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Guidance for students on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

1. What is Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)?

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) can generate new content based on prompts, like text and images. Examples include ChatGPT for text and DALL-E for images. GenAI can be standalone (e.g., ChatGPT) or integrated into standard software like Microsoft Office or Google Apps.

At the University of Westminster, students can access AI-enabled tools like the Adobe suite, the browser-based Microsoft copilot and GrammarlyGO. Many other GenAI tools are available publicly. However, while these tools offer benefits, they also pose risks. As a student, you must differentiate between the exploratory use of generative for non-assessed tasks and using them for marked assessments. This is essential for maintaining academic integrity in your work.

2. Issues and risks of using Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and

Current GenAI systems pose several significant risks and limitations, especially in academic contexts, necessitating ethical use and scrutiny. Trust and accuracy are paramount concerns as these models may generate false information confidently. Independent verification against reliable sources is crucial. The lack of cited sources and explainability raises questions about research integrity.

Ethical debates revolve around copyright, intellectual property, and plagiarism when individuals' creative work has been used to train GenAI models. Given unpredictable disclosures, privacy is also at risk, while inherent biases in training data can reinforce societal stereotypes. Structural concerns include sustainability, resource demands, unequal access, and potential hindrances to independent learning. Issues of accountability and oversight remain unresolved, as systems making mistakes lack liability.

Integrating AI into daily life demands ongoing scrutiny, user caution, and verification for ethical, responsible use centred on human agency. The academic community you are a part of is crucial in uncovering and addressing risks, establishing standards, and overseeing the public good.

3. Using Generative AI in any formally assessed work.

In general, when using a GenAI tool or system, an excellent question to ask yourself is:

"Is this something I would ask a member of the academic staff (e.g. module leader, personal tutor, language support staff) and expect them to help me with?"

- If you answer "no", then this is likely an improper use of the technology.
- If you answer "yes", it will likely be considered an acceptable use. **However, the university requires that you acknowledge the use of any such tools in writing.**
- If unsure, you should ask your module leader or personal tutor.

You should also consider the three points below, which we are sure you will understand and agree with.

Academic Responsibility: Just as you wouldn't ask a friend, relative, or other individual to write your essay or to share their work with you, entrusting GenAI to generate content for an assessment is academically irresponsible and is therefore considered cheating. Your degree's value lies in your ability to demonstrate your knowledge and application of skills, not in outsourcing work to an AI-driven system.

Attribution and Trust: GenAI cannot provide rigorously researched, accurately cited, and well-thought-out analysis. Proper attribution is paramount in academic work, and AI-driven systems generally fall short of this. They also cannot think critically and evaluate information as a human

would. They can't assess the quality of sources or provide nuanced interpretations that human researchers can.

Learning Process: Higher education's essence is the learning journey, not just the end product. Relying solely on AI for content generation deprives you of the opportunity to grow and develop your critical thinking and research skills and can limit your learning.

3.1 What must I do if I use a Generative AI to help generate or improve content for an assignment that will be marked?

When GenAI are used in assessed work, it is essential to be transparent about their use.

Ultimately, if you have made use of ANY AI-driven support tools in producing your assessment, you MUST include the following statement at the top or bottom of your submission:

"In this assessment, I used

[*list tools – see section 3.1.1 below for examples*]

to

[*state usage – see section 3.1.2 below for examples*]."

3.1.1 Such tools include (but are not limited to):

AI text: Bard, Bing Chat, ChatGPT, Claude, Ernie, LLaMA, Quillbot, Tongyi Qianwen

AI images: DALL-E, Midjourney, Tongyi Wanxiang

Translation: DeepL, Google Translate, YouDao

Grammar checking: Grammarly/Grammarly GO

3.1.2 Some possible legitimate use cases for GenAI to help you with assignments that will be marked are:

- Assisting with grammar and spelling checks.
- Utilising Generative AI to identify internet keywords for an internet search.
- Aiding in the planning and developing an outline structure for a written assessment.
- Generating ideas for graphics, images, and visuals.
- Obtaining explanations of concepts.
- Assisting in debugging code.
- Helping to inspire your writing (sometimes referred to as 'overcoming 'writer's block')

Please see Table 1 at the end of this document for some examples of use cases for GenAI.

You must be accountable for the assignment submission content and how it was produced. Before submitting, you should reflect and satisfy yourself that if an interview was held with you to discuss your work, you could explain and justify your work in developing and constructing the assignment.

You should be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Can you be truthful about which ideas are your own and which are derived from other sources that use AI to generate responses?
- Are you sure you are not trying to gain an advantage by unfair means, for instance, by passing off content generated by a GenAI as your own?

- Are you confident that you are responsible for the content of your assignment and how this content was derived?

Please note, however, that there may be instances where the legitimate uses of GenAI listed in section 3.1.2 and in table 1 of this guidance may not be applicable due to specific requirements of some subject areas or individual assignments. Any specific restrictions on using Generative AI will be clearly outlined in the relevant assignment brief, along with instructions provided by your tutor(s).

4. Using Generative AI for non-assessed tasks and independent learning.

GenAI, while not infallible, can be harnessed responsibly for non-assessed tasks and as a learning aid. Below are some examples of acceptable use for non-assessed tasks and independent learning.

4.1 Conceptual Companions or Study Buddy: Imagine researching a complex topic; your initial reading on the subject leaves you bewildered. A GenAI tool or system can serve as your 'virtual companion', offering simplified explanations to 'kickstart' your journey of understanding. The insights that the GenAI provides may then further guide your research.

4.2 Idea Incubators: When faced with a brainstorming exercise, perhaps for a project, GenAI can act as an idea incubator. It can generate diverse suggestions you can consider and build upon, helping you explore new angles and possibilities for an assignment.

4.3 Grammar Guardians: Correct spelling and grammar are important in academic writing. GenAI and other tools like Grammarly (freely available at the University) can be preliminary tools for proofreading and ensuring your work adheres to good linguistic standards

In drafting questions or prompts to GenAI, with the acceptable uses above in mind, the university has published a prompt guide you can download that you may find helpful.

However, before employing generative AI, even for non-assessed tasks or independent learning, you should consider the following questions:

- Can a GenAI enhance my understanding, considering my main learning objective(s)?
- Am I confident I can accurately check any GenAI response?
- Are my questions or prompts to the GenAI well-informed and aligned with my learning objectives?
- Does the GenAI aid your understanding and ability to ask further meaningful questions?
- Are you in control and able to act independently and ultimately make your own decisions?
- Are you responsible for your work and your decisions rather than simply passively relying on the GenAI to lead on your academic endeavours?

GenAI should augment your learning experience, not replace it. The real educational value lies in the process of your personal exploration, discovery, reflection and critical analysis.

5. In summary

Using a GenAI as a complementary tool to enhance your understanding and generate ideas early in your academic journey is ethically acceptable. However, it is unequivocally unethical and against the principles of academic integrity to use GenAI to produce content for assessed assignments. **Doing this is effectively cheating.**

However, please remember that your pursuit of knowledge and skills is the goal of your university experience, and GenAI tools should be seen as supportive allies, not replacements for your capability and efforts.

If you use a Generative AI tool like GrammarlyGO or ChatGPT to help you with an assessment/assignment, then:

- ➢ Using Generative AI to produce original content and claiming it as your work is strictly prohibited. Your assignments and exams should demonstrate reflection and critical analysis generated by your thinking.

- ➢ It is unacceptable to submit a draft essay or other written output to a GenAI and request the system to rephrase it in proper English or restructure it unless it **is part of the assessment brief.**

- ➢ Including outputs from GenAI systems, such as passages of text or images, in an assessment submission without disclosing what tool you have used and how you have used it is not permitted (see section 3 above).

Please be aware that misusing GenAI (as outlined in section 3 above) constitutes academic misconduct.

The University of Westminster defines academic misconduct as:

"*Academic misconduct is where a student gains, or seeks, attempts or intends to gain, advantage in relation to assessment, either for themself or for another person, by unfair or improper means*".

The list of offences that can be considered as academic misconduct includes:

Plagiarism, self-plagiarism, plagiarism commissioning and collusion (please see our guidance).

Presenting the output of tools that write for you as your work is academic misconduct. The University of Westminster may impose a penalty on the assessments of those found in breach of academic integrity. Part 3 of Section 10 of the University's academic regulations outlines the procedures and penalties for academic misconduct.

Table 1 Some examples of acceptable and unacceptable use cases for GenAI

Proposed Use	Acceptable/Unacceptable	Explanation
Having GenAI generate research findings and conclusions.	Unacceptable	Using generative AI to create research findings and conclusions misrepresents your own analysis and interpretation abilities and violates academic integrity.
Employing AI to write letters of recommendation or a reference.	Unacceptable	Using generative AI to generate letters of recommendation is unethical and presents qualifications and abilities inaccurately.
Submitting an AI-generated essay as your own work.	Unacceptable	This practice is academically dishonest, as it involves presenting someone else's work as your own, violating academic integrity.
Drafting an initial outline for an essay or report.	Acceptable but….	While using GenAI to generate an outline for an essay or report is generally acceptable, students must maintain academic integrity. The final essay/report must reflect your understanding and analysis and **MUST** be in the student's own words. In addition. If you use GenAI to help produce an outline for an essay/report, you must include this in the declaration appended to your coursework submission (see section 3 above).
Summarising articles	Acceptable	GenAI can assist in condensing lengthy articles and may help with comprehension and note-taking.
Generating topic-related questions (e.g. as an aid to revision).	Acceptable	GenAI can help create insightful questions to explore a subject or research area further. However, you should be wary of depending on the GenAI for answers or evaluations without further checking these.
Using GenAI to create flashcards to support your study/engagement with a topic.	Acceptable	Flashcards can help promote active recall. Seeing a term or phrase on a flashcard and then trying to recall the meaning helps to move it from short-term to long-term memory.
Using GenAI to generate a list of relevant sources for research.	Acceptable	GenAI can provide a starting point for finding credible resources, but further evaluation of any resources identified is needed. GenAI should not be used to generate a list of references that are then included with the assignment submission.
Using GenAI to generate search terms to use for researching into a specific topic.	Acceptable	GenAI can provide helpful suggestions for research search terms using more standard search engines or library catalogues.
Creating code entirely with GenAI for programming assignments.	Unacceptable	Relying solely on generative AI to produce complete code for programming assignments will undermine the assessment of your coding skills and violate the academic integrity of your work.
Using GenAI to create mind maps for visualising complex concepts.	Acceptable	GenAI can help generate visual aids for studying and organising information effectively.