

## Russell Group principles on the use of generative AI tools in education

*Our universities are committed to the ethical and responsible use of generative AI and to preparing our staff and students to be leaders in an increasingly AI-enabled world.*

*The rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential for a profound impact on the ways in which we teach, learn, assess, and access education. Our universities wish to ensure that generative AI tools can be used for the benefit of students and staff – enhancing teaching practices and student learning experiences, ensuring students develop skills for the future within an ethical framework, and enabling educators to benefit from efficiencies to develop innovative methods of teaching.*

*Valuable work undertaken by organisations such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and Jisc has helped develop the sector's understanding of the opportunities and considerations of generative AI<sup>12</sup>, and the Department for Education (DfE) has set out its position on the use of generative AI in the pre-university education sector<sup>3</sup>. Russell Group universities have contributed sector-wide insight and have been proactively working with experts to revise and develop policies that provide guidance to students and staff.*

*Collaboration, coordination, and consistency on this issue across the education and professional sectors – including professional bodies, schools, FE colleges and employers – will be crucial. In recognition of this, Russell Group universities have collectively developed the following principles that will guide the approach to generative AI tools across our universities and, we hope, beyond:*

1. Universities will support students and staff to become AI-literate.
2. Staff should be equipped to support students to use generative AI tools effectively and appropriately in their learning experience.
3. Universities will adapt teaching and assessment to incorporate the ethical use of generative AI and support equal access.
4. Universities will ensure academic rigour and integrity is upheld.
5. Universities will work collaboratively to share best practice as the technology and its application in education evolves.

### **1. Universities will support students and staff to become AI-literate.**

1.1 Generative AI tools are capable of processing vast amounts of information to generate responses but they have significant limitations. It is important that all students and staff understand the opportunities, limitations and ethical issues associated with the use of these tools and can apply what they have learned as the capabilities of generative AI develop. These include:

- (a) Privacy and data considerations: whether a generative AI tool is designed to learn directly from its users' inputs or not, there are risks to privacy and intellectual property associated with the information that students and staff may enter.
- (b) Potential for bias: generative AI tools produce answers based on information generated by humans which may contain societal biases and stereotypes which, in-turn, may be replicated in the generative AI tool's response.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2023/05/11/generative-ai-primer/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/membership/membership-areas-of-work/academic-integrity/chatgpt-and-artificial-intelligence>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education>

- (c) Inaccuracy and misinterpretation of information: data and information contained within generative AI tools is garnered from a wide range of sources, including those that are poorly referenced or incorrect. Similarly, unclear commands or information may be misinterpreted by generative AI tools and produce incorrect, irrelevant or out-of-date information. This means that accountability for the accuracy of information generated by these tools when transferred to another context lies with the user.
  - (d) Ethics codes: users of generative AI tools should be aware that while ethics codes exist, they may not be embedded within all generative AI tools and that their incorporation, or otherwise, may not be something that users can easily verify.
  - (e) Plagiarism: generative AI tools re-present information developed by others and so there is the risk of plagiarised content and/or copyright infringement being submitted by a user as their own, and artwork used by image generators may have been included without the creator's consent or licence.
  - (f) Exploitation: the process by which generative AI tools are built can present ethical issues. For example, some developers have outsourced data labelling to low-wage workers in poor conditions<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.2 Our universities will provide guidance and training to help students and staff understand how generative AI tools work, where they can add value and personalise learning, as well as their limitations. By increasing AI-literacy, our universities will equip students with the skills needed to use these tools appropriately throughout their studies and future careers, and ensure staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to deploy these tools to support student learning and adapt teaching pedagogies.

## **2. Staff should be equipped to support students to use generative AI tools effectively and appropriately in their learning experience.**

- 2.1 Our universities will develop resources and training opportunities, so that staff are able to provide students with clear guidance on how to use generative AI to support their learning, assignments, and research.
- 2.2 The appropriate uses of generative AI tools are likely to differ between academic disciplines and will be informed by policies and guidance from subject associations, therefore universities will encourage academic departments to apply institution-wide policies within their own context. Universities will also be encouraged to consider how these tools might be applied appropriately for different student groups or those with specific learning needs.
- 2.3 Engagement and dialogue between academic staff and students will be important to establish a shared understanding of the appropriate use of generative AI tools. Ensuring this dialogue is regular and ongoing will be vital given the pace at which generative AI is evolving.

## **3. Universities will adapt teaching and assessment to incorporate the ethical use of generative AI and support equal access.**

- 3.1 Universities continually update and enhance their pedagogies and assessment methods in response to drivers including new research, technological developments and workforce needs – adapting to the use of generative AI technology is no different. Incorporating the use of generative AI tools into teaching methods and assessments has the potential to enhance

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<sup>4</sup> <https://time.com/6247678/openai-chatgpt-kenya-workers/>

the student learning experience, improve critical reasoning skills and prepare students for the real-world applications of the generative AI technologies they will encounter beyond university.

- 3.2 Appropriate adaptations to teaching and assessment methods will vary by university and discipline, and protecting this autonomy is vital. All staff who support student learning should be empowered to design teaching sessions, materials and assessments that incorporate the creative use of generative AI tools where appropriate. Professional bodies will also have an important role in supporting universities to adapt their practices, particularly in relation to accreditation.
- 3.3 As the technologies develop and new generative tools become available, elements of generative AI used within universities may reside behind paywalls or be restricted to paying subscribers. Universities will need to consider how best to respond to a potential proliferation of such subscription tools and attempt to ensure fairness of access so that students and staff can access the generative AI tools and computing resources they need in support of their teaching and learning practices.

#### **4. Universities will ensure academic rigour and integrity is upheld.**

- 4.1 All 24 Russell Group universities have reviewed their academic conduct policies and guidance to reflect the emergence of generative AI. These policies make it clear to students and staff where the use of generative AI is inappropriate, and are intended to support them in making informed decisions and to empower them to use these tools appropriately and acknowledge their use where necessary.
- 4.2 Such clear and transparent policies are critical to maintaining consistent and high standards of learning, teaching and assessment across Russell Group universities.
- 4.3 Ensuring academic integrity and the ethical use of generative AI can also be achieved by cultivating an environment where students can ask questions about specific cases of their use and discuss the associated challenges openly and without fear of penalisation.

#### **5. Universities will work collaboratively to share best practice as the technology and its application in education evolves.**

- 5.1 Navigating this ever-changing landscape will require collaboration between universities, students, schools, FE colleges, employers, sector and professional bodies, with the ongoing review and evaluation of policies, principles and their practical implementation.
- 5.2 Our universities will regularly evaluate policies and guidance for staff and students relating to generative AI tools and their impact on teaching, learning, and assessment practices. This will include monitoring the effectiveness, fairness, and ethical implications of the integration of generative AI tools into academic life, and adapting policies and procedures to ensure they remain valid as generative AI technologies evolve.
- 5.3 Fostering relationships between higher education institutions, schools, employers, professional bodies who accredit degrees, AI experts, leading academics and researchers, as well as ensuring an inter-disciplinary approach to addressing emerging challenges and promoting the ethical use of generative AI, will be crucial. Russell Group universities recognise the challenges that lie ahead and will continue to value the input of others, along with contributing expertise to the national and international discussions around generative AI and its applications within teaching, learning, assessment and support.