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University Guidance on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in learning, teaching, and assessment

Academic Year 2025/2026

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Date: August 2025

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Introduction

The university encourages the exploration of the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in the learning, teaching and assessment environment. The technology has the potential to enhance teaching and learning in different subject areas. It also has the potential to improve the student experience, as well as help innovate the university's approach to teaching, learning and assessment. However, Generative AI must be explored within a set framework that outlines a set of underlying principles that guide how we engage with the technology in both ideological and practical terms, and which uses these principles to shape the contexts in which the university believes that the technology should and should not be used.

This guidance has been developed to help both academics and students understand the university's position on GenAI in teaching, learning and assessment, and to make informed decisions on when and how to use it. It is designed to be applied **alongside Appendix L of the Code of Practice on Assessment,** which supersedes this guidance in regulatory terms. This guidance is provided for both students and staff, as the principles on the responsible, transparent and ethical use of Generative AI apply to all users of the technology, and are not limited simply to particular groups.

Key GenAI Principles/University Position

The University's current position on Generative AI is that the technology should be responsibly, ethically and transparently integrated into learning, teaching and assessment, in contexts where it can be used to its full potential and which works to improve the student experience. As a result, there are a set of wider principles that should be followed when integrating or working with Generative AI:

- Generative AI should be used to enhance practice, not to replace it.
- Generative AI is not a substitute for original thought, creativity, independent research or the production of original work. Rather, it should be used to enhance these activities.

- Developing staff and student literacy with Generative AI is of paramount importance. The technology cannot be responsibly integrated into teaching without all stakeholders being aware of the uses and functions of the technology and its wider socioeconomic and environmental impacts. Generative AI literacy includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following aspects:
    - Users' understanding how the technology works to achieve specific and desired outcomes.
    - Users' awareness that there may be aspects about the technology and its functions that they do not know, and that this might affect the quality of the output they are seeking to create.
    - User awareness of how to critique the credibility and reliability of Generative AI outputs, particularly in terms of its accuracy and the biases and prejudices that it may reflect.
    - User awareness of the wider impacts and implications of the technology in environmental, sustainability, social, socioeconomic and cultural contexts.
    - The Library has produced a suite of resources to help users to develop these different aspects of their own, and others', AI literacy, which can be accessed here: AI - KnowHow Digital - Library at University of Liverpool.

- Generative AI technology should be used in relevant, purposeful and responsible contexts – and to be literate with the technology helps users to decide what these contexts are and why this is important. Frivolous use of the technology should be avoided

- All use of Generative AI should be as transparent as possible by both students and staff. Content created by Generative AI should be acknowledged, and in the correct academic contexts, such as if the content from a text-based AI generator has been directly quoted in an academic setting, it should also be cited as required.

University-Accepted Tools/Approaches

The University currently does not have a recommended or endorsed AI tool, and any local procurement of Generative AI technology should occur via IT Services. However, as Liverpool is a Microsoft (MS) institution and has MS applications embedded throughout its processes, Microsoft's Copilot is potentially the most institution-friendly Generative AI tool based on the enterprise data protection the university has as a result of subscribing to Microsoft services. However, this tool is not specifically endorsed as the 'institutional AI', it is merely the one that connects best with applications that the university actively uses.

If staff and students opt to use other Generative AI applications that are not Copilot, including but not limited to OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, Claude, or other AI-enabled tools that are embedded in other applications, then they should always ensure that privacy settings are able to be adjusted, and are appropriately set to ensure that no sensitive or personal information or data is shared.

This is also the case for those using Generative AI to create and distribute custom AIs for specific purposes.

Defined Unacceptable Use(s) of Generative AI

While the university encourages the exploration of Generative AI in learning, teaching and assessment, there remain some contexts in which the use of the technology is incompatible with the university's requirements, and are therefore always unacceptable. This generally covers instances where a user employs Generative AI to gain an unfair advantage over others, and to claim for themselves work that they did not produce. Some specific examples of unacceptable use of AI might include:

- Students or staff using Generative AI to generate an entire piece of work, or else any or multiple parts of a piece of work, and passing it off as if it was their own.

- Students or staff using tools that paraphrase text (i.e. rewrite in different words) to pass off the work of another person (including another student or staff member), organisation or content generated by GenAI as if it was their own.
- Using GenAI software to extensively rephrase work to a degree where the translation has caused 'false authorship' – where the translated text has been enhanced to such an extent that the work can no longer be considered to have been authored by the original writer.
- Using GenAI-powered translation to translate the work of another person (including another student) or organisation originally developed in a language other than English without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement/citation of the original source.
- Using GenAI-powered translation to translate work originally developed in a language other than English into English to a degree where the translation has caused 'false authorship' – where the translated text has been enhanced by the translation in such a way that the work can no longer be considered to have been authored by the original writer.
- In some contexts, translation of any kind using GenAI software may be prohibited, given the nature and context of the assessment. Students should always check with their local guidance, assessment briefs and module handbooks/teaching staff for specific information.
- Students submitting assessed work where use of GenAI has been cited, but the prompt given is in contravention of good academic practice* - for example, "write me a conclusion for my essay on XXXX." All work submitted must be the student's own in line with the University's Code of Practice on Assessment (CoPA).

If a student is not sure whether using Generative AI is appropriate in the context that they wish to do so, before they use the technology they should:

- Refer to the assessment brief/module handbook for direct guidance on the use of GenAI in that specific assessment.
- Check with local school or departmental guidance on Generative AI (if applicable).
- Speak to their module tutor directly.

Assistive Learning Technology and Student Support Information Sheets

Students with a Student Support Information Sheet (SSIS) may have access to specific assistive technology to support them in their study. This may include elements that are Generative AI-powered and which are therefore capable of breaching some or all of the guidance given above. Examples of this kind of technology include, but are not limited to, Grammarly.

Assistive technology is permitted for students with an SSIS when it is used to reduce a disability-specific disadvantage. However, the use of assistive technology will still need to comply with all guidance in this document. This ensures all student work is written in the student's own words and complies with the wider academic integrity policy.

Data Protection, Intellectual Property and Generative AI

Any use of Generative AI must be compliant with UK GDPR regulations. No personal information should be uploaded or shared with any GenAI tool unless it is necessary, and appropriate safeguarding and protection measures are in place. Users should always be aware of the information that they provide to GenAI systems to generate material, and should not share any information that could identify individuals and/or could potentially violate privacy rights. Others' work should also not be uploaded to any Generative AI platform, even if that work does not identify them. Further information on the misuse of data using Generative AI is available from the Library under the 'Ethics and AI' tab located on the KnowHow AI page here: AI - KnowHow Digital - Library at University of Liverpool.

We must comply with GDPR regulations and the Data Protection Policy at the University. Consequently, where use of Generative AI requires processing personal data, please consult the guidance on Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) and complete a DPIA where appropriate. For guidance on issues concerning data privacy and security at the University, please contact our Data Protection Officer (DPO) Gaige Corvo: g.corvo@liverpool.ac.uk.

All users must also be aware of the intellectual property and copyright concerns that emerge when using Generative AI. Users should not upload the non-published work of others to GenAI platforms without permission or licence. For example, students should not upload course materials, including lectures slides, handouts or other material provided by teaching staff without explicit permission from the member of staff to whom the materials belong. Similarly, staff should not upload any student work without the explicit consent of the student who owns the work. It is essential that all users ensure that they have the owner's permission, and/or have ensured that the work they are using has an appropriate Creative Commons (CC) level to be used in the way they are planning. Information on the different CC levels can be found here: Creative Commons - Research Data Management - University of Liverpool.

Users should also be aware that uploading content taken from behind a paywall – i.e. from a database or resource to which the university subscribes but which is not open access – may constitute a breach of the university's licencing agreement, as the material is being shared outside of that agreement. Users should check both the document that they intend to upload to a GenAI platform, and the privacy settings of the platform they are using. The Library has published guidance on this issue, which is linked here.

Ethics, Sustainability, Inclusivity and Accountability

Students and staff are individually responsible for their use of Generative AI, and are accountable for the content that it produces. This is why literacy with the technology is of paramount importance. Users will be unable to use the technology to its full potential, and will be unaware of the pitfalls they might fall into, if they are not aware of the functions, contexts and wider sociocultural and economic implications of the technology.

Generative AI has significant implications in ethics, sustainability and inclusivity contexts. The technology has energy and water requirements to function, and therefore is contributing to the ongoing global climate crisis. It also has a particularly global Western and global Northern focus, meaning that it tends to reflect imagery, perspectives, opinions and ideologies that reinforce existing Western- or Eurocentric thinking. Users should be aware of these concerns when using Generative AI, and can take some steps to mitigate the technology's global and cultural effects:

- Users should always question whether the use of Generative AI is relevant, necessary and will enhance the activity before using it.
- Users should consider the distinction in energy and water requirements for different requests using Generative AI, and consider whether there is an alternative way of creating the output that avoids AI use.
- Phrase the prompt(s) used in AI systems to account for potential biases in the systems and purposefully request it to account for these and mitigate the output along these lines. Guidance on the construction of effective prompts is available here: Generative AI: Learning and teaching prompt templates. The Library has also published a short training package on effective prompt design, available here: Prompts for GAI.
- Evaluate the outputs from Generative AI to account for potential biases and along disciplinary and subject-specific lines. Is the output accurate and correct? Is the output credible? Has the output told the user where the content was sourced? If not, can it do so, and can this be directly checked by the user to ensure it is true?

Transparency

Any use of Generative AI must be as transparent as possible, and any content generated by the technology and used directly in any learning, teaching or assessment context must be cited in the same way as any other source that has been used in the creation of an assessment (or any other) artefact. Students should refer to assessment briefs, module guides, and local guidance, and should speak to their module tutor, if they are unsure whether their use of Generative AI in their assessment requires an academic citation. The use of Generative AI in non-direct ways should still be declared, but it is up to local departments and schools to determine what 'declaration' might look like.

Further Resources

- CIE Generative AI Homepage
- Library KnowHow AI Homepage
- GenAI OnDemand course (UoL staff only)
- Generative AI Community Team (UoL staff only)
- Russell Group Guidance on AI
- Code of Practice on Assessment Appendix L (Academic Integrity Policy) (Currently Under Revision)