

Ursinus College Responsible AI Principles for Students

Ursinus College remains committed to centering the human in education. Deep, individual thought and person-to-person connection and collaboration continue to be at the forefront of an Ursinus education, and in fact, in the face of new technologies, are more critical than ever.

New technologies, including generative artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs), are becoming increasingly interwoven into our society. We therefore seek to equip a student body, faculty, and staff to use these tools capably, ethically, and mindfully, in line with [Ursinus's mission](#) to “enable students to become independent, responsible, and thoughtful individuals through a program of liberal education.”

To that end, the following document offers definitions of AI and LLMs, considerations for maintaining privacy, guidelines for using AI responsibly and within the bounds of academic integrity, and guidelines for citing AI.

The college encourages students, faculty, and staff to remain mindful of privacy, equity, security, and ethics when exploring AI and LLMs, and to ensure that each decision about its use remains compatible with the college’s mission.

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Definitions

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging and rapidly evolving type of artificial intelligence that uses machine learning models to create transformed or novel content, such as text, images, music, or videos, based on user prompts or inputs. A **Large Language Model** (LLM) is a type of generative AI that is trained on vast amounts of data to enable it to predict a probable sequence of words in response to a prompt and produce coherent, contextually relevant responses. **Agentic AI** uses specialized bots to perform specific tasks across multiple software platforms and can operate like a group of collaborating workers. For the purposes of this guide, uses of the term “AI” will refer to generative AI, like ChatGPT or Claude.

College-Wide Policy for AI Use in Student Work

At Ursinus, the decision whether to permit students to use AI tools to complete coursework or assignments resides with the professor. Professors should state their AI policy on the syllabus, and students should find out from the professor which assignments and tasks allow the use of AI and which do not. Students who use AI with the permission of their professor should disclose and cite its usage according to the guidance of a citation style guide, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago, or as the professor instructs. Cases of academic dishonesty involving the use of AI will be treated as any other academic dishonesty case, with the professor discerning when a breach of academic integrity has occurred and determining the appropriate penalty.

General Considerations When Using Generative AI

- Before using AI or an LLM to complete work for a course, consult with the professor to make sure AI use is allowed for that particular task. Using AI against the policies of the class or of that particular assignment or task qualifies as academic dishonesty, discussed in more detail below, and you will be subject to penalties according to your professor's academic integrity policy.
- Artificial intelligence tools can be inaccurate. They can produce misleading or completely fabricated information that was not in the input data. Furthermore, they may exhibit biases.
- Always be sure to verify the suggestions or information AI tools provide.
- Be sure to comply with Ursinus' academic integrity policies.

- Anything written by someone else—including essay assignments, lecture slides, study guides, exam questions, and similar material written by your professor or classmates—is their intellectual property. If you share those materials with a third-party AI product without the author’s permission, you are violating their intellectual property rights. In short: don’t share, including sharing by including in a generative AI prompt, the words or ideas of someone else, unless you have their permission to do so.
- [Early studies](#) have suggested an overreliance on AI tools can impede learning and critical thinking. Take the time to consider whether your use of AI is likely to undermine your learning process and critical thinking.
- If you have already begun the use of new tools or features, configure the platform *not* to use or retain chat/prompt history, if possible. Once data are placed into these platforms, there are no guarantees that it can later be removed from them.
- Disclose when you have used AI or LLMs to generate content.

Minimizing Privacy Risks with Generative AI

The Office of the Provost, the Teaching and Learning Institute, and Information Technology recommend that faculty, students, and staff proceed with caution when using generative AI tools such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT, Google’s Gemini, Adobe’s Creative Cloud, Anthropic’s Claude, and Microsoft’s Co-Pilot, as well as others. The guidance offered below focuses largely on mitigating risks, some of which carry serious social, academic, and/or legal consequences.

Many third-party software tools do not offer robust privacy controls. If using public AI chatbots, please follow the guidelines below:

- In interactions with these tools, do not use or provide any information that you should not share publicly. Examples include financial statements, sensitive identification data like social security numbers and bank numbers, private personal information, etc.
- If you are considering licensing a new tool or using a new AI feature in a tool you already use, please work with [IT](#) to ensure that the tools and services have appropriate privacy and security protections.

Academic Integrity When Using AI

Of course, if your professor does not permit students to use AI to assist in the completion of assignments, projects, class prep, or other coursework, you are not permitted to use it in those ways. Violations of the course's policy or a single assignment's policy regarding AI will be treated by the college in the same way as academic integrity violations of any other kind.

If you're not sure whether a tool you want to use is considered AI or whether it is compatible with the course's policy, you should check with your professor.

If you are permitted to use AI for some tasks or assignments, the key to doing so honestly, with academic integrity, is transparency. Disclose when and how you've used AI, rather than trying to hide your usage or act as if you completed work without AI assistance.

The next section will explain some general guidelines for how to disclose and cite AI use.

How to Cite Generative AI

If you use material generated by AI while completing coursework, transparency is key: each instance should be properly referenced. Find out which citation style is preferred by your professor; if your professor has no preference, you can choose one of the most common styles (like APA, MLA, or Chicago), and use it throughout your work. Currently, the [APA style guide](#), [MLA style guide](#), and [Chicago Manual of Style](#) include recommendations and examples for citing AI-generated materials.

If you use AI, with your professor's permission, to assist with completing assignments or other coursework, do the following:

1. Explain at the beginning of the document how you used AI in the development of the project—whether you copied the exact words generated by AI, or just used AI in a brainstorming or editing capacity.

Here are some examples of wording you can adapt:

[in a footnote to the title of an infographic] To brainstorm ideas for this project, I typed my class notes into Google's Gemini and asked it to generate ten ideas for an infographic based on the course material. I combined two of Gemini's generated ideas, then designed the infographic using a Word template.

[in a footnote to the introduction] In creating this report, I used Anthropic's Claude to generate case studies based on my friends' experiences, in order to protect the details of their private lives. Each place where I included AI-generated text, I added a footnote that indicates so.

Note that if your professor allows these sorts of AI uses, they may request a transcript of your exchange with any AI tools you used, so be sure to save your work.

2. Cite the portions you generated with AI, following the conventions of your field's citation guidelines, explained in brief below.

MLA

- If you use AI for functional purposes (like editing prose you composed yourself), MLA recommends explaining the use in a footnote. Example:

[footnote to an AI-edited paragraph] I wrote this paragraph myself, without AI assistance, then pasted it into ChatGPT with the prompt "Without changing the substance of the paragraph or the level of prose sophistication, re-write this without any grammar errors." This is the AI-edited version.

- MLA style recommends against treating AI as an author, and instead personally evaluating the sources an AI tool references. Example:

Say you prompted Claude, "Explain the themes of *Moby-Dick*," and it offered you six possible themes. Rather than use that explanation as your source, MLA recommends you find the sources that Claude relied on, read them yourself, and paraphrase those sources in your own words in the paper, properly citing the human-generated source and disclosing that the source was suggested to you by Claude.

- If you do use AI-generated words, either in brainstorming or by reproducing the words in your own writing, MLA recommends citing both quotations and paraphrases using standard MLA citations, with the text of the prompt as the title of the work. Example:

Anthropic's Claude suggests that revenge is the novel's most salient theme ("Explain the themes of *Moby-Dick*"). However, in this paper I will argue that Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship suggests that the resiliency of friendship outshines even the drama of Ahab's obsession with vengeance.

Works Cited

“Explain the themes of *Moby-Dick*” prompt. *Claude*, Sonnet 4.6, Anthropic. 1
May 2026, <https://claude.ai/chat/>

Chicago

- Chicago style gives two ways of citing AI. In less formal settings, Chicago recommends stating within the text when that text was generated by an AI tool. Examples:

The following paragraph was generated by ChatGPT, OpenAI. I edited it for style and clarity.

Or, alternately: After writing this paragraph on my own, I ran it through ChatGPT, Open AI, for style and clarity revision suggestions, which I accepted.

- For more formal writing, like a student paper, Chicago recommends using a numbered footnote, with more detail. Example:

[footnote] ChatGPT, response to prompt “Describe the causes of the U.S. Civil War in a single paragraph,” Open AI, Jan. 1 2026.

Chicago style does not recommend including further documentation of AI in the bibliography; disclosure of AI use through footnotes is sufficient.

APA

- APA style recommends using the Methods section to describe how a writer/researcher used AI during the research process. Example:

Throughout the research process, Google’s Gemini was consulted to seek comparable studies and detect flaws in research design. Each instance of AI use will be cited as it becomes relevant within this report.

- Then, if AI-generated text is reproduced within the paper, APA style recommends including the full prompt and responses in quotation marks. Example:

In response to the prompt “explain the results of four comparable peer-reviewed studies,” Gemini responded, “[excerpt from response]” (Google, 2026).

- Then, cite the entire AI tool in your reference list. Example:

Google. (2026). *Gemini* (2.5 Flash version) [Large Language Model].
<https://gemini.google.com/>

Like MLA and Chicago, APA guidelines recommend caution in trusting the results of AI chats, since the chatbots can sometimes hallucinate information. Therefore, APA recommends 1) requesting the AI name its source material and 2) reading and verifying the sources yourself.

Any Citation Style

Although this document can get you started citing generative AI accurately and transparently, note that perspectives on this newly available technology are rapidly evolving. It's a good idea to check directly with the style guides for more recent updates; guidance can shift quickly in response to new tools and new understandings.

Although most citation styles do not require it, some professors may ask you to submit the transcripts of your AI chats as an appendix to your paper, since the individualized results you get from the AI are not publicly available. Be sure to save your chats and include them if it's required by the assignment.

For Further Support

If you have questions about the technical aspects of AI or any other questions, please contact IT at techsupport@ursinus.edu. If you have questions about using AI in writing or speaking assignments or writing and speaking tasks outside of classes, please contact the director of the Center for Writing and Speaking, Professor Argondezzi, at targondezzi@ursinus.edu. If you have questions about how AI is being implemented in your coursework, contact your professor, and, if you need further help, contact our instructional technology librarian, Matt Good at mgood@ursinus.edu.

Source Acknowledgement

The "General Considerations When Using Generative AI" and "Minimizing Privacy Risks" portions of this guide were adapted, with permission, from Colby College's "Working Paper: Guidelines for Principles, Definitions, and Guidance For Working With Generative Artificial Intelligence," with extensive modifications made for the Ursinus context.