

AI Academic Integrity Policy for Students

At Northumbria University we want students to be able to engage with Artificial Intelligence (AI) confidently, critically, and ethically. This policy is not about catching people out, it is about making sure that AI works to support learning, and that every student understands how to use it well. The policies set out here are designed to support students to make informed choices about their use of AI, not to create additional anxiety or uncertainty.

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence tools are increasingly part of university life and increasingly used in the workplace. Northumbria University is committed to supporting students to use them effectively, ethically, and with confidence. This policy sets out how we expect students to use AI for learning and assessment, the importance of transparency and informed decision-making in relation to AI, the relationship between academic integrity and academic misconduct, and consideration of wellbeing in relation to AI use. This policy applies to all uses of AI, whether institutionally endorsed or not, and all forms of AI-generated content.

This policy should be read alongside the **Northumbria University AI Principles**, which set out Northumbria's overarching values and commitments in relation to AI. The **Academic Misconduct Policy** sets out the procedures and penalties that apply where AI use constitutes misconduct.

We make a distinction between AI use for learning and AI use for assessment: using AI to support thinking, explore ideas, and deepen understanding is encouraged; using AI to generate work that is submitted for assessment is subject to specific rules that vary by module and must always be disclosed. The use of AI in both contexts is discussed in the following two sections.

2. Using AI for learning

Northumbria University is committed to providing students with access high-powered, ethical generative AI tools free of charge, reflecting the University's commitment to equitable access. Students are encouraged to make use of institutionally provided provision as their primary AI tools. Used well, generative AI is most valuable when used as a tool for learning: to explore ideas, test arguments, seek feedback, deepen understanding, develop thinking, and help students be AI-ready for the workplace. AI is most valuable when it supports thinking rather than replacing it. It is important to always start with individual thoughts, ideas, and reading before going straight to using AI to avoid outsourcing learning. Generative AI can be used in the following ways as part of the learning process:

- brainstorming and exploring ideas in greater depth, using AI for inspiration and tips rather than to generate ideas wholesale;
- planning and structuring work, by using AI to give feedback on a draft structure rather than to produce one;
- explaining difficult concepts or subject knowledge, using iterative questioning to build genuine understanding;
- identifying search terms and keywords for research, while conducting research itself through library and academic sources (e.g. [library search](#));
- checking grammar, spelling, and punctuation;
- receiving feedback on drafts, using AI suggestions as a basis for the student's own editorial decisions;

- interpreting feedback received from tutors, where its meaning or application is unclear;
- clarifying difficult sections of reading, after an initial independent attempt.

Students should not ask AI to write, outline, or revise work on their behalf, to address tutor feedback directly, or to summarise readings as a substitute for engaging with them. Such uses replace learning rather than supporting it. AI responses should always be evaluated critically, and any sources identified by AI should be verified independently as all AI tools are known to exhibit biases and are liable to present information that is factually incorrect, invented, or misleading.

Guidance on using AI is available in the [Student IT Guides](#). Students seeking support with academic integrity, referencing, and the ethical use of sources are encouraged to access [Library Skills Plus](#).

3. AI use in assessment

Acceptable AI use varies by assessment, and it is the student's responsibility to establish what is permitted before commencing work if they intend to use AI. Understanding what is expected from an assessment brief is a core academic skill and this includes understanding expectations regarding AI. For every assessed piece of work, the module tutor will provide AI Use in Assessment guidance as part of the assessment brief. This will specify which AI activities are permitted and which are restricted, providing a rationale for those decisions.

If in doubt, students should seek clarification from the module tutor before using AI. It should not be assumed that AI use permitted in one assessment is permitted in another.

Certain activities are **never** permitted in assessment:

- generating all or a substantial part of submitted work using AI and presenting it as one's own;
- using AI to complete take-home examinations or equivalent controlled assessments;
- using AI to generate the core argument or line of reasoning of submitted work without disclosure and without explicit permission.

Where there is uncertainty about whether a particular use is permitted, students should seek guidance from their module tutor prior to submission.

4. Disclosure and attribution

Transparency in relation to AI use is a core institutional expectation, grounded in the **Northumbria University AI Principles** on disclosure and attribution. Where AI has been used in the preparation or production of assessed work this must be declared in the submission.

Declarations should identify the AI tool used, the purpose for which it was used, and the nature of its contribution to the work. Failure to disclose AI use that has materially contributed to submitted work constitutes a breach of academic integrity, irrespective of whether the use itself would have been permitted.

In some cases, additional evidence of AI may be requested as part of assessment briefs, for example details of prompts used, screenshots of output, or access to projects. It is good practice to keep evidence of the development of your work (e.g. use of OneDrive, clear version control, saving drafts before using AI) even if it is not directly required.

5. Student privacy and AI interactions

Northumbria's institutional provision is configured so that conversations are not retained beyond the current session and are not used to train the model. The University does not routinely monitor or access student interactions. Where there is a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity or a safeguarding concern, we reserve the right to request relevant information in accordance with our data protection obligations and student regulations.

6. The right to make informed choices

In accordance with **Northumbria University's AI Principle** on informed choice, no student will be required to use AI unless they have chosen to study a module or programme that has mandatory AI use. Where concerns exist about AI use, whether on personal, ethical, or other grounds, these will be respected. Where AI use is integral to a module or assessment, this will be communicated clearly to students, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible. Students with concerns are encouraged to raise these with their module tutor or personal tutor in the first instance.

7. Academic misconduct

AI use that breaches this policy or the requirements set out in assessment guidance may constitute academic misconduct under the **Academic Misconduct Policy**. For students on professionally regulated programmes, breaches may also be considered under the University's Fitness to Practise procedures. This includes, but is not limited to:

- submitting AI-generated work as one's own without disclosure or permission;
- using AI to complete assessments in ways explicitly prohibited in the assessment brief;
- failing to disclose AI use that has materially contributed to submitted work.

Where academic misconduct is suspected, the procedures set out in the **Academic Misconduct Policy** will apply. AI detection tools are unreliable and will not be used as the sole basis for a misconduct allegation. Investigations will be conducted on the basis of academic judgement and the full evidential context of the work in question. The burden of proof rests with those bringing the allegation, and all cases will be investigated with due regard to fairness and equity.

8. Student wellbeing and support

Northumbria recognises that uncertainty about AI use can be a source of anxiety, and that unhealthy patterns of engagement, whether avoidance or over-reliance, can affect student confidence and wellbeing. This policy is intended to provide clarity and support, not to create additional pressure.

Students who are concerned about AI use, uncertain about what is expected of them, or who feel that their relationship with AI tools is becoming problematic are encouraged to speak with their personal tutor or to contact [Student Support Services](#), who provide a confidential space to talk without judgement or criticism.

AI Use Disclosure

This policy was developed with the assistance of Claude by Anthropic, which was used throughout the drafting process to generate, refine, and redraft text in response to detailed human direction, to sense-check language and policy framing, and to support the synthesis of consultation feedback. All substantive decisions, including the policy positions, principles, and values expressed in these documents, were made by the human author. The final content reflects human authorship and judgement, and responsibility for it rests entirely with the author.