

Using AI tools at university summary

Introduction

Purpose

You may study or use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools at university, so it is important to understand how AI can be used responsibly and effectively.

Steps to using AI responsibly

1. understand what Artificial Intelligence (AI) is and how it works
2. identify different types of Generative AI (GenAI) you can use in your studies
3. know the ethical risks of using GenAI
4. critically evaluate GenAI output information
5. identify when you can, and cannot, use GenAI for your study
6. write useful GenAI prompts for searching
7. gain a wider view of the research and news about GenAI

Artificial Intelligence at university

What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is a revolutionary field of science that aims to create intelligent machines that can learn and perform tasks on par with humans.

What is GenAI?

Generative AI, or GenAI, is a type of artificial intelligence that focuses on the creation and generation of new content. GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney and AIVA can be used to write text, design visual works, and produce music. However, output from AI may be biased, inaccurate, or incomplete.

Responsible use of GenAI

Ethical risks

Using GenAI involves ethical risks. These include

- Access – fair and equitable access to learning tools is part of equal opportunity education
- Accuracy – ensure all information is accurate and reliable
- Bias – GenAI may demonstrate a range of types of bias because of the source material it uses
- Plagiarism – using GenAI content without citing it is plagiarism
- Privacy – GenAI tools and their data, including your data, may be sold to private companies
- Transparency – checking where GenAI data comes from can be difficult

Study tips

Relying on GenAI may prevent you from developing key study skills. These tips can help you:

Use GenAI as a starting point for research but don't rely on it

Knowing how to research independently is a key study skill at university. While GenAI tools can quickly offer large amounts of information, they cannot critically evaluate sources or tell when information is wrong.

Use GenAI to help generate some ideas or provide a basic structure

Learning how to structure and plan assignments is a key skill for studying at university. If you use GenAI tools to structure and plan your assignments, you are not developing these skills. You also risk having generic or incomplete information.

Be aware of the limitations of using GenAI to write/rewrite your content

Knowing how to paraphrase, summarise, and synthesise information are key skills at university. Although GenAI can quickly generate or rewrite content, it uses pattern recognition, which means the tool cannot engage with the source to understand the context.

Critically evaluating GenAI

Understand limitations

All AI systems, including GenAI, have limitations. While GenAI output may look impressive, it is vital to remember these tools do not possess genuine reasoning or comprehension skills.

Evaluate biases

GenAI systems reflect the biases present in training data. When using GenAI you need to be able to identify whether output is balanced and inclusive.

Analyse content

Contextual analysis is a key step in the critical evaluation of GenAI output. You need to be able to evaluate how well the GenAI tool has understood your question and decide whether the output is useful for your studies.

Verify and cross-reference information

To verify if the information is correct, you need to be able to cross-check output using reliable sources. Verifying and cross-referencing will help you understand the material better and ensure you avoid inaccurate or biased information.

Referencing GenAI output

If you use AI tools in your assignments, you should reference all output. Acceptable use and permissions may change depending on your unit, course, or faculty, so confirm what is permitted with your lecturer to make sure you are behaving with academic integrity.

Here is an example using the APA referencing system:

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT*. Retrieved February 17, 2023, from <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>

Here is an example using the Harvard referencing system:

OpenAI 2023, *ChatGPT*, <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>