**Proposed Taxonomy Framework: Evaluating HEI Tasks for AI Integration**

This framework uses several key dimensions to guide decision-making. For any given task, staff would evaluate it across these dimensions to determine the appropriate level and type of AI involvement.

**Core Dimensions:**

1. **Task Nature & Complexity:**
   * **Repetitiveness:** Is the task highly repetitive or highly variable? (High Repetitiveness favours Automation)
   * **Cognitive Load:** Does the task require simple rule-following, complex analysis, creative thinking, or deep critical judgment? (Simple rules favour Automation; complex judgment favours Human-Led or AI-Assisted)
   * **Data Dependence:** Does the task rely heavily on processing large amounts of structured or unstructured data? (High Data Dependence can favour AI)
   * **Creativity/Novelty Requirement:** Does the task require original thought, innovation, or artistic expression? (High Creativity favours Human-Led)
2. **Risk, Safety & Security Assessment:** (Your crucial dimension, expanded)
   * **Data Privacy & Security Risk:** Does the task involve sensitive personal data (student, staff)? What are the risks of breach or misuse? (High Risk necessitates strong safeguards, potentially limiting automation)
   * **Algorithmic Bias Risk:** Is there a risk that AI could introduce or perpetuate bias (e.g., in admissions, grading, resource allocation)? (High Risk requires careful AI selection, auditing, and human oversight)
   * **Safety Risk (Physical/Psychological):** Could AI failure or misuse lead to physical harm or psychological distress (e.g., incorrect advice from an AI counsellor, malfunctioning lab equipment)? (High Risk strongly disfavours automation of critical functions)
   * **Academic Integrity Risk:** Could the use of AI compromise academic standards or enable misconduct (e.g., AI writing tools used for plagiarism)? (Requires policy development and potentially AI detection, favours human oversight in evaluation)
   * **Reputational Risk:** Could AI errors or misuse damage the institution's reputation? (High Risk warrants caution)
   * **Operational Risk:** What is the impact if the AI fails or gives incorrect results? Is there a fallback? (High Impact requires robust systems and human backup)
3. **Ethical Considerations:** (Closely linked to Risk, but focuses on principles)
   * **Fairness & Equity:** Does AI use ensure equitable treatment and access for all stakeholders?
   * **Transparency & Explainability:** Can the AI's decision-making process be understood and explained (especially for high-stakes decisions)?
   * **Accountability:** Who is responsible if the AI makes an error or causes harm?
   * **Human Dignity & Autonomy:** Does the AI respect human agency, or does it unduly influence or replace human judgment in critical areas? Does it foster over-reliance?
   * **Potential for Deception:** Could the AI mislead users (e.g., chatbot posing as a human)?
   * **Environmental Impact:** What is the energy consumption/carbon footprint of the required AI infrastructure?
4. **Stakeholder Value & Impact:** (Your key dimension)
   * **Student Impact:** Does AI enhance learning outcomes, student experience, engagement, support, or accessibility? Or does it hinder development (e.g., critical thinking)?
   * **Staff Impact:** Does AI reduce tedious workload, free up time for higher-value activities (mentoring, research), enhance capabilities, or cause job anxiety/displacement?
   * **Institutional Impact:** Does AI improve efficiency, reduce costs, improve decision-making, enhance research capabilities, or align with strategic goals?
   * **Societal Impact:** Does the application align with broader societal values and contribute positively?
5. **Human Element Requirement:**
   * **Empathy & Pastoral Care:** Does the task require deep understanding, compassion, and nuanced interpersonal skills (e.g., student well-being support, complex mentoring)? (High requirement favours Human-Led)
   * **Mentorship & Guidance:** Does the task involve personalized guidance, fostering critical thinking, or inspiring students/colleagues? (High requirement favours Human-Led or highly sophisticated AI-Assist)
   * **High-Stakes Communication:** Does the task involve sensitive, complex, or potentially confrontational dialogue? (Favours Human-Led)
   * **Building Relationships/Community:** Is fostering human connection central to the task? (Favours Human-Led)
6. **Feasibility & Implementation:**
   * **Technological Maturity:** Is the AI technology reliable and proven for this specific application?
   * **Data Availability & Quality:** Is sufficient, relevant, and unbiased data available to train/run the AI effectively?
   * **Cost & Resources:** What are the implementation and ongoing maintenance costs (financial, personnel, infrastructure)? Is the ROI justified?
   * **Staff Skills & Training:** Do staff have the necessary skills to use, manage, or oversee the AI? Is training feasible?
   * **Regulatory & Policy Environment:** Are there existing laws, regulations, or institutional policies that govern this task or AI use?

**Decision Categories (The Output of the Taxonomy):**

Based on the evaluation across these dimensions, tasks can be mapped to one of these categories:

1. **Human-Led (No/Minimal AI):**
   * *Characteristics:* High risk/ethical concerns, requires significant human judgment, empathy, creativity, complex interaction. Low potential value from automation, or AI tech immature/unsuitable.
   * *Examples:* Final degree award decisions, sensitive student disciplinary actions, pastoral care, complex research design, high-stakes qualitative feedback.
2. **AI-Assisted (Human in the Loop/Human Centric):**
   * *Characteristics:* Moderate, manageable risks/ethics. Task benefits from AI's data processing, pattern recognition, or efficiency, but requires human oversight, critical judgment, customization, or final decision-making. Significant value in augmenting human capabilities.
   * *Examples:* AI suggesting relevant reading materials (curated by faculty), AI drafting initial feedback on assignments (reviewed/edited by faculty), AI identifying potential plagiarism (verified by human), AI tools for data analysis in research, AI chatbots handling initial student queries (with escalation path).
3. **High Automation Potential (Human on the Loop/Supervision):**
   * *Characteristics:* Low risk, minimal ethical concerns (once set up correctly). Task is repetitive, rule-based, or data-intensive. High value from automation (efficiency, consistency). Human monitors performance, handles exceptions, and reviews outputs periodically.
   * *Examples:* Automated grading of multiple-choice quizzes, processing initial application data against set criteria, library resource categorization, generating standardized reports, sending automated reminders.
4. **Full Automation (Limited/No Human Intervention Post-Setup):**
   * *Characteristics:* Very low risk/ethics. Highly structured, predictable, rule-based task. High reliability required and achievable. Minimal need for human judgment once operational.
   * *Examples:* Room booking systems, basic website FAQs managed by a simple chatbot, automated system alerts, simple data aggregation from known sources.

**How to Use in a Workshop:**

1. **Introduce the Framework:** Explain the dimensions and decision categories.
2. **Select Case Study Tasks:** Choose diverse tasks relevant to HEIs (e.g., grading essays, scheduling advising appointments, admitting students, providing mental health resources, conducting research analysis, managing library resources).
3. **Group Activity:** Have participants evaluate a chosen task using the framework dimensions. Use guiding questions for each dimension.
   * *Example Question (Risk):* What sensitive data does this task handle, and what could go wrong if an AI mismanages it?
   * *Example Question (Human Element):* How crucial is empathy or personalized judgment to the successful outcome of this task?
   * *Example Question (Value):* How would automating/assisting this task impact student learning and staff workload?
4. **Discuss & Map:** Groups discuss their assessment and decide which decision category the task best fits into.
5. **Debrief:** Discuss variations in assessments, challenges, necessary safeguards (policy, training, auditing), and the importance of context.

This taxonomy provides a robust starting point. Remember that AI is evolving rapidly, so the application of the taxonomy will need ongoing review and adaptation within your institution. Good luck with your workshops!