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University Guidance on the use of

Generative Artificial Intelligence by students and staff, in learning, teaching, and assessment
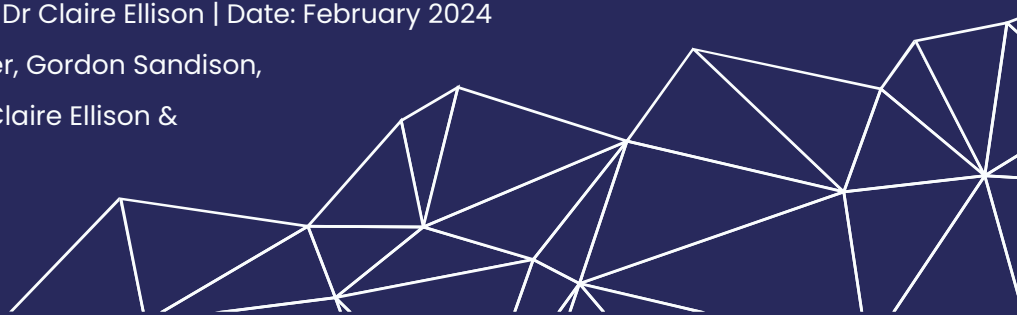
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Contents

Introduction

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools are software applications that create content in any form (including but not limited to text, graphs, data, code, images, audio, and video) automatically based on the prompt entered by the user. Examples include, but are not limited to, OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google Bard/Gemini, Microsoft's Bing Chat/Copilot, DALL-E (and DALL-E2/3), and Perplexity.ai.

Artificial intelligence tools are rapidly developing and increasingly becoming embedded into everyday activities across personal and professional contexts. To ensure our graduates have the skills and experience they will need in their future careers, the University of Liverpool seeks to incorporate the technology in their pedagogical approach. However, it is also vital that such technology is used ethically and does not undermine academic integrity principles.

To help students and staff to use such technologies appropriately, the University has developed this guidance on acceptable and unacceptable uses of GenAI and AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology and its appropriate citation. **This guidance is designed to be applied alongside Appendix L of the Code of Practice on Assessment (CoPA), which supersedes this guidance in regulatory terms**. This guidance also serves as the University's default position on usage. If module or programme/course component leaders wish students to use GenAI as part of an assessment, students will be informed of this specifically in module materials and assignment briefs. In these cases, specific guidance will be provided in the assignment brief on what constitutes appropriate use of the GenAI tools and how the work from such tools should be cited.

The underlying philosophy and/or ethos surrounding the use of Generative AI at the University of Liverpool is one of promoting literacy around the technology in both students and staff, and using the technology as openly, honestly, and transparently as possible. This ensures that any engagement with the technology is in line with both the Liverpool Curriculum Framework (LCF) - which promotes 'Digital Fluency' as a Graduate Attribute – and Strategy 2031, which states that the university will work to integrate AI into its practice(s). An outright ban on the use of the technology, therefore, contravenes both requirements, in addition to being impossible to enforce.

In general, therefore, the guiding principle(s) of the use of Generative AI that should inform all practice is that

1. Both students and staff should openly discuss, experiment with, and engage with the technology in discursive ways where possible, to help improve general understanding of its capabilities, functionalities, limitations, and problems/biases.

2. Any use of the technology in either an assessment or any other context should always be declared and evaluated/reflected on, and if necessary, cited and referenced. Citations and references to AI should follow the same process as if referencing or citing an academic source. This goes for both staff and students – for example, students can be asked to declare their use of GenAI on an assessment cover sheet, while staff should make it clear on their teaching materials where and how GenAI has been used to help create them.

3. The technology is not used as a substitute for original thought, independent research, and the production of original work. Rather, it is used to support these processes.

That said, the university recognises that there are some situations where the use of Generative AI is simply unacceptable and will attract sanctions under Appendix L of the Code of Practice on Assessment (CoPA). This guidance provides some steerage on what that unacceptable use of Generative AI looks like and should be consulted in line with the relevant sections of CoPA that deal with academic integrity.

Data Protection Policy and Your Responsibility

Students and Staff interacting with GAI systems bear responsibilities for ensuring the [Universities Data Protection Policy](#) is followed.

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 emphasise the importance of not submitting sensitive or personal data unless necessary and appropriate measures are in place. Users should be aware of the information they provide to AI systems and avoid sharing personally identifiable information, sensitive data, or any other data that could potentially violate privacy rights or lead to unethical use.

Generative AI and Copyright

Understanding the legal aspects of how copyright operates in the context of Generative AI is central to supporting staff and students to become more Generative AI literate and to mitigate the risks.

Staff and students must ensure that they are aware of the intellectual property and copyright concerns that might arise when using Generative AI tools. These are outlined by the UK National Centre for AI at: 'An introduction to copyright law and practice in education, and the concerns arising in the context of GenerativeAI'

Additional guidance can also be found on the Library website pages on copyright.

Acceptable Uses of GenAI Tools

In general, using GenAI tools for preparatory research work for an assignment is considered acceptable practice, **however such tools should never be the only source of information used**. GenAI tools are not academic sources; they do not produce fact-checked content, and they can, and often do, reproduce inherent biases in provision of information, and they often do not accurately state the sources from which the content provided has been gathered. It is therefore vital that students use academic and trusted disciplinary-specific sources when developing their work. None of the content generated by AI should be used in submitted work unless it is quoted and referenced as such.

AI is at its best when it is used to help synthesise ideas, so that users are in a better position to write an assignment. It may be helpful for students to consider GenAI tools in a similar light to Wikipedia: as a source of information, but not always a reliable one.

See some potentially acceptable uses of GenAI here. Please note, this list is not exhaustive and is indicative only

- Initial research into a topic, idea, or concept to gain an overview for example: "what are the main ethical concerns for students when using generative artificial intelligence tools?"
- Identifying/summarising core concepts or viewpoints in a particular disciplinary area for example "what were the prevalent influences on 19th century writers?" or "what are some alternative explanations to string theory?"
- Summarising texts- Sections of text can be pasted into a GenAI tool and it asked it to summarise the content. This is especially useful if you are unsure that you understand what the key message or concept in a piece of text is.
  - It is important to note that summaries cannot be pasted into work for assessment purposes unless they are being used as short quotations for a specific purpose. These quotations must be appropriately cited and the correct referencing conventions in the subject area used.
- Taking notes during group work discussions
- Getting ideas on how to present work
- Organising work
- Formatting a reference list

It is also possible to use GenAI tools for proof reading and self-assessment (i.e. to get feedback on your work prior to submission), as deemed acceptable according to section 2.4 of the University's Academic Integrity Policy (Code of Practice on Assessment, Appendix L) - however, it is not clear what happens to the data submitted to Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools, and so caution must be exercised. If work uploaded to GenAI platforms is used to train the dataset from which it creates new responses for others, your work might be used in another's work, thereby risking plagiarism.

Therefore, students should not upload their work to sites that do not have clear privacy policies and opt outs. Equally, it is not permissible to upload any personal or sensitive data, or university materials (e.g. lecture slides, teaching content, etc.) onto these systems without permission.

Unacceptable Uses of GenAI Tools

The unacceptable use of Generative AI software broadly falls in line with other examples of academic misconduct that exist outside of the GenAI space. Students using the technology to simply circumvent the requirements of an assessment or using it to create entire assessments that they then disguise as their own original work is not acceptable. The requirement to declare, cite, reference and reflect on the use of Generative AI is designed to prevent students from simply using the technology to create assessments that they then claim as their own, and a student that refuses to declare how they have used the technology, does not cite it, reference it or reflect on its outputs may be attempting to hide the fact that the work is not their own.

Some examples of misuse of Generative AI may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Students generating an entire assignment submission and passing it off as their own work.
- Submitting content generated by Generative AI tools without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement and citation of the source(s).
- Using tools which paraphrase text to pass off the work of another person (including another student), organisation, or content generated by artificial intelligence as the student's own.
- Using manual or machine 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 and citation of the original source.
- Submitting assessed work where use of GenAI has been cited, but the prompt given is in contravention of good academic practice* e.g. "write me a conclusion for my essay on XXXX." All work submitted must be the student's own in line with section 9.1 of the University's Code of Practice on Assessment

- Using tools in any other way that conflicts with the standards articulated (1) in programme level guidance or (2) in module level guidance or (3) in the instructions you were given for the specific piece of assessed work.
- Uploading any data generated from empirical research projects in contravention of ethical approval conditions - for example, information on participants of research studies.

*Good Academic Practice as stated in the Academic Integrity Policy: Guidelines for Students (CoPA, Appendix L, Annexe 1) is demonstrated through:

- Honesty and integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Respect for the wider academic community and your fellow students
- Fairness, knowing that you have truly earned the marks awarded for your work and that you have not used unfair means to gain an advantage

The assessment brief issued by staff for a piece of work can specify the scope and extent of the usage of GenAI that they expect students to comply with, albeit in line with the ethos of the introduction to this guidance.

Poor Academic Practice

If students base their work purely on the output generated by GenAI/AI tools, and do not consult any other sources of information, it is unlikely that their work will be (1) completely accurate and/or (2) have the sufficient depth of understanding and critique expected for the level of study (e.g. UG/PGT/PGR). Students are encouraged to go directly to academic and discipline-specific sources for several reasons. It is possible that AI tools and/or secondary sources might have misinterpreted or misrepresented information which will result in students importing errors into their work. Additionally, engaging with academic and discipline-specific sources allows students to develop their own thoughts and ideas in the context of established scholarship. Students who do not do this are unlikely to pass their assessments. Assessment is an important part of learning and students who do not complete assessments appropriately risk not only wasting their own time at university, but also not having the necessary skills required by employers when they leave.

Academic Misuse of GenAI Tools

If students use GenAI tools in an unacceptable way, as outlined both in this document and the Academic Integrity Policy (Appendix L of the Code of Practice on Assessment), then they risk receiving a potentially severe penalty for academic misconduct. The penalties for academic misconduct are ranked from A to E, ranging from Minor Error (A) to Unfair and/or Dishonest Academic Practice or Research Misconduct (E). Information on the specific penalties is included in the Academic Integrity Policy (CoPA, Appendix L) and accompanying Guidelines for Students (CoPA, Appendix L, Annexe 1). **Academic misconduct is taken very seriously, and penalties vary from losing marks to termination of studies.**

If students are struggling with their studies or are unsure of what is and is not acceptable on a particular assignment brief, they should contact their module or programme component leader/convener for support and/or advice.

Specific queries on whether the use of Generative AI constitutes a breach of academic integrity should be directed to either the Academic Quality and Standards Division (AQSD) or the Student Conduct, Complaints and Compliance Team (SCCCT).

- AQSD
- SCCT

Referencing GenAI Tools

Using GenAI/AI tools for research and in preparation of work does not require citation, in the same way that an initial Google search for information does not require citation. Prior to the introduction of GenAI, students were not required to reference web searches, sources that had not directly informed their submitted work or use of spell checkers. Therefore, the use of GenAI for similar purposes need not be referenced, unless an assignment brief specifically states otherwise.

It is unlikely that students will need to directly quote content from AI-generated sources very often due to the limitations of GenAI tools. Students need to critically evaluate any content generated using AI.

However, in certain circumstances, or for content types, this may be required. For example, part of the assessment may require the use of AI to generate text which is then critiqued by the student. In these instances, if students' work includes a verbatim quotation, embedded image, or figure this should be referenced within the text or content of the assignment and in the reference list. Students should use the referencing system they have been instructed to use within their discipline (e.g. Harvard, APA, Chicago etc.). Most referencing systems have guidance on how to quote content generated by GenAI/AI tools (usually with reference to ChatGPT) so students should consult these if they are unable to find what they need on citethemright

- APA guide to citing Generative Artificial Intelligence tools
- Chicago Guide to citing Generative Artificial Intelligence tools
- Harvard Guide to citing Generative Artificial Intelligence tools
- MLA Guide to citing Generative Artificial Intelligence tools

Further Information/Contact

If students have questions regarding appropriate use of GenAI/AI tools or referencing thereof they should contact their module lead or visit the appropriate KnowHow resources located here: KnowHow - Library at University of Liverpool

Staff looking for advice on the appropriate use of GenAI/AI tools should contact CIE.