



The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Knowledge Exchange Activity Policy

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Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Knowledge Exchange Activity

Artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI, can have many useful applications in academic research, including initial searches for ideas, data analysis and visualisation, research design and development and supporting academic writing. The capacity of AI to analyse big data for patterns and trends, for example, is leading to significant advances in cancer detection and enabling better prediction of health outcomes. Given its utility and transformative potential, Roehampton therefore permits the use of artificial intelligence in research and knowledge exchange activity. However, AI must not be used in a way which would undermine academic integrity, hinder researcher development or substitute for the researcher's independent and original thought, critical analysis and writing. Researchers, including doctoral students at the University, are therefore required to ensure that their use of AI in research remains ethical, responsible and transparent with accountability linking to the individual researcher.

Core Principles

Ethical: Researchers are required to ensure that their use of AI is within accepted ethical standards. Researchers should therefore avoid employing AI in a way that would violate intellectual property rights (for example by uploading or pasting copyrighted material into generative AI tools). Use of AI must adhere to data protection laws and avoid the infringement of rights of third parties. Formal, ethical approval must be sought where necessary for the use of AI. Advice can be sought from the School's ethics officer if you are unclear. Researchers considering using AI should also consider broader ethical issues, such as the environmental cost of AI and inherent biases within various AI tools when contemplating employing AI in their work.

Responsible: Researchers are accountable for their use of AI. Inappropriate use of AI in formally assessed work, including the final doctoral thesis, for example, could result in the imposition of penalties under our academic misconduct policy. The use of AI in the viva voce examination is prohibited and doctoral researchers should consider very carefully the potential risks of using AI in assessed work. Researchers are responsible for checking the accuracy of content generated by AI and should be aware that AI tools can produce outputs that contain errors, bias or 'hallucinations'. Researchers are expected, therefore, to carefully check any material produced by AI and not assume its accuracy or completeness. Researchers developing bids or research outputs are expected to follow the guidelines from the respective publishers or funders regarding the use of AI.

Transparent: Researchers must clearly acknowledge the use of AI in their research and failure to do so will be regarded as an example of academic and/or research misconduct. To support this, researchers should keep records of their AI use,

including prompts employed and responses received. References should make clear the AI tool(s) used, who inputted the data and or prompt and the date of use. Acknowledgements or longer methodological explanations should be provided where the use of AI has been more extensive, for example in research design, data analysis or in the writing and preparation of research outputs. The University Library offers [guidance](#) on referencing the use of AI. Many academic publishers and journals also provide detailed instructions on referencing of the use of AI tools which can be helpful in this regard. The University expects that researchers will follow funders' and publishers' specific guidelines regarding the use of AI.

Good practice

Researchers should consider first whether the use of AI would be appropriate or advisable for the research project in question. Doctoral researchers should seek the advice of their supervisors on using AI before employing it in their research and writing. If the research is intended to lead to publication, researchers should consider the policies of their target journals or publishers to check their restrictions on the use of AI. Researchers who employ AI tools should actively obtain the necessary knowledge and confidence about the usage of such tools and should have researched carefully the particular AI tool(s) they are considering using. If it has been determined that the use of AI would be beneficial then the following actions should be taken:

- Maintain good awareness of developments in the field. The world of AI is fast-evolving, and AI is now being integrated into many common digital tools such as search engines and into many frequently used software packages or applications. While the use of AI-enhanced searches or software packages would not typically require explicit acknowledgement or referencing, researchers should exercise care if incorporating AI-generated suggestions into their research and writing.
- Ensure that records of AI use in data analysis, transcription etc. are kept, including the specific tool and version, inputs and outputs, and date of use.
- Check AI-generated content carefully, being attentive not only to errors/'hallucinations' but also to possible bias in AI-produced material.
- Reference the use of AI in research clearly in any outputs generated from the research, including reports, publications and doctoral theses. Where AI is integral to the research design of a project, this should be clearly explained in the discussion of the project methodology. General acknowledgment should be given where AI has been used to support academic writing and the preparation of outputs. Doctoral students should expect that examiners will wish to discuss their use of AI during the examination.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Writing

- AI tools can be helpful in improving the clarity and structure of academic writing, including doctoral theses. They may be particularly helpful in this regard for researchers for whom English is not their first language and/or who have disabilities/are neurodivergent. Researchers are therefore entitled to use AI tools just as they may also make use of human proof-readers, though as with human proof-readers that use must be acknowledged.
- However, researchers must continue to be attentive to the risks noted above in uploading or pasting text into AI tools/platforms. This includes potential risks to their own intellectual property and copyright given that 'open' AI tools are often in part 'trained' on user input. For this reason, researchers should consider employing tools or adjusting settings so that the AI used will not retain user inputs or employ them to train AI.
- Researchers must also continue to adhere to the core principles of responsibility and transparency in using AI to improve their academic writing. Researchers must check any AI-generated outputs for errors and inconsistencies and should be transparent regarding their use of AI in their written work.
- For all researchers, the use of AI must not compromise the core expectation that the research submitted will be the candidate's own work unless otherwise acknowledged.

AI and Research: Case Studies

The following short case studies are intended to provide some guidance as to appropriate use of AI in research. They are also focused on case use that will not require significant technical knowledge. Given the varied nature of academic research and the rapid development of technology, the list is not, therefore, intended to be comprehensive but to highlight some current beneficial uses for AI in this context.

Auto-transcription

Collaboration software, supporting video conferencing, can now facilitate auto-transcription of interviews and meetings. Such transcriptions can reduce the time and effort needed to capture data from interviews and help to stay on track of key actions in the case of project meetings. They are improving rapidly in accuracy, though still need to be checked for potential errors by researchers. Researchers should also ensure that participants have consented to transcription in this way and that transcription records are held securely, protecting any sensitive data. The use of auto-transcription tools may not be appropriate in certain circumstances, for example interviews regarding highly sensitive subjects. Use of AI-powered auto-transcription should also be acknowledged in any research outputs based on the data.

Translation

AI tools offer more extensive and fluent translation services compared to earlier auto-translation software. This can be very helpful to researchers in breaking down language barriers. However, as with other AI-generated content, translations produced by AI should be checked for accuracy and the use of AI to translate material should be acknowledged or referenced appropriately. Researchers should also bear in mind the general guidelines noted above regarding uploading copyrighted material or sensitive data to AI tools.

Brainstorming/Developing Ideas

AI tools can be helpful in the development of research projects, supporting creativity and innovation. AI can provide a valuable sounding-board or digital 'critical friend' to explore research ideas. When using AI in this way, researchers are advised to ensure that AI tools are set not to use inputs to train their models or store user input. It would also be good practice to acknowledge the use of AI in research development and design.

Misuse of Artificial Intelligence

Misuse of AI occurs when these tools are applied in ways that compromise ethical standards, academic integrity, or the validity of research outcomes. As stated above, AI and related digital tools are evolving quickly. Owing to the wide-ranging approaches within academic research, this section addresses current examples of inappropriate use of AI in research settings. The policy will be routinely assessed and revised as needed.

With regards to using AI in research, scholars must not:

- Misrepresent AI-generated content as their own or employ AI to modify third-party materials to present as their own
- Falsify or fabricate data through the manipulation of material, including images via AI
- Breach data protection and copyright laws through their use of AI
- Employ material cut and pasted from AI-tools in their writing and publications, without appropriate accompanying analytical commentary and or referencing.
- Use AI for fact-checking given both that AI-tools can generate inaccurate content and because such use does not involve a critical approach to research findings or outputs. For the same reasons, AI-tools should not be used to generate bibliographies or other references, although AI could be used to check reference formatting.
- Use artificial intelligence in oral examinations, including the doctoral viva voce examination.

Researchers who are suspected of using AI in these ways may incur penalties under our academic misconduct and staff disciplinary policies and procedures. In the most

serious cases, for students, this could result in the termination of their studies and, for staff, could be deemed an example of gross misconduct.

Dealing with suspected misuse of Artificial Intelligence

Individuals who suspect AI has been misused in research generated by staff or students at the University should raise their concerns with the appropriate departments and staff members at the University. In the case of concerns regarding research produced by members of staff at the University, individuals are advised to contact the University Secretary. If doctoral supervisors are concerned that their students are misusing AI, they should raise this in the first instance with the relevant Research Programme Leader, in line with our Student Disciplinary Regulations. Where staff, including doctoral examiners, have concerns that AI may have been misused in work submitted for assessment, including as part of the final viva voce examination, they should contact the Graduate School. Staff/examiners should not upload material to detection software because detection tools are unreliable and frequently generate false positives, and because submitting student work through these tools also poses risks in relation to data protection and intellectual property rights.

Acknowledgment

This policy has been informed by policies developed in the wider UK HE sector, specifically guidance and policies developed by UK Research and Innovation, City St George's University, King's College, London and the University of York.