



Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

September 2026

SLT Responsibility – Adam Fahey

Policy Author – Sharon Dunphy

Significant Changes Following Review

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
Whole document	Policy has been rewritten	Sharon Dunphy

Equality Impact Assessment

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.	August 2026
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?	Staff and Students
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.?	To establish a clear and consistent framework for the ethical, transparent and appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education assessment, support academic integrity, provide guidance to staff and students, and align UCSE practice with emerging sector expectations and validating partner requirements.

You will need to consider whether its 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?	Students and staff benefit from clear expectations regarding AI use and academic integrity.
Who will benefit?	There is a potential disadvantage for students who rely on AI-enabled assistive technologies if guidance is unclear; this is mitigated through reasonable adjustments and support.
Who can access the policy?	Students, staff, validating partners and UCSE through greater consistency, transparency and protection of academic standards.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 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	Primarily neutral. The policy applies consistently to all students regardless of age. Some students may have differing levels of confidence or familiarity with AI technologies.	Provide guidance and support materials to ensure all students understand the policy and expectations.	Ongoing. Programme Leaders and Programme Partnership Managers (PPM)
Disability	3	Potential positive impact where AI-enabled accessibility tools support learning. Potential negative impact if students feel prohibited from using assistive technologies that incorporate AI functions.	Ensure reasonable adjustments continue to be provided. Clarify that approved assistive technologies remain permissible where consistent with assessment requirements and support plans.	Ongoing. Programme Leaders, Disability Support Team and PPM
Gender (Sex)	1	No specific positive or negative impact identified. Policy applies equally to all students.	Monitor implementation to ensure consistent application.	Ongoing. HE Management Team.
Gender Reassignment	1	No specific positive or negative impact identified. Policy applies equally to all students.	Monitor implementation to ensure consistent application and inclusion.	Ongoing. HE Management Team.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	No specific positive or negative impact identified.	No additional action required beyond normal policy monitoring.	Ongoing. HE Management Team.
Pregnancy / Maternity	1	No specific positive or negative impact identified. Policy applies equally to all students.	Ensure students continue to have access to standard support arrangements where required.	Ongoing. Programme Leaders and

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 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.
				Student Support Teams.
Race	2	Potential positive impact through promoting transparency and academic integrity. AI tools may contain cultural bias or produce inaccurate content relating to different groups.	Students are required to critically evaluate AI outputs, including bias and cultural sensitivity. Staff guidance will reinforce this expectation.	Ongoing. Programme Leaders and HE Management Team.
Religion or Religious Belief	1	No specific positive or negative impact identified.	Monitor implementation to ensure equitable treatment.	Ongoing. HE Management Team.
Sexual Orientation	1	No specific positive or negative impact identified.	Monitor implementation to ensure equitable treatment.	Ongoing. HE Management Team.
Any other element that needs to be considered.	3	Students with lower digital literacy, limited access to technology, or differing levels of AI experience may be disadvantaged in understanding expectations.	Provide clear guidance, examples and staff support. Ensure students can access advice before using AI in assessed work.	Ongoing. Academic Skills Team, Programme Leaders and HE Management Team.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming higher education, creating opportunities to enhance learning, research, and access to information, while also raising academic, ethical, and professional challenges.
- 1.2 This policy provides guidance on the acceptable use of AI within assessed work across UCSE's Higher Education provision. It aims to uphold academic integrity, promote ethical engagement with technology, and outline how potential misuse will be addressed. The policy applies to all students studying at Level 4 and above and operates alongside the requirements of validating partners and awarding bodies.
- 1.3 A key principle is that students must demonstrate achievement of their learning outcomes through their own knowledge, skills, and professional judgement. AI may support learning but must not replace the student's own contribution.
- 1.4 Students must discuss the use of AI in assessed work with their lecturers and be transparent about how AI tools have been used, following guidance set out in this document.
- 1.5 Where AI is used within creative or studio-based projects, students must consider any ethical implications and may be required to submit to the relevant ethical review committee for guidance and/or approval.
- 1.6 UCSE supports the responsible use of AI, including within creative, studio-based, and performance disciplines, where students must critically consider issues such as originality, authorship, bias, cultural sensitivity, and copyright.
- 1.7 UCSE's approach is to balance academic integrity with innovation, encouraging the responsible, transparent, and critical use of AI to enhance learning and academic development.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Higher Education students studying at Level 4 and above across all UCSE programmes, modes of study, and partnership arrangements. It covers the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in both formative and summative assessments and should be read alongside the academic regulations of validating partners and awarding bodies. Where external regulations apply, these take precedence.

2.2 The policy covers all AI-enabled tools, including generative AI platforms, proofreading and writing assistance tools, and AI features embedded within software applications. It applies where AI is used to generate, edit, reword, or otherwise alter work submitted for assessment, including written, presentations, visual, audio, and multimedia content.

2.3 Students may use AI to support learning where permitted, but must not present AI generated content as their own work. Any use of AI must be transparent and comply with assessment requirements.

2.4 The policy applies to both individual and collaborative assessments where joint authorship is permitted. Staff involved in teaching, assessment, moderation, or academic support are expected to apply this policy consistently and report any suspected misuse of AI through the appropriate academic misconduct procedures.

3. Data Protection

3.1 Students must not input personal or sensitive data into AI platforms. All use must comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and South Essex College Group (SECG)/University Centre South Essex (UCSE) data protection policies.

4. Aims

4.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the acceptable and unacceptable use of AI in assessed academic work, ensuring academic integrity, fairness, and consistency across all UCSE programmes.

4.2 The policy supports students and staff in understanding how AI can be used ethically and transparently to enhance learning, critical thinking, and skills development, while making clear that submitted work must reflect the student's own understanding, effort, and achievement of learning outcomes.

4.3 It provides guidance on distinguishing appropriate AI assisted support from the inappropriate use of AI generated content, promotes student responsibility for verifying the accuracy and reliability of AI outputs, and outlines the processes for identifying and responding to suspected misuse.

4.4 The policy also aims to protect the value and reputation of UCSE and validating partners awards while encouraging responsible AI literacy and professional practice.

4.5 Recognising the rapid evolution of AI technologies, it will be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with sector guidance and emerging best practice.

5. Acceptable Use of AI

5.1 As a general principle, AI use is acceptable where it supports learning rather than replaces a student's own work. Students must ensure that submitted work demonstrates their own understanding, skills, and achievement of learning outcomes.

5.2 Where AI has contributed to an assessment, students must:

- a. Retain evidence of their work development (e.g. drafts or screenshots).
- b. Declare and reference any AI tools used.
- c. Record relevant prompts or instructions

5.3 Students are responsible for checking the accuracy, reliability, and potential bias of AI generated content. If unsure whether a particular use of AI is permitted, they should seek advice before submission.

6. Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

6.1 UCSE is committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to learning and assessment opportunities. Some students may use AI-enabled technologies as part of approved reasonable adjustments, accessibility support, or inclusive learning practices.

6.2 The use of AI-enabled accessibility tools may be permitted where they support access to learning without undermining the assessment of the intended learning outcomes. Examples may include:

- Literacy support, including spelling, grammar, and reading assistance.
- Language support for students who require assistance with understanding or communicating information.
- Neurodiversity support, including tools that support organisation, comprehension, focus, planning, or reading.
- Accessibility support, including text-to-speech, speech-to-text, captioning, screen readers, and other assistive technologies.

6.3 Students who wish to use AI-enabled accessibility tools as part of a reasonable adjustment should discuss this with the relevant lecturer, Programme Leader, Disability Support Team, or other authorised support service where appropriate.

6.4 The use of approved accessibility technologies must not compromise the achievement of the learning outcomes being assessed. Where the purpose of an assessment is to directly evaluate a specific skill, competency, or professional requirement, additional restrictions may apply.

6.5 Any approved use of AI-enabled accessibility tools must be transparent and must comply with the requirements of this policy, relevant support plans, validating partner regulations, and assessment guidance.

7. Acceptable Use of AI - Visual Content

7.1 Where AI generated visuals are included in assessed work, students must:

- 7.2 Be transparent about how AI has been used.
 - a. Retain records of prompts and iterations.
 - b. Reference the AI tool and relevant prompts within their submission.

8. Practical Examples of AI Use

8.1 The following examples are provided to help students understand how this policy applies in practice. They are illustrative and are not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI.

AI	Acceptable Use	Not Acceptable Use
Understanding a topic	Using AI to explain a concept, suggest study approaches, or help you understand a topic, provided you check the information against reliable academic sources.	Copying AI explanations directly into your assignment and presenting them as your own understanding.
Idea generation	Using AI to generate initial ideas, questions, prompts, or areas to explore during the planning stage.	Using AI generated ideas, arguments, or structure as the main basis of your submitted work without your own development.
Research support	Using AI to identify possible themes,	Using AI generated references, summaries,

AI	Acceptable Use	Not Acceptable Use
	keywords, or areas for further reading, while independently checking all sources.	or claims without verifying that they are accurate, reliable, and real.
Proofreading and language support	Using AI to highlight spelling, grammar, or clarity issues, while deciding yourself what changes to make and keeping your own academic voice.	Asking AI to rewrite, paraphrase, restructure, expand, reduce, or substantially edit work that will be submitted for assessment.
Writing assessed work	Using AI as a support tool where permitted, while ensuring the final submission reflects your own knowledge, skills, judgement, and learning outcomes.	Submitting AI generated text, code, images, or other content as if it is your own work.
Analysis and evaluation	Using AI to help you think about possible questions or approaches, where this does not replace your own analysis.	Asking AI to analyse data, evaluate evidence, form conclusions, or produce content that is then used in your submission as your own work.
Creative or visual work	Using AI generated visuals, charts, graphs, tables, dashboards or data visualisations for inspiration, concept development, experimentation, or presentation purposes where appropriate to the assessment, provided the use of AI is declared, documented	Presenting AI generated visuals, charts, graphs, tables, dashboards, data visualisations, or other content as wholly original work where this misrepresents the student's authorship, creativity, analysis, interpretation of data, or achievement of the learning outcomes

AI	Acceptable Use	Not Acceptable Use
	and critically reviewed by the student.	
Use of AI-generated visuals	Including AI generated visual material only where permitted, declared, referenced, and supported by records of prompts or iterations.	Including AI generated visuals without declaring, documenting, or referencing the AI tool used.
Ethics and bias	Critically reviewing AI outputs for accuracy, originality, bias, cultural sensitivity, ethical issues, and copyright implications.	Using AI generated content or imagery that contains unreviewed bias, misinformation, fabricated content, or ethical concerns.
Transparency and records	Keeping drafts, screenshots, prompts, and records showing how AI supported the development of your work.	Failing to acknowledge AI use where disclosure is required or being unable to demonstrate how the work was developed.
Confidentiality and data protection	Using AI in a way that complies with data protection requirements and does not involve personal or sensitive data.	Uploading personal, sensitive, confidential, research, or copyrighted material into AI tools without permission.
When unsure	Asking your lecturer or Academic Skills Advisor for guidance before using AI in assessed work.	Using AI without checking whether it is allowed and relying on it in a way that may breach academic integrity requirements.

9. Unacceptable Use of AI

9.1 UCSE considers any use that misrepresents AI generated content as a student's own work to be a breach of academic integrity and subject to academic misconduct procedures.

9.2 Examples of unacceptable use include:

- a. Submitting AI generated content as original work, including text, images, code, or other assessment material.
- b. Using AI to rewrite, paraphrase, analyse, evaluate, expand, or substantially edit work intended for submission.
- c. Using AI to circumvent learning outcomes or misrepresent knowledge, understanding, or skills.
- d. Uploading confidential, sensitive, or copyrighted material to AI platforms without permission.
- e. Failing to acknowledge or reference AI generated content where disclosure is required.

9.3 Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of AI outputs, which may contain errors, bias, or fabricated information. Any confirmed misuse of AI may be recorded and managed through the relevant academic misconduct processes.

10. Unacceptable Use of AI Visual Content

10.1 The following are examples of unacceptable use of AI generated visual content:

- a. Including AI generated visuals without appropriate declaration, documentation, or referencing.
- b. Presenting AI generated visuals as wholly original work where this misrepresents authorship or achievement of learning outcomes.
- c. Using AI generated imagery that contains unreviewed bias, misinformation, or other ethical concerns.

10.2 Students must ensure that any AI generated visual content is used transparently, ethically, and in accordance with assessment requirements.

11. Identification and Investigation of Suspected AI Misuse

- 11.1 Academic writing submitted for assessment should be the student's own work and should demonstrate their own knowledge, understanding, critical thinking and academic skills. It should also be consistent with their usual standard and style of writing. Where there are concerns about the authenticity of a submission, the College may consider factors such as changes in writing style, language use (including American rather than British English), referencing, and other characteristics of the work. Plagiarism and AI detection tools may also be used to support this process; however, the output of these tools will not be relied upon in isolation. Decisions regarding academic misconduct will be based on academic judgement and consideration of all available evidence.
- 11.2 A submission may be investigated where there are concerns about authenticity, including significant differences from a student's previous work, unusual formatting or presentation, or indicators that content may not have been produced by the student.
- 11.3 Where concerns are identified, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the relevant awarding body's Academic Misconduct or Academic Offences procedure which can be found here: [HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads | South Essex Colleges Group](#) under the relevant awarding body section. Additional AI detection tools may be used where appropriate, but decisions will be based on the overall evidence rather than a single detection score. Students will be afforded the opportunity to respond to concerns in accordance with the relevant Academic Misconduct or Academic Offences Procedure.
- 11.4 As part of an investigation, students may be asked to explain their work, demonstrate their understanding of the subject, and provide evidence of how the assessment was developed. Students are responsible for demonstrating that the work submitted is authentic and represents their own learning and effort.

UCSE Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Senior Leadership Responsibility	Adam Fahey
Policy Author	Sharon Dunphy
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