

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL USE OF GENERATIVE AI

Generative AI (GenAI) tools like ChatGPT have recently become more advanced and can now help with various academic tasks, including writing. While these tools can be useful, they also raise concerns about cheating and the impact on learning. It's important to use these tools in a way that supports your learning and follows academic integrity. This handout will guide you on how to use GenAI ethically to improve your academic skills

Values of academic integrity

To use GenAI ethically, it's crucial to understand the principles of academic integrity. The NWU Policy on Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as following ethical guidelines, such as working independently, giving proper credit to others, ensuring your work is original, and not falsifying or manipulating data. Similarly, the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI) highlights six core values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. These values provide a framework for ethical guidelines when using GenAI in academic work.

Below is an illustration of how the values of academic integrity are applied in general academic practices and how they can be applied to the use of GenAI in academic writing:

VALUE/S	WHAT IT MEANS	EVERYDAY PRACTICE	USING GENAI RESPONSIBLY
Honesty	Being truthful about your work and where your information comes from	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always give credit when you use someone else's ideas or words• Be upfront about your contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let others know if you've used GenAI and explain how it helped you
Trust	Building confidence by being reliable and accurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Double-check your sources• Follow the rules of assignment instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check GenAI's information against trusted sources to make sure it's correct
Fairness	Treating everyone equally and following the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play by the rules in all your work• Make sure you have equal access to resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use GenAI as an extra help, not a shortcut, to ensure your work shows your own thinking
Respect	Valuing others' ideas and contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give credit where it's due• Appreciate and consider different viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give proper credit to GenAI when it contributes• Respect others' work and don't claim it as your own
Responsibility	Owning up to your actions and following University guidelines and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stick to the rules set by your teacher or school• Be dependable in your work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the University's rules on using GenAI• Make sure you understand what's allowed and what's not
Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doing the right thing, even when it's tough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stand up for what's right in your work• Address problems or mistakes openly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak up if you see GenAI being used unethically• Speak up if you see GenAI being used unethically

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ETHICAL GENAI USE

As you use GenAI, stay critical of how it impacts your learning. The values in the table guide you to be a responsible and ethical learner. Always ask yourself if GenAI is enhancing your growth or if you're relying on it too much. Use it in ways that support your learning, maintain the integrity of your work, and be transparent about how you use it. To help you navigate the use of GenAI responsibly, here are some key principles to follow:

PRINCIPLE	ACTION	EXPLANATION
Principle 1	Follow the guidelines provided by your lecturer/supervisor	Communicating with your lecturer or supervisor ensures you're using GenAI in the right way.
Principle 2	Think critically about how and why you're using GenAI	Make sure you're using GenAI to help you learn, not just to make things easier.
Principle 3	Be ready to explain how you used GenAI	You should be able to show your lecturer exactly how you used GenAI in your work.
Principle 4	Use GenAI as a support, do not become dependant	Make sure you're still doing your own work and not letting GenAI do everything.
Principle 5	Commit to using GenAI ethically	Use GenAI in a way that helps your learning and doesn't break any rules.

Practical Steps for Ethical GenAI Use

Using GenAI ethically requires a thoughtful approach to ensure it supports your learning while upholding academic integrity. The steps discussed below will guide you in making responsible and effective use of GenAI in your academic work.

STEP	ACTION	PURPOSE
Step 1	Determine the purpose or task you need help with before using GenAI.	Being specific helps you get the most relevant and useful results from GenAI.
Step 2	Check if using GenAI is allowed for the academic task you're working on.	This ensures that your use of GenAI follows academic rules and avoids any issues.
Step 3	Plan how you will explain and be open about using GenAI in your work.	Being transparent builds trust and keeps your academic work honest.
Step 4	Pick the right GenAI tool that best fits what you need.	Choosing the right tool helps you get results that are useful and appropriate.
Step 5	Write a clear and detailed prompt to get accurate results from GenAI.	A well-written prompt gives you better answers, saving you time and effort.
Step 6	Review GenAI's output carefully to make sure it's accurate and useful.	Checking the results helps you catch any mistakes and make sure the information is good.
Step 7	Think about whether GenAI is just doing the work for you or really helping you learn.	This ensures that GenAI is a tool that helps your learning, not something that replaces your effort.

All in all, GenAI can be a valuable tool in your academic journey when used thoughtfully and ethically. By following the principles and practical steps outlined in this handout, you can harness the power of GenAI to enhance your learning while maintaining academic integrity. Always remember to be transparent, critical, and responsible in your use of technology, ensuring that it supports your growth as a learner. By doing so, you'll not only benefit from GenAI but also contribute to a culture of ethical and effective learning

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Sources

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