

Statement on Generative AI Use in Teaching and Research

Department of English and Comparative Literature
Columbia University

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The following statement sets out the affirmative values that ought to govern the use of Generative AI by students, faculty, and staff in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, especially the use of Large Language Models that automate the production of text, sound, and images. This statement was adopted by vote of the faculty on May 20, 2026.

Affirmative Statements

- We affirm that the study of language and literature requires close attention to textual detail and the ability to read and absorb texts that may be long, unfamiliar, and challenging to understand. Likewise, the teaching of literature and culture is often best accomplished through open and communal discussion, rooted in common reading and understanding. We affirm the continuing centrality of these venerable practices to our educational programs and intellectual mission.
- We affirm that writing is a form of thinking and that writing and thinking both require practice, including analog or human-first practices.
- Faculty should model responsible Generative AI use in their research and teaching, holding themselves to the same ethical standards as they hold their students.
- Faculty, students, and staff are responsible for using Generative AI in a manner consistent with University policies and procedures, such as the [Provostial Policy on Generative AI](#) and policies relating to [academic integrity](#) for [students](#) and [research misconduct](#) by faculty.
- Generative AI technologies have given rise to new controversies over copyright and intellectual property, including the widespread uncompensated use of copyrighted work by members of this community to train Large Language Models. In using Generative AI technologies, we affirm the principles laid out in the [AAUP Statement on Intellectual Property](#), which grounds academic rights to intellectual property in principles of academic freedom and in the academy's "commitment to the broad dissemination of knowledge."
- Given concerns about the negative cognitive, environmental, and social impact of Generative AI technologies, including [their capacity to reproduce and reinforce existing biases](#), we affirm that educational and research use of Generative AI should be [necessary](#) and [proportionate](#) to a clear scholarly aim.

Classroom Use

- Academic freedom: Only faculty/instructors may decide whether and how Generative AI technologies and personal electronic devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, phones) may be used in their courses, whether inside or outside the classroom.
- Requests to use technological devices or Generative AI for assistive purposes must be arranged among the student, faculty/instructor, and Office of Disability Services following the procedures outlined [here](#).
- Responsibility to communicate: faculty/instructors should communicate clearly their expectations about Generative AI use, ideally through a class policy included in the course syllabus. For more on communicating with students, see:
 - CTL introduction to [Clear and Transparent AI Guidance](#) page
 - CTL guide to [Developing AI Syllabus Statements](#)
 - Denise Cruz's crowdsourced list of [AI Use Policies for ENCL Large Lectures](#)
- Assessment design responsibility: Assignment and assessment design should build in an awareness of Generative AI technologies, whatever the individual instructor's approach may be, ranging from outright prohibition to required use. For examples of "AI aware" assignments and assessment, see:
 - CTL page on [Updating Writing Assignments in the Age of AI](#)
 - CTL page on [Teaching Writing with AI](#)
 - CTL page on [Teaching Creative Assignments with AI](#)

Research Use

- Academic publishers, journals, and funding bodies have begun to adopt policies regulating and restricting Generative AI use in research. Faculty and students are responsible for compliance with those policies, whenever relevant. For examples, see:
 - Cambridge University Press, [AI Contributions to Research Content](#)
 - Elsevier, [Use of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in Writing for Elsevier](#)
 - Johns Hopkins University Press, [Generative AI Policy for Authors](#)
 - Oxford University Press, [Author Use of Artificial Intelligence](#)
 - Modern Language Association, [Policy on Generative AI](#)
 - Stanford University Press, [AI Policy](#)
 - University of California Press, [Guidelines on the Use of AI Tools by Authors, Peer Reviewers, and Freelancers](#)