

Academic Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Section 1: Scope of Policy

This policy establishes the permissible uses, restrictions, and responsibilities regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies within the academic and research environment of Robert Morris University (“the University”). Ultimate responsibility for this policy lies with the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

1.1 Covered Individuals

This policy applies to all individuals engaging in academic, instructional, research activity, and scholarly creativity under the auspices of the University, regardless of their physical location. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Students:** Undergraduate, graduate, non-degree-seeking, and college-in-high-school students
- **Instructional Faculty:** Full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and college-in-high-school instructors
- **Researchers:** Principal investigators, postdoctoral fellows, and any other faculty and students conducting research
- **Scholarly Creatives:** Faculty and students who produce creative work, such as literature, fine arts, design, performance, or digital media, which is intended for consumption by an informed audience, whether through peer-reviewed exhibition, publication, broadcast, performance, or juried competition
- **Third Parties:** Visiting scholars, guest lecturers, and academic contractors interacting with the University's academic processes

Note: Non-instructional university staff and administrators are excluded from this policy.

1.2 Covered Technologies

The boundaries of this policy apply to all current and future iterations of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies. This includes:

- **Generative AI:** Systems capable of generating texts, computer code, images, audio, or videos (such as, but not limited to, ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, Grok, Firefly)
- **Analytical and Predictive AI:** Tools utilized for data collection/analysis, literature reviews, and research synthesis
- **Integrated AI:** AI features embedded within standard productivity software (e.g., AI assistants in learning management systems, word processors, coding environments, or grammar and sentence structure checkers)

- **Agentic AI:** Systems designed to act as semi-autonomous agents capable of pursuing complex, multi-step goals with minimal human intervention that can independently plan sequences of actions, utilize external tools, and iteratively self-correct their output to achieve a specified objective.

1.3 Applicable Contexts and Activities

This policy governs the use of AI in all academic and research endeavors, including but not limited to:

- **Coursework and Assessments:** Examinations, essays, assignments, projects, presentations, and discussions
- **Research Activities & Scholarly Creative Work:** Data generation, manuscript and grant drafting, literature reviews, peer review processes, and the creation of works of art/design for the purpose of scholarship
- **Instructional Duties:** Grading student work, drafting syllabi, creating lesson plans, and developing instructional materials
- **Outcomes Assessment:** creation of rubrics and mechanisms, analysis of collected data, and interpretation of results

These rules apply whether AI tools are accessed via University networks, third-party platforms, personal devices, or off-campus locations, provided that the output is used for University academic purposes.

1.4 Data Security and Privacy, & Intellectual Property

The scope of this policy includes strict boundaries regarding the data input into public or unapproved third-party AI tools.

- **Intellectual Property:** Uploading copyrighted University materials, unpublished research, proprietary instructional content, or unpublished student work into public or unapproved third-party AI tools is prohibited, unless explicitly stated elsewhere in this policy.
- **Protected Information:** Inputting sensitive student records (governed by FERPA), human subject research data, PHI, or PII (see Section 2: Definitions) into AI tools is prohibited, unless explicitly stated elsewhere in this policy.

Protected information and others' intellectual property may only be used in specific AI tools authorized by the University listed [here](#).

1.5 Explicit Exclusions

To ensure clarity, the following tools and contexts are explicitly excluded from the restrictions of this policy:

- **Traditional Assistive Technologies:** Standard, non-generative spell-checkers, traditional search engines, and basic calculators

- **Approved Accommodations:** Specific technologies formally prescribed by RMU Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as an approved student accommodation
- **Proprietary Non-commercial AI Tools:** tools that the University permits as a result of a User Agreement with other institutions, industry partners, government agencies, or funding bodies.

1.6 Compliance and Accountability

Covered individuals, as described in Section 1.1, will comply with this policy as it pertains to their specific role in the academic environment. Failure to comply may result in the following:

- **Students:** Adjudication and possible sanctions as defined in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) or the RMU Student Code of Conduct
 - **All others:** Consequences as defined by University discipline procedures or an applicable collective bargaining agreement
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Section 2: Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are defined to provide clarity on user behaviors, interactions, and system outputs:

- **Human first, Human last (HFHL):** A philosophy that ensures that AI serves as a tool and not as a replacement for human decision-making and oversight, which requires that all output from technologies mentioned in Section 1.2 is validated, filtered, and/or approved to ensure accuracy, safety, and/or ethical compliance
- **Prompt:** The specific instruction, question, dataset, or contextual parameters provided by a user to an AI system to guide its output
- **Hallucination:** A phenomenon where an AI system generates false, historically inaccurate, fabricated, or nonsensical information but presents it confidently as an objective fact
- **Algorithmic Bias:** Systematic and repeatable errors in an AI system that create unfair, skewed, prejudiced, or manipulated outcomes. This typically occurs because the model is trained on flawed data that reflects historical inequalities, underrepresents specific populations, or embeds human prejudices. In an academic context, relying on biased AI can reinforce harmful stereotypes in coursework and research, lead to flawed data analysis, or result in inequitable evaluations.
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, Social Security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records; and any other information that is linked or

linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information.

- **Personal Health Information (PHI):** Any demographic information, medical history, test and laboratory results, mental health records, insurance information, or other data that identifies an individual and relates to their past, present, or future physical or mental health conditions, or the provision of healthcare services. Any HIPAA data is covered under this definition.
 - **FERPA:** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (1974), which protects student educational records in specific ways
 - **AI Share Link:** A unique, platform-generated URL that provides direct, read-only access to a specific conversation transcript between a user and a Generative AI tool. The linked transcript must include the complete, unaltered history of the user's prompts and the corresponding AI-generated responses for that specific session.
 - **University-approved AI Tools:** AI applications and platforms that have been vetted and authorized for use by the RMU Information Technology and RMU Information Security departments. A list of these tools may be found [here](#).
 - **General AI Tools:** AI Applications and platforms that have not been vetted and authorized by RMU Information Technology and RMU Information Security.
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Section 3: Policy

The following subsections address policy for students, faculty, and those conducting scholarly research or creative activities.

3.1 Student Use of AI

A. General Use of AI Tools

Students should be responsible users of AI with the understanding that AI enhances human learning and creativity. AI use should be primarily assistive and include human interaction. The extent and appropriate use of AI for a given course is at the faculty member's discretion and will be clearly described in their course syllabus. **In the absence of an instructor AI policy in the course syllabus, students should understand that the use of AI is not permitted.**

- Students who use AI in coursework not approved by the faculty member are subject to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and may be in violation of it.
- Agentic AI applications may not be used to complete any coursework, unless explicitly stated elsewhere in this policy.

B. Third-party Coursework

There may be instances in which students complete coursework off campus and/or with a third party.

- Student use of AI in internships, clinicals, student teaching, or practica at external sites is also subject to the AI policies of the organizations where they are carried out. Students should consult their site supervisor or coordinator regarding permissible use of AI at the external site.
- Student use of AI in online courses provided by consortial third parties (e.g., Acadeum, OCICU) is subject to that academic institution's AI policies.

In these situations, students should proactively familiarize themselves with third-party AI policies to ensure compliance, as these policies may differ substantially from this policy. RMU instructional faculty or staff who work with the third party will serve as the first point of contact if a policy conflict arises. Note: Some third parties may allow or require the use of agentic AI to fulfill the requirements of the experience.

C. Human Oversight and Verification

Students should understand that generative AI is a tool, not an author, as they employ the Human First/Human Last approach.

- Students should review, edit, and verify the accuracy, integrity, and quality of all submitted coursework.
- The student is responsible for any personally identifiable information that they submit to AI software, and for ensuring compliance with this policy and all other applicable instructor and university policies.
- If an AI tool produces hallucinations or biased content, the student, not the AI tool, is accountable for such errors.

D. Transparency and Disclosure

- Students should not engage in unauthorized or prohibited use of generative AI
- Students should not use AI tools to engage in academically dishonest practices, including, but not limited to, submitting AI-generated work as their own without appropriately referencing the use of AI via the citation framework required by the instructor. **By default, if students use AI without appropriate referencing, such student work will be considered plagiarized and a violation of the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).**
- Students should be transparent when disclosing AI use, either through an instructor-defined framework detailed in the course or through a standardized citation framework (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.), which reflects the specific nature and extent of generative contributions to their coursework. At a minimum, a disclosure requirement should:
 - Clearly identify the tool(s) used, including version number
 - Explain the specific purpose (e.g., brainstorming, drafting, editing, coding)
 - Indicate prompts used or provide a share link that includes the prompts submitted. Screenshots are not acceptable in this case unless permitted by the instructor
 - Illustrate how the AI output was modified or integrated into the final submitted coursework

E. Data Privacy and Security & Intellectual Property

Most AI tools capture user prompts to train future models, potentially compromising your or another person's intellectual property.

- Students should not input proprietary data, sensitive client information (e.g., in clinical or legal practica), or unpublished research into public AI models that use captured data to train the model.
- Students may not input faculty-provided instructional materials into any AI tool unless the University explicitly authorizes the tool.

F. AI Access

To ensure students have equal access to AI tools relevant for coursework, the University will endeavor to install applicable University-approved AI Tools onto student-designated computers or facilitate single sign-on (SSO) access to University-approved AI Tools.

G. AI Support

Use of AI tools that mitigate issues for students with disabilities generally will be allowed, as long as they do not go beyond removing barriers and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Faculty, in coordination with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), will help ensure that students have access to such tools and offer guidance on their appropriate use. Students whose first language is not English are permitted to use AI tools for translation purposes, but only during the learning activities of the course (e.g. lectures and discussions) and with the guarantee the tool does not use the instructor's content to train the model. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, AI tools for translation are not allowed for evaluative or assessment activities in the course.

H. AI Reporting

Students may use [this form](#) to report instances in which AI tools assigned for use in their coursework have been found to perpetuate discrimination through bias, stereotypes, or inaccuracies. The University's Academic Council on Artificial Intelligence (ACAI) will assess and recommend to the Provost whether such tools may be used with greater caution, in a limited capacity, or removed from the list of University-approved AI Tools for the RMU community.

When faculty implement assessment strategies to mitigate the inappropriate use of AI, they should carefully ensure accessibility is maintained for all students. If a student feels that their accessibility is in any way compromised, they are encouraged to contact both their instructor and Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to ensure tailored support is provided if needed.

3.2 Instructional Faculty Use of AI

A. Preservation of Faculty Expertise and Instructional Responsibility

AI must not replace faculty subject matter expertise or core teaching responsibilities. In particular:

- AI must not be used as a substitute for faculty judgment in course content, design, or delivery
- AI must not be used to automate grading
- AI content detector tools may not be used unless they are University-approved tools and cannot be the sole determinant for filing an academic integrity case
- AI may not be used for evaluative feedback without substantive faculty review and oversight.

Faculty must always remain the primary authority in evaluating student learning.

B. Transparency and Disclosure

To enhance the learning environment, faculty (at their discretion) should endeavor to be transparent when using AI tools in instructional activities to demonstrate best practices in AI usage. This includes disclosing AI when it has materially contributed to the development of:

- Course materials (e.g., syllabi, lectures, assignments, etc.)
- Instructional content
- Feedback or communication exchanges with students

Faculty are provided with standard language and symbols for use in the above materials to comply with this policy.

C. Human Oversight and Verification

In employing the Human First / Human Last approach, faculty are responsible for **reviewing and verifying** all AI-generated content used in teaching. AI outputs must be evaluated for accuracy, bias, alignment with course objectives and program outcomes, and appropriateness for the learning context. Faculty must also retain full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of all instructional materials and communications.

D. Clear Direction for Student Use of AI

Faculty are responsible for providing explicit, written guidance to students regarding the use of AI in each course. This clear guidance should include:

- One of the three university-issued statements in each course syllabus to indicate how much, if any, AI usage is permitted
- Detailed information on what forms and uses of AI are allowed in courses where AI is permitted
- Specific examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses
- Expectations for disclosure of AI use in submitted coursework

Lack of explicit guidance does not automatically result in a violation of academic integrity, but may result in a violation if the student uses AI without any authorization.

Note: Faculty may not penalize a student's grade unless the student has been found to have violated the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

E. Data Privacy and Security & Intellectual Property

Faculty must not input or share sensitive or protected information in any AI tools unless explicitly authorized by the University. This includes:

- Student educational records and grades
- Personally identifiable information
- Confidential course or assessment materials
- Research data or proprietary content (including student works)
- Any intellectual property that does not belong to the faculty user

Compliance with all applicable privacy laws and University data policies is required.

F. Use of Approved AI Tools

Faculty may only use University-approved AI Tools for University business. To request an additional AI Tool to be considered for the approved tools list, faculty must fill out [an application](#) to initiate the approval process. Completing an application does not guarantee approval

G. AI as a Component of Lifelong Learning and Teaching Practice

The University encourages faculty to engage with AI as part of ongoing professional development. Faculty should model responsible AI use and support students in developing critical AI literacy skills necessary for lifelong learning and professional success.

3.3 - Use of AI in Scholarly Research and Creative Activity

A. General Use of AI Tools

- Researchers may use University-approved AI Tools for literature search, coding assistance (with verification), and grammar/style editing.
- Researchers may only use AI tools only with full disclosure for drafting text, data coding/classification, and survey or instrument design assistance.
- IRB review or IRB amendment is required for research involving AI interaction with human subjects (chatbots, adaptive surveys, etc.), AI analyzing identifiable or sensitive data, and/or the use of AI tools that store or reuse participant data
- Scholarly Creatives and researchers may use AI Tools for visual, auditory, and multimedia assets, as well as for brainstorming, ideation, and conceptualization.

B. Data Privacy and Security & Intellectual Property

- Researchers and Scholarly Creatives should use deidentified PII, PHI, or HIPAA data in any University-approved, proprietary, or general AI tool.
- Researchers should use only University-approved AI tools when handling Protected Information and document how the data is processed and stored, as approved by the University IRB.

- Scholarly Creatives may not use copyrighted or similarly protected works as input for AI tools without express written permission from the owner or documentation of a license agreement that permits their use in AI applications.

C. Authorship and Attribution

- Researchers should not list any AI tools as authors but should appropriately reference them in accordance with the [university-issued citation manual](#) or the citation guidelines provided by applicable journals and conferences.
- Researchers should fully disclose all AI contributions in publications or reports
- Scholarly Creatives should fully disclose all AI contributions via a creative process statement.
- Researchers are subject to the AI policies of publishers and conference organizers when disseminating research materials.

D. Dissemination of AI-Generated Information and Creative Works

Researchers and Scholarly Creatives should be aware that information generated by AI may be inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, biased, fabricated, or may contain material subject to a third party's intellectual property ownership.

- Researchers must ensure accuracy before publishing AI-generated information.
- Researchers and Scholarly Creatives assume all responsibility for the accuracy of any information published, including AI-generated content.
- Scholarly Creatives should understand that AI-augmented works may not be covered in part or wholly by U.S. copyright laws.

E. Creative Integrity and Human Agency

In employing the Human First / Human Last approach, Scholarly Creatives must:

- Be responsible for the foundational conceptual intent and artistic vision for the creative work
- Review, curate, and approve all AI-generated content used in the final creative work
- Ensure artistic agency and originality by maintaining final decision-making authority over the creative work

F. Prohibited Use of AI Tools

Researchers may not:

- Use any AI Tools for fabricating data or results, with the exception of simulated data, which may be used with full disclosure.
- Misrepresent AI-generated work as entirely human-created
- Use AI tools that violate data privacy agreements
- Deploy AI tools that manipulate or deceive human subjects without full disclosure

Section 4: Stewardship and Oversight

The Academic Council on Artificial Intelligence (ACAI) will act as stewards of this policy, and any decisions or actions taken by the council will result in a recommendation to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Duties & Responsibilities

ACAI members will:

- Review and suggest updates for this policy from time to time
- In a timely manner, convene in-person or virtually to interpret questions about this policy posed by instructional faculty or members of the Academic Integrity Council, which cannot be readily addressed by existing policy language
- Suggests training ideas/opportunities as needed

Council Membership

Members of ACAI will include:

- Four full-time faculty members
- The Vice Provost (ex officio)

Terms of Service and Appointment Procedures

In the inaugural year of the council, staggered terms will ensure that no more than 50% of the membership will roll off the council in any given year. At this time, the Provost (or their designee) will appoint two individuals for one year and two additional individuals for two years. Beginning the second year of the council, all terms of service will be for two years. There are no term limits for re-appointment. Terms begin and end in August at the start of the fall semester.

In advance of any member's term expiration, the Provost will solicit member nominations from department heads in advance of the fall semester.

The roster of elected council members will be displayed on the dedicated web page that houses this policy and its support materials.
