



Canadian Association of University Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

# Memorandum 25:19

**Date:** March 28, 2025

**To:** Presidents and Administrative Officers  
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

**From:** David Robinson, Executive Director

**Re:** **Glean software for student accommodations**

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CAUT has been made aware of concerns about the use of Glean software for student accommodations. Glean records lectures and creates transcripts, and if an institution so authorizes, it can create study aids. Glean is commonly used as a means of accommodating students with certain disabilities.

As noted in CAUT's August 2024 Legal Advisory [Facilitating Student Accommodations: What Academic Staff and Academic Staff Associations Need to Know](#), institutions have a legal duty to provide students with disabilities reasonable accommodations up to the point of undue hardship.

CAUT has reviewed Glean's terms of use, [FAQs](#), website, and online discussions between students and faculty. This memo summarizes our advice regarding Glean. Please note, however, that specific agreements between Glean and an institution may differ.

## About Glean

[Glean](#) is a United Kingdom-based, educational software application. The user accesses Glean through an online portal. The institution is responsible for assigning user accounts to students. Students can use Glean to record lectures, create transcripts of lectures, take notes and create study aids.

[Students cannot download audio files](#) (which are stored on Glean's servers), but they [can share audio files with other Glean users](#), if this function has been enabled by the institution. Glean uses AssemblyAI to produce transcripts which users can download and print for use offline. Depending on the length of the recording, the transcript can be ready in less than fifteen minutes.

Glean clearly states that it does not assume ownership of any content uploaded onto its servers. Additionally, it asserts that it does not allow third parties to access or use content to monetize data or train AI.<sup>i</sup>

For Canadian institutions and users, Glean subcontracts its cloud services to Amazon Web Services (AWS). AWS has Canadian-based servers but there is no guarantee that these will be the only ones used for Glean contracts within Canada.

## Responding to Glean

CAUT strongly recommends that member associations ensure the use of Glean is restricted to student accommodations, and that it only be permitted after the student signs a transcription and accommodation agreement. The agreement should make it clear that students may only record the audio of lectures – no video recordings. Furthermore, students must not use Glean to record tutorials or discussions or share transcripts that contain personal information and details.

Academic staff may want to include the following notices in their syllabi:

- The teacher owns the copyright to all lecture content.
- Any unauthorized audio or visual recording is prohibited.
- Posting or sharing lecture materials created by the teacher is prohibited.
- Any student who needs accommodation or seeks to make any kind of recording or transcription must do so through the accessibility office or with the instructor's explicit permission.

Member associations should confirm with the Employer that audio recordings using Glean are only accessible by the accommodated student and only for the specific purpose of creating transcripts. Any other use should constitute student misconduct.

Accommodations for students or teachers should be specific to the needs of the individual. Depending on a student's needs and/or the specific class, Glean may not be a reasonable accommodation. For instance, in classes where students relay private information, other accommodations such as having a note taker in the class or having the teacher send lecture notes afterward may be more appropriate.

## Key Points for Associations

Associations should ensure their institution:

- provides the association with a copy of the agreement/contract between the institution and Glean
- verifies that Glean does not assume ownership of the contents uploaded by users
- verifies that only students requiring relevant accommodations will be permitted to use Glean
- ensures that students are not permitted to share audio files or transcripts (other than with other students in the same class with Glean as an accommodation tool)
- prohibits students from making video recordings of lectures or tutorials using Glean or other tools, unless specifically authorized by the course instructor
- advises all students and other participants and/or speakers in a class where Glean is being used that the lecture may be audio recorded
- ensures that Glean is not used in workshops, tutorials, or in smaller classes where it is known or reasonable to assume that confidential personal information will be shared, unless the consent of all participants is obtained
- ensures that any party with whom Glean subcontracts (including Amazon Web Services) complies with relevant provincial privacy legislation and must not use the data stored on their servers to train their own machine learning/knowledge engineering.

If you have any questions, please contact CAUT's legal team at [legal-assistant@caut.ca](mailto:legal-assistant@caut.ca).

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<sup>i</sup> See the answers to the ["Faculty FAQ"](#).