Plan

  Although this project was conducted individually, various risks both technical and academic were identified and mitigated throughout the research lifecycle. These risks were managed proactively using alternative strategies, time buffers, and continuous feedback from supervisor and co-supervisor.

Risk	Trigger	Owner	Response	Resource Required
Technical Failures or Bugs	System errors, API failures, unexpected model behavior	Researc her	* Troubleshoot errors immediately. * Seek supervisor guidance if unresolved. * Utilize community documentation and forums.	* System Logs * Backup code * Model checkpoints
Data Loss Due to Hardware/Sy stem Failure	Device crash or data corruption	Researc her	* Maintain frequent backups. * Use cloud storage solutions. * Version control for scripts and documents.	* Cloud storage * GitHub
Lack of Field Knowledge	Limited prior experience in NLP or educational technologies	Researc her	* Take online courses/tutorials. * Study open-source implementations and official documentation.	* Online resources * Research papers
Panel Requests Changes	Evaluation panel is unsatisfied with demo or results	Researc her	* Apply requested changes promptly. * Update system, report, and presentation documents.	* Gantt Chart * Versioned files * Feedback Notes

Table 2: Risk Management Plan

- Communication Management Plan

Effective communication played a crucial role in the successful development and deployment of the BioMentor system. Despite being an individual implementation for a group research project, structured, consistent, and professional communication practices were maintained between the team members, supervisor, co-supervisor, and contributors. Communication was carried out using formal and informal channels, including email, shared cloud-based documents, version-controlled code repositories, scheduled virtual meetings, and instant messaging. These practices ensured transparency, task alignment, timely feedback, and uninterrupted progress throughout the project lifecycle.

- ✓ *Communication Objectives*:

To ensure smooth and result-oriented communication throughout the project, the following criteria were adhered to

- **Adequate**: Delivered in a suitable format and relevant context.
- **Specific**: Tailored for the intended audience, e.g., supervisor or technical team.
- **Sufficient**: Covered all required content without ambiguity.
- **Concise**: Avoided redundancy while being informative.
- **Timely**: Shared information promptly to support agile decision-making.

- ✓ *Communication Media*:

The following communication tools and platforms were utilized:

1. **Email** – For formal updates and document submission.
2. **WhatsApp** – For quick clarifications and scheduling meetings.
3. **Google Drive** – For sharing reports, test cases, evaluation data, and collaborative writing.
4. **Google Meet / MS Teams** – For live meetings, discussions, and supervisor presentations.
5. **GitHub** – For source code collaboration and version tracking.

Meeting Type	Attendees	Purpose	Frequency	Agenda Items
Planning Kick-off Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Formally launch the project's planning phase. Define project scope, component assignments, team responsibilities, and expectations. Identify potential risks and agree on overall direction and novelty of the components.	Once at the start of the project	* Introduce project overview and research problem * Distribute components and outline responsibilities * Present initial timeline - Discuss expected outcomes and evaluation criteria * Identify high-level risks and mitigation * Confirm communication tools and methods * Recap and record key decisions
Execution Kick-off Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Initiate the development phase of the project. Reconfirm roles, finalize milestones, present Communication Management Plan, and agree on team norms and workflows.	Once at the start of each major phase	* Present the finalized Work Plan * Outline communication flow and escalation paths * Reconfirm Quality Assurance measures * Introduce issue/change management

				plan * Set up documentation protocols * Confirm upcoming reviews and evaluations
Internal Project Status Meeting	All Team Members	Review weekly progress of all components, share completed work, address technical challenges, and plan next steps. These meetings ensure continuous alignment between members and timely identification of blockers.	Weekly throughout the project	* Share status updates for each component * Compare actual work vs. planned tasks * Assess milestone progress * Identify new risks or issues * Set action items for the coming week * Record attendance and key outcomes
Actual Project Status Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Provide formal progress updates to the supervisor(s). These include demos, presentations, or summary reports to ensure each team member is on track with their responsibilities.	Twice per week or as requested by the supervisor	* Present current component status * Highlight key deliverables and demos * Discuss encountered problems * Get technical and research feedback * Log changes and improvements made

Project Review Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Review the entire project's status and preparedness for milestone reviews like Proposal, PP1, PP2, or Final. Discuss potential re-baselining or refinements.	Once per phase (Before Proposal, PP1, PP2, Final)	* Review documentation readiness * Validate milestone achievements * Analyse testing and validation results * Address unresolved issues * Prepare for panel expectations and possible changes * Review research alignment and educational contribution
Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Address official project approvals and permissions. Used when major decisions or milestone achievements are made. Ensures project stays aligned with academic requirements and timeline.	Monthly or at major milestone approval	* Debrief team performance to date * Record accomplishments and setbacks * Note items pending for next milestone * Review budget, time, or scope constraints * Confirm supervisor approval for milestone progress * Ensure required panel feedback or sign-

				offs are documented
Change Control Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Evaluate and prioritize required changes following evaluations or internal reviews. Commonly used post-panel feedback to initiate necessary modifications in reports, presentations, or implementations.	As needed after panel feedback or scope changes	* Discuss panel feedback * Prioritize changes * Assign responsibility to team members * Set timeline for updated implementation * Approve and document changes made
Project-End Review Meeting	Supervisor, Co-supervisor, All Team Members	Conduct final evaluation of the project's outcomes and performance. Share individual and group reflections, lessons learned, and opportunities for future research or improvement.	Once at the end of the project	* Summarize system performance and outputs * Review success in achieving goals * Discuss team collaboration experience * Identify technical or logistical issues faced * Share research insights and lessons * Plan long-term contributions

Table 3: Communication Management Plan

2.1.2 Requirement Gathering & Analysis

The Requirement Gathering and Analysis phase was critical in defining the scope, goals, and expectations of this research project, which focuses on developing an intelligent self-assessment platform for Sri Lankan A/L Biology students. This phase involved systematically identifying both functional and non-functional requirements through structured methods to ensure the system met academic expectations and technical feasibility.

2.1.2.1. Functional Requirements

The Requirement Gathering and Analysis phase was essential in shaping the design and functionality of the self-learning platform for Sri Lankan A/L Biology students. This phase aimed to clearly define what the system must do, how it should behave, and how users particularly students would interact with it. Both functional and non-functional requirements were gathered using direct stakeholder engagement and a structured analysis of user needs.

Requirement Elicitation Approach: To understand the practical needs of the end users, a targeted survey was conducted with current and past A/L Biology students. The objective was to gather insights into common challenges students face when preparing structured and essay-type answers, especially in environments where access to subject-specific feedback is limited. These responses were essential in identifying features such as instant evaluation, keyword tracking, and the need for detailed feedback.

External Subject Matter Support: An external supervisor with expertise in A/L Biology was involved to ensure that the system accurately reflected the curriculum and subject expectations. She played a key role in helping interpret the structure of Biology questions, expected answer depth, marking styles, and common pitfalls in student responses.

Nagalatha Thayaparan
A/L Biology Subject Teacher
Saiva Mangaiyar Vidyalayam
Colombo -06

18th March 2025

To:
The Academic Department
SLIIT, Malabe

Subject: Confirmation of Assistance in Final Year Project

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to confirm my involvement in supporting the final-year project of the SLIIT Software Engineering students Sujitha S., Dharane S., Sajeevan S., and Abisheak G.S. Their project is an E-learning web application, designed to be mobile-responsive and specifically curated for Advanced Level Biology students, following the A/L Biology syllabus.

I assisted in collecting and organizing the necessary data for the project. For Sujitha S., I helped gather past MCQ papers and worked with her to categorize the questions into different difficulty levels. For Sajeevan S. and Dharane S., I provided past structured and essay questions, along with the A/L Biology syllabus, to support their components, which focus on question-and-answer evaluation and abstractive summarization with voice output. These contributions were essential for fine-tuning their chosen LLM model.

I can assure you that this platform is entirely based on the A/L Biology syllabus and will serve as a valuable resource for A/L Biology students to enhance their knowledge and learning experience.

Thank you

Sincerely,
Nagalatha Thayaparan

Figure 5: Confirmation from external supervisor

Figma Mockup and User Interface Feedback: To validate the system's usability, Figma mockups were shared with surveyed students. They provided feedback on layout clarity, navigation flow, and responsiveness. Based on this feedback, improvements were made to make the interface more intuitive, especially for mobile access, and ensure it could be used easily by students with varying levels of digital experience.

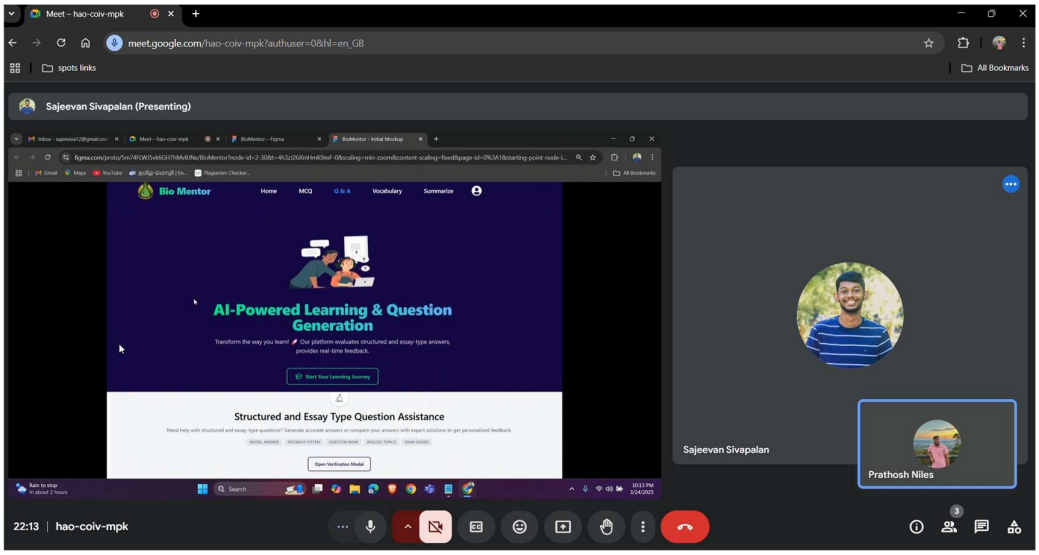

Figure 6: Getting feedback from user

Identification of Key Functionalities: Through surveys, curriculum analysis, and expert guidance, the following core functional requirements were identified:

- Answer Generation: The platform must be able to generate model answers based on A/L Biology questions using the officially approved syllabus.
- Automated Evaluation: Student answers should be evaluated using a hybrid scoring approach combining semantic similarity, grammar accuracy, and keyword relevance.
- Keyword Feedback: Highlight missing and extra keywords with feedback to help students understand content-level gaps.
- Question Acceptability Check: Validate if a student's question is syllabus-aligned and appropriate before processing it for answer generation.
- Content Recommendation: Suggest relevant learning materials or notes from the database based on evaluation results.
- Performance Tracking: Log student responses and provide history or trend analysis to help track individual progress.
- Responsive Design: Ensure platform usability on desktop and mobile devices to accommodate different user access levels.

Main functional requirements,

- ✓ Generate Biology model answers based on A/L syllabus.
- ✓ Evaluate student answers using semantic, lexical, and grammatical analysis.
- ✓ Provide instant feedback with keyword comparisons and improvement tips.
- ✓ Provide attention seeking mechanism to increase student engagement.
- ✓ Filter out invalid or inappropriate questions automatically.
- ✓ Recommend relevant revision content based on weak areas identified.

2.1.2.2. Non-Functional Requirements

Non-functional requirements define how the system performs rather than what it does. These attributes ensure the platform is usable, ethical, and scalable.

Performance Metrics: The system was developed to provide complete evaluation results including answer generation, hybrid scoring, and feedback in approximately 3 to 4 minutes. While not instant, this performance meets the expectations for asynchronous self-assessment platforms. Key non-functional performance goals included feedback consistency, scoring fairness, and maintaining accurate alignment with the A/L Biology syllabus. The evaluation pipeline was optimized for stability, ensuring each component from semantic similarity calculations to keyword detection functions reliably across varied input styles.

Security and Ethics: The system does not collect personal or sensitive data. All content was sourced from government-approved materials, and question moderation mechanisms ensure academic integrity by preventing off-topic or inappropriate inputs.

The Requirement Gathering and Analysis phase provided a comprehensive foundation for this research project. Through user surveys, content validation, and subject expertise, a clear and practical set of non-functional requirements was defined. These requirements guided all subsequent development stages and ensured that the platform serves both the technical goals of automation and the educational needs of its users.

Main non-functional requirements,

- ✓ Usability: Simple and clean user interface for school-level students.
- ✓ Reliability: Consistent and error-free processing of evaluations.
- ✓ Availability: Accessible through standard web browsers across devices.
- ✓ Accuracy: High alignment with syllabus-based model responses.
- ✓ Performance: Instant processing and feedback generation.

2.1.3 Designing

The Designing phase of this research project focused on translating conceptual ideas into a technically feasible architecture. This stage played a crucial role in organizing system components and ensuring that the natural language processing (NLP), scoring algorithms, and feedback mechanisms worked cohesively to support the self-learning objectives of A/L Biology students in Sri Lanka. The core modules designed include answer generation, answer evaluation, feedback generation, question acceptability filtering, and content recommendation each structured to ensure curriculum alignment, performance efficiency, and educational value.

System Architecture Diagram:

The system follows modular architecture to promote scalability, maintainability, and component-level testing. The main backend system was implemented in Python using a combination of deep learning models, text similarity techniques, and NLP pipelines. FastAPI was used to expose core functionalities as RESTful APIs, while MongoDB was integrated as a NoSQL database to store evaluation records, student responses, and analytics. The frontend interface was developed in React with Tailwind CSS, providing a responsive and intuitive UI for end users.

System Architecture Overview:

1. The question is first passed through a **question acceptability module** based on a fine-tuned BERT classifier, hosted via Hugging Face Spaces, to ensure that only academic and syllabus-relevant content is processed.
2. Accepted questions are then passed to the **answer generation module**, where a fine-tuned **LLAMA 3-Instruct model** generates a model answer tailored to the specific biology question.
3. The student's submitted answer and the model answer are sent to the **evaluation module**, which includes:
    - **Semantic scoring** uses sentence embeddings and cosine similarity.
    - **Lexical scoring** using TF-IDF and Jaccard similarity.

- **Grammar and structure checking** using LanguageTool.
- **Keyword comparison** using spaCy-based tokenization and matched against curriculum-based terms.

4. The **feedback engine** compiles results, highlights missing or extra keywords, and provides a final score along with suggestions.
5. A **content retrieval engine**, backed by a FAISS index, recommends relevant study notes based on weak areas detected in the student's answer.

All components communicate via APIs, enabling smooth integration and easy extensibility for future updates.

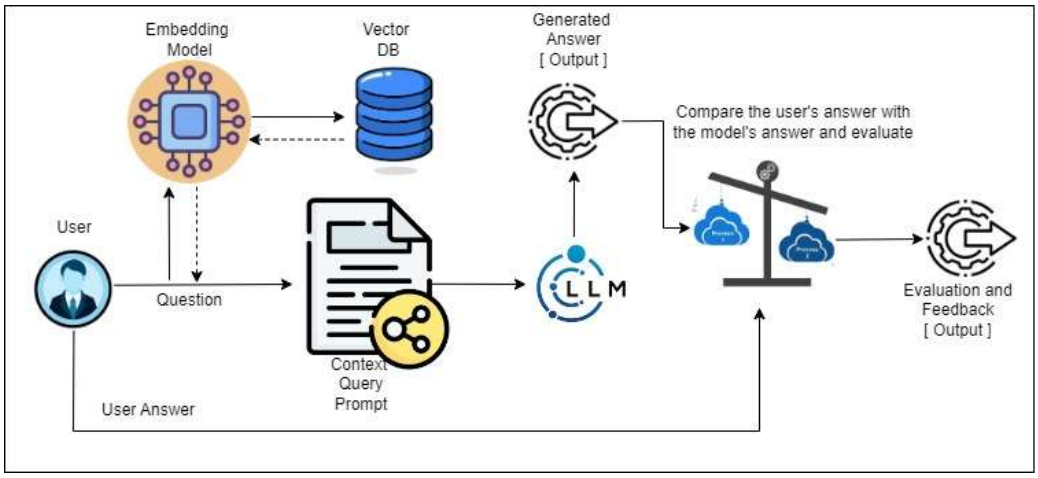

Figure 7: System Diagram

The Designing phase of this research project played a pivotal role in defining the technical architecture and integration strategy for a self-assessment platform tailored to Sri Lankan A/L Biology students. This phase involved converting conceptual objectives into a modular and functional system that integrates natural language processing, automated evaluation algorithms, and a responsive user interface. The primary components designed in this phase include answer generation, answer evaluation, feedback generation, question moderation, and personalized content recommendations.

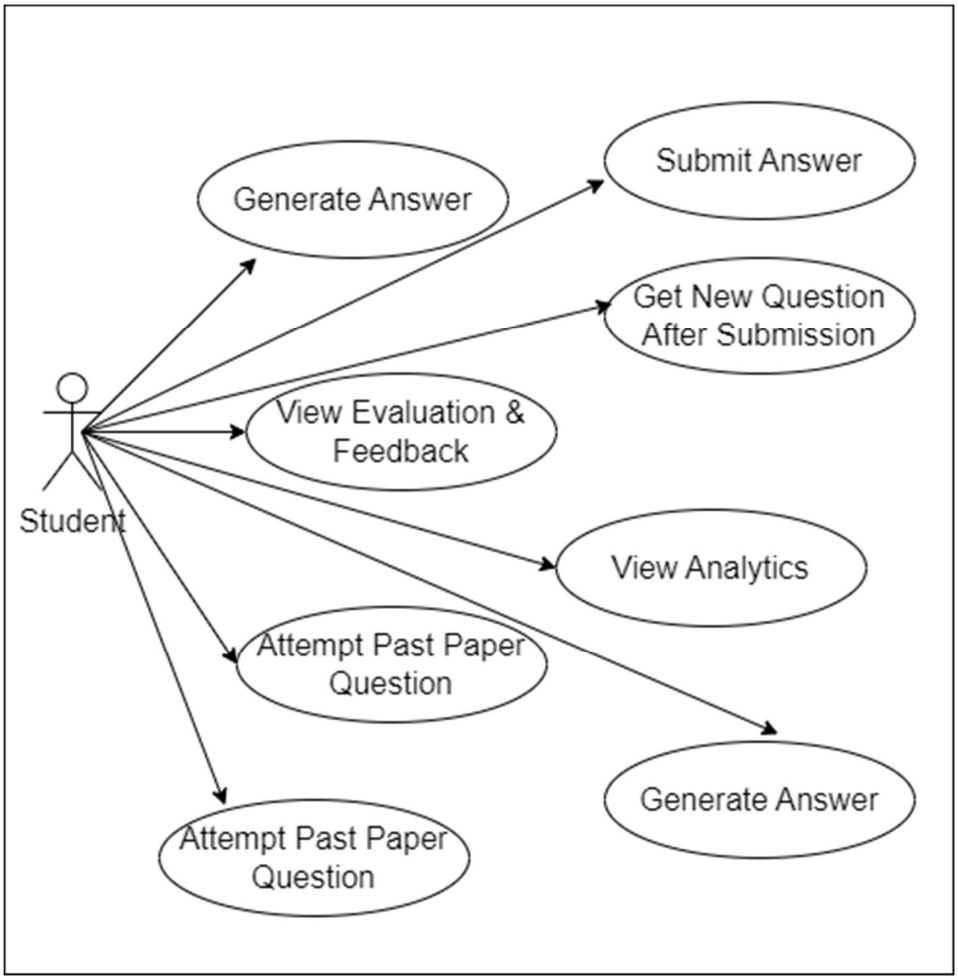

Figure 8: Use Case Diagram

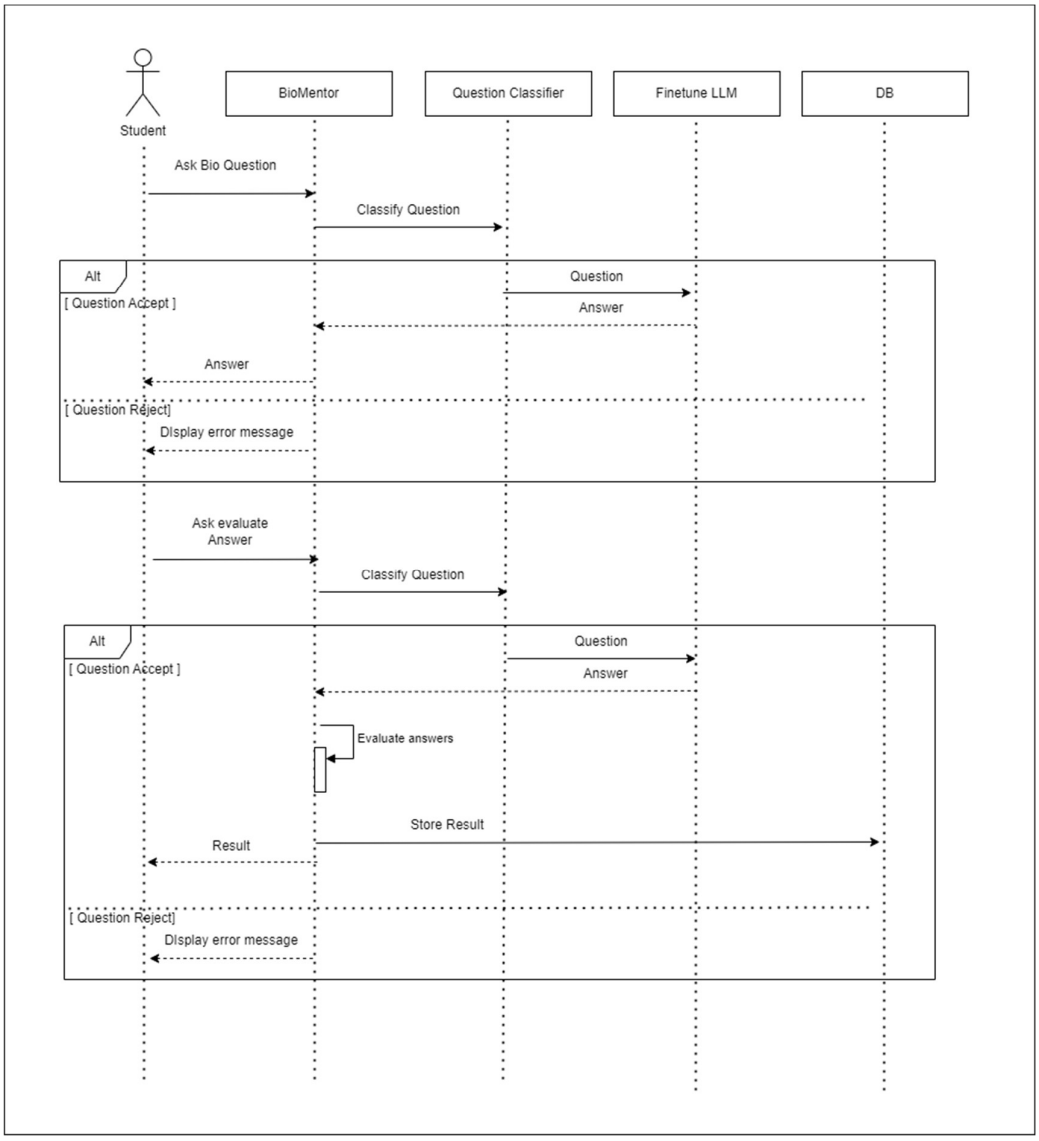

Figure 9: Sequence Diagram

1. **Answer Generation Model**:

The answer generation module uses a fine-tuned LLAMA 3-Instruct model, specifically adapted to generate structured and essay-type answers aligned with the Sri Lankan A/L Biology curriculum. This model accepts a biology question as input and produces a coherent, contextually relevant response that reflects the tone, depth, and format expected in official marking schemes.

To improve domain accuracy, the model was fine-tuned using a curated dataset that includes past A/L Biology exam papers, structured marking schemes, term test questions, and answers derived from government-approved reference books. The transformer-based architecture enables the model to understand question semantics and generate logically ordered, syllabus-specific answers.

To further enhance clarity, fluency, and grammatical precision, each generated response is post-processed using the Gemini API, which acts as a polishing layer. This refinement stage corrects language inconsistencies, improves sentence structure, and ensures the final output reads naturally while remaining academically appropriate. The result is a model answer that is not only biologically accurate but also linguistically polished and examiner-friendly ideal for guiding student self-assessment.

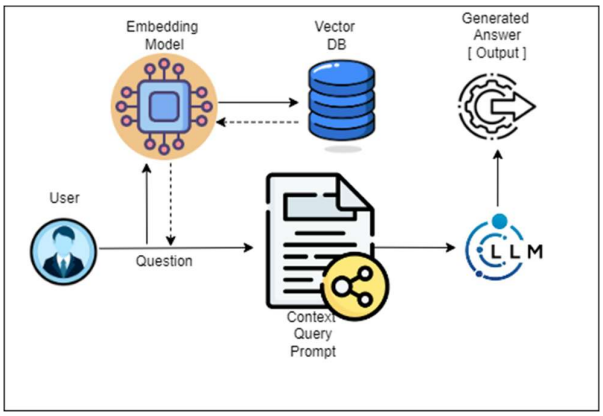

Figure 10: Answer Generation Pipeline in BioMentor

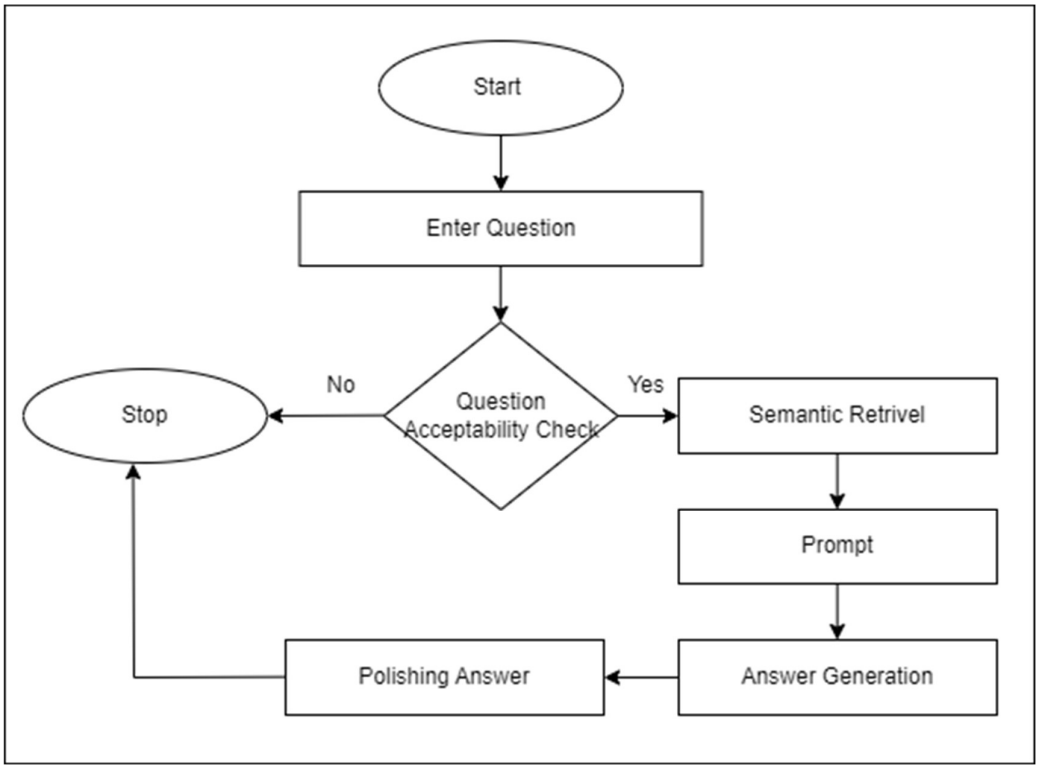

Figure 11: Answer Generation Flow

2. **Question Acceptability Classification Model**: To maintain academic relevance and prevent misuse, all student-submitted questions are first filtered by a **BERT-based classifier** deployed on Hugging Face Spaces. This model checks whether the input is aligned with the A/L Biology syllabus and free from inappropriate or unrelated content. Only approved questions proceed to the answer generation stage, ensuring the system stays focused on educational use and curriculum integrity.

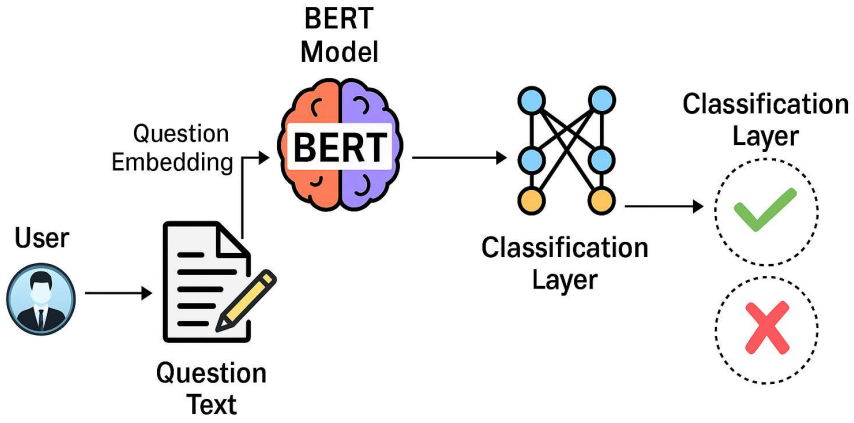

Figure 12: Question Acceptability Flow

3. Answer Evaluation Module: The answer evaluation module is designed to automatically assess student responses by employing a hybrid scoring mechanism that combines multiple natural language processing techniques. Semantic similarity is measured using the SciBERT model, which encodes the student's answer and the model answer into contextual sentence embeddings and calculates their similarity. To assess lexical overlap, TF-IDF cosine similarity is applied, while keyword alignment is determined through Jaccard similarity using spaCy-extracted key terms such as nouns, verbs, and proper nouns. In addition, the system integrates LanguageTool to detect grammar and spelling errors, contributing to the grammar score. This multi-layered approach ensures that answers are evaluated holistically considering meaning, vocabulary, structure, and accuracy. A final weighted score is computed from individual metrics, and the system generates detailed feedback highlighting missing or extra keywords, grammar issues with suggestions, and specific areas where the student's conceptual understanding is weak. All evaluation results are stored in MongoDB to enable longitudinal performance tracking and facilitate analytics for students.

4. Feedback Engine: The feedback engine plays a vital role in transforming raw evaluation data into meaningful, actionable insights for both students and teachers. For each evaluated answer, the system provides a detailed breakdown of the student's performance across different scoring dimensions. It identifies strengths and weaknesses, missing biological concepts, excessive or incorrect usage of terms, and the number and nature of grammatical issues. In addition to per-answer insights, the feedback engine tracks score trends over time, allowing students to monitor their academic growth. It also delivers adaptive learning recommendations, such as targeted review topics and personalized writing exercises that address frequently made mistakes. Moreover, the system supports students by generating group-level and class-wide analytics enabling instructors to identify common problem areas and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly.

5. Content Recommendation Engine: To complement the feedback process, the content recommendation engine delivers targeted learning materials based on each student’s specific weaknesses. After identifying missing keywords and concepts from the evaluation reports, the system constructs a semantic query embedding using a SentenceTransformer model. This embedding is then matched against a pre-built FAISS index that contains vector representations of textbook-based study notes. The engine retrieves the top-k most relevant content chunks, offering students immediate access to study materials that align precisely with their learning gaps. This intelligent recommendation mechanism not only reinforces weak concepts but also supports personalized and efficient revision strategies for A/L Biology exam preparation.

2.1.4 Implementation

The Implementation phase of this research project marked the transition from conceptual design to building a functional self-assessment platform for Sri Lankan A/L Biology students. This stage focuses on translating architectural components such as answer generation, evaluation, feedback, and question moderation into deployable modules using a structured task-based development approach.

Task Breakdown and Project Management:

Before initiating development, the entire system was decomposed into well-defined tasks, deliverables, and milestones to ensure smooth execution. The development was structured across three iterative sprints, each focused on a key phase of the system: the first sprint addressed answer generation using LLAMA 3-Instruct, the second focused on evaluation logic and feedback modules, and the third dealt with API integration, frontend development, and UI responsiveness.

To manage the project effectively, Jira was employed as the primary project management tool. Tasks were categorized under functional modules such as model fine-tuning, semantic scoring integration, grammar analysis, keyword matching, feedback generation, question moderation, and frontend deployment. Each task was assigned to specific roles with clearly defined start and end dates, priority labels, and status updates. Jira's **Kanban boards** and **Sprint planning features** allowed for real-time collaboration, backlog grooming, and consistent progress tracking.

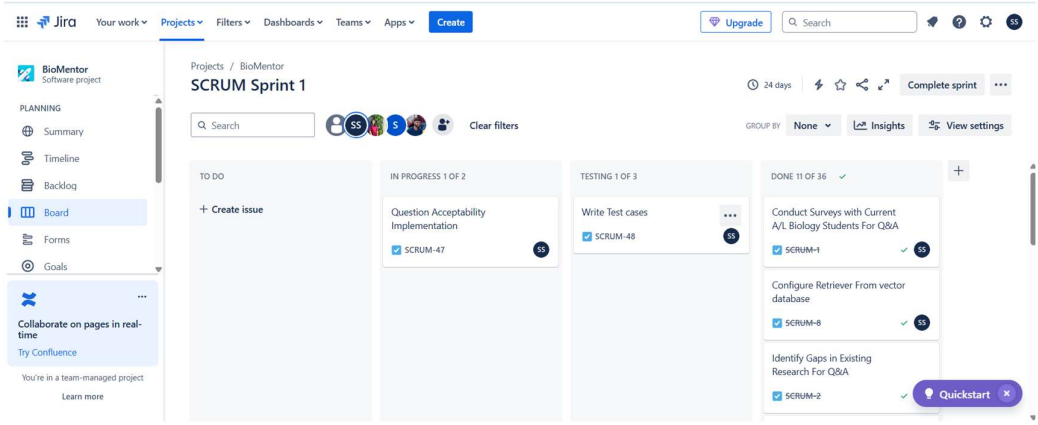

Figure 13: Jira Board

A **Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)** was created to provide a hierarchical view of all development tasks, allowing better resource allocation and alignment with project objectives. Major components such as model training, scoring logic, content recommendation, and UI refinement were tracked individually to ensure timely delivery.

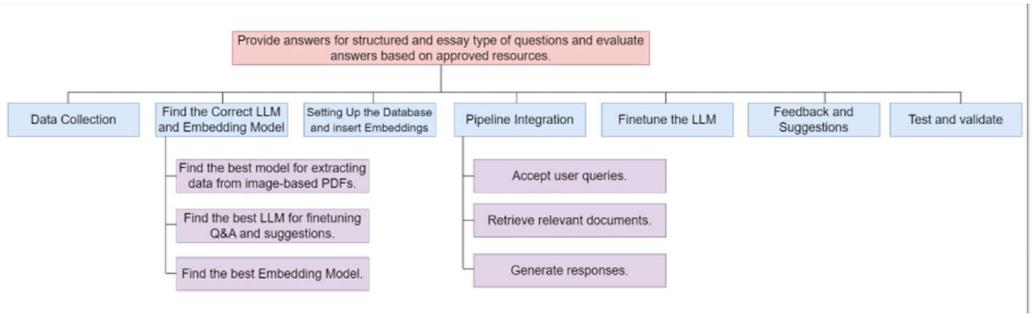

Figure 14: Work Breakdown Structure

Development Environment and Tools:

The implementation phase was carried out in the **Visual Studio Code (VS Code)** IDE, which provided a flexible and developer-friendly environment for Python development. VS Code was chosen for its support for virtual environments, extensions for Python-based tools, and seamless Git integration for version control.

Python served as the primary programming language throughout the project. Several libraries and frameworks were employed to implement key components:

- **Transformers (Hugging Face)**: Used for integrating and fine-tuning the LLAMA 3-Instruct model for model answer generation.
- **SciBERT / Sentence Transformers**: Enabled semantic similarity scoring in the answer evaluation module.
- **TF-IDF / Scikit-learn**: Supported lexical comparison and surface-level keyword scoring.

- **spaCy**: Used for token extraction and named entity recognition to identify biology-specific keywords.
- **LanguageTool**: Integrated to assess grammar, sentence structure, and writing quality of student answers.
- **FAISS**: Powered semantic search in the content recommendation engine to suggest relevant study materials.
- **FastAPI**: Used to build the backend service and expose RESTful APIs for question submission, answer generation, evaluation, and feedback delivery.
- **MongoDB**: Functioned as the primary NoSQL database for storing student responses, scores, and usage logs.
- **Hugging Face Spaces**: Hosted the BERT-based question filtering model for real-time question moderation.
- **React + Tailwind CSS**: Employed in building the responsive, mobile-friendly front-end interface used by students.

Each module was developed, tested, and deployed independently before being integrated into the main API system. Frequent testing ensured that all modules communicated effectively, performed within expected timeframes, and returned curriculum-aligned results.

2.1.4.1 Dataset Preparation and Collection Process

This research required the development of a curriculum-aligned dataset tailored specifically to the Sri Lankan Advanced Level (A/L) Biology curriculum. To ensure academic accuracy and syllabus compliance, data was gathered from government-approved resource book, past national A/L examination papers, and school-level term test questions. The external subject supervisor, a qualified biology educator, provided valuable assistance in sourcing school term test papers and verifying the relevance and quality of content used in the datasets.

The system utilizes three main datasets:

- **Question and Answer Dataset**: This dataset includes structured and essay-type A/L Biology questions with model answers. It was used for both fine-tuning the LLAMA 3-Instruct answer generation model and benchmarking the evaluation system.
- **Study Notes Dataset**: A summarized content bank based on textbook material and curated biology notes. It supports semantic retrieval and is used to recommend supplementary learning material when key concepts are missing in student responses and generate essay type answers.
- **Question Acceptability Dataset**: A labeled set of acceptable and unacceptable questions, created to train the BERT-based moderation model. It ensures that only syllabus-relevant and appropriate questions are processed by the system.

	A	B	C
1	Question	Answer	Type
2	About how many years ago did life originate on earth?	3.5X10^9	Structure
3	Example for Endemic species	Dipterocurpus zeylanicus / Gracinia quaesita	Structure
4	write a short notes lectron microscopes	Electron microscopes represent a groundbreaking advancement in	Essay
5	Explain the fine structure of mitochondria	Fine Structure of Mitochondria	Essay
6	Indicate the major function of both vitamin K and Ca ion in the human body.	Aids blood clotting	Structure
7	Briefly explain the carpels of the flowering plants.	The Carpels of Flowering Plants	Essay
8	Name the structure which is found in young stems for gaseous exchange?	tomata	Structure
9	What is the hypothesis which is used to explain the opening and closing of sto	K+ influx hypothesis	Structure
10	Give two human activities that leads to loss of biodiversity.	Habitat loss / fragmentation	Structure
11	Internal fertilization often provides greater protection to the embryos. Indicati	Eggs are protected by shells	Structure
12	Name a laboratory test used to identify Main storage substance of Chlorophyt	Iodine test	Structure
13	Describe the mechanism of phloem translocation.	Phloem translocation is a vital process in vascular plants, responsible for	Essay
14	State two differences between effector cells and memory cells?	Effector cells have a short life span while memory cells have a long life	Structure
15	Name the membrane bounded canals between plant cells?	Plasmodesmata	Structure
16	What is meant by polyphyletic?	Originated from more than one ancestor	Structure
17	Name the monomer of a polysaccharide, which is a component of middle lam	Galacturonic acid	Structure
18	State two major properties of water to maintain life on the earth	Cohesive behavior	Structure
19	What is community?	A collection of populations of different species living in the same area inte	Structure
20	Indicate two functions of peroxisomes.	Detoxification of peroxides	Structure
21	Write short notes on Epigenetics	Epigenetics refers to the study of changes in gene expression or	Essay
22	Indicate the respiratory pigment/ pigments found in vertebrates.	Haemoglobin	Structure
23	Indicate the constitutive elements of chlorophyl molecule, other than C, H an	N	Structure
24	Briefly describe the diversity of nutrition seen among protists.	Protists, a diverse group of eukaryotic microorganisms, exhibit a wide	Essay
25	What are the main reasons that life could not exist on this planet without wate	Vital chemical constituent of a living cell	Structure
26	Indicate three post translational modifications of polypeptides after translatic	Protein trafficking	Structure

Figure 15: Question and Answer Dataset Structure

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Document	Topic	Sub-topic	Text Content	Source		
2	1	Introduction to Biology	Understanding biological Diversity	At present our planet is rich in diversity. Life on earth formed around 3.5 billion years ago. The first formed	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
3	2	Introduction to Biology	Understanding the human Body and its functions.	When studying biology, especially by studying histology and anatomy of the human body, one can gain the	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
4	3	Introduction to Biology	Sustainable use and Management of natural resources and Er	Natural resources are sources of materials and energy found naturally which are used in everyday life and	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
5	4	Introduction to Biology	Sustainable Food production	Sustainable food production is the production of sufficient amounts of food for the human population usin	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
6	5	Introduction to Biology	Understanding plant life	Plants are the primary producers in the world. All the animals depend directly or indirectly on plants. Then	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
7	6	Introduction to Biology	Understanding diseases and causes	To maintain healthy human body one should have the knowledge of causes of the diseases and their effec	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
8	7	Introduction to Biology	Solving some legal and ethical issues	Knowledge and application of biological concepts is important in solving some legal issues, such as parer	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
9	8	Introduction to Biology	The nature and the organizational patterns of the living world	In accordance with different criteria we can see a diversity among living organisms. Organisms are	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
10	9	Introduction to Biology	Hierarchical levels of organization of living things	The cell is the basic structural and functional unit of life. Some organisms are unicellular while others are	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
11	10	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Physical and chemical properties of water important for life	Physical and chemical properties of water important for life	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
12	11	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Carbohydrates	Most abundant group of organic compound on earth is carbohydrates. Major elemental composition is	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
13	12	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Lipids	Lipids	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
14	13	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Proteins	Proteins	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
15	14	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Nucleic acids	Nucleic acids are Polymers exist as polynucleotides made up of monomers called nucleotides. They	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
16	15	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Contribution of microscope to the expansion of knowledge on	Advancement of cytology is mostly based on the microscopy. The discovery and early study of cells	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
17	16	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Historical background of the cell and analyses the structure	Cell theory	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
18	18	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Structures and functions of organelles and other subcellular	Plasmamembrane is the outer limit of cytoplasm. All cellular membranes resemble the ultra structure of	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
19	19	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Subcellular components	There are many sub-cellular components in the cell. Some of them are organelles, which are bound by	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
20	20	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Extracellular components	1. Cell wall	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
21	21	Chemical and cellular basis of life	The cell cycle and the process of cell division	The sequence of events that takes place in the cell from the end of one cell division	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
22	22	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Meiosis	Sexually reproducing organisms undergo different type of cell division called meiosis.	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
23	23	Chemical and cellular basis of life	The energy relationships in metabolic processes	Sum of all biochemical reactions of living being is known as the metabolism and it	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
24	24	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Photosynthesis as an energy fixing mechanism	Photosynthesis	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
25	25	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Photorespiration	As its name suggests, Rubisco is capable of catalyzing two distinct reactions, acting as	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		
26	26	Chemical and cellular basis of life	Cellular respiration as a process of obtaining energy	Cellular respiration is the process by which chemical energy in organic molecules such	Biology, Grade 12, Resource Book		

Figure 16: Study Notes Dataset

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	text	label										
2	What is the active site of an enzyme and describe its role.	acceptable										
3	How to mail a weapon without getting caught please explain.	not_acceptable										
4	Activated carbon is used in some water treatment plants. State the relevant step and purpose they used. step-by-step.	acceptable										
5	Name a phylum which includes of animals without showing radial or bilateral symmetry. explained clearly.	acceptable										
6	Indicate two main enzymes used in constructing cDNA libraries. for students.	acceptable										
7	How to self-harm without getting caught and stay anonymous?	not_acceptable										
8	How to make armor-piercing bullets at home for beginners.	not_acceptable										
9	How to scam crowdfunding platforms safely?	not_acceptable										
10	Which organism consumes large amount of methane from ocean sediments in biology class.	acceptable										
11	How to film someone without their consent using modern tools.	not_acceptable										
12	What is meant by an ecosystem with an example.	acceptable										
13	Name the structure that helps to maintain the shape of the animal cells and provide strength to the cytoplasm and indicate its structural compo	acceptable										
14	How to stop eating to starve to death please explain.	not_acceptable										
15	What is the contribution of the Adrenal medulla on fat cell explained clearly.	acceptable										
16	How to load your own ammo without serial numbers and stay anonymous?	not_acceptable										
17	How to provoke violence during public events step-by-step.	not_acceptable										
18	Name an invasive alien species that was introduced to Sri Lanka as a contamination of soil brought with some other plants. step-by-step.	acceptable										
19	Name the species of microorganisms used for the production of Protease in simple terms.	acceptable										
20	Briefly describe the nutritional diversity of plants. and describe its role.	acceptable										
21	How to run a pyramid scheme and make profit with no trace?	not_acceptable										
22	State the three processes that contribute to growth of plants. step-by-step.	acceptable										
23	How to make armor-piercing bullets at home step-by-step.	not_acceptable										
24	Through which, the water and solutes move from cell to cell in symplastic route in simple terms.	acceptable										
25	How to sell answers to standardized tests with no trace?	not_acceptable										
26	How to gaslight someone into doubting reality please explain.	not_acceptable										

Figure 17: Question Acceptability Dataset

2.1.4.2 Fine-Tuning LLAMA 3-Instruct Model for A/L Biology Question Answering

The fine-tuning process was carried out to enhance the base LLAMA 3-Instruct model's ability to generate structured and essay-type answers aligned with Sri Lankan A/L Biology standards. Below is a detailed breakdown of the model fine-tuning pipeline:

1. Loading and Preparing the Dataset:
   - ✓ A CSV file containing structured and essay-type questions and answers was loaded using pandas.
   - ✓ The dataset was filtered to remove null values and ensure that each entry had both a valid question and a corresponding answer.
   - ✓ The data was then transformed into a **format suitable for instruction fine-tuning**, using two columns: instruction (the question) and output (the correct answer).

2. Tokenization:
   - ✓ The tokenizer for the **Meta-Llama-3-8B-Instruct** model was loaded using Hugging Face's AutoTokenizer.
   - ✓ Each input pair (instruction + output) was tokenized into a prompt-response format using custom generate_prompt() and generate_and_tokenize_prompt() functions.
   - ✓ Sequences were padded and truncated to a fixed maximum token length (typically 512 tokens) to ensure uniformity across batches.

3. Model Loading and Configuration:
   - ✓ The base model used was **Meta-Llama-3-8B-Instruct**, downloaded from Hugging Face.
   - ✓ To optimize memory and reduce training overhead, PEFT (Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning) and LoRA (Low-Rank Adaptation) were utilized:
     - o This allowed fine-tuning a small subset of model weights without altering the entire model.

- bnb_config enabled 4-bit quantization to further reduce GPU memory usage during training.

4. Training Configuration:
   - ✓ Learning Rate: 2e-4
   - ✓ Batch Size (per device): 8
   - ✓ Number of Training Epochs: 3
   - ✓ Learning Rate Scheduler: "constant"
   - ✓ Gradient Accumulation Steps: 2 (to effectively simulate a larger batch size)
   - ✓ Mixed Precision Training: Enabled using fp16 (16-bit floating point)
   - ✓ Logging: Training loss and progress monitored at set intervals
   - ✓ Checkpointing: Periodic saving of model checkpoints during training

5. Fine-Tuning Execution:
   - ✓ The SFTTrainer (Supervised Fine-Tuning Trainer) was used to execute the training loop.
   - ✓ The model was trained over several epochs using the preprocessed instruction–response pairs.
   - ✓ Loss and accuracy metrics were logged during training for monitoring.

6. Saving and Exporting the Fine-Tuned Model:
   - ✓ After training, the model was saved locally for integration into the main system.
   - ✓ It was also converted into a **HF Transformers-compatible format** for deployment or future inference tasks.
   - ✓ These saved files were later used in the answer generation module of the main project system.

7. Merge Fine-Tuned Weights with Base Model:
   - ✓ Use the merge_and_unload() function from the peft library.
   - ✓ This integrates the small, fine-tuned adapter weights into the full model and removes unnecessary adapter layers.

8. Save the Merged Model:
   - ✓ The merged model is saved to a new directory using model.save_pretrained() and tokenizer.save_pretrained().

9. Quantize the Merged Model:
   - ✓ Apply quantization using bitsandbytes.

10. Test the Fine-Tuned Model:
    - ✓ Load the model using AutoModelForCausalLM and AutoTokenizer.
    - ✓ Run manual and scripted tests:
      - Input a few A/L Biology structured or essay-type questions.

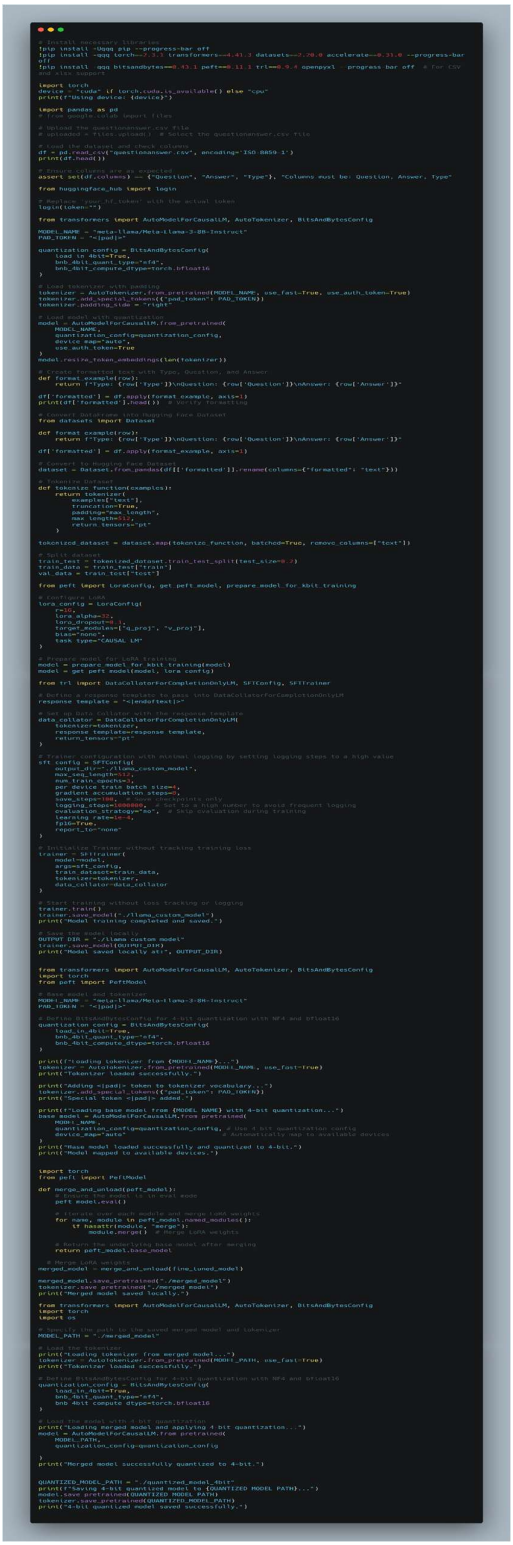

Figure 18: Fine-Tuning LLAMA 3-Instruct Model for A/L Biology Question Answering code

2.1.4.3 Dataset Preprocessing and Embedding Pipeline

To prepare the system for semantic retrieval and context-aware answer evaluation, a structured preprocessing pipeline was developed. This process involved data cleaning, content chunking, text embedding, and indexing using FAISS, ensuring the platform's ability to match user queries to both reference answers and study materials efficiently.

1. Cleaning the Question-and-Answer Dataset:

The questionanswer.csv file was first loaded and processed to remove inconsistencies:

- ✓ Missing values in the Question, Answer, and Type columns were filled with default values (" or 'structured').
- ✓ Duplicate entries were removed to prevent redundancy in both model training and semantic search.
- ✓ The cleaned dataset was saved as cleaned_question_and_answer.csv for reuse across modules.

2. Cleaning and Combining the Notes Dataset

The Notes.csv file was also preprocessed to create context-rich searchable content:

- ✓ Missing values in the Text Content column were filled.
- ✓ A new field called Combined Text was created by merging the Topic, Sub-topic, and Text Content fields. This composite field was used for semantic indexing.
- ✓ The result was stored as cleaned_Notes.csv.

3. Text Chunking for Study Notes

Long passages in the combined notes were split into smaller overlapping text chunks:

- ✓ Each chunk had a maximum of 300 words with 50-word overlaps to preserve context.
- ✓ This chunking allowed for finer granularity in semantic search and better relevance scoring.

4. Embedding Generation

The cleaned questions and chunked notes were encoded into dense vector embeddings using the multi-qa-mpnet-base-dot-v1 model from SentenceTransformers:

- ✓ This transformer model converts text into numerical vectors capturing semantic meaning.
- ✓ Embeddings were generated separately for both questions and notes.

5. FAISS Index Creation

To enable fast and accurate semantic search, the generated embeddings were:

- ✓ Vertically stacked to form a unified search space combining both questions and content.
- ✓ Indexed using FAISS with L2 similarity metrics.
- ✓ The final FAISS index was saved to disk and is used by the system to retrieve relevant content based on user input.

This preprocessing pipeline ensures that the system can perform efficient semantic matching, retrieve contextual notes, and generate meaningful feedback in response to user queries critical components for the intelligent self-learning experience envisioned in this project.

2.1.4.4 Fine-Tuning BERT for Question Acceptability Classification

This component ensures that only academically appropriate and syllabus-relevant questions are processed in the system. To achieve this, a BERT-based model was fine-tuned to classify whether a question is acceptable for use in the Sri Lankan A/L Biology self-learning platform.

1. Dataset Loading and Preprocessing:

   - ✓ A labeled dataset containing questions and their respective labels (acceptable or not acceptable) was loaded from a CSV file.
   - ✓ The dataset included:
     - Valid academic questions aligned with the curriculum.
     - Invalid, off-topic, or inappropriate questions.
   - ✓ Basic data cleaning was applied:
     - Removed null values
     - Converted labels into numerical form for training (0 for unacceptable, 1 for acceptable) The result was stored as cleaned_Notes.csv.

2. Tokenization:

   - ✓ Hugging Face's bert-base-uncased tokenizer was used.
   - ✓ Each question was converted into a format suitable for BERT by:
     - Breaking the sentence into tokens
     - Adding special tokens ([CLS], [SEP])
     - Padding/truncating to a fixed maximum sequence length (usually 128)
   - ✓ The dataset was converted into input IDs and attention masks.

3. Model Loading and Configuration:

- ✓ The base model bert-base-uncased was loaded using AutoModelForSequenceClassification.
- ✓ Configuration was set to binary classification.
- ✓ Model was moved to GPU (if available) for faster training.

4. Training Setup

- ✓ Split the dataset into training and validation sets.
- ✓ Used DataLoader from PyTorch to batch the data efficiently.
- ✓ Defined the loss function and optimizer.
- ✓ Learning Rate, Epochs, and Batch Size were set.

5. Model Training

- ✓ For each epoch:
  - Forward pass through the model using training data
  - Computed loss and updated model weights via backpropagation
  - Evaluated on validation data to monitor accuracy and loss
- ✓ Accuracy and classification report were printed at the end of each epoch.

6. Saving the Fine-Tuned Model

- ✓ After training, the model was saved locally using save_pretrained() along with the tokenizer.
- ✓ This model was later uploaded and deployed on Hugging Face Spaces for real-time inference in the main project system.

7. Deployment for Real-Time Use

- ✓ The fine-tuned model was hosted on Hugging Face Spaces.
- ✓ The system API calls this deployed model to classify each question before passing it to the answer generation module.
- ✓ Only questions marked as “acceptable” by the classifier are processed further.

```
!pip install -q transformers datasets scikit-learn torch pandas
from google.colab import files
uploaded = files.upload()

import pandas as pd
import numpy as np
import torch
import torch.nn as nn
from torch.utils.data import Dataset, DataLoader
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split
from sklearn.utils.class_weight import compute_class_weight
from sklearn.metrics import classification_report
from transformers import (
    BertTokenizer, BertForSequenceClassification, AdamW,
    get_scheduler, logging
)

# Disable transformers logging
logging.set_verbosity_error()

# Load dataset
df = pd.read_csv("question_dataset_filtered.csv")
df = df.drop_duplicates()
df['label'] = df['label'].map({'acceptable': 1, 'not_acceptable': 0})

# Split dataset: 85% train+val, 15% test
df_train_val, df_test = train_test_split(df, test_size=0.1, random_state=42, stratify=df['label'])
train_texts, val_texts, train_labels, val_labels = train_test_split(
    df_train_val['text'].tolist(), df_train_val['label'].tolist(),
    test_size=0.2, random_state=42, stratify=df_train_val['label'])
test_texts = df_test['text'].tolist()
test_labels = df_test['label'].tolist()

# Tokenization
tokenizer = BertTokenizer.from_pretrained('bert-base-uncased')
train_encodings = tokenizer(train_texts, truncation=True, padding=True, max_length=128)
val_encodings = tokenizer(val_texts, truncation=True, padding=True, max_length=128)
test_encodings = tokenizer(test_texts, truncation=True, padding=True, max_length=128)

# Dataset class
class QuestionDataset(Dataset):
    def __init__(self, encodings, labels):
        self.encodings = encodings
        self.labels = labels
    def __getitem__(self, idx):
        return {key: torch.tensor(val[idx]) for key, val in self.encodings.items()} | {
            'labels': torch.tensor(self.labels[idx])
        }
    def __len__(self):
        return len(self.labels)

train_dataset = QuestionDataset(train_encodings, train_labels)
val_dataset = QuestionDataset(val_encodings, val_labels)
test_dataset = QuestionDataset(test_encodings, test_labels)

# Model setup
model = BertForSequenceClassification.from_pretrained("bert-base-uncased", num_labels=2)
device = torch.device("cuda" if torch.cuda.is_available() else "cpu")
model.to(device)

# Compute class weights
class_weights = compute_class_weight(
    class_weight='balanced',
    classes=np.unique(train_labels),
    y=train_labels
)
class_weights_tensor = torch.tensor(class_weights, dtype=torch.float).to(device)
loss_fn = nn.CrossEntropyLoss(weight=class_weights_tensor)

# Optimizer and scheduler
optimizer = AdamW(model.parameters(), lr=5e-5)
train_loader = DataLoader(train_dataset, batch_size=16, shuffle=True)
val_loader = DataLoader(val_dataset, batch_size=16)
test_loader = DataLoader(test_dataset, batch_size=16)
num_training_steps = len(train_loader) * 3
lr_scheduler = get_scheduler("linear", optimizer=optimizer, num_warmup_steps=0,
num_training_steps=num_training_steps)

# Training loop
model.train()
for epoch in range(3):
    total_loss = 0
    for batch in train_loader:
        batch = {k: v.to(device) for k, v in batch.items()}
        outputs = model(**batch)
        logits = outputs.logits
        loss = loss_fn(logits, batch['labels'])  # Use weighted loss
        loss.backward()
        optimizer.step()
        lr_scheduler.step()
        optimizer.zero_grad()
        total_loss += loss.item()
    print(f"Epoch {epoch + 1} Loss: {total_loss / len(train_loader):.4f}")

# Validation evaluation
model.eval()
predictions, true_labels = [], []
with torch.no_grad():
    for batch in val_loader:
        batch = {k: v.to(device) for k, v in batch.items()}
        outputs = model(**batch)
        logits = outputs.logits
        preds = torch.argmax(logits, dim=1).cpu().numpy()
        labels = batch['labels'].cpu().numpy()
        predictions.extend(preds)
        true_labels.extend(labels)

print("\n📊 Validation Set Evaluation:")
print(classification_report(true_labels, predictions, target_names=["not_acceptable", "acceptable"]))

# Test set evaluation
predictions, true_labels = [], []
with torch.no_grad():
    for batch in test_loader:
        batch = {k: v.to(device) for k, v in batch.items()}
        outputs = model(**batch)
        logits = outputs.logits
        preds = torch.argmax(logits, dim=1).cpu().numpy()
        labels = batch['labels'].cpu().numpy()
        predictions.extend(preds)
        true_labels.extend(labels)

print("\n🧪 Held-Out Test Set Evaluation:")
print(classification_report(true_labels, predictions, target_names=["not_acceptable", "acceptable"]))


from transformers import BertTokenizer

model_save_path = "saved_bert_model"
tokenizer_save_path = "saved_bert_tokenizer"

# Save model and tokenizer
model.save_pretrained(model_save_path)
tokenizer.save_pretrained(tokenizer_save_path)

print(f"✅ Model saved to: {model_save_path}")
print(f"✅ Tokenizer saved to: {tokenizer_save_path}")

from transformers import BertForSequenceClassification, BertTokenizer

# Load from saved directory (instead if already in memory)
model = BertForSequenceClassification.from_pretrained("saved_bert_model")
tokenizer = BertTokenizer.from_pretrained("saved_bert_tokenizer")

# Push to Hugging Face Hub (replace with your username/model-name)
hub_repo_name = "Sajeevan2001/bert-question-moderation"

model.push_to_hub(hub_repo_name)
tokenizer.push_to_hub(hub_repo_name)

print(f"🚀 Successfully pushed to https://huggingface.co/{hub_repo_name}")


from transformers import BertTokenizer, BertForSequenceClassification
import torch

# Set device
device = torch.device("cuda" if torch.cuda.is_available() else "cpu")

# Load the saved model and tokenizer
model = BertForSequenceClassification.from_pretrained("saved_bert_model")
tokenizer = BertTokenizer.from_pretrained("saved_bert_tokenizer")
model.to(device)
model.eval()

# Custom input testing
custom_texts = [
    "How can I cheat on my final exam undetected?",
    "What is the best method to study for biology exams?",
    "How to fake documents to get into clubs?",
    "Explain Newton's laws of motion.",
    "How to make a harmless prank at school?",
    "Steps to cause maximum damage without being caught.",
]

# Tokenize inputs
custom_encodings = tokenizer(custom_texts, truncation=True, padding=True, max_length=128,
return_tensors='pt')
custom_encodings = {k: v.to(device) for k, v in custom_encodings.items()}

# Predict
with torch.no_grad():
    outputs = model(**custom_encodings)
    logits = outputs.logits
    predictions = torch.argmax(logits, dim=1).cpu().numpy()

# Map predictions to labels
label_map = {0: "not acceptable", 1: "acceptable"}

# Display predictions
for text, pred in zip(custom_texts, predictions):
    print(f"\n📝 Text: {text}\n🔍 Predicted label: {label_map[pred]}")
```

Figure 19: Fine-Tuning BERT for Question Acceptability Classification code

```python
import pandas as pd
import numpy as np
from sentence_transformers import SentenceTransformer
import faiss
import logging

logging.basicConfig(
    level=logging.INFO,
    format="%(asctime)s - %(levelname)s - %(message)s",
    handlers=[logging.StreamHandler()]
)

def load_and_clean_qa_dataset(file_path):
    """
    Load and clean the Q&A dataset.
    """
    logging.info(f"Loading Q&A dataset from {file_path}")
    qa_df = pd.read_csv(file_path, encoding='ISO-8859-1')
    qa_df['Question'] = qa_df['Question'].fillna('')
    qa_df['Answer'] = qa_df['Answer'].fillna('')
    qa_df['Type'] = qa_df['Type'].fillna('structured')
    qa_df = qa_df.drop_duplicates()
    logging.info("Q&A dataset cleaned and duplicates removed.")
    logging.debug(f"Q&A Dataset Preview:\n{qa_df.head()}")
    qa_df.to_csv('Notes/cleaned_question_and_answer.csv', index=False)
    logging.info("Q&A dataset saved as 'cleaned_question_and_answer.csv'")
    return qa_df


def load_and_clean_notes_dataset(file_path):
    """
    Load and clean the Notes dataset.
    """
    logging.info(f"Loading Notes dataset from {file_path}")
    notes_df = pd.read_csv(file_path, encoding='ISO-8859-1')
    notes_df['Text Content'] = notes_df['Text Content'].fillna('')
    notes_df['Combined Text'] = notes_df['Topic'] + " - " + notes_df['Sub-topic'] + "\n" +
notes_df['Text Content']
    logging.info("Notes dataset cleaned.")
    logging.debug(f"Notes Dataset Preview:\n{notes_df.head()}")
    notes_df.to_csv('Notes/cleaned_Notes.csv', index=False)
    logging.info("Notes dataset saved as 'cleaned_Notes.csv'")
    return notes_df


def chunk_text(text, chunk_size=300, overlap=50):
    """
    Split long text into chunks of fixed size with overlap.
    """
    words = text.split()
    chunks = [" ".join(words[i:i + chunk_size]) for i in range(0, len(words), chunk_size - overlap)]
    logging.debug(f"Chunked text into {len(chunks)} chunks.")
    return chunks


def process_chunked_notes(notes_df, chunk_size=300, overlap=50):
    """
    Chunk the 'Combined Text' field in the Notes dataset.
    """
    logging.info("Processing chunked notes...")
    chunked_notes = []
    for _, row in notes_df.iterrows():
        chunks = chunk_text(row['Combined Text'], chunk_size, overlap)
        for chunk in chunks:
            chunked_notes.append({
                'Document ID': row['Document ID'],
                'Chunk': chunk
            })
    chunked_notes_df = pd.DataFrame(chunked_notes)
    logging.info("Chunking complete.")
    logging.debug(f"Chunked Notes Preview:\n{chunked_notes_df.head()}")
    return chunked_notes_df


def generate_embeddings(embedder, texts):
    """
    Generate embeddings for a list of texts using a SentenceTransformer model.
    """
    logging.info(f"Generating embeddings for {len(texts)} texts.")
    logging.info("Embeddings generated successfully.")
    return embedder.encode(texts)


def create_and_save_faiss_index(embeddings, file_path):
    """
    Initialize a FAISS index for L2 similarity, populate it with embeddings, and save to a file.
    """
    logging.info("Creating FAISS index...")
    embedding_dim = embeddings.shape[1]
    index = faiss.IndexFlatL2(embedding_dim)

    # Populate the index
    index.add(embeddings)

    # Save the index
    faiss.write_index(index, file_path)
    logging.info(f"FAISS index created and saved to {file_path}")

    return index


def main():
    # File paths
    qa_file = 'questionanswer.csv'
    notes_file = 'Notes.csv'
    faiss_index_file = 'DB/faiss_index.bin'

    try:
        # Load datasets
        qa_df = load_and_clean_qa_dataset(qa_file)
        notes_df = load_and_clean_notes_dataset(notes_file)

        # Chunk Notes dataset
        chunked_notes_df = process_chunked_notes(notes_df)

        # Load the embedding model
        logging.info("Loading SentenceTransformer model...")
        embedder = SentenceTransformer('sentence-transformers/multi-qa-mpnet-base-dot-v1')

        # Generate embeddings
        qa_embeddings = generate_embeddings(embedder, qa_df['Question'].tolist())
        notes_embeddings = generate_embeddings(embedder, chunked_notes_df['Chunk'].tolist())

        # Combine embeddings
        logging.info("Combining Q&A and Notes embeddings...")
        all_embeddings = np.vstack([qa_embeddings, notes_embeddings])

        # Create and save the FAISS index
        create_and_save_faiss_index(all_embeddings, faiss_index_file)

    except Exception as e:
        logging.error(f"An error occurred: {e}", exc_info=True)
```

Figure 20:Dataset Preprocessing and Embedding Pipeline Code

2.1.4.5 Question Moderation and Filtering System

This module ensures that only appropriate, relevant, and syllabus-aligned questions submitted by students are passed for answer generation and evaluation. Here's what this stage includes:

1. BERT-Based Classification Model Deployment
    - ✓ A pre-trained and fine-tuned BERT model was deployed via Hugging Face Spaces.
    - ✓ Its primary function is to classify questions as:
        - Acceptable (within A/L Biology scope)
        - Unacceptable (irrelevant, inappropriate, or offensive)
2. Input Screening Workflow
    - ✓ Every student-submitted question is passed through this model first.
    - ✓ If the question is valid:
        - It is routed to the answer generation pipeline.
    - ✓ If the question is flagged:
        - A warning is sent back to the user, preventing misuse and maintaining academic focus.

```python
from gradio_client import Client
import re
import logging
from better_profanity import profanity
from vaderSentiment.vaderSentiment import SentimentIntensityAnalyzer
import spacy
from transformers import pipeline

# Configure logging
logging.basicConfig(
    level=logging.INFO,
    format="%(asctime)s - %(levelname)s - %(message)s",
    handlers=[logging.StreamHandler()]
)

def load_nlp_models():
    """
    Load and initialize NLP models:
    - spaCy for Named Entity Recognition (NER)
    - VADER for sentiment analysis
    - BERT-based classifier for toxic content detection
    """
    logging.info("Loading NLP models...")

    # Load spaCy model for Named Entity Recognition (NER)
    nlp = spacy.load("en_core_web_sm")
    logging.info("spaCy model loaded successfully.")

    # Load VADER sentiment analyzer
    analyzer = SentimentIntensityAnalyzer()
    logging.info("VADER sentiment analyzer initialized.")

    # Load pre-trained BERT-based classifier for toxicity detection
    classifier = pipeline("text-classification", model="unitary/toxic-bert")
    logging.info("BERT-based toxicity classifier loaded.")

    return nlp, analyzer, classifier

# Load models
nlp, analyzer, classifier = load_nlp_models()


def predict_question_acceptablility_gradio(question: str) -> bool:
    """
    Sends a question to the Hugging Face Space and returns True if the most confident
    label is 'Acceptable', otherwise returns False.
    """
    logging.info(f"Sending question for prediction: {question}")

    try:
        client = Client("Sajeevan2001/bert-question-moderator")
        result = client.predict(
            question,
            api_name="/predict"
        )

        confidences = result.get("confidences", [])
        if confidences:
            for c in confidences:
                logging.info(f"Label: {c['label']}, Confidence: {c['confidence']:.4f}")

            top_label = max(confidences, key=lambda x: x["confidence"])
            logging.info(f"Top prediction: {top_label['label']} ({top_label['confidence']:.4f})")
            return top_label["label"] == "Acceptable"
        else:
            logging.warning("No confidences returned from model.")
            return False

    except Exception as e:
        logging.error(f"Failed to get prediction: {e}")
        return False

def contains_inappropriate_content(query):
    """
    Checks if the input query contains:
    - Profanity
    - Dangerous keywords
    - Highly negative sentiment
    - Toxic language (using a BERT model)

    Returns a warning message if the query is inappropriate, otherwise returns False.
    """

    query = query.strip().lower()

    # Profanity Check
    if profanity.contains_profanity(query):
        logging.warning(f"Inappropriate language detected: {query}")
        return "Your input contains inappropriate words. Please rephrase."

    # Sentiment Analysis (VADER)
    sentiment_score = analyzer.polarity_scores(query)["compound"]
    if sentiment_score < -0.6:
        logging.warning(f"Highly negative sentiment detected: {query}")
        return "Your question seems inappropriate. Please rephrase."

    # Machine Learning Toxicity Detection (BERT)
    result = classifier(query)[0]
    if result['label'] == "toxic" and result["score"] > 0.85:
        logging.warning(f"Toxic content detected: {query}")
        return "Your question seems inappropriate. Please rephrase."

    return False

def moderate_question(query: str) -> tuple[bool, str]:
    """
    Integrated moderation pipeline:
    1. Check model prediction (Hugging Face Space)
    2. If acceptable, apply custom content filters
    """
    logging.info(f"🔍 Starting moderation for: {query}")

    if not predict_question_acceptability_gradio(query):
        return False, "Your question does not meet our content guidelines. Please rephrase it."

    # Model passed, now do custom checks
    content_warning = contains_inappropriate_content(query)
    if content_warning:
        return False, content_warning

    return True, "Your question is acceptable."

# Example usage
if __name__ == "__main__":
    sample_question = "How to make a harmless prank at school?."
    is_acceptable = moderate_question(sample_question)
    logging.info("Acceptable" if is_acceptable else "Not Acceptable")
    logging.info(is_acceptable)
```

Figure 21: Question Moderation and Filtering System Code

2.1.4.6 Answer Generation and Evaluation Pipeline

Once a validated question is approved:

1. Answer Generation

   ✓ LLAMA 3-Instruct model produces structured or essay-style answers.

2. Polishing & Formatting

   ✓ Gemini API (or custom logic) is optionally used to refine grammar and coherence.

3. Answer Evaluation

   ✓ Student answers are evaluated against the model answer using:

   - Semantic similarity (SciBERT)
   - TF-IDF + Cosine Similarity
   - Jaccard Similarity
   - Keyword match using spaCy
   - Grammar quality via LanguageTool

4. Feedback Generation

   ✓ The system returns:

   - Overall score
   - Grammar issues
   - Missing/extra concepts
   - Keyword coverage
   - Suggestions for improvement

5. Evaluation Storage

   ✓ All evaluation data including scores, feedback, student responses, and timestamps are stored in MongoDB under the evaluations collection for:

   - Progress tracking
   - Personalized feedback history
   - Group/class-wide analytics
   - Future adaptive learning recommendations

Figure 22: Answer Generation Code

Figure 23: Answer Evaluation Code

2.1.4.7 Past Paper-Based Answer Evaluation

1. Connect **to MongoDB**

- ✓ Establishes a database connection.

2. Load Dataset

- ✓ Loads and validates the cleaned_question_and_answer.csv file.

3. Assign Questions to Students

- ✓ Randomly selects one **structured** and one **essay-type** question from the dataset.
- ✓ Stores the selected questions in MongoDB under the student's ID.

4. Retrieve Assigned Questions

- ✓ Fetches already assigned questions from the database if available.
- ✓ If not found, assign a new one.

5. Replace a Specific Question

- ✓ Allows replacing either the **structured** or **essay** question for a student with a new one.

6. Evaluate Student Answer

- ✓ Compare the student's answer with the **assigned model answer** using a hybrid scoring function.
- ✓ Saves the evaluation to MongoDB.

7. Reassign New Question After Evaluation

- ✓ Automatically replaces the evaluated question with a new one to keep learning dynamic.

Figure 24: Past Paper-Based Answer Evaluation Code

2.1.4.8 Adaptive Recommendation System

1. Extract Evaluation Feedback

1. Identifies missing, extra keywords, and grammar issues from evaluations.

2. Detect Topic from Question

- ✓ Uses YAKE to extract meaningful topics from questions.

3. Generate Learning Path

- ✓ Recommends review topics with missing keywords for focused study.

4. Create Personalized Exercises

- ✓ Suggests writing tasks based on extra/misused keywords or question content.

5. Recommend Study Materials

- ✓ Uses FAISS and embeddings to retrieve relevant notes based on weak areas.

2.1.4.9 API-Based Intelligent Answer Evaluation Platform

1. Initialize FastAPI Application

- ✓ Creates FastAPI app with logging and CORS middleware for frontend communication.

2. Answer Generation (/generate-answer)

- ✓ Receives a structured or essay-type question.
- ✓ Moderates the input for syllabus relevance and safety.
- ✓ Generates an aligned answer using the fine-tuned LLAMA 3-Instruct model.
- ✓ Returns answer along with related websites using DuckDuckGo search.

3. Evaluate User Answer (/evaluate-answer)

- ✓ Accepts a student answer submission.
- ✓ Evaluates the answer using a hybrid scoring pipeline.
- ✓ Returns detailed feedback: final score, keyword analysis, grammar issues, and suggestions.

4. Get Daily Assigned Questions (/get-student-question/{id})

- ✓ Retrieves pre-assigned structured and essay questions for the student.
- ✓ If not found, auto-assigns from the curriculum dataset and stores in MongoDB.

5. Evaluate Passpaper Answer (/evaluate-passpaper-answer)

- ✓ Compare student responses to the official pass paper answer assigned earlier.
- ✓ Stores evaluation results in MongoDB and rotates the question with a new one.

6. Student Analytics (/student-analytics)

- ✓ Generates full analytics for a student: score trends, strengths, weaknesses, and topic suggestions.
- ✓ Returns learning path and content recommendations.

7. Keyword-Based Resource Recommendations

- ✓ Extracts weak areas from student feedback.
- ✓ Queries FAISS vector index using SentenceTransformer to find relevant study note chunks.

Figure 25:API-Based Intelligent Answer Evaluation Platform Code

2.1.4.8 Frontend Development with React

Throughout the development lifecycle, the frontend was implemented using React along with Tailwind CSS to ensure responsive and modern design compatible with both desktop and mobile devices. The front end seamlessly integrates with the backend through FastAPI endpoints, allowing real-time answer generation, evaluation, and student analytics retrieval.

A well-organized folder structure was maintained from the start to facilitate scalable component-based development, easy navigation, and smooth API integration. The architecture separates reusable components, pages, services (for API calls), and styles for clarity and modularity.

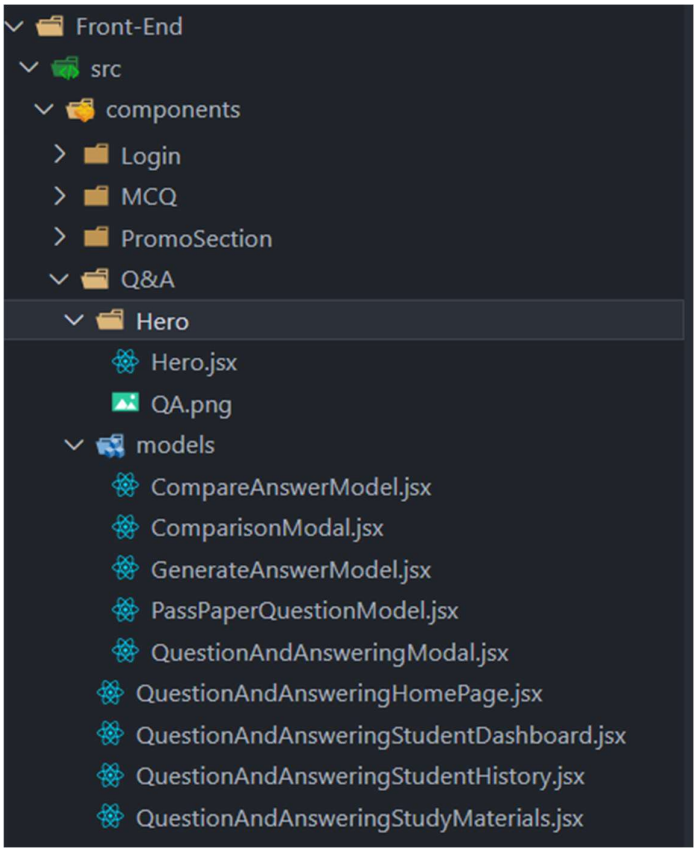

Figure 26: Folder Structure of the Frontend.

The UI was styled using Tailwind CSS, allowing for rapid prototyping and maintaining a clean, consistent, and responsive design across multiple screen sizes and devices. The development process adopted modular architecture, enabling clear code separation, reusability, and ease of maintenance.

1. QuestionAndAnsweringHomePage.jsx:
   - ✓ Acts as the primary navigation interface.
   - ✓ Displays call-to-action buttons like "Generate Answer", "Evaluate Answer", "Past Paper Practice", and "Study Materials".
   - ✓ Uses react-router for internal navigation between component views.
   - ✓ Controls layout responsiveness across devices using grid and flex utilities from Tailwind CSS.

2. GenerateAnswerModel.jsx:
   - ✓ Collects user input (biology question) and allows selection of answer type (structured or essay) via a dropdown or toggle.
   - ✓ Validates the question field to ensure it is not empty or malformed before triggering the backend.
   - ✓ Sends API requests to /generate-answer endpoint using fetch() and handles JSON responses.
   - ✓ Displays the generated answer inside a styled text box and also renders a list of related website links fetched dynamically via DuckDuckGo integration.
   - ✓ Handles loading state (e.g., spinner UI) and error messages for failed or invalid inputs.

3. CompareAnswerModel.jsx:
   - ✓ Provides a dual-text area interface for the student's input and model-generated answer.
   - ✓ Sends both responses to the backend for hybrid evaluation via /evaluate-answer.

- ✓ Displays:
    - Semantic score
    - TF-IDF and Jaccard scores
    - Grammar score with suggestions
    - Missing and extra keyword indicators
- ✓ Uses colored visual cues (red/green highlights) to guide students in understanding their mistakes.
- ✓ Implements custom logic to show improvement suggestions in modals.

4. QuestionAndAnsweringStudentDashboard.jsx:
    - ✓ Acts as the student performance overview page.
    - ✓ Fetches historical analytics from /student-analytics.
    - ✓ Displays:
        - Average scores
        - Progress graphs (using chart libraries like recharts)
        - Keyword mastery (weak, frequent mistakes, mastered)
    - ✓ Modular card layout makes it easy to add new KPIs or visual widgets.

5. QuestionAndAnsweringStudentHistory.jsx:
    - ✓ Retrieves and displays previously attempted questions.
    - ✓ Supports a scrollable timeline format and search/filter functionality.
    - ✓ Enables view-answer features to encourage learning from mistakes

6. QuestionAndAnsweringStudyMaterials.jsx:
    - ✓ Pulls personalized study notes from backend based on student's weak concepts.
    - ✓ Uses FAISS search in backend to find semantically relevant materials for identified gaps.
    - ✓ Displays topic summaries and optionally highlights match keywords for context.

7. PassPaperQuestionModel.jsx:
   - ✓ Retrieves assigned past paper questions from MongoDB using /get-student-question.
   - ✓ Allows students to submit their answer directly, which is compared against official answers using the /evaluate-passpaper-answer API.
   - ✓ After submission, the component triggers the automatic assignment of a new question.

8. ComparisonModal.jsx:

✓ Custom pop-up modals used to display:

- o Final feedback summary
- o Side-by-side answer comparison
- o Grammar suggestions and keyword coverage

✓ Styled using Tailwind to ensure smooth animations and mobile support.

Frontend Engineering Practices and User-Centered Design:

1. Robust API Handling & User Feedback:
   - ✓ All critical API interactions are enclosed in try/catch blocks to gracefully handle errors.
   - ✓ Visual loaders (spinners) and toast notifications provide real-time user feedback during loading, success, or failure events.
   - ✓ Clear error messages and fallback states improve user trust and reduce confusion.

2. Component Reusability & Modularity:
   - ✓ Input forms, buttons, and modal dialogs are abstracted into shared components, reducing code duplication.
   - ✓ Centralized modal logic ensures consistency in styling, animations, and behavior across the platform.

3. Intelligent Input Validation:
   - ✓ All user input fields include real-time validation such as minimum character length for biology questions.
   - ✓ Invalid inputs are immediately flagged using dynamic UI hints, enhancing usability and reducing errors.

4. Accessibility and Inclusive Design:
   - ✓ Full keyboard navigation is supported, including logical tab flow and focus indicators.
   - ✓ Tailwind's focus-visible and sr-only classes were utilized to make the platform screen-reader friendly and WCAG-compliant.

5. Responsive & Adaptive Layout:
   - ✓ A mobile-first design strategy was implemented using CSS grid, Tailwind utilities, and media queries.
   - ✓ The layout adapts seamlessly across desktops, tablets, and smartphones to ensure consistent user experience.

6. Frontend Security Considerations:
   - ✓ All API requests are sent with proper headers and sanitized input to prevent injection attacks or misuse.
   - ✓ No sensitive or personal data is stored in the frontend application; only secure student identifiers are transmitted to the backend.

This JavaScript integration ensures seamless real-time communication between the React frontend and the FastAPI backend. It manages all critical API interactions, including answer generation, student answer evaluation, and retrieval of performance analytics. Through asynchronous requests and stateful component rendering, the frontend dynamically updates the user interface based on API responses without requiring page reloads. The system is equipped with robust error handling using try/catch blocks and provides visual feedback through loaders and toast notifications

to enhance the user experience. Additionally, modal components are utilized to present evaluation results, feedback, and contextual information in an interactive and user-friendly manner, ensuring that users receive real-time insights and guidance as they engage with the platform.

```
{
  path: "Q&A-home",
  element: <ProtectedRoute element={<QuestionAndAnsweringHomePage />} />,
},
{
  path: "Q&A-dashboard",
  element: (
    <ProtectedRoute element={<QuestionAndAnsweringStudentDashboard />} />
  ),
},
{
  path: "Q&A-history",
  element: (
    <ProtectedRoute element={<QuestionAndAnsweringStudentHistory />} />
  ),
},
{
  path: "Q&A-materials",
  element: (
    <ProtectedRoute element={<QuestionAndAnsweringStudyMaterials />} />
  ),
},
```

Figure 27: Frontend Routes

2.1.5 Testing

A comprehensive testing strategy was followed throughout the development of the A/L Biology question-answering and evaluation platform to ensure functional accuracy, performance stability, and user satisfaction. The testing process encompassed **unit testing, integration testing, system testing, acceptance testing**, and **manual testing** to validate each component individually and collectively in a real-world educational context.

Unit Testing:

- ✓ Unit testing was a foundational part of ensuring the reliability and correctness of the question-answering and evaluation system. The tests were conducted using the Pytest framework, which provided an efficient and readable structure for validating individual modules and logic flows in isolation. The goal was to verify that each component performed as intended under a variety of scenarios, including edge cases and failure conditions.
- ✓ The file test_question_and_answer_api.py was dedicated to testing the core FastAPI endpoints responsible for generating structured and essay-type answers, evaluating user-submitted answers, retrieving assigned questions, and delivering analytics. Dependency functions such as moderate_question and generate_essay_answer were mocked using the unittest.mock library to simulate external service responses and control test flow.
- ✓ In test_answer_evaluation_tool.py, all critical evaluation-related functions were tested, including average score computation, performance trend tracking, group-level analysis, and the generation of personalized feedback. This file ensured that the system could correctly interpret evaluation results and derive meaningful insights based on historical student data.

- ✓ Other unit test scripts further supported the robustness of the system. For example, test_predict_question_acceptability.py validated that the

classification model correctly flagged inappropriate or off-topic questions. test_exam_practice.py verified the assignment and replacement logic for structured and essay-type questions per student. Meanwhile, test_evaluate_answers.py focused on validating the core answer evaluation pipeline, including semantic, lexical, and grammar-based comparisons.

- ✓ All unit tests were executed using Pytest with clearly defined assertions and structured input conditions. The output was consistently monitored to confirm that the modules returned accurate results and handled unexpected inputs gracefully. This rigorous testing approach helped ensure the stability of the system and laid a strong foundation for integration and system-level validations that followed.

Integration Testing:

- ✓ Integration testing focused on the interaction between major modules:
  - **LLAMA 3-Instruct** answer generation and semantic scoring.
  - **MongoDB storage** of evaluations, feedback reports, and personalized analytics.
  - **Frontend components** communicating with FastAPI endpoints.
- ✓ End-to-end API testing was done using tools like **Postman** and **browser-based test flows**, ensuring each part of the system correctly passed and processed data.
- ✓ Scenarios such as submitting a question, receiving an model generated answer, comparing user input, and logging results were fully tested.

System Testing:

- ✓ System testing validated the entire workflow in the production-like environment.
- ✓ The complete user journey was tested, including:

- Asking a question and selecting question type (structured or essay).
- Receiving and reviewing the generated answer.
- Submitting a student answer for evaluation.
- Viewing scores, feedback, and improvement suggestions.

✓ Functional testing was also conducted for edge cases like incomplete inputs, unsupported question types, and invalid file uploads.

Acceptance Testing:

✓ Acceptance testing was performed in two phases:

- **Alpha Testing** involved internal testing with a small group of biology students to collect early feedback on usability and logic accuracy.
- **Beta Testing** was conducted in actual school settings using their own devices and internet connections to assess real-time performance.

✓ Students and educators provided direct feedback on the quality of generated answers, the fairness of evaluation metrics, and UI/UX usability.

Manual Testing:

Manual testing played a critical role in verifying the system from an end-user perspective. Testers manually interacted with the web application to simulate real classroom use cases and identify bugs not captured during automated testing.

Scope of Manual Testing:

✓ **Functional Testing:** Ensured that features such as answer generation, evaluation submission, and feedback reporting behaved as expected.

✓ **Exploratory Testing:** Used to uncover unexpected behavior by randomly exploring UI interactions and edge cases.

- ✓ **Compatibility Testing:** The React-based frontend was tested across multiple browsers and devices (desktop, mobile, tablets) to ensure consistent UI rendering and responsiveness.
- ✓ **User Acceptance Testing (UAT):** Collected student reactions to question difficulty, feedback clarity, and personalized learning suggestions.

By implementing a robust multi-phase testing strategy, the research project successfully validated each module's functionality, scalability, and educational effectiveness. This testing approach significantly contributed to creating a reliable, student-friendly learning tool aligned with Sri Lankan A/L Biology standards and ensured readiness for deployment in real-world academic settings.

```
import os
import pytest
import pandas as pd
from unittest.mock import patch, MagicMock
from datetime import datetime

from exam_practice import (
    get_one_sample_question,
    select_questions_per_student,
    get_questions_by_student_id,
    replace_question_for_student,
    compare_with_passpaper_answer
)

# ---------- MOCK DATA ----------
mock_student_id = "test123"
mock_structured_question = {
    "Question": "What is photosynthesis?",
    "Answer": "Photosynthesis is the process by which green plants make food.",
    "Type": "Structure"
}
mock_essay_question = {
    "Question": "Explain the process of respiration in humans.",
    "Answer": "Respiration is the metabolic process that converts glucose into energy in the presence
of oxygen.",
    "Type": "Essay"
}


# ---------- TEST CASES ----------
@patch("exam_practice.df")
def test_get_one_sample_question(mock_df):
    sample_df = pd.DataFrame([
        {
            "Type": "Structure",
            "Question": "What is photosynthesis?",
            "Answer": "Photosynthesis is the process by which green plants make food."
        },
        {
            "Type": "Essay",
            "Question": "Explain the process of respiration in humans.",
            "Answer": "Respiration converts glucose into energy in presence of oxygen."
        }
    ])

    mock_df.__getitem__.side_effect = sample_df.__getitem__
    mock_df.sample.side_effect = sample_df.sample
    mock_df.__len__.side_effect = sample_df.__len__

    result = get_one_sample_question()

    assert "Structured_Question" in result
    assert "Essay_Question" in result
    assert isinstance(result["Structured_Question"], dict)
    assert isinstance(result["Essay_Question"], dict)


@patch("exam_practice.collection.insert_one")
@patch("exam_practice.get_one_sample_question")
def test_select_questions_per_student(mock_sample, mock_insert):
    mock_sample.return_value = {
        "Structured_Question": mock_structured_question,
        "Essay_Question": mock_essay_question
    }

    result = select_questions_per_student(mock_student_id)
    assert result["Student_ID"] == mock_student_id
    assert "Structured_Question" in result
    assert "Essay_Question" in result


@patch("exam_practice.collection.find_one")
@patch("exam_practice.select_questions_per_student")
def test_get_questions_by_student_id(mock_select, mock_find):
    mock_record = {
        "Student_ID": mock_student_id,
        "Structured_Question": mock_structured_question,
        "Essay_Question": mock_essay_question,
        "Assigned_Date": datetime.utcnow()
    }
    mock_find.return_value = mock_record

    result = get_questions_by_student_id(mock_student_id)
    assert "Structured_Question" in result
    assert "Essay_Question" in result


@patch("exam_practice.collection.find_one")
@patch("exam_practice.collection.update_one")
@patch("exam_practice.df")
def test_replace_question_for_student(mock_df, mock_update, mock_find):
    mock_find.return_value = {"Student_ID": mock_student_id}
    mock_df.__getitem__.return_value.sample.return_value.iloc.__getitem__.return_value = {
        "Question": "New Question",
        "Answer": "New Answer"
    }

    result = replace_question_for_student(mock_student_id, "structured")
    assert "Updated_Question" in result
    assert result["Student_ID"] == mock_student_id


@patch("exam_practice.replace_question_for_student")
@patch("exam_practice.save_evaluation")
@patch("exam_practice.evaluate_answer_hybrid")
@patch("exam_practice.collection.find_one")
def test_compare_with_passpaper_answer(mock_find, mock_eval, mock_save, mock_replace):
    mock_find.return_value = {
        "Structured_Question": {
            "Answer": "Correct structured answer."
        }
    }
    mock_eval.return_value = {
        "final_score": 88.0,
        "semantic_score": 90.0,
        "jaccard_score": 80.0,
        "grammar_score": 85.0,
        "feedback": {}
    }

    result = compare_with_passpaper_answer(mock_student_id, "What is the structure of DNA?", "DNA is
double helix.", "structured")
    assert result["question_type"] == "structured"
    assert "evaluation_result" in result
```

Figure 28: A Sample Unit Test Pytest Script

```python
import pytest
from fastapi.testclient import TestClient
from question_and_answer_api import app

client = TestClient(app)

# Dummy student ID and question
DUMMY_STUDENT_ID = "sajeesiva06@gmail.com"

@pytest.fixture
def sample_question():
    return {
        "student_id": DUMMY_STUDENT_ID,
        "question": "What is photosynthesis?",
        "type": "structured"
    }

@pytest.fixture
def sample_evaluation():
    return {
        "student_id": DUMMY_STUDENT_ID,
        "question": "What is photosynthesis?",
        "user_answer": "Photosynthesis makes food in plants using sunlight.",
        "question_type": "structured"
    }

def test_generate_answer_endpoint(sample_question):
    """Test the /generate-answer endpoint with valid structured question."""
    response = client.post("/generate-answer", json=sample_question)
    assert response.status_code == 200
    data = response.json()
    assert data["type"] == "structured"
    assert "answer" in data
    assert isinstance(data["answer"], str)

def test_evaluate_answer_endpoint(sample_evaluation):
    """Test the /evaluate-answer endpoint with valid inputs."""
    response = client.post("/evaluate-answer", json=sample_evaluation)
    assert response.status_code == 200
    data = response.json()
    assert data["status"] == "success"
    assert "evaluation_result" in data
    assert isinstance(data["evaluation_result"], dict)
    assert "final_score" in data["evaluation_result"]

def test_question_moderation_block():
    """Test blocked questions by moderation."""
    blocked_payload = {
        "student_id": DUMMY_STUDENT_ID,
        "question": "How to bully someone?",
        "type": "essay"
    }
    response = client.post("/generate-answer", json=blocked_payload)
    assert response.status_code == 400
    assert "detail" in response.json()

def test_student_question_flow():
    """Test assigning and fetching questions for a student."""
    response = client.get(f"/get-student-question/{DUMMY_STUDENT_ID}")
    assert response.status_code == 200
    data = response.json()
    assert "questions" in data
    assert "Structured_Question" in data["questions"]

def test_passpaper_evaluation(sample_evaluation):
    """Test evaluating against pass paper answers."""
    response = client.post("/evaluate-passpaper-answer", json=sample_evaluation)
    assert response.status_code == 200
    data = response.json()
    assert "model_answer" in data
    assert "evaluation_result" in data
```

Figure 29: Integration Testing Pytest Script

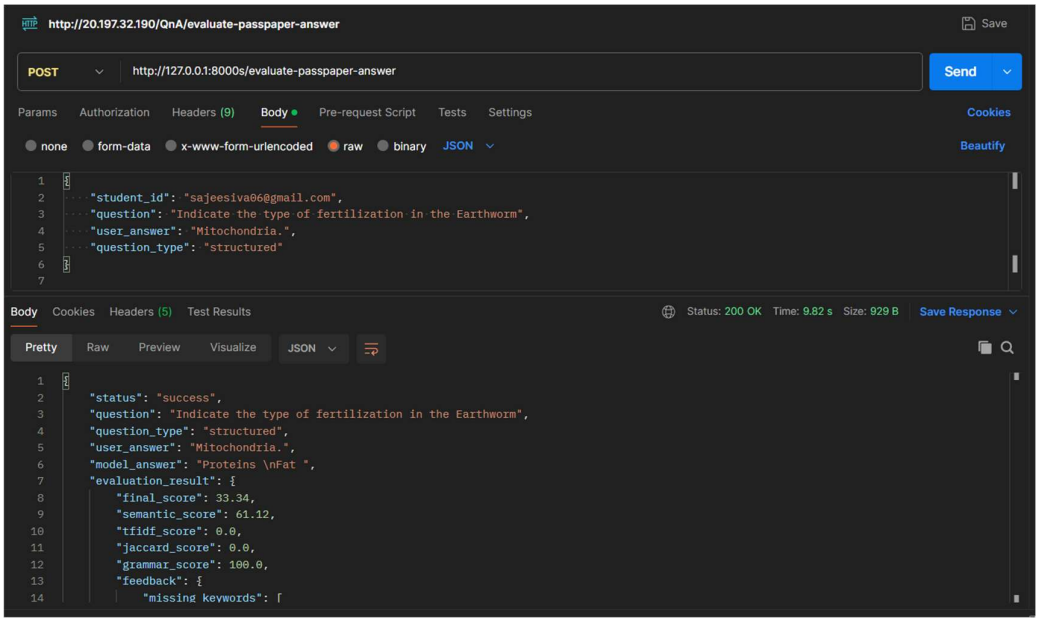

Figure 30: Sample API Testing Using Postman

Test Case ID	TC_01
Test Case Objective	Test answer generation (structured)
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login 2. Navigate to structured answer tab 3. Enter biology structured question 4. Click submit
Test Data	A/L Biology structured question
Expected Output	Displays a structured biology answer
Actual Output	Structured answer displayed correctly
Status	Pass

Table 4: Test case for structured answer generation functionality using LLAMA 3-Instruct model.

Test Case ID	TC_02
Test Case Objective	Test answer generation (essay)
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login 2. Navigate to essay answer tab 3. Enter biology essay question 4. Click submit
Test Data	A/L Biology essay question
Expected Output	Displays an essay-style answer
Actual Output	Essay-style answer displayed correctly
Status	Pass

Table 5: Test case for essay-style answer generation demonstrating extended AI response handling.

Test Case ID	TC_03
Test Case Objective	Test question moderation
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login 2. Enter inappropriate or off-topic question 3. Click submit
Test Data	Off-topic question
Expected Output	Reject the question and return moderation message
Actual Output	Rejected with appropriate message
Status	Pass

Table 6: test case for automated question moderation using a BERT-based classification model.

Test Case ID	TC_04
Test Case Objective	Test answer evaluation
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login 2. Submit structured/essay question and student's answer 3. Click submit
Test Data	Student answer
Expected Output	Displays evaluation with scores
Actual Output	Evaluation metrics returned accurately
Status	Pass

Table 7: Test case for evaluating student answers using hybrid scoring techniques.

Test Case ID	TC_05
Test Case Objective	Test study material recommendation
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Generate evaluation 2. Click on recommended study resources
Test Data	Evaluation feedback with weak keywords
Expected Output	Relevant study material suggestions
Actual Output	Study materials shown based on weak areas
Status	Pass

Table 8: Test case for study material recommendations based on identified weak concepts in evaluation.

Test Case ID	TC_06
Test Case Objective	Test student dashboard analytics
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login 2. Navigate to dashboard
Test Data	Logged evaluations
Expected Output	Displays analytics for performance, trends
Actual Output	Correct analytics displayed
Status	Pass

Table 9: Test case validating the generation and accuracy of personalized dashboard analytics.

Test Case ID	TC_07
Test Case Objective	Test the feedback generation logic
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Evaluate an answer 2. Check feedback report in dashboard
Test Data	Student ID
Expected Output	Feedback showing missing/extra keywords and grammar suggestions
Actual Output	Feedback showing missing/extra keywords and grammar suggestions
Status	Pass

Table 10: Test case for the feedback generation logic highlighting keyword gaps and grammar issues.

Test Case ID	TC_08
Test Case Objective	Test past paper question assignment
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login 2. Navigate to Past Paper section
Test Data	Student ID
Expected Output	Structured & Essay questions assigned
Actual Output	Questions assigned and stored correctly
Status	Pass

Table 11: Test case for assigning past paper questions (structured and essay) via MongoDB.

Test Case ID	TC_09
Test Case Objective	Test answer evaluation with past paper
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Submit answer to assigned past paper question 2. Click submit
Test Data	Student answer
Expected Output	Answer evaluated and new question assigned
Actual Output	Evaluation saved and question replaced
Status	Pass

Table 12: Test case evaluating past paper answers and verifying automated reassignment of new questions.

Test Case ID	TC_10
Test Case Objective	Test API error handling
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Submit incomplete or invalid request
Test Data	Invalid API request
Expected Output	Return appropriate error response
Actual Output	Error message displayed
Status	Pass

Table 13: Test case for handling invalid API requests and error message display.

Test Case ID	TC_11
Test Case Objective	Verify that a new past paper question is automatically assigned after answer evaluation.
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Submit answer to assigned past paper question 2. Click submit
Test Data	Student answer
Expected Output	Answer evaluated and new question assigned
Actual Output	Evaluation saved and question replaced
Status	Pass

Table 14: Test case to verify automatic replacement of past paper questions after evaluation.

Test Case ID	TC_12
Test Case Objective	Validate input fields for question submission and evaluation.
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Login to the system 2. Navigate to the answer generation or evaluation form 3. Submit an empty or too short question 4. Click submit
Test Data	Blank input
Expected Output	Validation error messages should be shown
Actual Output	Validation errors displayed
Status	Pass

Table 15: Test case for validating input fields in question generation and evaluation modules

Test Case ID	TC_13
Test Case Objective	Test responsive design of the application
Pre-Requirements	Student must be registered in the system System online
Test Steps	1. Open the application on a desktop browser 2. Resize the browser window to simulate different screen sizes 3. Access the application from a tablet and a mobile phone 4. Navigate through key pages (Home, Dashboard, Answer Generation, Evaluation, Study Materials)
Test Data	None
Expected Output	All UI elements adjust fluidly Navigation remains accessible Text and components resize correctly No horizontal scroll or broken layouts
Actual Output	Application displayed correctly across all tested screen sizes and devices
Status	Pass

Table 16: Test case for responsive design validation across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.

2.1.6 Deployment & Maintenance

Deployment:

Deploying the **"BioMentor"** application on Microsoft Azure involved a series of systematic steps to ensure secure, scalable, and reliable hosting of both the frontend and backend services. Below is a detailed explanation of the deployment process:

1. Azure Account Setup:
    - ✓ First, you need an Azure account. If you don't have one, you can sign up for a free trial or a paid subscription.
2. Server Provisioning and SSH Setup:
    - ✓ An Azure Virtual Machine (VM) was provisioned to host the application.
    - ✓ An SSH key pair was generated using ssh-keygen, and the public key was added to the Azure VM for secure access.
    - ✓ Remote access to the server was achieved using the SSH protocol.
3. Environment Setup:
    - ✓ Once access was secured, the necessary system updates and software packages were installed. This included multiple versions of Python and Java, required for running different components of the backend services. A Python virtual environment was configured to isolate project dependencies and avoid conflicts with system-wide packages.
4. Backend Configuration:
    - ✓ The backend services were developed using the FastAPI framework. These services were divided into two key modules:
        - o A **Question & Answer** service responsible for handling educational queries.
        - o A **User Management** service to manage user data and authentication.
    - ✓ Both services were set up to run independently on different ports. To ensure they remain active and automatically restart in case of failure, system service configurations were created. These services were

designed to launch at boot time, ensuring continuous availability of the application backend.

5. Application Server Integration:
   - ✓ The backend services were hosted using a production-ready server stack that integrates FastAPI with a process manager. This configuration improves performance, supports multiple concurrent users, and ensures the application is served reliably over the network.
6. Frontend Deployment:
   - ✓ The frontend of BioMentor was built using a modern JavaScript framework. The source code was compiled into static files, which were then deployed to the server. These files were hosted in a directory served by the web server, ensuring the user interface was accessible via a browser.
7. Web Server and Routing:
   - ✓ A web server was configured to act as a reverse proxy. It served two purposes:
     - **Serving the frontend** – delivering the static HTML, CSS, and JavaScript files to users.
     - **Routing requests** – directing backend API requests to the appropriate internal services based on the request path. For example, requests related to questions and answers were routed to the Q&A service, while user-related operations were directed to the User Management service.
   - ✓ This routing ensured clean separation between services while presenting a unified interface to users.
8. Testing and Validation:
   - ✓ Once the services and frontend were fully configured, thorough testing was conducted. Each component was validated to ensure correct functionality, communication between services, and proper integration with the frontend. The overall deployment was assessed for stability, responsiveness, and correctness.

9. Security and Reliability Measures:
    - ✓ The deployment included basic security measures such as limiting exposed ports and isolating the backend services. The use of service managers and web server configurations ensured high reliability, with automatic recovery from failures. These practices contributed to maintaining uptime and user trust.
10. Continuous Monitoring:
    - ✓ After deployment, continuously monitor your application's performance and security. Azure's monitoring and logging tools will help you keep an eye on your application's health.
11. CI/CD Pipeline Integration with GitHub Actions:
    - ✓ To further streamline the deployment process and reduce manual intervention, a CI/CD (Continuous Integration and Continuous Deployment) pipeline was integrated using GitHub Actions. This pipeline is triggered automatically whenever code changes are pushed to the main branch, specifically targeting changes within the backend service directories. The workflow uses SSH to securely connect to the Azure VM, pull the latest code, install dependencies, and restart system services using systemctl. Secrets such as the SSH private key, server IP, and remote user credentials are securely stored in GitHub Secrets. This automation ensures faster, safer, and more consistent deployments, improving developer productivity while minimizing human error.

The deployment of **BioMentor** on Azure reflects a practical and scalable approach to hosting a multi-component web application. By combining cloud infrastructure, service management, and modern development frameworks, the application was successfully brought online in a secure and maintainable manner. This deployment not only supports the current needs of the project but also lays a foundation for future growth and improvements.

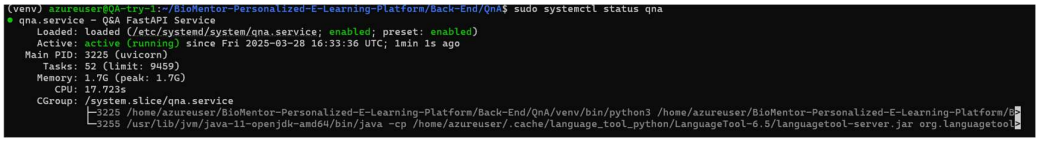

Figure 31: Nginx Service Status on Azure VM

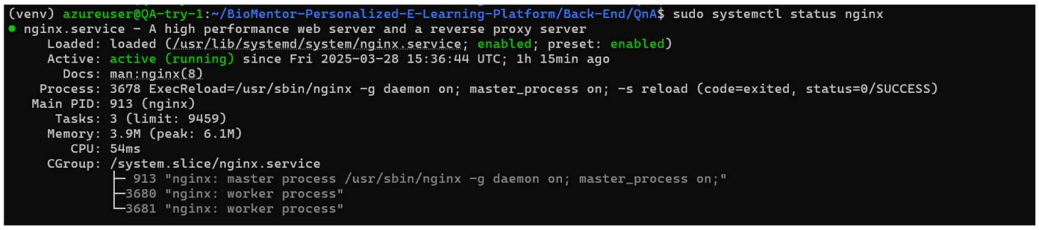

Figure 32: Backend Service Status

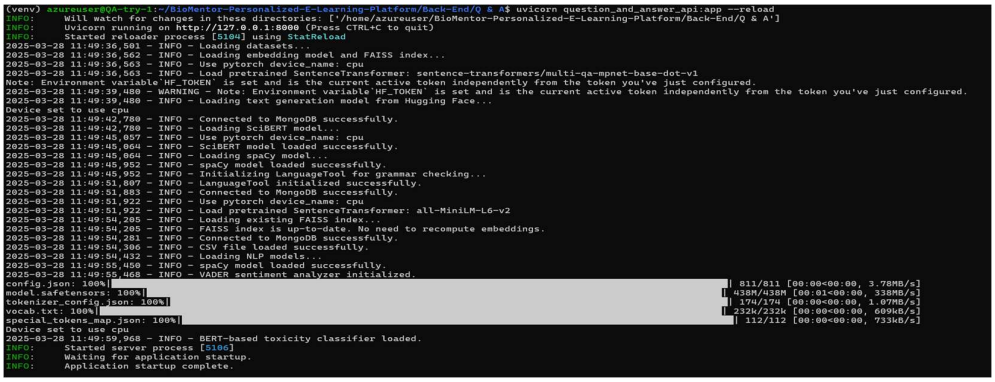

Figure 33: Application Startup Logs

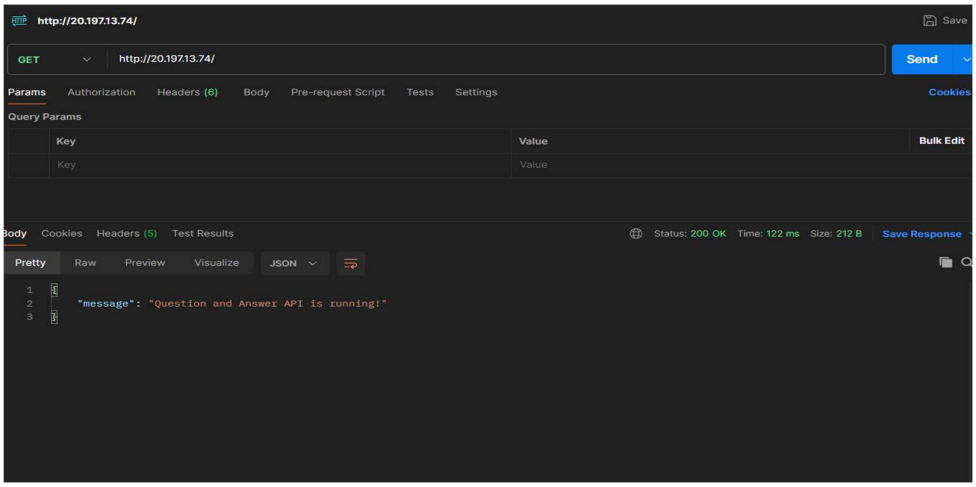

Figure 34: API Response Confirmation via Postman

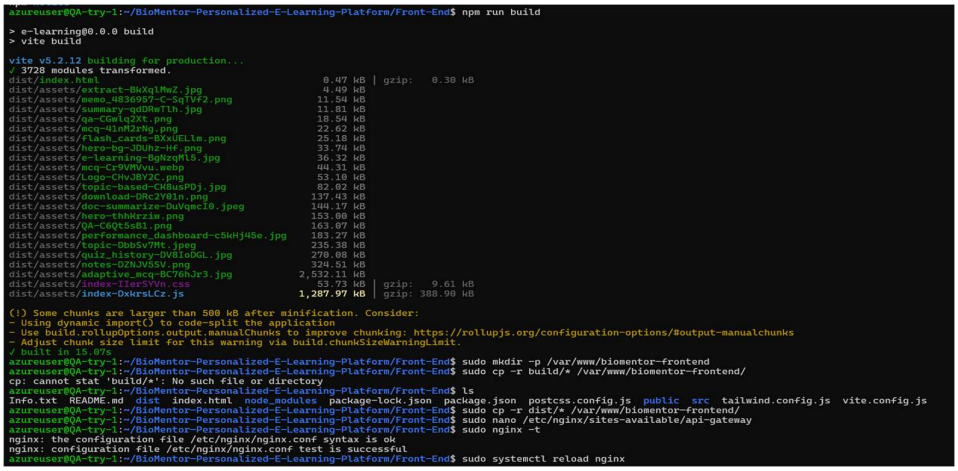

Figure 35: Frontend Build and Deployment Process

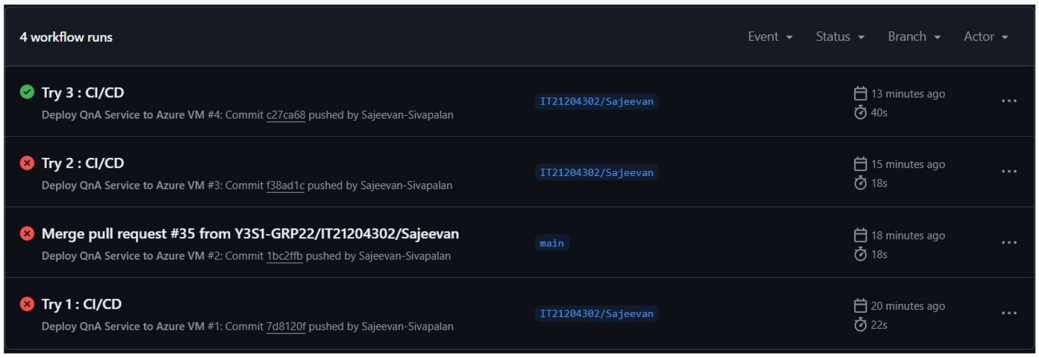

Figure 36: GitHub Actions

Maintenance:

The maintenance phase of this research project plays a critical role in ensuring the system's continued effectiveness, performance, and relevance after its initial development and deployment. As the platform supports A/L Biology students in self-evaluating answers and accessing curated content, ongoing updates and refinements are essential to maintain alignment with syllabus changes and evolving user needs. This section outlines the key tasks carried out during the maintenance stage:

1. Bug Fixes and Stability Improvements

- ✓ Continuous monitoring of backend logs (via FastAPI and MongoDB) and frontend behavior (React) helps identify unexpected failures or response delays.
- ✓ Real-time errors, API timeout issues, and data inconsistencies reported by users are analyzed using integrated logging tools.
- ✓ Hotfixes are deployed regularly to address reported issues in evaluation scoring, question rendering, and analytics dashboards.
- ✓ Testing scripts using Pytest are re-executed after each bug fix to ensure the stability of core modules, especially the scoring engine and question moderation pipeline.

2. Curriculum Updates and Dataset Expansion

- ✓ New past paper questions and updated marking schemes (sourced with the help of the external biology supervisor) are added to ensure curriculum alignment.
- ✓ The questionanswer.csv and Notes.csv files are reviewed quarterly and cleaned using the data preprocessing pipeline.
- ✓ Updated FAISS indexes are regenerated after embedding new content to reflect recent academic requirements.

3. Feature Enhancements Based on Feedback

- ✓ Student and teacher feedback is gathered during user interaction (especially during UAT and beta testing).
- ✓ Enhancements such as improved dashboard UX, keyword suggestions, and clearer evaluation summaries are prioritized and released in batches.

- ✓ The frontend (React.js) components are modularly updated to reflect better UI responsiveness and add new capabilities such as side-by-side answer comparisons.

4. System Performance and Optimization

- ✓ Embedding generation and FAISS indexing pipelines are periodically optimized for faster search and response times.
- ✓ Server-side endpoints (FastAPI) are refactored as needed to reduce latency, support concurrency, and maintain resource efficiency.

5. **Continuous Deployment and Operational Automation**

- ✓ A GitHub Actions-based CI/CD pipeline automates backend deployment.
- ✓ It triggers on code changes in Back-End/QnA/
- ✓ Uses SSH and GitHub Secrets to securely access Azure VMs.
- ✓ Automatically pulls the latest code, activates the virtual environment, installs dependencies, and restarts systemd services.
- ✓ Reduces manual work, speeds up updates, and minimizes deployment errors.
- ✓ Enables rapid maintenance and feature rollout without direct server access.

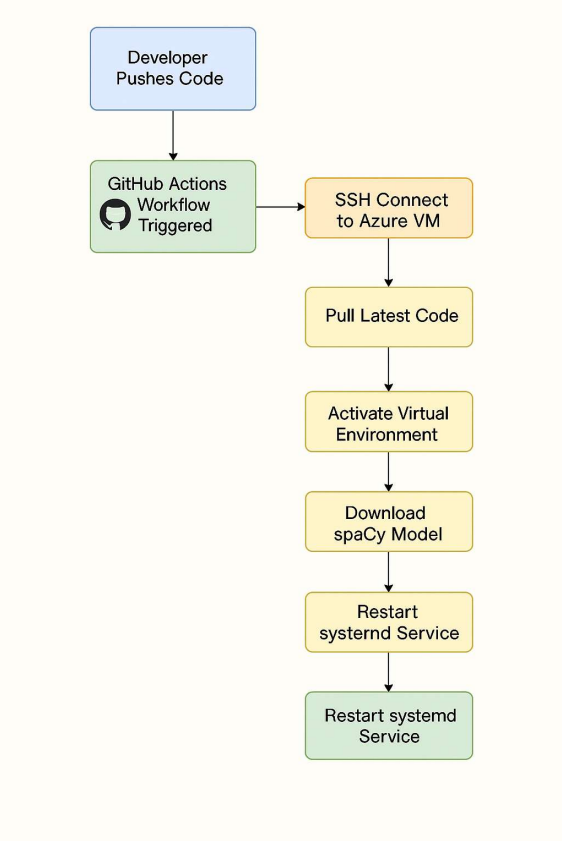

Figure 37: CI/CD Workflow for Backend Deployment using GitHub Actions

2.2 Commercialization

The **BioMentor** platform, developed as a curriculum-aligned intelligent question-answering and evaluation system for A/L Biology, is well-positioned for commercial deployment. With its integration of fine-tuned large language models, adaptive scoring, feedback automation, and personalized academic insights, BioMentor holds significant potential to support the digital transformation of education in Sri Lanka and beyond. Below is a detailed plan outlining the commercialization strategy for BioMentor.

1. User Segmentation

- **Students (A/L Biology stream)**: Individual learners looking for automated revision, feedback, and content recommendations.
- **Teachers and Tutors**: For evaluating student answers and monitoring performance trends.
- **Educational Institutions**: Schools, private academies, and tuition centers integrating digital evaluation into their curriculum.

2. Subscription-Based Pricing Model

BioMentor can be offered under a flexible **SaaS (Software as a Service)** model with role-specific access:

- **Free Tier**: Limited usage of answer generation and evaluation per day, access to past paper practice.
- **Student Premium Plan**: Unlimited answer generation, detailed analytics dashboard, and personalized study material recommendations.
- **Teacher Dashboard Tier**: Access to group analytics, feedback reports, and assignment tools.
- **Institutional Tier**: Centralized access for faculty and students, integration with LMS platforms, and administrative controls.

3. Authentication & Access Management

- Secure authentication via email and password or federated login (e.g., Google OAuth).
- Role-based access control (RBAC) to restrict or allow feature access for students, teachers, or admins.

4. Granular Permission Sets

- **Students**: Access to question generation, answer submission, feedback reports, and history.
- **Teachers**: View student evaluations, assign questions, view class-level analytics.
- **Admins**: Control user management, billing, and platform configuration.

5. Subscription and Payment Integration

- Integrate **Stripe** or **PayPal** for handling secure payments.
- Support monthly/annual plans with billing history, upgrade options, and trial access.

6. Advertising Revenue Model

- For free-tier users, unobtrusive ads can be placed in the dashboard, preferably from academic publishers, EdTech platforms, or local educational partners.
- Ensure ad placement is **non-intrusive**, complies with **GDPR/local data laws**, and aligns with student interests.

7. Institutional Partnership Opportunities

- Collaborate with schools to provide **classroom-scale deployment**.
- Offer training and onboarding packages for teachers and IT staff.
- White-label version of BioMentor for use in tuition centers.

8. Marketing and Outreach

- Target **educational forums**, **social media**, and **school networks**.
- Showcase **exam-aligned performance analytics**, **model answer generation**, and **feedback automation**.
- Highlight the system's alignment with **Sri Lankan A/L curriculum** to gain trust among local educators.

9. User Feedback and Product Iteration

- Deploy feedback capture tools within the dashboard to collect user experience data.
- Use this to iteratively enhance performance, interface design, and feature relevance (e.g., adding Chemistry/Physics support in future versions).

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This research project culminated in the development of an intelligent self-assessment and feedback platform specifically designed to assist A/L Biology students in Sri Lanka. By integrating advanced NLP techniques, fine-tuned LLMs, and a semantic recommendation engine, the platform provided structured learning support in a virtual and personalized manner. This section outlines the results achieved across each module and discusses the broader academic implications.

1. Answer Generation using LLAMA 3-Instruct:

The LLAMA 3-Instruct model was fine-tuned on a carefully curated dataset of Sri Lankan A/L Biology past paper questions and official marking scheme answers. The training process adopted Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning (PEFT) with Low-Rank Adaptation (LoRA), enabling selective weight updates to reduce GPU resource consumption. To further optimize performance and memory usage, 4-bit quantization was applied during training using bnb_config. The model was trained with a learning rate of 2e-4, a batch size of 8, three epochs, and a constant learning rate scheduler, with mixed-precision (FP16) training enabled for efficiency. After training, the LoRA adapter weights were merged back into the base model using the merge_and_unload() function to create a complete, standalone model. This merged model was then quantized again for deployment to minimize size and improve inference speed without sacrificing quality.

To enhance the clarity, coherence, and academic tone of the generated answers, an additional polishing layer was applied using the Gemini API. This polishing phase post-processes the output generated by LLAMA 3, correcting grammar and refining structure. The combined fine-tuning and polishing pipeline ensured high-quality, curriculum-aligned answers, making the model a reliable tool for student support and self-study preparation.

2. Automated Answer Evaluation & Scoring Engine:

A multi-layered scoring engine was developed to evaluate student answers using a hybrid NLP approach. This included semantic similarity using SciBERT embeddings, TF-IDF with cosine similarity, Jaccard similarity for lexical overlap, grammar analysis via LanguageTool, and domain-specific keyword matching using spaCy. Each scoring metric contributed a weighted portion to the final evaluation, with semantic understanding prioritized. The formula used to calculate the final score is shown below:

$$S\_\{final\} = w\_\{scibert\}\, S\_\{scibert\} + w\_\{tfidf\}\, S\_\{tfidf\} + w\_\{jaccard\}\, S\_\{jaccard\} + w\_\{grammar\}\, S\_\{grammar\}$$

The final output included a cumulative score out of 100 along with detailed feedback: grammatical suggestions, missing or extra keywords, and suggestions for improvement. This system ensured accurate, explainable evaluations for both structured and essay-type answers.

3. Study Material Recommendation:

The semantic retrieval module leveraged SentenceTransformer embeddings and FAISS indexing to recommend relevant textbook content based on a student's weaknesses. Notes were preprocessed by cleaning, merging topic and sub-topic fields, and then chunking them into 300-word segments with 50-word overlaps. These chunks were converted into embeddings using all-MiniLM-L6-v2, allowing semantic-level search. Based on missing keywords detected during evaluation, the system queried the FAISS index and returned the top three most relevant note chunks. This mechanism enabled students to receive targeted material aligned with their learning gaps, fostering more focused revision.

4. Analytics and Feedback Dashboard

A dynamic analytics dashboard was developed to provide students with detailed insight into their academic progress. The dashboard displayed average scores across multiple metrics, historical score trends, and keyword mastery breakdowns. Feedback reports highlighted specific areas of improvement, Additionally, the system performed group-level analysis by comparing peer performance and class-wide averages. These visualizations and reports were accessible via the frontend, offering students real-time feedback.

5. Adaptive Past Paper Integration

A dedicated module allowed students to attempt past paper questions in a simulated exam-like setting. Each student was assigned one structured and one essay-type question drawn from the dataset. After the student submitted an answer, the system evaluated it and automatically replaced the answered question with a new one, ensuring dynamic practice. All interactions were stored in MongoDB, including assigned questions, evaluation results, and timestamps. This continuous practice cycle kept students engaged and exposed them to a diverse set of examination-style questions.

6. Backend Performance and Storage

FastAPI served as the backend framework, offering fast, reliable endpoints for handling requests related to question generation, answer evaluation, analytics retrieval, and recommendation queries. All student-related data, including answers, scores, feedback, and history, were securely stored in MongoDB. The backend was optimized for low latency, averaging under 200ms for database operations. Environmental configurations and API keys were managed using dotenv, and CORS middleware ensured safe cross-origin communication with the frontend.

7. Question Acceptability Classification

To ensure that the system maintained academic relevance, a BERT-based classification model was integrated into flag and reject irrelevant or inappropriate questions. Hosted on Hugging Face Spaces, the model analyzed each question before

it was passed to the answer generation module. It filtered out off-topic or nonsensical content with high accuracy, maintaining a focused, curriculum-bound learning experience for students. This safeguard was essential in preventing misuse and ensuring the system delivered meaningful educational support.

Interface Demonstration of the BioMentor System:

The following screenshots illustrate the core functionalities and user interactions within the BioMentor platform. These visual representations provide evidence of successful implementation of answer generation, question evaluation, personalized feedback, and dashboard analytics.

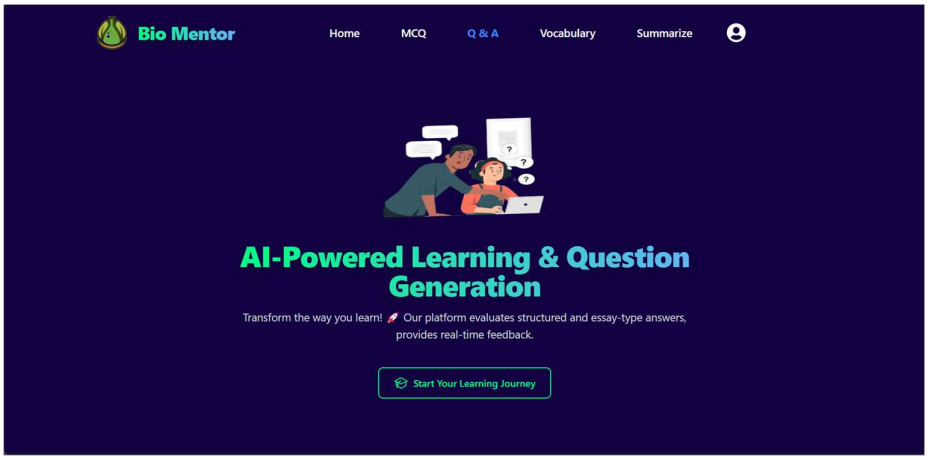

Figure 38: Hero page

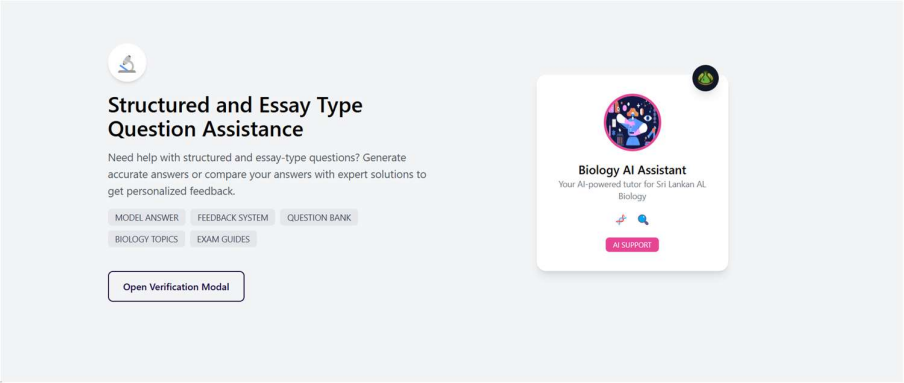

Figure 39: Home - Answer Submission Page

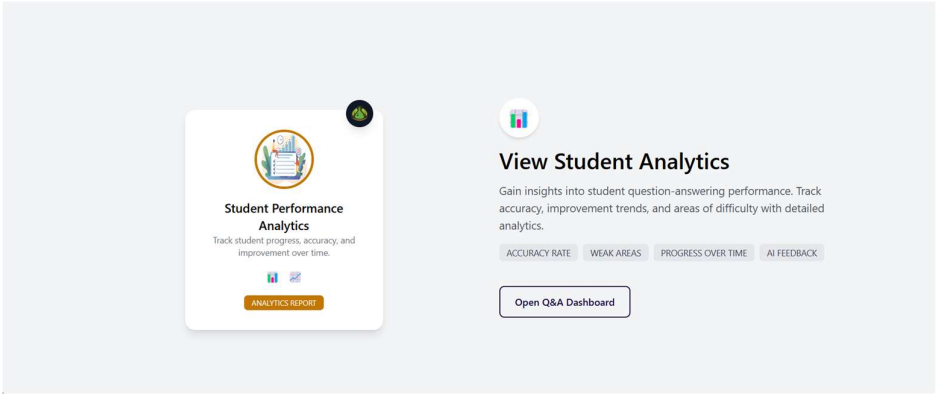

Figure 40: Home - Student Analytics Page

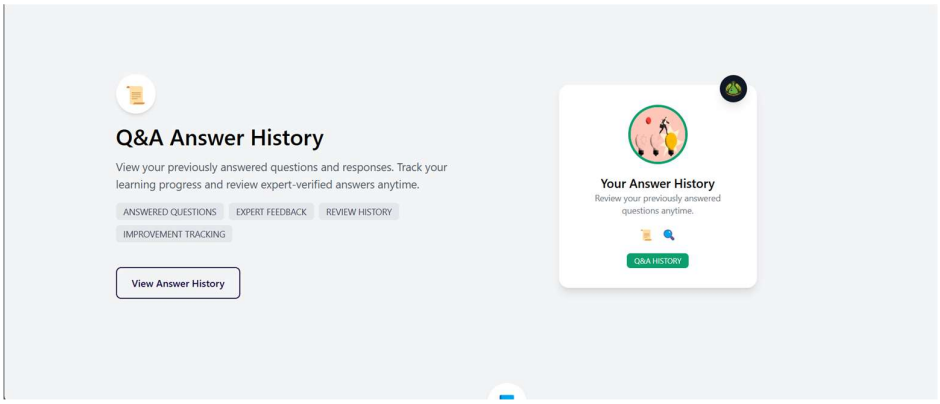

Figure 41: Home - Answer History Page

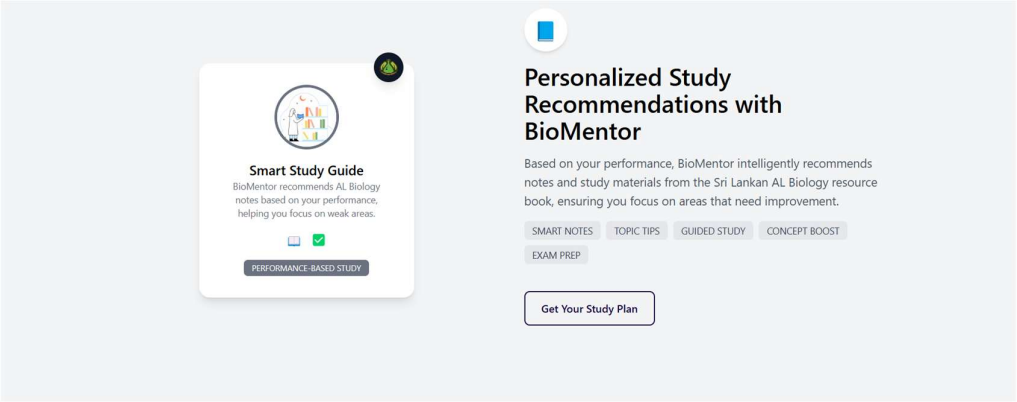

Figure 42: Home - Study Recommendation Page

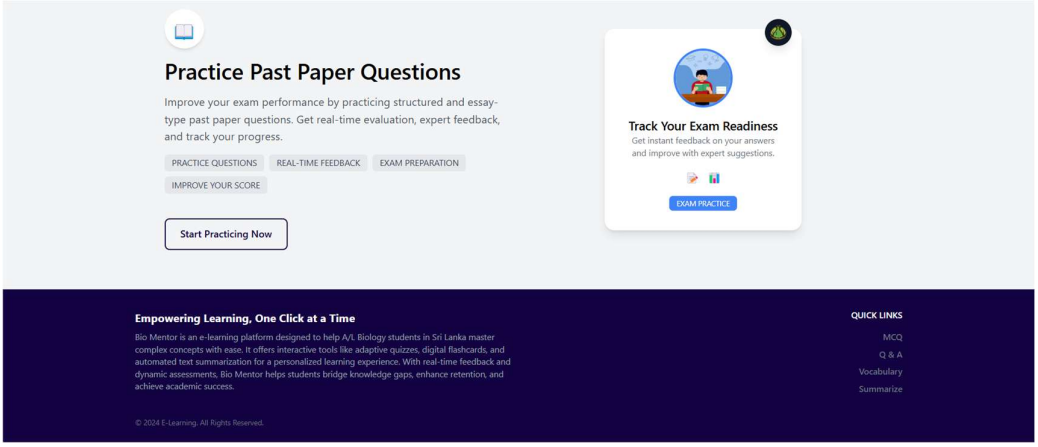

Figure 43: Home - Past paper Page

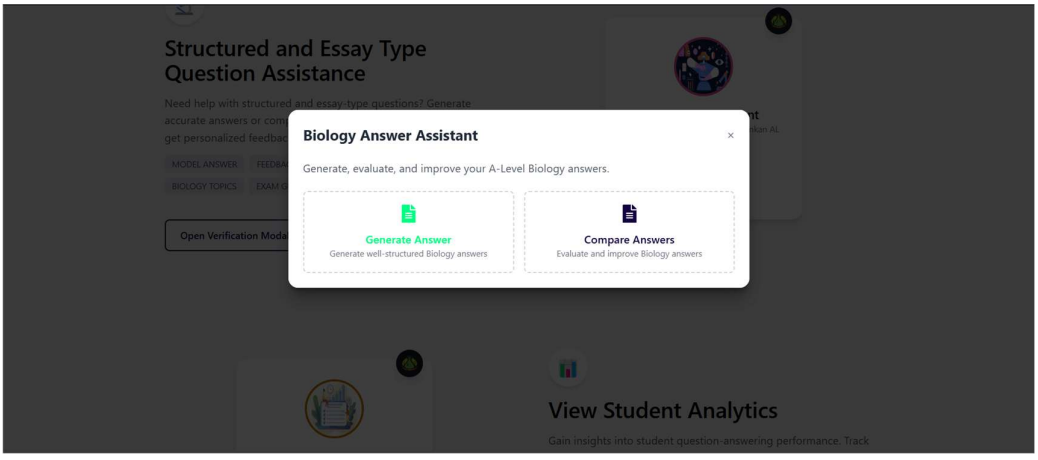

Figure 44: Select Generate or Compare Modal

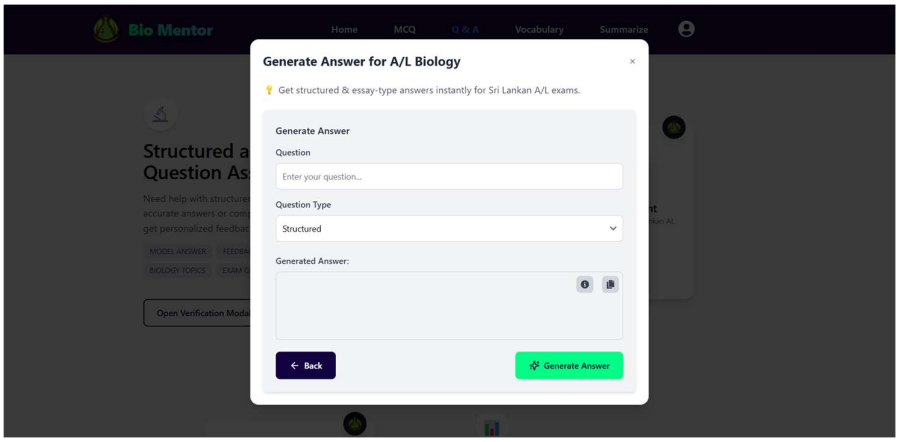

Figure 45: Answer Generation Modal

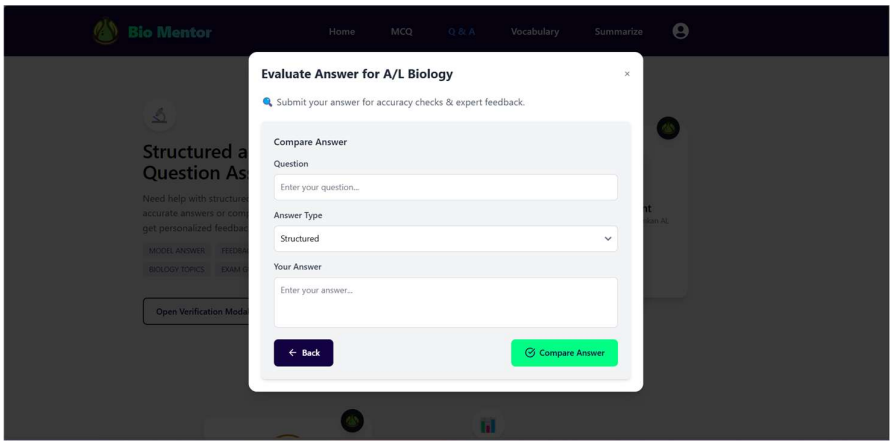

Figure 46: Answer Compare Modal

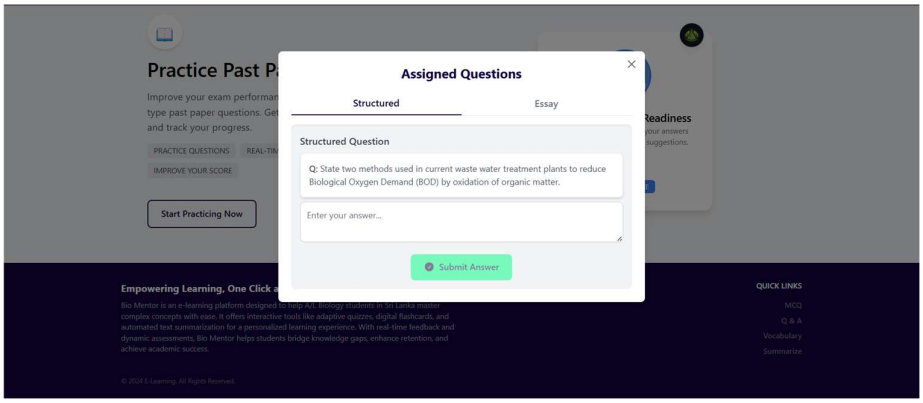

Figure 47: Past paper Modal

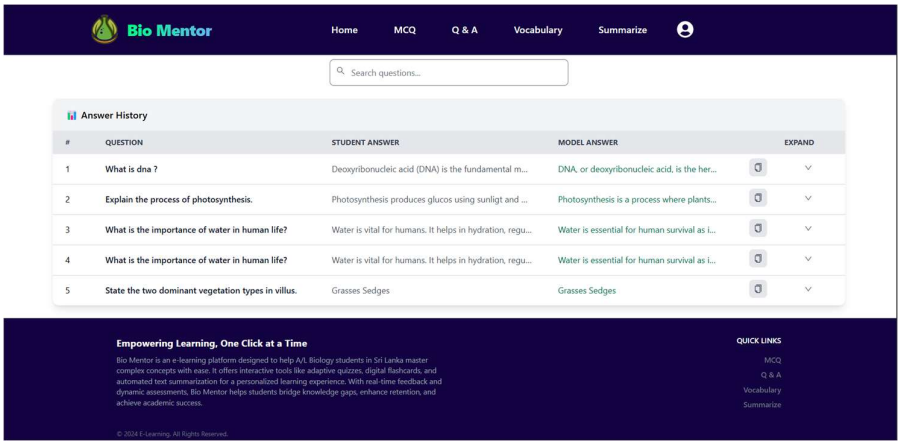

Figure 48: Answer History Page

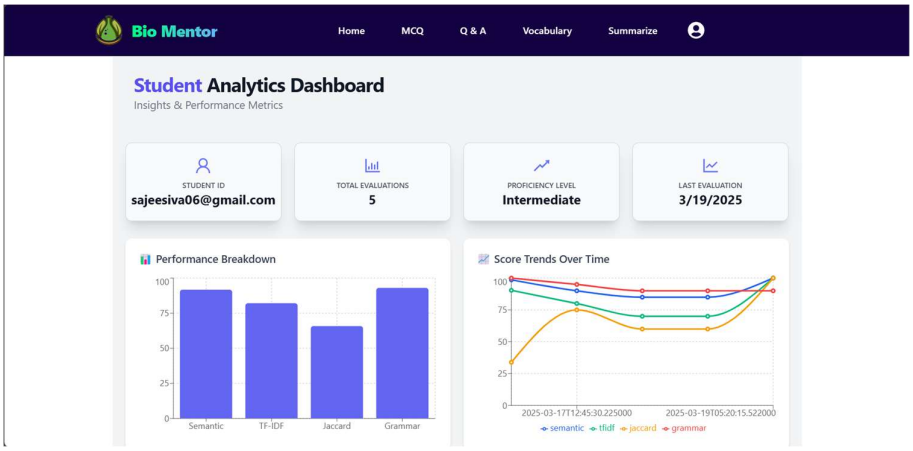

Figure 49: Student Dashboard - 1

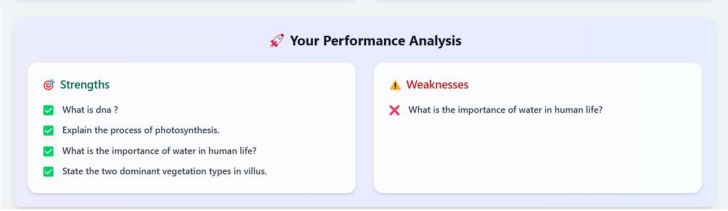

Figure 50: Student Dashboard - 2

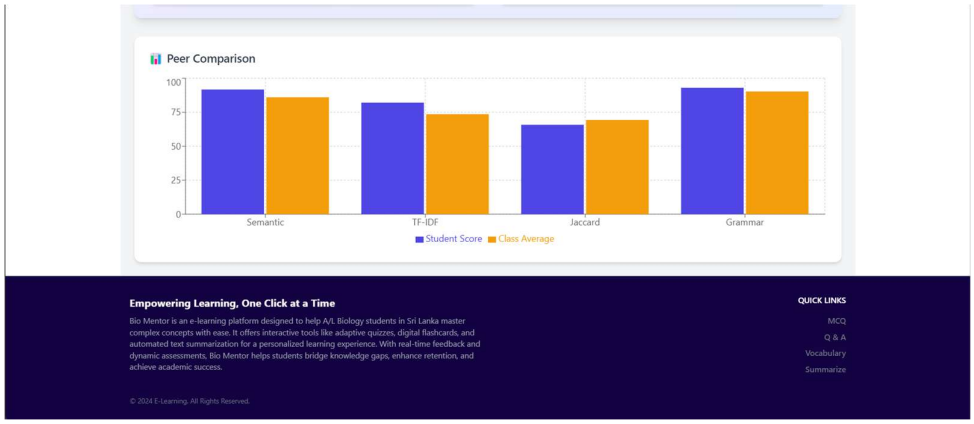

Figure 51: Student Dashboard - 3

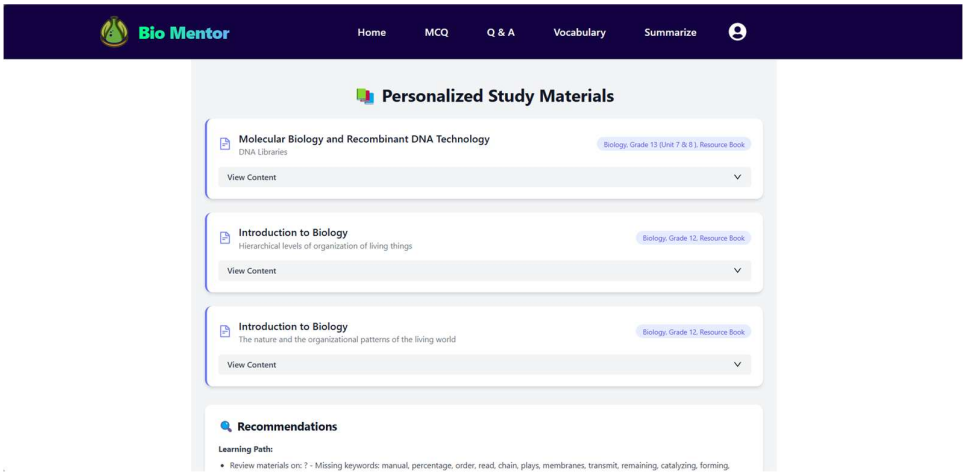

Figure 52: Personalized Study Material Page

Discussion:

The outcomes of this research demonstrate both the technical sophistication and the educational value of the developed intelligent answer evaluation and learning support system for Sri Lankan A/L Biology students. By combining natural language processing (NLP), semantic scoring, keyword analysis, grammar feedback, and past paper-based question evaluation, the solution provides a robust and personalized self-learning environment tailored to local curriculum standards.

A significant achievement of this project is the successful fine-tuning of the LLAMA 3-Instruct model, which was trained on domain-specific datasets and enhanced using Gemini API-based polishing. The model consistently generated answers that aligned with marking schemes, enabling students to receive structured or essay-style responses depending on the question type. This capability not only supports autonomous learning but also helps students align their writing with exam expectations.

In terms of answer evaluation, the integration of hybrid scoring techniques semantic similarity using SciBERT, TF-IDF, Jaccard similarity, grammar scoring, and keyword matching ensured a multi-angle assessment of student responses. These metrics collectively contribute to a final score using the following equation:

$$Final\ Score = (0.3 \times Semantic\ Score) + (0.25 \times TF - IDF\ Score) + (0.2 \times Jaccard\ Score) + (0.25 \times Grammar\ Score)$$

This composite score allows for fair, transparent, and meaningful feedback, while also identifying weak areas through missing keywords or grammar issues. The system then leverages this insight to recommend targeted study materials, retrieved via FAISS-based semantic search against curated notes from government-approved textbooks and marking schemes.

Another impactful feature is the integration of past paper practice. Students are randomly assigned both structured and essay-type questions from actual exam datasets, and upon evaluation, a new question is automatically assigned. This dynamic cycle simulates real exam preparation and reinforces learning continuity.

From a system architecture perspective, the use of FastAPI for the backend ensured lightweight, scalable API communication. The frontend, developed in React.js with Tailwind CSS, provided a responsive and intuitive interface. Real-time feedback, modal-driven user interaction, and accessibility features further enriched the user experience. The platform also maintained user-specific analytics and progress tracking through MongoDB, supporting both individual feedback and group-level analysis.

In terms of deployment, the system was successfully tested across multiple environments and screen sizes, ensuring responsiveness and cross-device compatibility. All modules were verified through unit testing using Pytest, and comprehensive manual test cases were executed to validate key functionalities such as answer generation, evaluation, dashboard analytics, and API error handling.

In conclusion, this research not only advances intelligent assessment methods through localized fine-tuning of LLMs and hybrid evaluation pipelines but also emphasizes usability, curriculum relevance, and learning equity. By providing real-time feedback, adaptive recommendations, and exam-aligned practice, the system empowers students to take control of their learning journey and offers students valuable insights for intervention and support. This project contributes meaningfully to the future of personalized, intelligent education in Sri Lanka’s digital learning landscape.

4. FUTURE SCOPE

The development of an intelligent, curriculum-aligned question answering and evaluation system using fine-tuned LLAMA 3-Instruct, semantic scoring, and adaptive feedback marks a pivotal step forward in personalized digital education. However, the evolving educational landscape presents several opportunities for further enhancement. The following areas outline the prospective future directions that can build upon the foundation of this research.

1. Expansion of Subject Domains:

   While the current system is specialized for A/L Biology in the Sri Lankan curriculum, future versions could extend support to additional subjects such as Chemistry, Physics, and General English. Fine-tuning the LLAMA 3-Instruct model on diverse domain-specific datasets would enable a broader application of this intelligent tutoring system across multiple academic disciplines.

2. Integration with Learning Management Systems (LMS):

   To increase adoption and scalability, the system could be integrated into popular LMS platforms such as Moodle or Google Classroom. This would allow seamless data sharing, student authentication, and centralized access to generated answers, evaluations, and performance analytics.

3. Offline and Multilingual Capabilities:

   Introducing offline accessibility and support for Sinhala and Tamil languages would significantly enhance inclusivity, especially in rural and under-connected areas. Fine-tuning multilingual models or deploying lightweight edge-compatible versions of the model could help bring AI-powered learning to all corners of the country.

4. Research-Driven Iteration & Public Dataset Contribution:

The system's datasets curated A/L Biology questions, answers, and notes could be made publicly available to support future research in AI for education in local contexts. Continuous iteration driven by pilot studies in schools and feedback from academic bodies would help maintain curriculum alignment and real-world impact.

5. Advanced Adaptive Learning:

A long-term goal is to incorporate **personalized learning journeys**, where the system adjusts question complexity, learning material, and feedback based on each student's performance history. Machine learning models could predict learning gaps and recommend structured interventions.

In summary, this research lays the groundwork for an intelligent and curriculum-aligned educational assistant tailored for Sri Lankan A/L Biology. Looking ahead, the system holds great potential for expansion into other academic subjects such as Chemistry, Physics, and General English, allowing for a more comprehensive academic reach. Integrating the platform with mainstream Learning Management Systems (LMS) would improve accessibility and streamline classroom adoption. Enhancing inclusivity through multilingual and offline capabilities could extend the system's benefits to rural and underserved communities. Moreover, contributing curated datasets to the research community would foster continued innovation in education technology within the local context. Ultimately, the integration of advanced adaptive learning techniques tailored to individual student performance promises to elevate the platform into a fully personalized and scalable educational companion.

5. CONCLUSION

This research's successful implementation represents a major achievement in the development of smart, customized e-learning platforms. Central to this initiative is BioMentor, a question-answering and evaluation system aligned with the curriculum, designed specifically for A/L Biology education in Sri Lanka. BioMentor meets the educational requirements of students while also incorporating behavioral insights to create a nurturing and interactive virtual learning space.

A significant advancement in this project involved adjusting the LLAMA 3-Instruct model by utilizing a meticulously selected dataset of prior exam questions and official grading standards. The model was refined through Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning (PEFT) using LoRA, making it optimized for resource efficiency by needing to update only a small portion of the parameters. After training, the model's weights were combined and quantized to facilitate its use in lower-resource environments while maintaining response quality. Two different types of answers were provided: structured and essay, both created with a high degree of semantic accuracy and coherence.

To improve fluency and accuracy, the Gemini API was incorporated into the post-processing workflow for refining grammar and style. Moreover, a classification model based on BERT, hosted on Hugging Face, was utilized to filter user-submitted questions, ensuring that all inquiries were suitable for educational purposes and aligned with the syllabus prior to being processed by the generation module.

In order to maintain linguistic quality and coherence, a polishing layer utilizing the Gemini API was implemented for grammatical corrections and style improvements. Prior to entering the generation pipeline, a BERT-based Question Acceptability Classification Model, accessed via Hugging Face, was employed to screen inputs. This model assessed each question for its relevance to A/L Biology, appropriateness, and compliance with an academic tone. This approach ensured that only questions aligned with the syllabus and meaningful content were processed, thereby upholding the academic integrity of the system.

BioMentor also featured an extensive answer assessment module that employed a hybrid scoring system integrating semantic similarity (through SciBERT), TF-IDF with cosine similarity, Jaccard similarity, grammar evaluation (using LanguageTool), and keyword matching (via spaCy). The ultimate evaluation score was derived using the subsequent weighted formula:

$$Final\ Score = (0.3 \times Semantic\ Score) + (0.25 \times TF - IDF\ Score) + (0.2 \times Jaccard\ Score) + (0.25 \times Grammar\ Score)$$

Along with their raw scores, students obtained automated feedback reports that pointed out grammar suggestions, keywords that were either missing or unnecessary, and semantic discrepancies. This was further enhanced by personalized study material suggestions, sourced through a FAISS-based semantic search from indexed biology notes. All evaluation records were kept in MongoDB, facilitating long-term tracking of progress, visualization of trends, and analysis at the group level.

The frontend, developed with React.js, utilized a modular, component-oriented structure while employing Tailwind CSS to ensure responsiveness and a polished user experience. The integration with a FastAPI backend provided real-time interactions, secure evaluation processes, and effective communication among components. Functionalities like modal feedback views, progress dashboards, past paper practice, and report downloads were crafted with a focus on both usability and performance.

Thorough testing was carried out using Pytest for unit tests, integration tests, and real-life manual scenarios. This approach guaranteed the platform's dependability, precision, and performance across different input situations. Integrated validation, error handling, and responsive design facilitated seamless operation on various devices.

Significantly, the whole system was deployed on Microsoft Azure, guaranteeing dependable uptime, worldwide accessibility, and the ability for cloud-scale deployment. Azure's infrastructure enabled scalability for implementations at both classroom and institutional levels.

In summary, BioMentor represents a notable advancement in educational technology aligned with curricula. By combining sophisticated language modeling, semantic assessment, and automated feedback within a scalable cloud infrastructure, it provides a robust platform for intelligent academic assistance. Its carefully crafted design prioritizes both functionality and educational principles, showcasing how technology can enhance individualized learning experiences. BioMentor not only meets present requirements but also establishes a strong basis for future growth across various subjects, languages, and adaptive learning methods, offering insight into the future of intelligent, student-focused digital education.

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7. APPENDICES

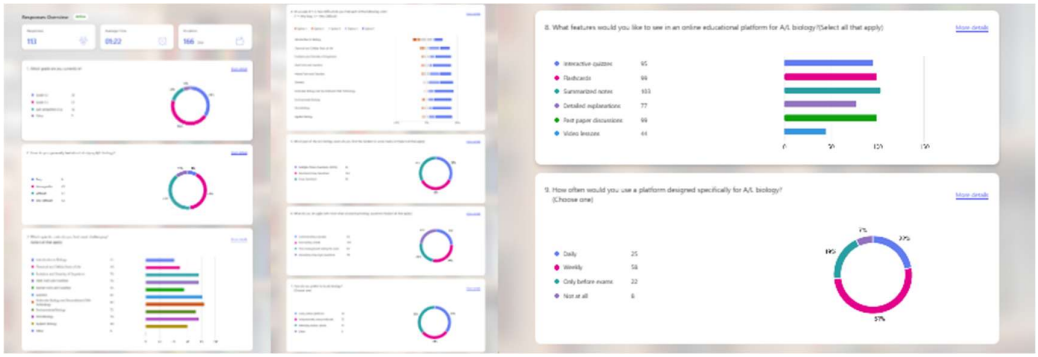

Figure 53: Survey details