

**Staff Guidance on AI tools in Teaching and Assessment**

**Overview**

This document is intended to provide a high-level overview of the university’s approach to the use of AI tools (e.g. Elicit, Otter and Quizlet), generative AI tools (e.g. Claude.ai and ChatGPT), and presentation tools (e.g. Gamma Ai) in teaching and assessment. It should be read alongside the St Mary’s University Policy on Artificial Intelligence ([st-marys-ai-policy-july-2024](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/policies/docs/st-marys-ai-policy-july-2024.pdf)). Resources to support staff AI literacy and guidance on how teaching and assessment can be adapted to integrate AI tools will be provided separately.

This guidance draws from two documents: The UNESCO guidelines on the use of Artificial Intelligence and the Russell Group Principles. The context is one of increasing student use of AI tools as evidenced in the recent HEPI report (<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/02/26/student-generative-ai-survey-2025/>)

We support the stance of UNESCO, which endorses a “human-centred approach that promotes human agency, inclusion, equity, gender equality, and cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as plural opinions and expressions” (Holmes & Miao, 2023, p.7, <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence?hub=32618>).

Most importantly, and in line with the Russell Group Principles 2023, St Mary’s is committed to the “responsible and ethical use of generative Artificial Intelligence” whilst ensuring our students gain the AI literacy skills to enable them to thrive in the world of work. (<https://russellgroup.ac.uk/media/6137/rg_ai_principles-final.pdf>)

**What does this mean?**

* All programmes will be required to have a Generative AI plan that is specific to the discipline demonstrating where in Generative AI skills are developed so that students
* develop their skills at each level of the programme
* meet the St Mary’s graduate attribute relating to ethical use of in Generative AI

**Approach**

An important consideration in Generative AI use is clarity around how we want to encourage students to engage with it. Rather than replacing learning, it should enhance and facilitate learning. However, it is worth considering what you expect students to be able to do first before they engage with generative AI tools. For example, all children learn to write with a pencil years before they type. They also learn basic Maths before learning to use a calculator. In some respects, Generative AI is similar. Rather than replacing the cognitive effort associated with essay writing, it needs to be harnessed as a developmental tool.

Following the rapid proliferation of generative Artificial Intelligence since 2022, research has begun to investigate potential impacts. For example, Gerlich (2025), in a study of 666 participants across all educational levels, found that over-reliance on generative AI led to a decline in critical thinking abilities, highlighting the “need for educational strategies that promote critical engagement with AI technologies” (Gerlich, 2025, p.6). It is also important that we and our students remain informed about the negative aspects of Gen AI which include the exploitation of low paid labourers, harm to the environment and the replication of negative stereotypes. At the same time, the DfE reports that employees with qualifications at Level 6 are more likely to work in roles with high exposure to AI ([GOV.UK Impact of AI on UK jobs and training](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/656856b8cc1ec500138eef49/Gov.UK_Impact_of_AI_on_UK_Jobs_and_Training.pdf)) meaning that, as educators we, need to introduce our students using Gen AI tools in a responsible manner and promote critical engagement with AI-based technologies.

We encourage all staff to develop their own AI literacy and have provided a range of resources for this purpose hosted on Moodle.

**Key points:**

In teaching

* Plan for the use of AI tools in the design of teaching and assessment
* Ensure teaching aligns with St Mary’s graduate attributes relating to AI literacy
* Use Generative AI to promote critical thinking, adopting a critical interrogation approach (Cimadoro, 2024)
* Approach the use of Generative AI itself critically, encouraging self-reflection at every stage
* Cross-check the outputs of Gen AI against bona fide academic sources
* Raise awareness of the ethical, environmental and bias issues
* Encourage a values-based approach to AI, retaining human agency
* To avoid inequity when recommending Generative AI tools, programmes should recommend those that are available to students without additional charge

In assessment

* Encourage iterative interactions, rather than simple input/output use, so that learning is enhanced rather than replaced
* Design assessment in such a way that accounts for Gen AI so that students are clear about its use. Where possible, demonstrate the use of AI tools in class.
* Ensure that the university approach to Gen AI is stated clearly on Moodle and within assessment briefs and the Turnitin description box
* Make sure students sign a disclaimer on AI use and cite which tool they have used and how they have used it
* Make sure students are aware that their work needs to be in their own voice
* Update marking criteria to penalise AI misuse
* Review assessments to make them more AI-resistant
* Review exam questions to ensure that students can’t simply learn (in advance) an AI-generated answer to a predictable question

Future-proofing

* Where appropriate and when re-designing assessment, include Gen AI in learning outcomes (e.g. see OU Critical AI Literacy Framework) <https://about.open.ac.uk/sites/about.open.ac.uk/files/files/OU%20Critical-AI-Literacy-framework-2025.pdf>

Please note that the guidance above will sit alongside AI resources developed in collaboration with academics at St Mary’s. These resources will support the development of staff AI literacy drawing from sector good practice and will include case studies and recommendations on how to integrate Gen AI into teaching and assessment.

**References**

Cimadoro, G., (2024), Don’t just chat(GPT): turn on critical interrogation, (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/dont-just-chatgpt-turn-critical-interrogation>)

Gerlich, M., (2025) AI Tools in Society: Impacts on Cognitive Offloading and the Future of Critical Thinking. *Societies*, *15*(1), p.6.

HEPI (2025), Student Generative AI Survey, <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2025/02/26/student-generative-ai-survey-2025/>

Holmes, W. and Miao, F., (2023) Guidance for generative AI in education and research. UNESCO Publishing. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386693/PDF/386693eng.pdf.multi>

JISC (2024) Generative AI – A primer <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/reports/generative-ai-a-primer>

The Open University (2025) A Framework for the Learning and Teaching of critical AI literacy skills <https://about.open.ac.uk/sites/about.open.ac.uk/files/files/OU%20Critical-AI-Literacy-framework-2025.pdf>

Russell Group (2023) Principles on the use of Generative AI tools in education, <https://russellgroup.ac.uk/news/new-principles-on-use-of-ai-in-education/> and <https://russellgroup.ac.uk/media/6137/rg_ai_principles-final.pdf>

UNESCO Artificial Intelligence Hub <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence?hub=32618>

QAA <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/membership-areas-of-work/generative-artificial-intelligence>