

Guidelines for Responsible Generative AI Use: Balancing Innovation and Responsibility at the University of North Alabama

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide the responsible use of generative AI at the University of North Alabama, ensuring its potential benefits are maximized while minimizing risks to academic integrity, privacy, and ethical considerations.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all UNA students, faculty, and staff who use generative AI in coursework, research, and administration.

Definitions

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): The development of computer systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence.
- Machine Learning: A subset of AI that enables computers to learn from data and improve their performance over time.
- Generative AI: A type of AI that can generate new content, such as text, images, or audio, based on input data and user prompts.

References:

- [Generative AI Primer \(Educause\)](#)
- [Glossary of Artificial Intelligence Terms for Educators](#)
- [A Generative AI Primer](#) (Brian Basgen, EDUCAUSE Review)
- [A Generative AI Primer](#) (JISC)
- [Managing the Risks of Generative AI](#) (Kathy Baxter and Yoav Schlesinger, Harvard Business Review)
- [Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights](#) (US Office of Science and Technology Policy)
- [ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in higher education](#) (UNESCO)
- [Google AI Principles](#) (Google)
- [Our commitment to the responsible use of AI](#) (Amazon)
- [Empowering responsible AI practices](#) (Microsoft)
- [Developing safe & responsible AI](#) (OpenAI)

- [AI Risk Management Framework \(NIST\)](#)

Ethical Considerations

Generative AI use at UNA should adhere to ethical principles, including privacy, fairness, transparency, and accountability. Researchers and users should consider the potential societal impacts of AI technologies, such as fairness, bias, and privacy.

Academic Integrity

The University of North Alabama acknowledges that faculty have complete discretion in establishing acceptable use of Generative AI (and other assistive tools) in their courses, so long as that use complies with existing university policies such as Faculty Handbook policies, Academic Honesty policies, IT Acceptable Use policies, and Privacy policies. The University offers the following guidance for crafting syllabus policies:

Faculty should explicitly define and explain the acceptable use of AI in the course syllabus, assignments, and rubrics/grading guides. Sample language will be provided in Simple Syllabus and can be customized. Faculty members who use AI to create lesson plans, assignments, rubrics, reading lists, and other class documents should acknowledge the use of AI to model academic integrity practices.

When using generative AI, users must acknowledge the use of AI-generated content by properly citing AI-generated content in academic work and ensuring that AI-generated content does not violate academic integrity policies. Faculty should review the appropriate procedures for documenting AI-generated content with students. The reference list below includes links to the Modern Language Association, the American Psychological Association, and the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for documenting AI-generated content.

References:

- [Q&A on Citation, Documentation of Sources for the Chicago Manual of Style Online](#)
- Coley, M., Snay, P., Bandy, J., Bradley, J., & Molvig, O. (2023). Teaching in the Age of AI. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/>
- [American Psychological Association blog on Citing AI-generated content](#)
- [Modern Language Association Style Center on citing AI-generated content](#)
- [Comprehensive Classroom Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#)
- [Sample Syllabi Statements from Vanderbilt University, College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [Sample Syllabus Policy Statements from The University of Texas at Austin, Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

Data Privacy and Security

Users must follow data privacy and security guidelines when using generative AI to protect personal and institutional data. This includes adhering to **UNA's** data [privacy](#), confidential information policies, and applicable laws and regulations. Entering information into most non-enterprise generative AI tools or services is like posting that data on a public website.

University information that **may be input** into Generative AI tools:

- Publicly available information lawfully published or internal information approved to be provided to the public by the University. Examples include:
 - University community email announcements/digest content
 - University publications
 - Information on the University's public-facing website accessible without authentication of UNA login information
 - Content on official university social media accounts
 - Job postings
 - Publicly available maps

Information that **may NOT be input** into Generative AI tools:

- Personal, [confidential](#), proprietary, or sensitive information that should not be published or uploaded into a Generative AI tool. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Student records subject to [FERPA](#)
 - Admissions records
 - Social Security numbers
 - Credit/Debit card information
 - Driver's license or State identification card numbers
 - Medical or patient-related data, including medical history, diagnosis, mental/physical condition, or treatment
 - Health insurance information, including policy number(s), subscriber number(s), application information, claims history, and appeals records
 - Research participant data unless there is consent to use it publicly
 - Bank account numbers or information
 - University budget and business records
 - Employee personal records, including recruitment and search records, employee performance evaluation, and disciplinary records
 - Legal analysis or advice
 - University telephone directories
 - Any information within the scope of a Nondisclosure Agreement or nondisclosure terms of contracts
 - Intellectual property owned by or licensed from a third party without express written permission
 - Donor information

- Passport or visa numbers
- Copyrighted material unless you are the author and it does not require permission from your publisher

Information where **caution should be used** before input into Generative AI tools:

- Content that may contain personal, confidential, proprietary, or sensitive information should only be uploaded after verification that it does not include information that may not be uploaded. Examples include:
 - Course content materials
 - Unpublished academic research or discoveries
 - Meeting notes
 - Presentation notes
 - Research data
 - Email
 - Proprietary or unpublished research data or writing or uploading information on discoveries may compromise your ability to seek a [patent](#) or [copyright](#) in the future

Rationale for the Above Guidelines

Please note that Microsoft and OpenAI explicitly forbid using ChatGPT and their other products for specific activity categories, including fraud and illegal activities. This list of items can be found in their [usage policy document](#).

Personal liability for publication on ChatGPT

ChatGPT uses a click-through agreement. Click-through agreements, including OpenAI and ChatGPT terms of use, are contracts. Individuals who accept click-through agreements without delegated signature authority **may face personal consequences**, including responsibility for compliance with terms and conditions.

For questions regarding data privacy, contact Information Technology Services.

References:

- [University Policies](#)
- [University Employee Policy Manual & Handbook](#)
- [UNA IT Campus Technology Policies](#)
- Adapted from "[Guidelines Relating to Data Privacy and Security When Using Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools](#)" (Chapman University)

Responsible Use

Users should follow best practices for selecting and using AI tools and services, considering generative AI's potential risks and benefits. This includes being aware of the limitations of AI-generated content and verifying its accuracy before using it in academic or research contexts.

Faculty

- Use generative AI to enhance teaching and learning experiences while maintaining academic integrity.
- Faculty should include an AI Policy Statement in each course syllabus. (Template language included at the end of this policy).
- Be transparent about the use of AI-generated content in course materials.
- Encourage students to use AI responsibly and ethically.
- Avoid using AI-detection software as the single means of verifying originality.
- UNA faculty members are strongly cautioned against using AI grading tools to evaluate student work. While these tools may offer efficiency, they lack the nuanced understanding required to assess critical thinking, creativity, and individual learning needs. Faculty are encouraged to maintain direct involvement in the grading process to ensure fair and meaningful assessment. Any use of AI grading tools should be carefully considered and supplemented with human oversight to preserve academic integrity and instructional quality. If AI grading tools are utilized in a course, this information must be disclosed to students in the course syllabus.

References:

- [The Sentient Syllabus Project offers guidelines for discussing the use of AI with students.](#)
- [ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: Quick Start Guide from UNESCO](#)
- [“Five Things to Know about ChatGPT” from The University of Texas at Austin, Center for Teaching and Learning](#)
- [MIT Sloan Teaching and Learning Technologies Hub on teaching with AI](#)
- [Guidance on AI Detection and Why We’re Disabling Turnitin’s AI Detector](#) (Vanderbilt University)

Staff

- Use generative AI to improve administrative processes and decision-making.
- Ensure data privacy and security when using AI tools in daily tasks.
- Stay informed about the latest AI developments and best practices.
- UNA staff and faculty are permitted to use generative AI responsibly to assist in their work. However, users must exercise caution to avoid sharing confidential information, including student data protected under FERPA guidelines, when using AI tools. Additionally, the creation of AI-generated images for promotional materials is not allowed, as such content may conflict with UNA’s branding standards, copyright regulations, and institutional values. To ensure that all promotional materials remain on brand and in compliance with institutional and legal standards,

the Office of Enrollment Marketing & Digital Communications is available to assist in developing any needed promotional images.

- Work with IT Services prior to the use of AI for administrative purposes to help ensure data security, data integrity, integration needs, and data confidentiality

Students

- Use generative AI to support learning and research while adhering to UNA's academic integrity policies.
- Know your instructors' policies for using AI in your courses.
- Properly cite AI-generated content in academic work.
- Be aware of the limitations of AI-generated content and verify its accuracy before using it in academic or research contexts.

Review and Updates

This document will be reviewed by the AI Policy Committee and updated yearly to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in the rapidly evolving field of AI. Updates will consider new developments in AI research and technology and feedback from the **UNA** community. Updates will be reviewed by the Shared Governance Committees as well as the Committee of Assistant Deans.

References:

- [University of Michigan | Generative Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [UC Berkeley's Appropriate Use of ChatGPT and Similar AI Tools](#)
- [The University of Southern California's Academic Senate Committee's Guidelines for Student Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Academic Work \(PDF\)](#)

Unless otherwise noted, this document is adapted from the [template created by Joe Sabado](#).

Sample Syllabus Language:

OPTION 1

Policy on AI Use in Coursework

As part of this course, students are encouraged to engage with emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) tools, to enhance learning and skill development. However, it is essential to use these tools responsibly and ethically. The following guidelines outline acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in coursework.

Acceptable AI Use

1. Assistance with Research and Writing: Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly) to assist with brainstorming ideas, conducting research, grammar checks, or improving the clarity of writing. However, the original ideas and final work must reflect the student's understanding and effort.
2. Programming and Coding Assistance: AI tools may be used to generate code snippets or suggest solutions. Students should ensure that they understand the generated code and are able to explain its functionality during assessments or in class discussions.
3. Proofreading and Editing: Students may use AI for basic proofreading, formatting, and language refinement, as long as the content remains their own creation.
4. Learning and Exploration: AI tools can be explored to supplement learning and deepen your understanding of course material. This includes using AI to clarify concepts, simulate scenarios, or analyze data sets.

Unacceptable AI Use

1. Plagiarism or Full Automation of Assignments: Submitting AI-generated work as your own without meaningful engagement or modification is considered plagiarism. All assignments should reflect your own original thought processes, critical analysis, and academic effort.
2. Bypassing Learning Objectives: Using AI to complete an assignment without engaging with the learning objectives (e.g., generating entire essays, exam answers, or project deliverables without personal input) is prohibited.
3. Uncredited Use of AI-Generated Content: If you use AI-generated content in your work, it must be properly credited, even if the AI only provided part of the assignment. Failure to do so will be treated as academic dishonesty.
4. Personal, [confidential](#), proprietary, or sensitive information that should not be published or uploaded into a Generative AI tool.

Guidelines for AI Attribution

- When using AI-generated content (e.g., for ideation or content improvement), cite the tool and briefly describe its use, like this:
 - Formal citation in appropriate course format (e.g., APA 7, MLA, ect.)
 - "This assignment used suggestions from ChatGPT for structuring arguments."

Consequences of Misuse

Misuse of AI will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties ranging from assignment point deductions to failure of the course, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Instructor's Role

If you are uncertain about whether your use of AI falls within acceptable guidelines, consult the instructor before submitting your work.

OPTION 2

Policy on AI Use in Coursework

This course is designed to foster your independent critical thinking, creativity, and skill development. To ensure that you meet the learning objectives and demonstrate your personal understanding of the course material, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any aspect of coursework is strictly prohibited.

Prohibited AI Activities Include, but Are Not Limited to:

1. **Generating Content:** Using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Jasper, Grammarly AI) to generate essays, assignments, reports, code, or any other form of academic work is not allowed.
2. **Assisting with Writing or Revisions:** AI tools cannot be used to help with writing, editing, or revising your work. This includes grammar correction, sentence restructuring, or suggesting ideas.
3. **Problem Solving and Coding:** AI tools are not to be used to solve problems, generate solutions, or assist with coding assignments. All work submitted must reflect your own efforts and understanding.
4. **Research and Idea Generation:** You must not use AI tools to generate research topics, conduct research summaries, or formulate ideas for your coursework.
5. **Exams and Quizzes:** During exams, quizzes, or any form of assessment, the use of AI tools is strictly prohibited, whether for generating answers or assisting in completing the task.
6. **Personal, [confidential](#), proprietary, or sensitive information** that should not be published or uploaded into a Generative AI tool.

Consequences of Misuse

Misuse of AI will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties ranging from assignment point deductions to failure of the course, depending on the severity of the infraction.