UHI

Student guidance on the use of Generative AI

Version: 1.2

Introduction

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) is committed to embracing new technologies that can enhance the quality of education and the overall student experience. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) has the potential to significantly enhance and potentially revolutionise the way in which we learn, teach, conduct research, and carry out professional duties. The use of GAI within these contexts must be governed by considerations for ethics and privacy. GAI is subject to bias and discrimination, and there are serious concerns about the potential for unauthorised access to sensitive data. As such, it is essential that use of GAI is implemented in a responsible and ethical manner, guided by the principles of transparency, accountability, sustainability, and privacy.

The guidance that follows is provided for students across UHI to support their effective use of GAI for their learning and coursework, in ways that support and enhance practice while also meeting the key considerations outlined above.

This guidance is to be read in conjunction with/or after reading [UHI's Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) policy](#), [UHI Principles on the use of Generative AI tools](#) and [UHI's external web site disclaimer](#).

This guidance will continue to be updated as UHI's position on the use of GAI matures and extends into other areas beyond teaching and research. The guidance covers the following:

- May GAI be used for course and assessed work?
- Ethical use of GAI.
- Examples of good practice for students.

The policy and guidance do not preclude students from using assistive technologies or accessibility features available to them, or those recommended to them as a reasonable adjustment, as indicated within their agreed Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP). Misuse of these technologies (including that which compromises the integrity and originality of the student's work) will be penalised as normal and subject to normal misconduct processes.

Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): a broad field of computer science that focuses on developing machines and computer systems capable of performing tasks that would typically require human intelligence.

Assistive technologies: software, products or systems that support and assist individuals with disabilities, restricted mobility, or other impairments to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.

Chatbots: can handle routine administrative tasks such as answering student inquiries, providing course information, and assisting with enrolment procedures. They can be available 24/7, reducing the burden on administrative staff and improving the overall student experience.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI): a category of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that includes chatbots and Large Language Models (LLMs) that generate content (text, images, audio, movies, music, computer code etc.,) by responding to questions and/or instructions (called prompts) from users.

Large Language Models (LLMs): An Artificial Intelligence algorithm that is trained on large amounts of date, enabling it to generate what appears to be coherent content, despite having no understanding of the content it is generating.

Prompts: instructions or questions input into GAI tools to obtain generated content, e.g. text, images, audio, movies, music, computer code etc.

May GAI be used for course and assessed work?

Your tutor/lecturer will tell you if and how GAI may be used in your unit/module. All use of GAI must be acknowledged, and full details of how to do this are in the GAI policy.

Cite Them Right has a good article on Use of artificial intelligence (AI) sources in academic work. Remember not to use direct quotations excessively.

Essential Student Skills: Academic writing, will help you write in an academic voice and structure essays and reports. **Please note** that failure to cite and reference GAI content will be treated as a form of academic misconduct.

Essential Student Skills: Referencing, plagiarism and academic misconduct and Plagiarism - Referencing, and RefWorks and EndNote explains how to avoid plagiarism. If GAI use is permitted, you must comply with UHI's Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) policy. **If you are in any doubt if you may use GAI, and to what extent, please ask your tutor/lecturer first**.

If you are employed and your tutor/lecturer permits you to use GAI for your studies, **you may not** use anything (text, image, code etc.,) related to your place of employment or owned by your employer as a GAI prompt, **unless** you have the written consent of your employer.

Finding credible and reliable published material

The UHI library service recommends usage of Library Search and our subscribed online resources, rather than solely relying on third-party search facilities or AI tools, for the following reasons:

- Our online resources are curated and vetted by experts which ensures the credibility and quality of the information.
- Many of our subscribed resources, including scholarly articles, journals, and other publications, have undergone rigorous peer review. They are authoritative sources that you can refer to safe in the knowledge that the information is accurate. Much of the content will not be available via third-party sites.
- Our resources are copyright compliant. Third-party services may provide access to resources that they do not have the rights to legally share. This means that you do not have the right to use them for your work.
- Most of our resources use single sign-on which makes access more seamless when you move between other UHI systems and platforms. We can provide technical support and assistance if you experience difficulties with our resources and collections, which is not the case for external sites.
- Some AI tools are prone to hallucinations and provide inaccurate information and in some cases refer to articles and research that doesn't exist.

Our video guides page introduces library services, Library Search, and the A-Z collections page. Please contact us via library chat, Servicedesk, or in-person at your partner college library if you require any further assistance on tools or search strategies.

Ethical use of GAI

The use of GAI by students can bring forth a range of benefits that can support and enhance your learning and support you in undertaking initial groundwork and research to inform your coursework. A range of potential uses are outlined further below under 'Examples of good practice for students'.

However, before you use GAI in your learning and studies there are several points consider:

1. Check with your tutor/lecturer first that you are permitted to use GAI tools in the context of the course work and other activities you are undertaking for your units/modules/courses.
2. UHI recommends that you only use the GAI tools that have already been approved for learning and teaching. These tools/sites have undergone various checks to ensure they are not malicious and do not breach security requirements: UHI approved GAI tools for students.
3. GAI tools and sites often have minimum age restrictions. For example, many specify that you must be 18+ to use their tools/site. If you have not reached the minimum age specified, you should not use the tool/site.

4. Always read the terms and conditions and privacy policy for any GAI tools you have opted to use. As you use these tools/sites, they are often collecting your data. If you click a check box such as "I agree" to use the tool/site, you have given the platform/tool permission to do a variety of things. Exactly what they do is specified in the terms and conditions and the privacy policy. There are ways of stopping sites from collecting your data. Visit UHI's [External web site disclaimer](#) to learn how to do this.

5. Do not put aspects of your own original work into GAI sites without very careful consideration, and do not put drafts or final versions of your own assignments into GAI tools. You may be giving the rights to your work away to the owner of the GAI tool, and other users of the tool/site may be presented with work you have submitted in 'as is' or adapted form. Your work could then be flagged by an originality checker such as Turnitin as not being original when you submit it for assessment.

6. Do not put existing course materials or assessment questions into GAI tools, as UHI owns the copyright to existing course materials, assignment questions and specifications etc. Instead, ask GAI general questions that may assist you with undertaking some of the initial groundwork and information gathering.

7. Do not use GAI generated information without checking it first. It may be giving you copyrighted or licensed material which you can't use without knowing who holds the rights and if you are permitted to use it under the terms of the copyright or license.

8. Although GAI appears to be able to answer your questions, GAI tools cannot think or properly rationalise. GAI tools do not know what they are writing, and instead are just predicting which word should follow its last word. GAI is also known to hallucinate, e.g. it makes up references and data, is known to be biased against and towards certain groups and communities. It can also be inaccurate in producing visual material, including depictions of real-world objects. Use it with caution.

9. GAI may also give a similar answer to the same question asked by different users. If you and several other students then made use of the GAI generated content, it could be detected by Turnitin as not being original work.

10. Do not use GAI to help you with course work or assessments **unless** you have permission from your tutor or lecturer. You should be told at induction and in the programme handbook what the general position is on the use of GAI on your course, and lecturers should also make this clear in the context of their own unit or modules, and the specific assignments they ask you to undertake.

11. You must comply with UHI's Generative AI Policy and [UHI's Acceptable Use Policy](#).

12. Before using GAI tools, Consider the environmental impact. GAI tools use high amounts of energy and water. For some GAI tools/sites, it takes the same amount of electricity to create one image as it does to charge your mobile phone. Plan your use of GAI in advance if you can, to make focused use of GAI for the specific tasks you want to use it for.

Please note: there are many fake GAI tools/sites designed to capture your information, passwords, and put malware on your device. Never use your UHI password to register for any external service. To protect your device from malware, viruses etc., you must ensure your device meets UHI's minimum specifications: [Information for Students - Buying your](#)

own device. Operating systems must be supported by the manufacturer and receiving operating system updates and security updates. Your anti-virus software must be up to date, UHI's Top security tips has more information and shows you how to spot phony websites. Websites also put cookies and trackers onto your device, for more information, visit UHI's External web site disclaimer.

Examples of good practice for students

When considering how you might use GAI tools and sites to support your learning and studies, or if you are unsure of what may be considered appropriate use of GAI tools, then a good starting point is to consider that GAI tools are a "virtual study buddy." The same kind of support that can be provided by a friend or course mate can be provided effectively by GAI tools. To this end, uses of GAI that are unwise will largely mirror what it would be inappropriate to as a 'study buddy' or classmate to do, for example, asking them to do your work for you. Keep in mind that there is a fundamentally important difference between 'GAI informed/assisted' versus 'GAI produced'.

Some of the ways in which GAI tools and sites can support you are as follows:

- Assist with improving the quality of your writing by checking spelling, using GAI tools as a thesaurus, and to suggest better grammar and vocabulary. Be mindful too though that this functionality is also fully provided for in the AI functionalities of the MS Word Spell Check and Grammar Check features.
- Improve the presentation of your work by improving the format and layout of specific aspects of your work, for example tables or through prompting the GAI tool to put your references in the correct format.
- Using GAI tools to assist with planning your project. Conversation-based tools are useful for brainstorming and generating initial ideas and alternatives.
- Using GAI tools to breakdown complicated subject material into more manageable language, allowing you to digest more information effectively.
- GAI tools can help with suggesting things like colour schemes, but they will always need your imagination and creativity to build on those ideas. Remember that GAI tools don't have an imagination, they are purely logical in their functionality.

In using GAI, do also keep the following pointers in mind:

- The better your prompts, the better the results. GAI tools are always changing and becoming more articulate. Not all tools respond to prompts in the same way. Be bold and experiment with your prompts until you find what works for yourself. Start by reading GPT best practices. This will help you write prompts and get better results.
- Be wary that that GAI tools are all trained on different data and won't always give you accurate answers. Think critically and always double check. Never trust GAI tools to write better work than yourself.

Prepared by

Andy Brown, Head of Corporate Systems Compliance
Keith Smyth, Dean of Learning and Teaching
Gary Souter, Vice President, Education, Your Students Association
John Smith, Head of Integrated Technologies, and Resources

Note: this document will be subject to amendment based on University policy and international regulation. This is Version 1.2.

Version history

Table 1: version history

Version	Date	Authors	Description
1.0	01/03/2024	Andy Brown, Keith Smyth, Gary Souter, John Smith	Original version
1.1	09/04/2024	Andy Brown	Minor edits
1.2	22/04/2024	Richard Hughes, Mark Ross, Andy Brown, Keith Smyth	Library and PLSP information and minor edits