



University of
St Andrews

Generative AI – FAQs for students

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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
GENERATIVE AI – FAQs FOR STUDENTS

1. What is generative AI?

- It is artificial intelligence (AI) technology that actively generates content based on patterns learned from existing data in response to prompts.

2. How can I access AI tools?

- AI tools are available in an open format online, such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, Claude
- They are provided by online platforms, such as Google Cloud AI
- They are accessible via software, such as [Microsoft Co-Pilot](#).
- The University's provided AI tool is [Microsoft Copilot](#). This is available to all staff and students, with 'Commercial Data Protection' services enabled.

3. What is St Andrews' standpoint on the use of generative AI for assessment?

- The University is committed to upholding academic integrity, including the prevention of the misuse of Generative AI.
- Skills in selectively utilising Generative AI as a resource will be required by our graduates.
- The University recognises that there are academically justifiable applications of Generative AI in the process of educational research and enquiry.
- The University acknowledges that AI offers students exciting opportunities to develop their academic, employability and life skills, and we are committed to support them to use this technology ethically.
- The University prides itself on developing students with excellent skills in research techniques, project planning, design, and critical thinking. These skills are core to a graduate's education and cannot be replaced by AI use. Students should be aware of the many risks associated with using Generative AI – see Question 9 below.
- While students may choose to use Generative AI to generate notes, study aids, or other materials that they consider helpful in their learning, this type of usage may not be allowed in specific modules, so students should always check the relevant School or module handbook. Even when this type of usage is allowed, students should be mindful that they are still expected to develop relevant study skills they can employ independently of AI tools.

4. Can Students use AI to produce assessed work?

- Students should not use Generative AI for the preparation and presentation of assessed work unless authorised explicitly by the module co-ordinator. If AI use is permitted, the extent to which it can be used in assessment will be clearly outlined in the module handbook.
- If AI has been used, this should be clearly declared by the student on an assessment coversheet.

5. How does the Good Academic Practice policy address the use of AI?

- The [Good Academic Practice Policy](#) states that Unauthorised use of AI is a type of academic misconduct.
- Using AI is considered academic misconduct when a student presents the output of an AI technology, such as a large language model (LLM) or paraphrasing application, as their own work without acknowledgment in all situations.
- The University's position regarding students who submit content produced by Generative AI as their own work is identical to that of any type of plagiarism.
 - If a module does not allow Generative AI at all, then any use would be considered a case of Unauthorised Use of AI and, therefore, academic misconduct.
 - If a module does not prohibit the use of Generative AI, and yet a student submits content produced by Generative AI as their own work **without** acknowledgement, this will also be considered academic misconduct.

6. How can I maintain academic integrity when using AI?

- You should only use AI for assessment when you are permitted to by the module co-ordinator.
- If AI use is authorised, it must be cited.
- If AI use is authorised, all prompts used should be retained for reference and should be available to the module co-ordinator on request.
- AI should not be used as a substitute for your own work.

7. How do I acknowledge use of generative AI?

- You should include a declaration statement along with your references stating the AI tool used, describing how you used it, and indicating the date you accessed it.
- Further requirements may be stipulated by a School, academic programme, or individual member of teaching staff, or for a particular assignment, and will be made clear when an assignment is set.

8. How may AI assist me in my studies?

- It can help automate routine tasks, e.g., scheduling, task prioritisation, note management
- It can help improve your time management skills, e.g. you could experiment with asking AI to design a study plan.
- It may help with notetaking and summarisation. Where summation is required as part of formative or summative assessment, AI should only be used with the express permission of the module co-ordinator.
- It can create practice learning exercises.
- It may help practice your evaluation skills by assessing the quality of arguments given, e.g. some people find it helpful to ask a Generative AI based chatbot to critique their own writing.
- It may be used to proof-read for grammatical errors, as directed by your module co-ordinator.
- It may be used to suggest improvements to your writing, as directed by your module co-ordinator.
- It may help explain terms or key concepts in different ways to suit your own individual learning style.
- It may help you to learn new skills.

9. What are the risks of using AI in my academic work?

- AI produced content is plagiarised content, and is not your own work, if it is not cited.
- As AI generates content from existing data, it can re-produce content copied from other sources.
- There are risks of copyright infringements on pictures and other copyrighted material.
- AI can generate incorrect data, produce “hallucinations” and out of date data.
- AI summarisation is not always correct and should always be checked for accurateness.
- AI can reproduce biased data.
- The energy required for AI data processing and storage is damaging to the environment, as this uses excessive amounts of electricity and water, as well as rare minerals.
- AI use may hinder a student’s independent thought and problem-solving skills.
- AI may capture data from input prompts, so it is important not to submit personal or sensitive information to an AI tool. The University Data Protection Policy can be accessed [here](#).
- A reliance on Generative AI could impact your ability to develop important skills, including those associated with research design and critical engagement. It may also hinder the development of skills important in situations where AI is not available, e.g. in an exam setting.

10. How do I know that I am using AI?

In most cases, you would deliberately log into AI software (e.g. Co-pilot) and type in your prompt. However, there is now software available (e.g. Grammarly) which uses AI, embedded into it, so you may not be immediately aware that AI is underlying the functions of the software.

Here are some tips to help you identify if software uses AI:

- **Check the Software’s Website:** Look for mentions of AI, machine learning, or natural language processing. These terms often indicate AI usage.
- **Read Reviews and Articles:** Reviews and tech articles can provide insights into whether a software uses AI.
- **Look at Features:** Features like predictive text, automated suggestions, and real-time feedback are often powered by AI.
- **Contact Support:** If in doubt, reach out to the software’s customer support for clarification.
- **University Resources:** Consult IT guidelines – See <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/it-support/services/software/students/>

11. How can I determine if AI is allowed in my assessments?

- Read your School and module handbook and ask your module co-ordinator if AI use is permitted prior to starting your assessment.

12. Can I use Grammarly in my assessments?

- Grammarly has optional Generative AI features that aid the production of new content based on a series of prompts. These features should be disabled when writing assessments unless expressly permitted by your module co-ordinator or permitted as a reasonable adjustment by the Disability Team in Student Services.

13. Is AI detection software used at St Andrews?

- No. Whilst Turnitin has developed AI-detection, this has not currently been switched on at the University of St Andrews due to concerns over accurate detection. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) advised that universities should ‘be cautious in your use

of tools that claim to detect text generated by AI and advise staff of the institutional position. The outputs from these tools are unverified and there is evidence that some text generated by AI evades detection’.

14. How can AI support disabled students?

- AI tools can provide support for students with physical, visual and auditory impairments
- ‘Use of AI’ is not a standard adjustment included in Student Support Plan, but it can be included should a student request this. Disability Advisers ensure that a student’s support plan is needs-led. If a student has information to suggest AI is needed due to their disability this can be discussed with their Disability Adviser.
- Examples of where AI may be permitted includes for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) who may use AI to proofread their work. In such instances, the student should keep the original copies of their own work and drafts, where they haven’t used AI. Students with SpLDs may use generative AI to re-draft and improve sentence structure and phrasing and then combine the two in a finished piece of writing.
- The Scholarcy AI summarisation tool can help with condensing articles/reports/chapters into short summaries, this is helpful for students with SpLDs/ Autism spectrum disorder and underlying medical conditions like chronic fatigue or chronic migraines, where students may need to work in short bursts and take frequent breaks from screens.
- For visual or hearing impairments, one common problem is taking notes. Glean, a note-taking piece of software, has in-built AI that can record, caption & transcribe lecture content. It can also provide ‘Question cards’ after a lecture, generated from this content.
- Software recommended through Disabled Student Allowance may have AI embedded in it, without you realising (Glean, Grammarly, Scholarcy). If you have been recommended this software as a reasonable adjustment, you may use it to adjust your work. You should not use Grammarly to generate content unless explicitly allowed to do so in your assignment guidance.

15. What should PGR students consider before using AI?

- PGR students considering the use of Generative AI should discuss and agree appropriate scope, boundaries, and applications with their supervisor at the start of the project or before commencing usage.
- Any Generative AI usage should also be highlighted during the annual review process and discussed with the review committee.
- Any use of Generative AI should be acknowledged.
 - a) AI use should be cited, and any prompts used, and responses received should be reported in an appendix. It is expected that Generative AI, even when used, will be applied only to specific sentences or paragraphs, and not used more broadly to contribute to the thesis. Extensive usage will still be considered poor academic practice or academic misconduct and investigated accordingly.
 - b) Use of AI specifically for language correction should be acknowledged in the same way as any other assistance with writing is acknowledged as per the Language Correction policy. If Generative AI forms an integral part of the research conducted or thesis production (e.g., a Computer Science thesis), a methodological statement must be included in the thesis.

16. How can I learn more about AI?

- IELLI Workshop - Understanding and using AI at University is available through PDMS

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