TRENT UNIVERSITY

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Trent University Guidelines, 2024

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to systems that can be used to create new content, such as texts, images, audio, and video, in response to prompts made by a user, after being trained on existing datasets (UBC, n.d.)[i] Examples include, but are not limited to, ChatGPT, Bing AI, and Bard AI. Accordingly, generative AI is a form of technology that is in the realm of machine learning rather than true 'intelligence;' it does not actually understand concepts but rather produces content based on a statistical analysis of the best response to a prompt or query.[ii]

Generative AI is not yet fully understood, and its use comes with significant risks. It is a complex and rapidly changing field. Trent University recognizes that faculty, staff, and students across disciplines will have differing levels of familiarity and comfort with its use in higher education. If you currently use, or are considering using, AI this guide offers thoughts for consideration.

How should instructors and students use this document?	
	AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION. This document offers information about the risks and benefits of generative AI in teaching and learning. It is not an exhaustive list but identifies key considerations. Faculty and students can refer to this document to help make informed decisions about the use of AI.
	AS A COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCE FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Faculty may refer to this document for policies and practices related to misuse of AI in their courses and how to deal with violations. Students should review this document to understand their responsibilities when completing and submitting assessments. Resources and links are provided throughout to help!
	AS A GUIDE FOR COMMUNICATION. This document is intended to promote communication about generative AI, between instructors and students and more broadly across the university. We aim to foster a conversation that is inclusive and respectful of all viewpoints.

Trent University is committed to upholding the right to Academic Freedom and moving forward with a balanced, thoughtful, and consultative approach towards the possible implementation of AI in our classrooms. We recognize there are risks, such as inaccurate and biased outputs and academic integrity violations as well as benefits, such as opportunities for enhanced learning outcomes and greater accessibility. Trent University remains committed to fostering discussions about the larger implications of AI, including ethical considerations, data protection, job security, and environmental impacts.

Artificial Intelligence is a tool in our teaching and learning toolboxes.

When it comes to AI in the classroom, instructors and students should always consider whether they need a tool, have selected an appropriate one, whether they know how to use it, and whether they can use it effectively to enhance learning.

On its own, this tool is useless. With the skilled hand of an instructor guiding its use, it can be effective. Wielded incorrectly, it can be dangerous.

Five Guiding Principles

Choice - Instructors may choose whether or not to use AI in their teaching. Those who do should be aware that it has benefits as well as flaws.

Transparency - All use of AI in teaching, assessments, and/or grading should be disclosed and explicitly explained to students (such as on the syllabus and in class) for students to make informed decisions about enrollment in the course.

Ethical Use - Prior to using AI, instructors and students should consider the broader ethical implications. These include, but are not limited to, upholding academic integrity standards, storage and management of personal data and intellectual property, job security, and taking tangible measures to offset environmental impacts.

Meaningful Learning - The choice to use AI in teaching should be aligned with undergraduate (or graduate) degree level expectations (such as the UDLEs). Instructors and students who use AI are expected to do so because they want to enhance learning outcomes in their field of study.

Evidence-Based - As AI is an evolving field, Trent will continue to seek feedback on the use of AI within our institution, including though not limited to conducting surveys, workshops, and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning projects. Training and resources will continue to be offered through the Centre for Teaching and Learning's Programs and Offerings, with ongoing support provided to Trent faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

AI Guidelines Development and Purpose

This document reflects our current knowledge about AI in higher education. The Teaching & Learning Advisory Committee drafted these guidelines using McMaster University's "Provisional Guidelines on the Use of Generative AI in Teaching and Learning" as a framework for discussion. Thank you to McMaster for sharing their work and allowing us to reflect on their ongoing discussions. Additionally, survey data was collected from 136 faculty / staff and 1700 students at Trent from August - September 2023, to inform a Trent University-specific response. The report on these survey findings is publicly available as a stand-alone document. The guidelines are aligned with the structure of a standard semester. The statements are intended to offer guidance and reflections on the use of AI in teaching and learning at Trent University.

Trent University AI Guidelines
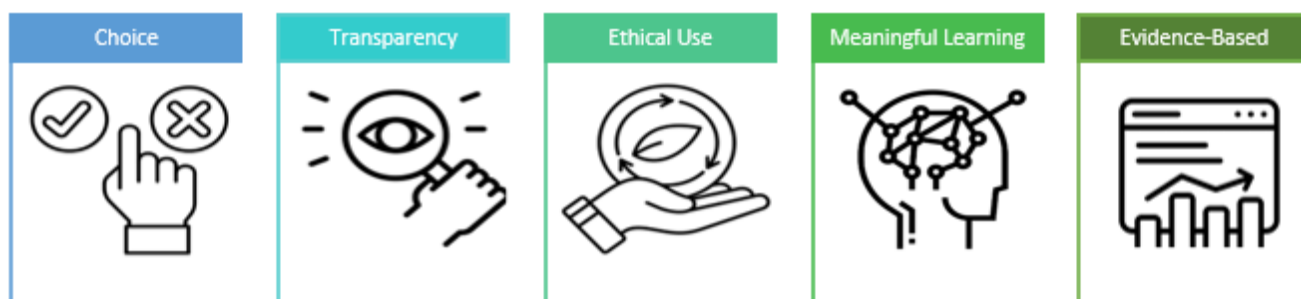
1. COURSE PREPARATION

1.1   Instructors may choose whether, how, and to what extent (if at all) to use AI as a tool in their teaching.

1.2   In preparing to use AI in teaching, these considerations should be observed:

☐   If instructors use generative AI in preparing any course materials they should identify and explain in the course syllabus the extent to which and how generative AI has been, or will be, used.

☐   Instructors who incorporate generative AI should be aware of the privacy policies and user agreements of each generative AI tool they intend to use, and alert students to these policies in the course syllabus.

1.3   Instructors should clearly communicate to students the extent to which students may use (or will be expected to use) generative AI in the course.

   ☐   Where possible, courses that incorporate generative AI should rely on free versions of these tools. Instructors are encouraged to weigh the financial cost of generative AI with its pedagogical value. Trent members can access ChatGPT through Microsoft Bing. When there is an additional cost, it should be clearly identified in the course syllabus.

   ☐   Some generative AI tools are limited to users who are 18 or older. Alternatives (such as other tools or assessments) should be provided for students who do not meet the legal age requirements.

New MyTrent Syllabus Builder Language

Trent will add three statements to the Syllabus Builder for Instructors to choose from. These are intended to provide students with standardized language across courses. Individual Instructors should add specific language to clearly communicate information about the use of AI in their course assignment descriptions and familiarize themselves with the recommendations below.

Option 1**:** Students are **not permitted** to use generative AI in this course. Please refer to Trent's Academic Integrity Policy for information on violations.

Option 2**:** Students are **permitted** to use generative AI in this course, but only as explicitly outlined by their instructor. Please review the syllabus for details, seek clarification from your instructor as needed, and refer to Trent's Academic Integrity Policy for information on violations.

Option 3**:** Students are **required** to use generative AI in this course. Please review the syllabus for details, seek clarification from your instructor as needed, and refer to Trent's Academic Integrity Policy for information on violations.

2. TEACHING

2.1   Instructors may choose to use AI for instructional use. It is recommended that:

    ☐   AI should only be used in teaching practices where it supports one or more degree level outcomes (UDLEs).

    ☐   All use of AI for instructional purposes should be disclosed to students.

    ☐   Instructors should fact-check any generative AI produced materials.

2.2   Instructors who choose to incorporate AI into their teaching are encouraged to educate themselves and their students about the limitations, strengths, and broader ethical implications.

2.3   There are disciplinary differences in the use of AI for teaching purposes. Departments are encouraged to discuss AI in their faculty meetings. Departments and programs may request consultations from the Centre for Teaching and Learning to support these discussions.

> ### *Did you know?*
>
> Teaching and Learning at Trent has a repository of information about Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education and the knowledgeable staff at the Centre for Teaching & Learning and Trent Online are always available for consultation!

Image of three people sitting at a table talking by Monstera Production on Pexels.com

3. ASSESSMENTS

3.1   Unless explicitly stated by their instructor, students should assume use of generative AI is **prohibited** in completing class assessments.

3.2   Without the explicit permission of their instructor, student use of generative AI in assessments is an **academic integrity violation**.

> "Academic dishonesty includes any act that results or could reasonably be seen to result in submission of work that is unoriginal to the context in which it is being submitted or the product of unauthorized collaboration, aid, or unearned advantage. Dishonest acts, including plagiarism, cheating, the unauthorized use of AI generators, and the unauthorized sharing and distribution of course content, are ultimately destructive of the values of the University. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the University. Engaging in any form of academic dishonesty or misconduct in order to obtain academic credit or advantage of any kind is an offence under this policy."
>
> *Trent University Academic Integrity Policy*

[Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Graduate Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Information For Students](#)

[Academic Integrity Information For Instructors](#)

[Academic Integrity Information For Chairs](#)

3.3   Instructors are encouraged to consider the types of assessments they are assigning and their susceptibility to the use of AI generators.

☐   Those that assess only a finalized or polished product are more vulnerable. Assessments such as oral exams, presentations followed by Q & A, invigilated / in-class assessments, practical tests, class-based discussions, and process-based work are generally less vulnerable to AI usage.

☐   Having a variety of assessment types can help to provide a more holistic assessment of students' learning and protect against misuse of AI.

☐ Instructors are encouraged to have students document their work process throughout the term, regardless of whether AI is permitted or not. This practice is useful for promoting meaningful learning and can serve as a resource for students, should academic integrity violations be raised.

Looking for assessment resources?	Guidance and resources for documenting student work is available through the CTL website at [Teaching Resources](#)

3.4   Instructors who choose to incorporate generative AI into a class assessment should:

☐ Explicitly indicate to students on the syllabus and in class that the assessment may be, or is required to be, completed using generative AI.

☐ Explicitly explain the rationale for using generative AI and the expected learning outcomes for students.

☐ Review the criteria and/or rubrics in ways that demonstrate how the use of generative AI is being assessed.

☐ Provide information or support on how students should cite AI within the assessment.

Not sure how to cite generative AI?	Check out these Academic Skills resources for citing in [APA](#), [MLA](#), and [Chicago](#) style.

3.5   As AI is intended to be used only to promote meaningful learning, it is expected that students will complete all assessments in which their instructor deems AI to be beneficial. Students who are unable to meet the expectations as outlined, such as due to accommodation needs, are advised to speak to their instructor. Depending on the circumstances, they may be permitted to submit an alternate assessment, but must speak with their instructor and be prepared to provide documentation if requested, such as through Student Accessibility Services.

3.6   Instructors can require that students in their courses complete the [Academic Integrity Module](#), a standalone educational module available to students in Blackboard. This module educates students on the university's integrity policy and best practices for research, writing, and learning to ensure students protect their academic integrity.

3.7   As a complement to the Academic Integrity Module, the [Trent University Honour Pledge](#) is available for instructors who wish to require that students submit it in their course(s). This is a downloadable document available to any instructor who wishes to use it. Students are asked to read and review the Honour Pledge and add their full name, student number, and current date. They can then download a copy of the pledge with their information attached. Instructors can request that students submit the pledge to them by creating a dropbox on Blackboard. The pledge does not replace the Academic Integrity Module but may serve as a supplement. Honour pledges can be useful in helping to reinforce the importance of academic integrity in relation to individual assessments.

Trent University Honour Pledge

As a student at Trent University, I am committed to obtaining the highest quality of education and will act accordingly to complete assessments that further my learning. I acknowledge the importance of submitting original work of my own making and in accordance with Trent University academic integrity policy standards. I am aware that the use of AI generated work is not permitted in assessments, unless explicitly stated by the course instructor.

- [Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Graduate Academic Integrity Policy](#)

By adding my name to this honour pledge, I acknowledge that I am aware of Trent University's academic integrity policies for undergraduate / graduate students and that I am submitting coursework that adheres to these standards. I acknowledge that my work is original and not in violation of these policies.

Interested in using the Honour pledge?	Instructors can offer it to students on Blackboard through the direct [weblink](#) or through the embed code: `<iframe src="https://h5pstudio.ecampusontario.ca/h5p/60332/embed" width="993" height="1200" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen="allowfullscreen"></iframe><script src="https://h5pstudio.ecampusontario.ca/modules/contrib/h5p/vendor/h5p/h5p-core/js/h5p-resizer.js" charset="UTF-8"></script>`

4. GRADING

4.1 Generative AI plagiarism detection software is currently unavailable at Trent University, and not recommended for use. This software will continue to be reviewed and assessed as it evolves over time.

   ☐ These detectors are known to produce false positives, indicating a student has used generative AI when they have not.

   ☐ Use of these programs requires that student work be uploaded to their software. Students have not consented to the sharing of their intellectual work through these tools. It is unclear at this time how the material submitted to the third-party detectors is retained or used.

   ☐ Until more is understood about generative AI detection tools, instructors should not use them. Rather, instructors are encouraged to use their own expertise in the subject matter to assess the quality of each submission.

4.2 If it is suspected that a student has used AI to complete an assessment, without explicit instructor permission, then standard academic integrity policy procedures should be followed.

   ☐ Instructors will need to provide documentation of suspected AI submissions. It is advisable to check the accuracy of claims and citations, as these programs can create references that do not actually exist.

   ☐ Students who are suspected of submitting an AI generated assessment will be asked to meet with their instructor. This is an opportunity for students to verbally explain and/or provide their work process.

   ☐ If students were previously asked to create a rough copy or keep notes, they may present them during the meeting. Instructors may find it useful to provide this information about documenting the research and writing process to their students at the start of the term.

   ☐ If the academic integrity module was completed or an Honour Pledge was submitted, these may serve as points of discussion for instructors and students about academic integrity.

4.3 The use of AI as a tool for grading is not recommended at this time, given the amount of uncertainty it raises. It is noted that this statement is not intended to address the use of existing digital tools, such as Blackboard tests, in which an instructor enters the material and grading criteria. Trent will continue to monitor and collect feedback on the implications of AI as a tool for grading.

Noted Concerns & Uncertainties with the use of AI in Grading	

☐ Generative AI is not a substitute for an instructor and/or their assistants, particularly for assessments that require human interpretation and evaluation. Use of AI in place of human assessment raises larger considerations related to employment and training of highly qualified personnel.

☐ There may be disciplinary differences regarding the value of AI as a tool for grading. These may be explored and discussed within departments and programs.

☐ If used inconsistently, such as across courses or by instructors / assistants within a specific course, the feedback and grades may be inequitable.

☐ Use of AI in grading requires that a student's work be uploaded. This requires explicit consent, as privacy policies, security policies, and use / storage of data vary across platforms.

4.4 Instructors who choose to use AI as a tool for grading should adhere to the following recommendations.

☐ Instructors who assign AI grading to course assistants are expected to provide adequate training for them to complete this work. Note that this training is not provided by Trent at this time.

☐ Instructors and/or their assistants are responsible for all grades and feedback, and should carefully review all outputs generated through AI to ensure they align with the learning objectives and course materials. Where necessary, they should add their own comments.

4.5 If AI is used in grading, it should be disclosed to students, such as on the syllabus and/or in class.

☐ Student work should be assessed by a qualified instructor or their assistant. Instructors who use AI in grading should be able to justify how it is comparable, and detail the measures taken for oversight of its use.

☐ Consistent with any assessment, students may ask for another review and/or additional feedback if they are unclear on the justification for their grade.

4.6 Classes in which AI is not permitted in student assessments should not permit the use of AI for grading.

5. POST-COURSE REFLECTION

5.1 Instructors are encouraged to reflect on what worked and what did not, and to make notes for future reference the next time they offer the course. If changes related to AI use are intended, it is advisable to return to section 1 of this document.

5.2 Following the completion of a course in which AI was used, instructors should review the Student Experience of Teaching Surveys (SETS) for students' input.
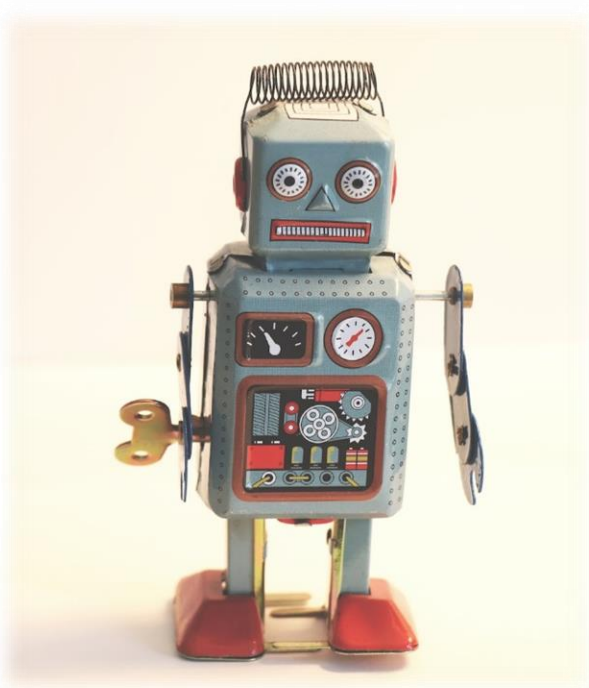
Conclusion

Image of a Robot by Rock'n Roll Monkey on [Unsplash](#)

Generative Artificial Intelligence is rapidly shaping the experience of teaching and learning in Higher Education today. This reality is likely to continue.

Trent University is committed to engaging in ongoing discussion and review of AI in our institution, and as it has implications for our broader society.

We move forward guided by the principles of *choice*, *transparency*, *ethical use*, *meaningful learning*, and a recognition that we will *continue to evolve* with the world around us.

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[i] UBC (no date). What is Generative AI? (ubc.ca). The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology.
[ii] Cormier, D. 2023. A look at the Government of Canada's guidelines for the use of Generative AI by their employees. Available on Youtube
[iii] Cover image of a circuit brain by Steve Johnson on Unsplash