NAVIGATING NEW TERRAIN

A GUIDE TO ETHICAL USE OF AI IN THE CLASSROOM

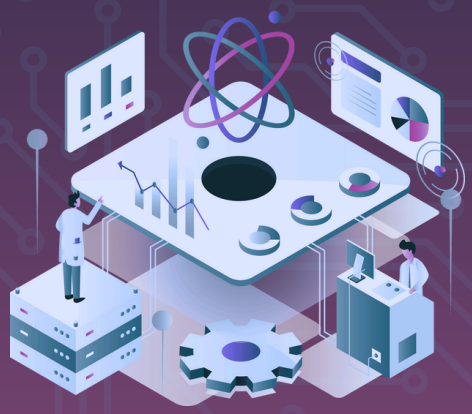
Artificial intelligence is a tool that, when used thoughtfully, can amplify your learning experience and productivity. However, with great tools come great responsibilities. Understanding how to use AI ethically and appropriately—knowing when to trust it, when to question it, and when to do the work yourself—is a critical skill for both your academic and professional future.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS RESHAPING THE LANDSCAPE, AND THE UNIVERSITY IS READY TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH THIS TRANSFORMATION.

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, WE WILL:

- Define Artificial Intelligence
- Explore ethical usage of AI
- Learn proper citation techniques
- Discuss methods for obtaining superior results with AI

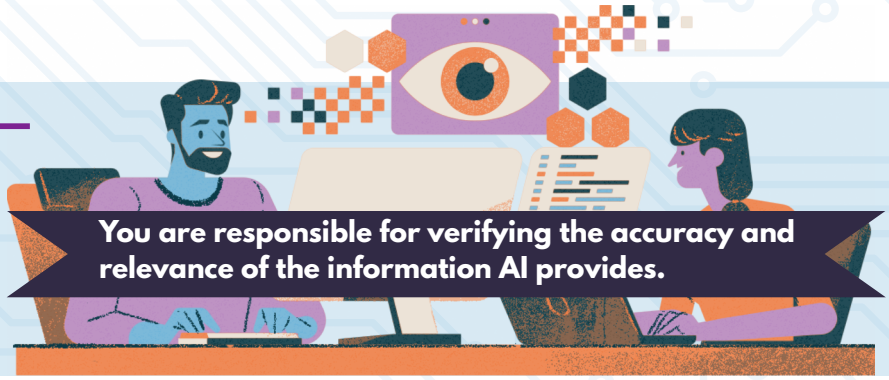
AI DEFINED



At its core, artificial intelligence is a computing system that "learns" by using pattern recognition. AI excels in utilizing these patterns to aid in decision making, problem solving, editing, and refining or summarizing ideas.

A specific branch of AI, known as generative AI (Gen AI), can produce content across different forms of media simply by being prompted. These technologies run on what are called large language models (LLMs), which are trained on vast data sets of written information (such as published works). This content is used by AI to generate anything from conversations or essays to images and videos. It is important to understand the nuance behind this technology, as it is not "creating" something novel, but instead simulating creativity by rearranging elements of learned data sets.

AI is not thinking or fact-checking—it's guessing. While that guess might sound convincing, it can sometimes be misleading, biased, or flat-out wrong.



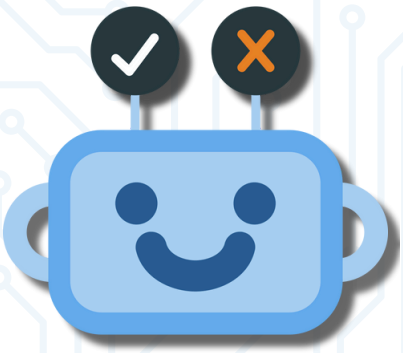
Think of it as learning to drive with a powerful GPS: it can help guide the way, but you're still the one behind the wheel.

A GPS has been fed enough maps and routes to guess the best route for you to take, but the GPS may not know about a fallen tree in the road, unreported construction, or the parade happening downtown. You must use your own knowledge and intuition when navigating artificial intelligence, or you could end up lost or worse, your academic goals could be in jeopardy.

Artificial intelligence is not a trend; it's here to stay. AI has already been incorporated into our daily lives in subtle ways, such as corrective filters on photos or spellchecking text messages.

According to this article by Forbes,

- **78% of Organizations use AI, a 55% increase from last year.**
- **92% of students use generative AI, a 66% increase from last year.**



ETHICAL PRACTICES

Gen AI tools can assist in brainstorming, organizing thoughts, or exploring new concepts, but it's important to use them responsibly. To stay aligned with the University's Gen AI Policy, here are a few high-level guidelines that will help you use these tools ethically and appropriately throughout your academic journey.

BE TRANSPARENT AND GIVE PROPER CREDIT.

If you use Gen AI to generate text, images, summaries, or any other type of content, you must identify that material and give proper credit. It's the same principle as citing a source in a research paper.
The key is to differentiate your original work from work generated by AI.

VERIFY THE ACCURACY AND RELEVANCE OF GENERATED CONTENT.

Gen AI tools are excellent for organizing data and assisting in editing, but they don't understand context, truth, or logic the way humans do. AI produces information without discernment. Sometimes they even produce something called a hallucination—a statement that looks polished but is completely false or nonsensical. Always ensure AI-generated information is accurate and used appropriately.
You should never treat Gen AI output as a reliable academic source.

BE MINDFUL OF PRIVATE INFORMATION.

Never share confidential or personally identifiable information with AI tools. This includes, but is not limited to information such as:

- Names, addresses, or student IDs
- Health or academic records
- Private conversations
- Sensitive or proprietary information*

All information shared with AI becomes a part of the data it is trained on. Anything you share with AI must be treated as though it is being shared on a public forum.

*In the context of the University, proprietary information is sensitive information regarding the business aspect of the University, such as financial data, marketing strategies, security protocols, or course materials.

Properly Citing AI-Generated Content

Using citations and references properly strengthens the integrity of our work and honors the contributions of others. Presenting somebody's ideas as your own is plagiarism. In this new terrain, remember that we cite AI-generated content, just as we would human-generated content. Although AI is not human, failing to properly attribute Gen AI content counts as plagiarism.

There are two main components to citing sources. In-text citations, which appear within your writing, and the more fully detailed version listed on the References (or Works Cited) page. Both have to appear in your work.

There are several main "styles" of formatting citations that you will encounter at the University, each with unique requirements. Academic disciplines typically determine the style used.

Though each is distinctly different, they all share the standard function of identifying borrowed concepts and/or words. The formatting rules of each style still apply when citing Gen AI.

MLA (Modern Language Association)
- Used in the Humanities, particularly language and literature.

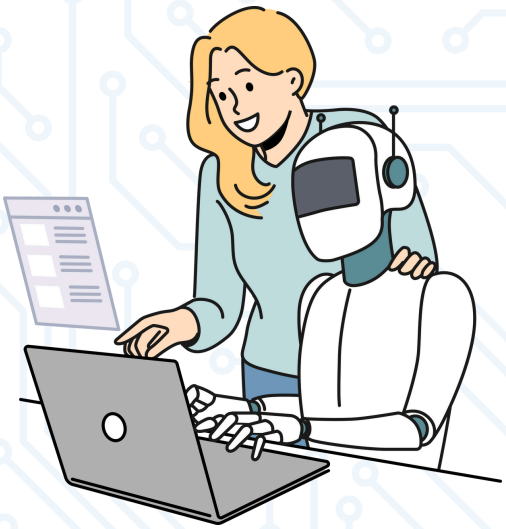
APA (American Psychological Association)
- Used in psychology, education, nursing, sociology, criminal justice, anthropology, and business.

Chicago
- Used in history and some sciences.

AI can hallucinate references and cite non-existent sources. It is your responsibility to verify that everything referenced by AI exists, is accurate, and relevant. When directly quoting an AI-generated sentence or phrase, you must place the generated text in quotation marks, include a proper in-text citation, and list the source on your reference page.

Not sure which one to use? Check your syllabus or ask your professor. Each department often follows a standard citation style.

Properly Citing Continued

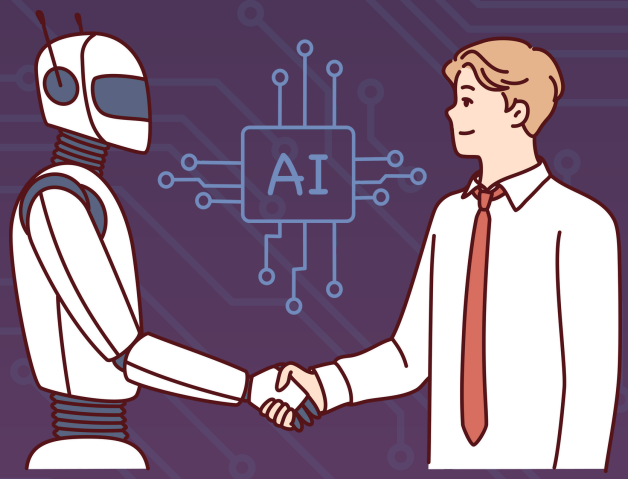


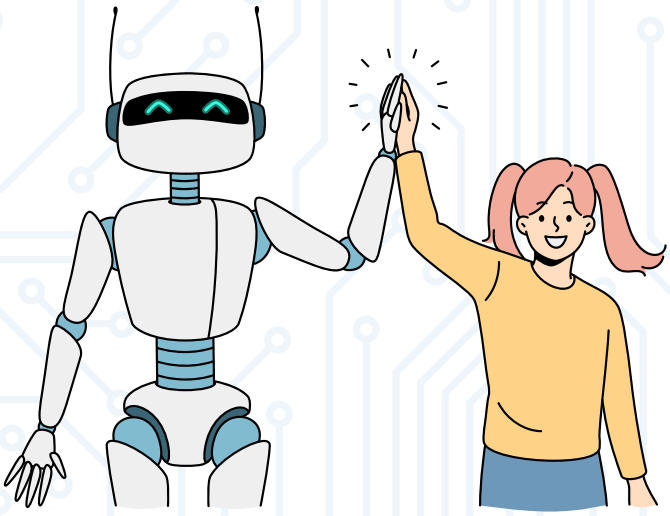
MLA

- Title of Source: Describe what was generated by AI.
- Title of Container: Name the Gen AI used.
- Version: Name the version of the Gen AI tool as specifically as possible.
- Publisher: Name the company that made the tool.
- Date: Give the date the content was generated.
- Location: Give the general URL for the tool.

APA

- Figure Title: Use a description of the prompt, followed by the Gen AI tool, version, and date created.
- Caption Note: Include a description of the image mentioning the prompt and Gen AI tool.





Chicago

- Use a caption below the image to give the citation information.
- Each image caption starts with the word “Figure” and a unique number.

VISIT THE APUS CITATION HUB FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

CITATION EXAMPLES

When using an image created by a Gen AI tool, cite it as follows:

MLA	Full Citation	"A photograph captures four young researchers working with a robot on Mars." DALL-E, version 3, OpenAI, 8 Mar. 2023, chatgpt.com/.
	In-Text Citation	"A photograph captures four young researchers working with a robot on Mars" (DALL-E 3, 2025).
APA	Full Citation	OpenAI. (2025, July 29). A photograph captures four young researchers working with a robot on Mars [AI-generated image]. ChatGPT.
	In-Text Citation	"A photograph captures four young researchers working with a robot on Mars" (DALL-E 3, 2025).
CHICAGO	Full Citation	[1] ChatGPT, response to "generate an image of a group of researchers collaborating on a project with a friendly robot," July 19, 2023, OpenAI, https://chat.openai.com/chat.
	In-Text Citation	[1] ChatGPT

ATTRIBUTION

While formal citations will be used most often, there are some instances in which an informal attribution is sufficient. An informal attribution can be as simple as mentioning the name of the author or Gen AI. Situations where an informal attribution would be acceptable are class discussions, casual conversation, and informally responding to an email (when instructions specifically allow for it). The attribution, though informal, must be traceable!

AI TOOLS

As of the writing of this guide, there are several AI tools available to assist you in writing, researching, and proofreading. These tools are valuable to a student writer. They save time, improve quality, and enhance productivity. However, they must be used with careful consideration. Be mindful of restrictions set by instructors or assignments and remember to cite Gen AI whenever used.

GENERAL INQUIRY AND SEARCH

perplexity

consensus

RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

Google Scholar

Undermind

KNOWLEDGE AND MIND MAPPING

OPEN KNOWLEDGE MAPS

ResearchRabbit

DATA ANALYSIS

rapidminer

Open for Innovation KNIME

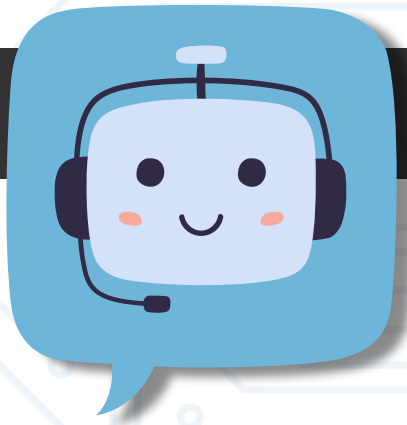
CITATION

Citation Machine a Chegg service

EasyBib

A citation generator produces and formats citations and reference lists for academic work by processing details about a source and organizing that information according to a specific citation style. These tools save time and minimize mistakes, but must be used ethically. Always review the results for accuracy and remember that you are ultimately responsible for maintaining academic honesty in your work.

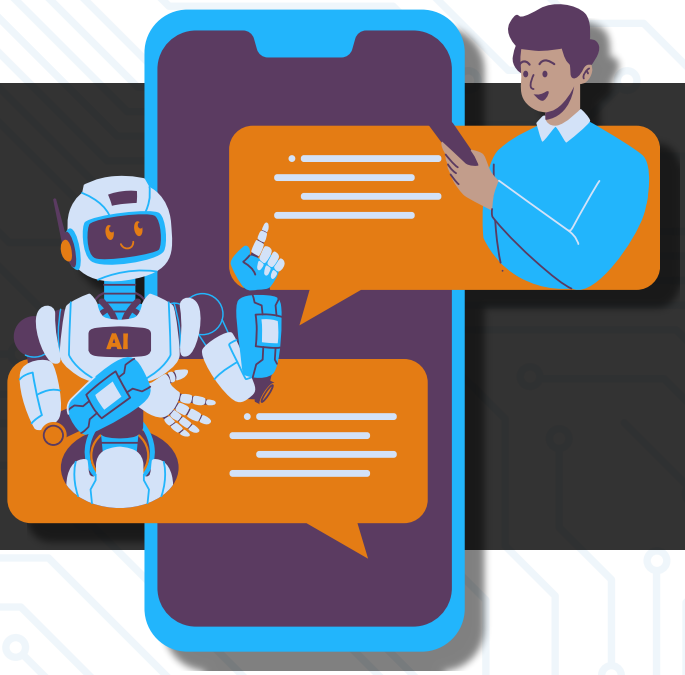
Please note: Students are responsible for understanding and managing their use of generative AI tools. While we encourage ethical exploration of these technologies, **Classroom Support cannot provide assistance with questions related to how these tools work or are used.**



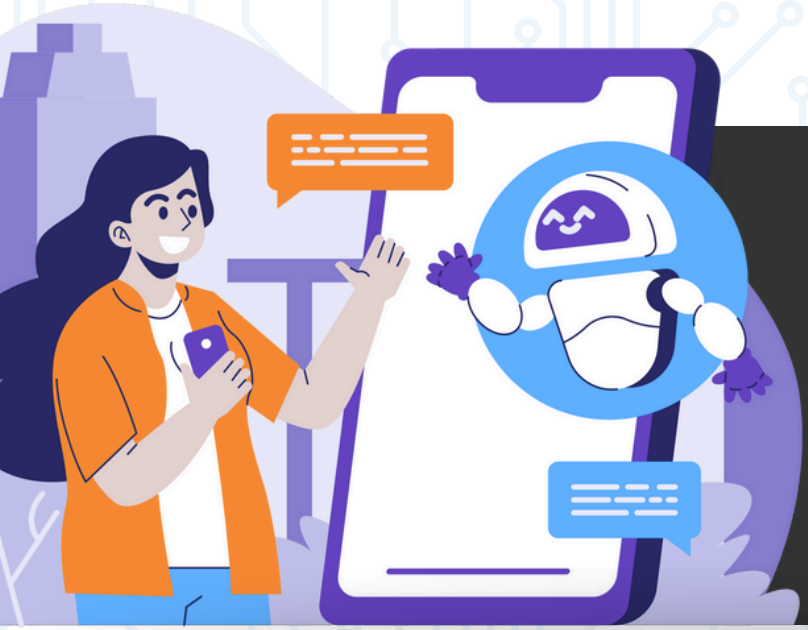
PROMPT LIKE A PRO

When using a large language model (LLM), the quality of your prompt directly affects the quality of the response. Clear, specific, and well-structured prompts yield better results, while vague or overly broad prompts tend to produce equally vague or generic answers.

GARBAGE IN = GARBAGE OUT!



CONTEXTUALIZING a prompt will greatly improve the answers you receive from the LLM. Use your prompt to set the stage. Consider specifying your target audience, the tone you want used in the response, or the format you want the information written in. The more specific your prompt, the more precise your results will be.



ELABORATING is another means of improving the quality of AI-generated results. Asking more focused or detailed questions or requests will guide the AI in producing more favorable results. Prompting AI can resemble a back-and-forth conversation at times. Embrace experimenting with your prompting and note how subtle adjustments to your prompt affect the information you receive!

YOUR RESULTS WILL ONLY BE AS GOOD AS YOUR PROPMTS.

CONCLUSION

While generative AI tools can unlock new levels of creativity, insight, and understanding, remember that they are exactly that—tools. The true creativity, critical thinking, and originality come from you. As the designer and decision-maker, you shape the final product. The guidelines above are here to help you use Gen-AI ethically and responsibly in both academic and professional settings, ensuring your work remains authentic and grounded in integrity.

GLOSSARY

Below is a glossary of ten terms often used when describing AI and Gen-AI (as generated by Microsoft Copilot Pro [August 2025]):

"AI (Artificial Intelligence): The simulation of human intelligence in machines programmed to think and learn.
Algorithm: A set of rules or instructions given to an AI program to help it learn and make decisions.
Creativity (also called "synthetic creativity" or "computational creativity"): The ability of generative AI to produce imaginative content based on pattern recognition and recombination.
Deep Learning: A complex neural network with many layers, enabling advanced learning and generation capabilities.
Generative AI: A type of AI that can generate new content, such as text, images, or music, based on learned data.
Hallucination: The phenomenon where a generative AI model produces content that is not based on reality but rather on its own errors or biases learned from the training data.
LLM (Large Language Model): Advanced AI models trained on vast datasets to understand and generate human-like text.
Machine Learning: A subset of AI where machines learn from data to improve their performance over time.
Model: The representation of what an AI has learned during training, which it uses to make predictions or generate content.
Natural Language Processing (NLP): The ability of AI to understand and generate human language.
Neural Network: A computer system modeled on the human brain that helps AI learn from data.
Prompt Engineering: The practice of crafting effective inputs to guide AI models to produce better responses.
Training Data: The dataset used to teach AI models how to perform tasks."
[Microsoft Copilot Pro, August 2025]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

THE FOLLOWING LINKS WILL GUIDE YOU TO FURTHER RESOURCES TO INFORM AND GUIDE YOUR RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL USE OF GEN-AI.

Using Gen-AI to Improve Writing Skills

Generative AI Policy Overview

Learning with a Gen-AI Tool

How Can I Use and Not Use Copilot

Gen-AI Summarizing Articles

Formatting References Using Copilot

Gen-AI and Career Research

Finding Quality Articles

Disclaimer: This guide was drafted with the assistance of Copilot and Chat GPT, following our institution's commitment to responsible and transparent use of generative AI in academic and professional communications.