

Guidelines for AI Use at The City College of New York

I. Introduction

After extensive discussions in the Faculty Senate Ed Policy Committee and at Faculty Senate Plenaries during AY25-26, each of the Divisions and Schools of the College have been charged with drafting their own AI policies. While that process is in progress, I am posting these guidelines, which are not policy but contain some advice, some best practices used elsewhere and some things of which everyone should be aware. These guidelines draw on those prepared by Baruch College:

<https://provost.baruch.cuny.edu/artificial-intelligence-think-tank/ai-use-guidance/>

Faculty may also wish to consult the thoughtful guidelines posted by the Graduate Center:

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/research-faculty/research-graduate-center/ai-graduate-center/cuny-graduate-center-ai-guidelines>

II. General Principles

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have become a daily fact of life. When used properly and appropriately, they can be powerful tools for problem solving. When used inappropriately they can interfere with the primary mission of the College: educating our students. This document provides some basic suggested guidelines for the appropriate use of artificial intelligence by our students, faculty and staff in the service of our educational mission. It is *not* a document that addresses in any way the use of artificial intelligence technology in research and creative work other than to say that its use should *always* be declared.

Users of AI technologies should be aware of privacy and data security concerns since many of the platforms utilize user input as training data. To address these concerns, the CUNY Microsoft 365 contract specifies that Microsoft CoPilot will not share data input beyond the CUNY environment. *But this is only the case if you use CoPilot through Microsoft 365 with your CUNY login credentials.* It is therefore strongly recommended that CoPilot be your default AI tool and that you use it with your CUNY login. However, we recognize that different LLMs have different strengths and there may be reasons to use other platforms. When doing so, users should be especially careful to think twice about what data is being uploaded to these platforms. In particular, institutional data that is not publicly available, and especially FERPA-protected data, should not be uploaded to any platform other than CoPilot. Uploading data to LLMs is uploading data to the Cloud and CUNY's policy¹ on data in the Cloud must be followed.

While the tools have become more sophisticated, AI-like tools have been used in document editing to correct spelling, punctuation and simple grammatical errors for quite some time. You may decide otherwise in a class where spelling, punctuation and/or grammar are core parts of the curriculum, but otherwise it seems reasonable that such use need not be declared. Apart from such cases, any other use of AI tools in the creation of a document *must* be declared. The declaration should include which AI tool was used and what content it created. Similarly, when AI tools are used in decision making, their use must be disclosed. This should include, at minimum, what data, platform and prompts were used.

¹ [CUNY-Data-Classification-Standard](#) ;
[CUNY-Acceptable-Use-of-University-Data-in-the-Cloud-Standard.pdf](#)

III. AI in the Classroom

With few exceptions, you can rest assured that students will be exploring the use of AI tools in your class. Most of the above principles apply to the use of AI tools by faculty in the classroom and by students in doing class assignments and exams. An exception may be the use of AI tools by students for editing a document, as mentioned above. Therefore, it is essential that your syllabus include your own guidelines for the acceptable use of AI tools in your class. Do not assume that students know where the line is between appropriate and inappropriate use. Be as explicit as possible and be clear that the line between appropriate and inappropriate use is likely to be different in different classes. Possible sanctions for inappropriate use should also be included. Remind the students of these guidelines on a regular basis.

Given that our students will be entering a workforce where AI tools are being used, either peripherally or centrally in their professions, it is incumbent upon us as a college to provide training in the use of AI. Faculty should therefore consider including artificial intelligence tools in their courses, *as appropriate*. The level of engagement with AI and the specific tools used, will naturally vary from one major to another.

Guidelines around the use of AI tools are *in addition* to the College's and CUNY's [Academic Integrity Policy](#), not in place of them. Students should be reminded of this fact. Violations of your stated AI policy, should they rise to the level of violations of academic integrity, should be reported to the College's [Academic Integrity Officer](#) and will be handled through that office.

Automatic AI detection systems are not reliable and students are aware that proving AI-related academic integrity violations can be difficult. It is worth reminding them why they are here and how AI misuse can defeat that purpose providing, perhaps, short-term gain but long-term damage to their prospects. More effective measures for preventing the misuse of AI in coursework can come from pedagogical and operational changes. With understanding that it is easier to write down suggestions than it is to implement them, faculty should consider having assessments that are a significant part of the course grade done in person and in class. This may mean that classes that previously used term papers as a major component of assessing student learning will need to revert to shorter in-class work and may need to schedule an in-class final exam where previously the final was a take-home assignment. Faculty should also consider collecting cell phones prior to in-class exams, provided they can efficiently return them to their rightful owners when the exam is done. There is, unfortunately, no recipe, and some (or all) of these ideas may seem impractical to you. You may well find better alternatives, just be sure to very clearly, and in writing, state what AI use is allowed and not allowed in your class. A few sample AI policy statements, appropriate for use on syllabi, are provided towards the end of the Graduate Center guidelines linked above.