

GENERATIVE AI USE POLICY

Assignment-Level Tiered Framework for Instructors

Purpose & Overview

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools—such as ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Gemini, and similar platforms—are now widely available and are increasingly used by students. This framework provides instructors with a structured, three-tier system to communicate clearly defined AI use expectations on a per-assignment basis.

Inspired by tiered models developed at institutions including Austin Community College, Tacoma Community College, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), and the University of Minnesota, this policy recognizes that a single blanket rule cannot serve every assignment, discipline, or learning objective. Instructors are encouraged to select the appropriate tier for each assignment and label it accordingly in the assignment prompt, course shell, or syllabus.

This policy does not replace your institution's Academic Integrity or Student Conduct policies. All three tiers operate within those foundational standards. Students found to have misrepresented AI use will be subject to consequences consistent with institutional policy.

General Principles Applicable to All Tiers

- **Instructor authority:** Individual instructors have the right to determine the role of AI in their courses and on each assignment. Policies must be stated clearly in the syllabus and/or assignment directions.
- **Transparency by default:** When in doubt about whether AI use is permitted, students should assume it is not and ask the instructor before proceeding.
- **Academic integrity:** Submitting AI-generated content as entirely one's own original work—without attribution, disclosure, or instructor permission—constitutes academic dishonesty.
- **AI limitations:** AI tools can produce inaccurate, fabricated, outdated, or biased outputs. Students are always responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of their final submissions, regardless of tier.
- **Data privacy:** Students should never enter personal information, patient data, confidential course materials, or intellectual property belonging to others into any AI platform.
- **Citation:** When AI use is permitted or required, students must cite or disclose their use according to the instructor's stated format (see Disclosure & Citation Guidelines below).

The Three Tiers

Each assignment should be labeled with its tier designation. Instructors may use the sample syllabus language provided below each tier or adapt it to suit their course context.

TIER 1: NO AI USE PERMITTED

Student work must be entirely the student's own.

Best for: Assignments in which authentic skill demonstration, personal voice, or unassisted critical thinking is the core learning objective—such as in-class writing, reflective essays, clinical reasoning tasks, lab reports, portfolios, or timed exams.

Prohibited

- Using any AI tool (including grammar checkers beyond basic spell-check) to draft, outline, edit, paraphrase, summarize, translate, or generate content for the assignment.
- Entering any portion of the assignment prompt or your written response into an AI tool, even for reference or comparison.
- Using AI to generate images, code, calculations, or other non-text content unless the assignment explicitly permits it.

Permitted

- Standard spell-check and grammar-check tools built into word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word spell-check).
- Conducting research through traditional databases, library resources, and course materials.
- Discussing ideas with peers, tutors, or the Writing Center—as long as the writing itself remains your own.

Sample Syllabus Language:

"In this course, the development of [writing / analytical / clinical / creative] skills is a central learning outcome. All work submitted for graded assignments must be entirely your own. The use of generative AI tools—including but not limited to ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, and Gemini—to draft, outline, edit, paraphrase, or generate any portion of your work is prohibited. Violations will be treated as academic dishonesty under [Institution] policy. If you have questions about what constitutes acceptable assistance, please ask me before submitting."

TIER 2: LIMITED AI USE — AS DIRECTED

AI may be used only in specific, instructor-defined ways.

Best for: Assignments where AI can assist with select preparatory tasks (brainstorming, research synthesis, grammar review) but should not replace the student's core intellectual contribution. Instructors will specify exactly which uses are permitted.

Prohibited

- Using AI to draft, write, or substantially complete the final submission.
- Copying, lightly paraphrasing, or submitting AI-generated text as your own work.
- Using AI in ways not explicitly authorized by the instructor for this assignment.

Permitted

- Brainstorming or outlining ideas with AI before drafting (student must write the final product independently).
- Using AI to suggest grammar or sentence-level edits after drafting (student must review and approve every change).

- Using AI to locate or summarize sources for initial research—student must then verify and independently engage with the original sources.
- Using AI to generate alternative explanations of a concept to improve comprehension (not to substitute for reading assigned materials).
- Other specific uses the instructor designates in writing for a particular assignment.

Sample Syllabus Language:

"For this assignment, limited use of generative AI is permitted only in the following ways: [describe permitted use—e.g., 'to brainstorm an outline before you begin drafting' / 'to check grammar after your draft is complete' / 'to identify potential sources for your literature review, which you must then locate and read yourself']. All other AI use is prohibited. You must disclose any AI assistance in a brief statement at the end of your submission. Your ideas, analysis, and writing must be your own. Failure to disclose AI use or to follow these guidelines will be treated as academic dishonesty."

TIER 3: MANDATED AI USE — AI AS ASSISTANT

AI is an integrated tool and students are expected to use it as an active assistant.

Best for: Assignments explicitly designed to build AI literacy, prompt engineering skills, critical evaluation of AI output, or professional workflows that involve AI tools—such as industry-aligned projects, research synthesis exercises, or future-workforce skill-building tasks.

Prohibited

- Submitting AI-generated content without reviewing, critically evaluating, and meaningfully editing it.
- Treating AI output as authoritative without verification against credible sources.
- Failing to document your AI interactions and disclose how the tool was used.
- Entering confidential, personally identifying, or proprietary information into any AI platform.

Required

- Actively using AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, or a designated course tool) to assist with drafting, ideation, research synthesis, coding, design, or other tasks specified by the instructor.
- Iterating with the AI through multiple prompts to refine outputs.
- Documenting your AI prompts and the tool's responses as part of the submission process.
- Critically evaluating AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, and completeness—and revising accordingly.
- Reflecting on how AI assisted your work and where human judgment was necessary to improve or correct it.

Sample Syllabus Language:

"This assignment requires you to use generative AI as a working assistant. [Describe tool(s) and task.] You are expected to: (1) engage with the AI actively and document your prompts and the outputs it generates, (2) critically evaluate and revise the AI's output for accuracy and relevance, and (3) submit a brief AI Use Disclosure Statement explaining which tools you used, how you used them, and how your own thinking shaped the final product. AI tools can produce errors, fabrications, and biased

content—your grade reflects your judgment in catching and correcting these problems, not just the AI's raw output."

How to Label Assignments

Instructors should clearly mark each assignment with its tier. Suggested formats:

- In the assignment title or header: Add the tier designation in brackets, e.g., "Reflective Essay [Tier 1 – No AI]" or "Research Summary [Tier 2 – Limited AI: Brainstorming Only]" or "Industry Analysis Project [Tier 3 – AI Required]."
- In the Canvas (or LMS) assignment description: Include the full tier language block at the top of the instructions.
- In the course syllabus: Include a general statement that assignments will be labeled with tier designations and that students are responsible for following each assignment's specific AI policy.

Suggested global syllabus statement:

"This course uses a tiered AI policy. Each assignment will specify the level of AI use permitted (Tier 1: No AI; Tier 2: Limited AI as directed; or Tier 3: AI Required). You are responsible for reading and following the AI use designation on every assignment. When in doubt, assume AI use is not permitted and ask the instructor before submitting. Violations of this policy will be treated as academic dishonesty in accordance with [Institution] Academic Integrity Policy."

Disclosure & Citation Guidelines (Tiers 2 and 3)

When AI use is permitted or required, students must disclose it. The following formats are acceptable unless the instructor specifies another:

APA Format (7th Edition)

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (version GPT-4o) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

MLA Format

"Describe the specific content generated." ChatGPT, 4o version, OpenAI, 15 Jan. 2025, chat.openai.com.

Informal Disclosure Statement (recommended for Tier 2 and 3)

At the end of the submission, students should include a brief paragraph such as:

"For this assignment I used [tool name] to [describe purpose—e.g., brainstorm an outline / check grammar / generate a first draft of the introduction]. I reviewed the output, verified claims against [source(s)], and revised [describe what you changed]. The final analysis, conclusions, and writing are my own."

Note: Because AI-generated content is not retrievable or independently verifiable, students may also be asked to submit their original prompts and AI outputs alongside the final assignment.

Consequences for Policy Violations

Violations of this AI use policy will be handled as academic dishonesty under [Institution]'s Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy. Consequences may include:

- A zero or failing grade on the assignment
- A failing grade for the course
- Referral to the Dean of Students or the Office of Student Conduct
- Notation in the student's academic record, per institutional policy

Instructors are encouraged to treat a first-time, minor violation (e.g., using AI for brainstorming on a Tier 1 assignment without knowing it was prohibited) as a teaching moment before escalating. The goal is student learning, not punishment. However, intentional misrepresentation of AI use will be treated as a serious integrity violation.

Quick Reference Summary

Feature	Tier 1: No AI	Tier 2: Limited AI	Tier 3: AI Required
AI Drafting	Prohibited	Prohibited	Required
AI Brainstorming	Prohibited	If specified	Required
AI Grammar/Editing	Prohibited	If specified	Permitted
Disclosure Required	N/A	Yes	Yes
AI Citation Required	N/A	Yes	Yes
Instructor Specifies Limits	No — blanket prohibition	Yes — must specify	Yes — describe the task

Feature	Tier 1: No AI	Tier 2: Limited AI	Tier 3: AI Required
Ideal Assignment Types	Essays, exams, reflections, clinical tasks	Research outlines, drafts with revisions, source summaries	Workforce projects, AI literacy tasks, prompt engineering

References & Further Resources

This framework draws on AI use policies and guidance from the following institutions and organizations:

- Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC). (2024). Academic Integrity Policies in the Age of Artificial Intelligence. asccc.org
- Austin Community College. (2023). Artificial Intelligence Draft Policies. offices.austincc.edu
- Tacoma Community College. (2024). Generative AI: A Guide for Faculty and Staff. tacomacc.libguides.com
- Duke University Center for Teaching & Learning. (2025). Artificial Intelligence Policies: Guidelines and Considerations. ctl.duke.edu
- NC State University ASC Office of Distance Education. (2025). Crafting Policy for Student Use of Artificial Intelligence. ascode.osu.edu
- Mercer University Center for Teaching & Learning. (2025). Sample Syllabus Guidance for AI Use. ctl.mercer.edu
- EAB. (2025). 3 Types of Faculty AI Policies Your Institution Needs to Have. eab.com

Last updated: [Date] | Developed by: [Instructor / Department / College] | Review date: [Semester/Year]