

## **NWU Guidelines on the Responsible and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence**

*The following information will appear as a declaration when assignments/tests are to be submitted to eFundi:*

Honour Pledge: I declare that this assignment/work was done according to the NWU Guidelines on Responsible and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence ([NWU Current Students](#))

AI, as Large Language Models (LLMs) or Generative AI, is primarily defined as “a type of artificial intelligence that can learn from and mimic large amounts of data to create content such as text, images, music, videos, code and more, based on inputs and prompts” (<https://huit.harvard.edu/ai#block-boxes-1687273052>). AI may also include other AI tools such as research summarising tools, automatic data analysis tools, and creation of synthetic data tools (<https://sajs.co.za/article/view/17147>). AI is not restricted to this definition and with new AI tools constantly being developed, the use of other or new forms of AI should not be excluded from this definition and it remains the responsibility of the student to get permission for the use of it from the relevant lecturer or supervisor.

### **Ethical use of AI**

The NWU is committed to the ethical use of AI technologies and applies the following basic principles to which you as a student should adhere:

1. **Transparency.** You should keep a record and be open and clear about when and how you use AI. Declare your use of AI and keep track of your use of it.
2. **Honesty.** You should be honest about the use of AI in all your academic work. You need to follow the rules and guidelines given by the lecturer/supervisor for the use of AI, otherwise you are academically dishonest. Any work submitted by you that is not your own, and not clearly declared as such, might lead to a report on [AIITSA](#) (Academic Integrity Information Technology System Application).
3. **Integrity.** Do not lose your trustworthiness through the dishonest use of AI. Integrity means wholeness or the consistent and coherent ability to live as an honest person. Honest and transparent use of AI is needed to keep your academic work’s integrity intact.
4. **Accountability and Ownership.** With the submission of an assignment, you as a student are seen as the owner of the work. You should therefore take ownership of what is written since you are accountable for it. You cannot blame AI if something false, biased, or inappropriate is stated in the work you present as your own. The responsibility for the content (even if created by AI) lies with you as the human author who submits the work.
5. **Privacy, Security, and Safety:** Safeguard personal data and respect user privacy in all AI applications. The use of especially generative AI, including models that create text, images, audio, and video, introduces unique challenges and considerations for the protection of information.
6. **Referencing and Acknowledgment.** Proper citations and recognition of the use of AI are needed. Make sure proper credit is given to all the sources. See the [guide](#) on

how to cite AI. The use of AI without recognition may be considered plagiarism, or unethical use of AI, and will be reported on the AIITSA system.

*The following information will be available as a hyperlink on the eFundi site: this is considered to be an extended, more detailed version of the above-mentioned points:*

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [NWU Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and the *NWU Statement of Intent on Artificial Intelligence (in progress)*. A regular evaluation and review of these guidelines will take place to ensure it is aligned with ethical guidelines and best practices and students should make sure they stay updated with the latest version.

### **Responsible and critical use of AI**

1. Only use AI as allowed and specified by the lecturer/supervisor for the specific assignment. It is your responsibility to make sure you know what your lecturer/supervisor's stance is on the use of AI. Declare your use of AI and keep track of your use of it.
2. Do not use AI as an 'essay mill' (contracting out of thought to someone or an algorithm). Large Language Models can conceptualize, do research, and write assignments, but this might be detrimental to your own possible scientific reasoning and writing advancement.
3. AI answers or essays cannot be presented as your own work. This is a form of plagiarism and dishonesty. Remember, if you use AI exclusively to do your assignments, without critically evaluating the output, you will learn and achieve little to nothing in the process.
4. Keep in mind, that assessments are designed to determine the level of your content knowledge and support your learning of the module outcomes. If AI is used to complete assignments, you are not demonstrating proficiency in these outcomes. Thus, you might not have mastered what was intended with the program/module.
5. Should the use of AI be permissible in a module, be critical of what AI presents as answers since it might be biased, can perpetuate stereotypes, as well as reinforce discriminatory practices, or simply present false information as fact.
6. Should the use of AI be permissible, you always -as with any source- need to critically evaluate and rephrase the content. In other words, rephrase the content into your own words – this helps you to understand and fully grasp the concepts.
7. Proper citations and recognition of the use of AI is vital. Make sure proper credit is given to all the sources. See the [guide](#) on how to cite AI. Be sure to reference a wide range of sources and do not over-rely on a particular source.
8. Verify information and evaluate the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated work. Always double-check the responses that AI generates. Sometimes results are far-fetched and false. Be aware that AI can also obscure poor research behind apparently brilliant writing and therefore one should ensure the presented research is of good quality.
9. Do not become too dependent on AI. You must develop a deep understanding of the content and material you are studying.
10. Keep in mind that dependence on AI discourages independent and critical thinking. It diminishes confidence in one's ability to learn and display critical skills (e.g. synthesis of ideas) and may thereby inhibit thinking. There is also a risk that AI may diminish creativity, as well as reading and writing skills.

11. Do not exclude human interaction in your use of AI. The exclusive use of AI has the risk of diminished social skills and skills of collaboration and cooperation, and complex interdisciplinary problem-solving with other people should not be lost.
12. Be aware of the limitations of AI. LLMs can produce credible untruths (hallucinations, simulated authority, or compelling misinformation) and it may omit attributions of its source of training data (which is a form of plagiarism).
13. Using AI as a proofing tool at the end of the writing process might have some benefits, e.g. fixing spelling, grammar, register, tone, and style. Keep a record of what you use these tools for in case this is flagged as AI-generated. It is considered good practice to keep a copy of your original work.
14. Using AI as a copyediting tool during and after the writing process might have some benefits, e.g. shortening wordy text, expanding for clarity, and rephrasing for clarity, but again this should be allowed by the lecturer/supervisor and should be acknowledged by the student. Again – a copy of the original, unedited work should be kept.
15. Using AI as a drafting consultant, or a co-creator, from the start of the writing process might have some benefits, e.g. planning a research write-up, shaping and developing an argument, and requesting sample lines, but again this should be allowed by the lecturer/supervisor and should be acknowledged by the student. Students should keep track of all the prompts and answers during this research and keep it on record to acknowledge at the end. The problem here is (as with unlimited use of AI) that the authorship becomes opaque, and that the mastery of skills expected from scientists and academics might not take place.
16. Respect Copyright and Intellectual Property. Avoid using LLMs and AI systems to plagiarize or infringe upon copyright and intellectual property rights. Give credit to the original creators when using their work, as you would like to receive credit for your own work.
17. Continuously Learn and Adapt. Stay informed about developments in LLMs and AI ethics and best practices. Be open to feedback and willing to adapt your practices to align with evolving ethical standards.

## **IN SHORT:**

### **DO**

- Use AI only if allowed and as specified by the lecturer/supervisor. If unsure, ask your lecturer.
- Declare the use of AI and properly cite all sources. Commonly used AI tools such as spelling, and grammar checks (e.g. built-in spell checker in Word documents) do not need to be disclosed.
- Rephrase. Even if the use of AI is allowed, never simply copy and paste the generated output.
- Critically consider and verify the accuracy of AI-generated material.
- Keep track of and document all generative AI prompts and outputs.
- Stay informed about AI ethics and best practices for responsible use.
- Keep your original work. If you use an external tool for language editing and modification, your work might be red-flagged and you will need to provide your original, unedited work.

### **DO NOT**

- Submit AI-generated outputs as your own original work. It is academic fraud.
- Plagiarise or infringe upon copyright and intellectual property rights.

- Rely too much on the use of as well as the results produced by AI, since AI-generated text is often flawed.
- Misuse AI to the detriment of your own academic development in academic reasoning and writing.
- Exclude human interaction in your use of AI.