

GEOGRAPHY SUBJECT GROUP POSITION STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Geography subject group at NWU acknowledges the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and research. While AI offers valuable opportunities to enhance learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving, its use must align with the [NWU Guidelines on Responsible and Ethical Use of AI](#) to maintain academic integrity, uphold ethical standards, and ensure meaningful student learning.

1 Lecturer responsibilities in AI implementation and use

To ensure consistency and clarity in the responsible use of AI, lecturers must provide clear instructions to students at the beginning of the semester regarding:

- The NWU Guidelines on Responsible and Ethical Use of AI and the AITSA (Academic Integrity Information Technology System Application) process for reporting academic misconduct.
- The extent to which AI may or may not be used in coursework, assignments, and assessments.
- The level of AI involvement permitted for each task (as outlined in 2 below).

Lecturers have a professional and ethical duty to critically engage with AI's impact on their disciplines, ensuring students are prepared for a rapidly evolving world. Failing to apply their own minds to how AI transforms their fields undermines both academic integrity and the purpose of higher education.

- **Passive Resistance to AI** – Ignoring AI's influence leaves curricula outdated and fails to equip students with essential skills for an AI-driven future.
- **Failure to Innovate** – Lecturers who do not rethink their teaching methods risk eroding educational value, allowing AI to replace human thought rather than augment learning.
- **Compromising Student Readiness** – Graduates untrained in AI's ethical use and practical applications will struggle in industries where AI is integral.
- **Intellectual Dishonesty** – Expecting students to engage critically while avoiding AI discussions in coursework is a failure of academic responsibility.

With each assignment, lecturers must clearly specify the permitted AI use level to guide student engagement with AI tools appropriately.

2 Recognising Different Uses of AI

AI is integrated into various educational, research, and professional activities. To communicate permissible AI use effectively, it is important to distinguish the different types of AI applications. The following categories outline the broad uses of AI in academia:

- **Learning & Study:** AI-powered tutors, summarisation tools, and interactive study aids (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity AI, Quizlet AI, Google Scholar AI).
- **Research & Sources:** AI-driven literature review, source analysis, and citation management (e.g., Elicit, Scite, Consensus AI, Turnitin AI).
- **Writing & Editing:** AI-assisted grammar correction, language refinement, and content structuring (e.g., Grammarly, Jasper AI, MS Word AI, Hemingway).
- **Data Analysis:** AI tools for processing, visualising, and interpreting datasets (e.g., Wolfram Alpha, Python AI tools, Power BI AI, SciPy).
- **Creative Work (Art, Music, Video):** AI for generative media creation and enhancement (e.g., DALL-E, Midjourney, Canva AI, Adobe Sensei).
- **Admin & Organisation:** AI for task management, scheduling, and document automation (e.g., Notion AI, Google Assistant, Apple Siri AI).
- **Career & Personal Growth:** AI-driven career guidance, resume building, and professional networking (e.g., LinkedIn AI, Resume.io AI, LinkedIn Job Tools).

- **Mental Wellbeing:** AI-powered mental health support and mindfulness applications (e.g., Woebot, Wysa, Replika, Headspace AI, Calm AI).
- **Social Media & Communication:** AI-assisted content creation, post suggestions, and automated replies (e.g., Jasper AI, Meta AI, LinkedIn AI).
- **Media & Journalism:** AI-driven news summarisation, voice synthesis, and automated reporting (e.g., Synthesia AI, ElevenLabs AI, Bloomberg AI).
- **Language Translation & Accessibility:** AI-supported translation and speech-to-text tools (e.g., DeepL, Google Translate, YouTube Auto-Subtitles).
- **Customer Support & Chatbots:** AI-driven conversational agents for automated responses (e.g., Zendesk AI, Intercom AI).
- **AI for Coding & Debugging:** AI-powered coding assistants and debugging tools (e.g., GitHub Copilot, VS Code AI, JetBrains AI).
- **Gaming & Interactive AI:** AI-powered NPCs and interactive game elements (e.g., ChatGPT for NPC conversations, Nvidia AI Game Assistants).

These categories help define how AI is used in various academic and professional contexts. When assigning coursework, lecturers will indicate the level of AI engagement allowed based on these use cases

3 AI Use Levels in Geography Assignments

Each assignment should explicitly indicate the allowed AI engagement level, ensuring that students adhere to ethical AI use. The following levels define the extent of AI use permitted:

Level 1 – No AI (pure human effort)

- AI is strictly prohibited – students must rely solely on their own knowledge, research, and writing.
- AI declaration of non-use is required upon submission.
- AI detection tools will be used, and if AI use exceeds 20%, the student will be reported on the AIITSA system for academic misconduct.

Level 2 – AI-assisted idea generation and structuring

- AI may be used for brainstorming and organizing ideas, but all content must be written and critically evaluated by the student.
- AI may assist in summarising key concepts but not in drafting content.
- Students must declare the extent of AI assistance and attach transcripts of AI engagements as evidence of ethical use.
- AI detection tools may be applied to verify appropriate AI use and originality.

Level 3 – AI-assisted editing

- AI may be used for language refinement, grammar checks, and minor content adjustments under the direction of a human author.
- Students must declare the nature of AI involvement and submit both pre- and post-edited versions of their assignments.
- AI detection tools will be applied to ensure only minor AI-assisted refinements have been made.

Level 4 – AI-assisted content creation

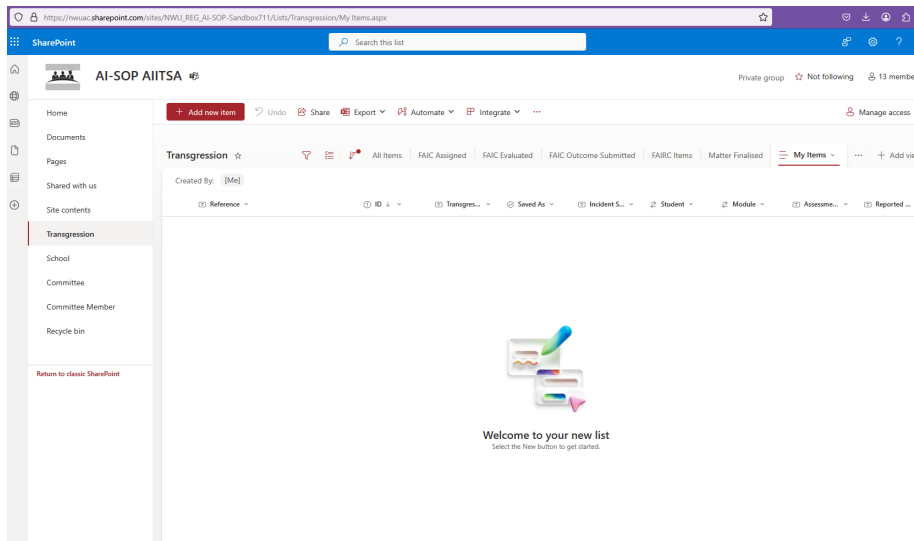
- AI may assist in co-creating content by suggesting improvements or completing tasks with human evaluation and oversight.
- Students must declare the extent of AI involvement and provide a self-reflection on prompt strategies used.
- AI transcripts must be included to verify ethical AI use.
- Lecturers must predefine the allowed percentage of AI-generated content, and AI detection tools will ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Level 5 – Full AI engagement

- AI is used extensively to handle tasks end-to-end for educational purposes, under human direction, to explore AI capabilities.
- A comprehensive declaration of AI use is required, including:
 - All transcripts of AI engagements
 - Critical student reflection on AI-generated content
 - Evaluation of AI outputs for bias, accuracy, and reliability
- AI detection is crucial at this level to verify student engagement and understanding.

4 Academic integrity and AI misconduct

All AI-related academic misconduct must be reported via the [NWU AIITSA system](#).



The threshold for AI-generated content will be based on the lecturer's instructions and the AI use level specified for the assignment (See 2 above).

Although AI detection tools are valuable, they are not infallible. Lecturers retain the right to report any suspected work for misconduct, even if detection results fall below predetermined thresholds.

Students who fail to declare AI use, misuse AI beyond permitted levels, or submit AI-generated work as their own will be subject to academic integrity procedures in accordance with NWU policies.

5 Final considerations

The Geography subject group supports the ethical and responsible integration of AI in education, emphasising that AI should enhance, not replace, human intellectual effort. Students are expected to engage with AI in a way that fosters critical thinking, originality, and academic integrity.

For further guidance, students should consult their lecturers and review the [NWU resources on use of AI](#), as well as the [NWU Guidelines on Responsible and Ethical Use of AI](#) before incorporating AI into their academic work.