



Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

2025-26



Senior Leadership Responsibility	
Policy Author	Dani Brookes, Higher Education Examinations and Assessment Officer
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	
Issue date of current version	1 st September 2025
Date to be reviewed	August 2026
Type of Policy	Public / Internal

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	5/9/25
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Sharon Dunphy
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Deputy Executive Director HE and Quality
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff employed

What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	This is a yearly review and update required by awarding organisations
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You will need to consider whether it's possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy / procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy)
Who can access the policy	Who cannot, or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with one being lowest impact and 5 being the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	2	Neutral. All age groups are subject to the same rules. Some mature students may be less familiar with AI technologies, creating a potential confidence barrier.	Provide guidance, workshops, and Academic Skills support to ensure all students have equal access to understanding AI.	Ongoing – Academic Skills Advisor / HE Support Team
Disability	4	Potential negative impact. Some disabled students may rely on AI-enabled tools (e.g., text-to-speech, dictation, grammar support) as accessibility aids. Risk of confusion if accessibility tools are mistaken for academic misconduct.	Clarify in policy that approved assistive technologies are acceptable. Ensure reasonable adjustments are considered on a case-by-case basis.	By next annual policy review – HE Exams & Assessments Team / Disability Support

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with one being lowest impact and 5 being the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Gender (Sex)	1	Neutral. No differential impact anticipated.	None required.	N/A
Gender Reassignment	1	Neutral. No differential impact anticipated.	None required.	N/A
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	Neutral. No differential impact anticipated.	None required.	N/A
Pregnancy / Maternity	2	Neutral to positive. Students with caring responsibilities may find AI useful for organising study time. Risk if over-reliance leads to policy breach.	Ensure flexibility in academic support and clear guidance on acceptable AI use.	Ongoing – Academic Skills Advisor
Race	2	Neutral. All students are subject to same rules. However, students with English as an additional language may be more likely to use AI for grammar/spelling support, which could fall into “unacceptable use” without clarification.	Provide targeted guidance for students; embed examples of acceptable vs unacceptable AI use in induction and study skills workshops.	By start of each academic year – Academic Skills Advisor / HE teaching Team
Religion or Religious Belief	1	Neutral. No specific barriers identified.	None required.	N/A
Sexual Orientation	1	None identified.	None required.	N/A

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010.

2. As part of the policy approval process The Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the landscape of education, offering both significant opportunities and complex challenges within academic settings. At University Centre South Essex (UCSE, also referred to as The University Centre), we acknowledge the value AI technologies can bring to teaching, learning, and research when used appropriately. From enhancing access to information to supporting academic development, AI has the potential to be a powerful educational tool.

However, with these opportunities come important ethical and academic considerations, particularly around authorship, academic integrity, and the authenticity of student work. In response to these developments, this policy has been created to provide clear guidance on the acceptable and unacceptable use of AI in relation to assessed academic work within our Higher Education provision.

This policy outlines the principles that underpin the responsible use of AI by students, establishes clear expectations for academic conduct, and details the procedures for the detection and investigation of potential misuse. It applies to all students studying at Level 4 and above, across all pathways and modes of delivery, and operates in conjunction with; though not in place of, requirements set by our validating partners and awarding bodies.

By setting these parameters, UCSE aims to uphold the integrity of academic achievement while supporting students to engage with AI in a constructive, transparent, and ethical manner.

SCOPE

- 1.1** The University Centre recognises both the transformative potential and inherent risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education. This policy is specifically concerned with the use of AI in academic works submitted for both summative and formative assessments, ensuring that all academic submissions maintain the standards of integrity, originality, and personal academic development expected from our students.
- 1.2** This policy applies to all Higher Education provision at UCSE, specifically at Level 4 and above, across all disciplines, pathways, and modes of study. It includes both full-time and part-time provision, blended and distance learning, and any courses delivered in partnership with validating institutions or awarding bodies.
- 1.3** The policy operates alongside, and is subject to, the policies and regulations of any external validating partners or awarding bodies, specifically in relation to

Academic Offences and Plagiarism and Collusion. In cases of conflict, the external partner's policy takes precedence, provided it directly governs academic practice within the relevant programme or award.

- 1.4** This policy covers all types of AI tools, not just ones that create content. It applies to any platform students use—whether it's well-known tools such as ChatGPT, Bard, or Grammarly, or built-in AI features in apps like word processors or learning platforms.
- 1.5** It includes all instances where an AI-based platform is used to create, reword, rewrite, or alter a student's academic work in a way that misrepresents the work as their own. This encompasses not only textual content but also AI-generated visual, audio, or multimedia elements where applicable to an assignment.
- 1.6** The scope extends to AI-assisted proofing platforms which directly alter content intended for submission. While students may use tools to guide self-correction, direct edits made by AI that are then submitted without further revision by the student fall within the scope of this policy.
- 1.7** The policy applies to all individual submissions and collaborative-based projects where shared authorship is explicitly permitted.
- 1.8** Staff members responsible for the assessment, moderation, or academic support of students are expected to be familiar with this policy and uphold its principles in their guidance, marking, and academic decision-making. They must report any known or suspected incidences of unacceptable use of AI to the HE Examinations and Assessments Team.

AIMS

- 2.1** The primary aim of this policy is to define the acceptable and unacceptable use of AI technologies in academic work submitted for formal assessment, in order to uphold academic integrity and fairness across all programmes at The University Centre.
- 2.2** The policy seeks to support both students and staff in understanding the role of AI as an educational tool; acknowledging that when used ethically and transparently, AI can support learning, critical thinking, and skill development.
- 2.3** It provides clear, practical guidance for distinguishing between acceptable supportive use of AI and unacceptable substitution of student work with AI-generated content. The policy is designed to foster self-awareness and personal responsibility in how students engage with digital tools during their academic journey.

- 2.4** A further aim is to ensure consistency and transparency in how concerns regarding AI misuse are identified, investigated, and responded to. The policy outlines the detection tools used, thresholds for concern, and procedures followed under the various awarding bodies Academic Offences Policies.
- 2.5** This policy promotes the principle that all submitted academic work must reflect the student's own understanding, effort, and capabilities. In doing so, it safeguards both the value of UCSE awards and the academic reputation of its student body.
- 2.6** As AI technologies continue to evolve rapidly, the policy aims to remain adaptable, with annual review cycles ensuring alignment with emerging best practice, technological developments, and sector-wide guidance.
- 2.7** The policy encourages the proactive and responsible use of AI, preparing students for real-world contexts in which AI literacy is increasingly important—while ensuring they understand the ethical boundaries of its use in academic work.

ACCEPTABLE USES OF AI

- 3.1** The University Centre recognises the potential benefits of AI and does not intend to discourage students from using it to their benefit in a manner which supports learning, research and exploration.
- 3.2** A key determining factor between appropriate and inappropriate use is the integration of a 'generative content', which is content produced by an AI platform which features within the submission of work for formal evaluation. I.e. this is work which is not directly produced by the student, but is instead produced by the platform based on information and instruction provided by the user of the platform.
- 3.3** The University Centre encourages students to use AI technologies to support their learning and skill development. The following list of examples are not-exhaustive but provide guidance on instances where AI has been used appropriately:
- a. **Research:** Using AI-based technologies to aid in the acquisition of information to be used towards general development and understanding. This is appropriate if the content is summarised to aid the student's understanding of a particular topic or subject matter which then helps them prepare materials for formal evaluation.

- b. **Sign-Posting:** Using AI-based technologies to help identify particular sources of information. I.e. to help a student identify forms of critique in relation to a particular theory, principle or approach. This allows the student to access the particular content and review it to be used to develop general understanding or to identify sources and information to be used within materials for formal evaluation.
- c. **Proofing and Work Development:** Submitted a draft of a submission to an AI-based technology seeking ways in which the submission could be developed. It is appropriate to ask an AI-based technology for ways in which the submission could be developed and asking for advice on how this could be developed.
- d. **Developing the Presentation of Works:** Submit a draft presentation of references and academic practices to check accuracies.
- e. **Suggesting Structure or Approach:** Presenting the assignment details; for example the assignment brief, to an AI-based platform and asking for suggestions and structure as to how to approach the task. This advice can be acted upon and is not considered inappropriate.

3.4 Most uses of AI are appropriate; as a guiding principle any usage which does not directly produce or change student's work which is used for submission for formal evaluation will typically be deemed as appropriate.

3.5 Where AI technologies have been used to support the development of a formal submission, it is strongly recommended that students keep copies of older drafts to show the development of their work over a period of time. This can significantly aid any investigation and help demonstrate how and where AI has been used.

3.6 If you are unsure if your intended use of AI is acceptable, please speak to our Academic Skills Advisor. You can contact them at HESupport@southessex.ac.uk.

UNACCEPTABLE USES OF AI

4.1 Whilst The University Centre does not discourage the use of AI, we recognises that there are instances of inappropriate or unacceptable uses of AI in relation to students work.

4.2 Instances where work produced by an AI platform features directly or indirectly within a submission is considered unacceptable and is subject to the academic offences policy.

4.3 Inappropriate use of AI in relation to a formal submission for evaluation is viewed as a serious offence. Where determination is made that a student has misused AI to benefit their work beyond this skill and subject knowledge, this will be officially recorded on the student's academic record.

4.4 The University Centre encourages students to use AI technologies to support their learning and skill development. However, in-line with this policy the following list of examples, which are not-exhaustive, provide guidance on instances where AI has been used inappropriately:

- a. **Direct Generation:** Giving instruction to an AI-based technology to produce work which is then copied and features directly in the student's work for formal evaluation. This is in relation to any weighting or length of work produced. Any direct 'copy and paste' from a generative AI platform is considered an academic offence.
- b. **Revised Generation:** Giving instruction to an AI-based technology to produce work which is then rephrased by the student to mask the use of AI for large sections within their submission.
- c. **Analysing or Evaluation Data:** Giving instruction to an AI-based technology to analyse or evaluate a particular data set or procedure and then using this produced work either directly or indirectly within a submission.
- d. **Re-Drafting or Developing Assignments:** Submitting student-created work to an AI-based platform which makes direct changes to the work. This includes:
 - i. Correcting the spelling and grammar
 - ii. Correcting the presentation of academic content
 - iii. Making direct changes to the structure or content
 - iv. Correct inaccurate content
 - v. Adding references to the submission
 - vi. Adding additional to content to extend the submission
 - vii. Removing or condensing sections in order to meet the limitations of the assignment
 - viii. Paraphrasing content

The above examples are not exhaustive, however each demonstrates the principle of the AI technology either producing work for the student or make either direct or indirect changes to work. Meaning the submitted work is no longer entirely representative of the student's knowledge, skills and/or learning.

DETECTION AND INVESTIGATION

5.1 Wherever possible, all submissions are subject to evaluation for all forms of plagiarism and collusion. These tools are used to inform assessors as to the authenticity of the work submitted for formal evaluation by the student.

5.2 AI detections scores will not be used as sole evidence of academic misconduct. Where a score suggests possible AI generated content, this may trigger further investigation alongside consideration of writing style, assessment content and academic judgement

5.3 In some instances where the initial AI-detection tool identifies less than 20% of the submission as being AI generated, the assessment can still be subject to investigation under our various awarding body's Academic Offences policies. Where the assessor believes AI has been used inappropriately and is able to communicate clear reasons for this, the submission will be subject to investigation. Instances where the marker may raise concerns about the authenticity of the work may include:

- a. The submitted work is stylistically different to previous submissions.
- b. The submitted work is of a considerable different standard to previous submissions.
- c. The submitted work contains formatting functions which are consistent with the use of AI to generate content.
- d. The assessor is concerned that some of the content has not been authentically produced by the student.

5.4 Once an assessor has raised a concern regarding the authenticity of the student's work, this will then be investigated in accordance with the awarding body's Academic Offences Policy. The panel's duty will be to determine whether or not an academic offence, including the misuse of AI, features within the formal submission for evaluation.

5.5 Where there is concern regarding the authenticity of a formal submission in relation to the misuse of AI; and recognising the variables in relation to AI-detection, further AI-detection tools will be used to assist the panel in their identification and decision making.

5.6 During an investigation, a student may be asked to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter and/or their approach taken to develop their assignment work in order to help the panel in their assessment and decision making.

5.7 During an investigation, it is not the duty of the panel to prove instances of AI misuse, but instead give the student the opportunity to demonstrate that the work submitted is authentic.

5.8 During an investigation, it is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate to the panel that the work submitted is authentic and has been produced without actions which could be viewed as an academic offence. This includes demonstrating that the work is their own and has not been developed in conjunction with a misuse of AI.

End of Policy

