

FOCUS ON: GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

(V1.0 NOV 2023)



MAINTAINING ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University is committed to taking a positive, educational approach to the potential use of generative artificial intelligence tools (GAI) as part of the teaching, learning and assessment activities undertaken by students. However, it remains imperative to be alert to potential risks and take appropriate action to protect our academic standards and the academic integrity of our assessments.

The potential misuse of GAI raises serious ethical and pedagogical concerns. Such behaviour erodes the foundations of the assessment process, devalues genuine learning and achievement, and has the potential to erode trust in the educational system. However, we need to accept that students are aware of these tools, and many will already be using them. Importantly, we should recognise that the application of GAI is not academic misconduct unless used in such a way that it becomes unethical or is used to generate work that students then pass off as their own.

POLICY ON THE USE OF GAI

Without clear ethical boundaries being encapsulated into policy for the appropriate use by students of GAI, consideration of suspected cases of academic misconduct involving these technologies could be difficult. Therefore, the University prioritised an update to its [Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct](#) for the start of 2023-24 academic year including a new [annex](#) that outlines policy in this respect.

This policy places an emphasis on Schools identifying on a programme, module, or individual assessment level whether and how the use of GAI is appropriate. Schools need to consider the issue and plan in the context of their own disciplinary pedagogies and assessment practices, particularly in respect of changes to any module or assessment briefs. Where GAIs have been authorised by the School for a particular assignment, in order to maintain good academic practice and fairness in assessment, students must acknowledge when they have used GAI in the development of their work. The policy annex describes one approach that might be adopted by Schools.

GAI MISUSE DETECTION

If a School suspects that the outputs from GAIs have been used unethically then the student should be investigated under the terms of the Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct policy. However, establishing reasonable proof of academic misconduct in relation to GAI is more challenging than for other forms of plagiarism. This is one reason our guidance on GAI focusses strongly on adapting assessment design.

Companies such as Turnitin have developed GAI detection software. However, their effectiveness is limited and there is a risk of producing false positives, resulting in students being incorrectly accused of cheating. Therefore, this aspect of Turnitin functionality has not been made available to staff at most universities, including Reading.

Supporting Your Students with Academic Integrity and use of GAI

The Study Skills team have created a [LibGuide](#) for students to access to support their learning.

Guidance on GAI is also available for students on [Essentials](#)

Ensure students are aware of whether they can use GAI to support or as a key part of each assessment.

As part of helping students learn about Academic Integrity, they need to know how GAI create content and the mass uploading of content from around the world to create the database.

Build in skills development sessions on academic integrity and GAI into core modules to support students.

“The use of AI and other technological tools does not inherently hinder learning; the critical factor is how to use the technology while maintaining academic integrity”
–Chami (2023)

Other tools exist which claim to detect the use of GAIT, however, these tools have been found to result in false positives as well as false negatives. For example, Open AI (the creators of ChatGPT) launched a tool to distinguish between AI-written and human-written text but withdrew it due its low rate of accuracy. With the nature of GAIT-generated content changing rapidly, caution should be applied to the use of any so called 'GAIT detector'. Student work should not in any case be uploaded to third-party GAIT detection websites because the legal and ethical implications of this are uncertain.



GAITs are known to produce outputs which are quite generic, using formal language with similar length sentences with little variation in the use of language. Unless staff are very familiar with the writing style of a student, it can be very difficult to detect the use of GAIT in their work. Furthermore, as more information is released about how to use GAIT effectively, the obvious indicators relating to use of language, sentence length and lack of variation in language will cease to exist.

Citing GAIT

There is considerable debate and a lack of consensus currently about whether this should happen and how. [APA7](#) have produced guidance for citing GAIT, however at time of writing neither Harvard nor OSCOLA have. In the absence of guidance from the styles themselves, some institutions have predicted what an output in [OSCOLA](#) and [Harvard](#) might look like. Another alternative is for outputs to be presented as personal communications and is recommended by [Cite them Right](#) which University of Reading students are encouraged to use by the Library and Study Advice Team.

It is unlikely that detection of GAIT will be able to keep up with the rapidly evolving GAITs.

Researchers in the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences at Reading (Scarfe, et al. 2023) highlighted the difficulty of detecting GAIT-generated work. With permission, they mixed 100% AI written submissions in with student exam scripts due for marking on five undergraduate modules, across all years of study, on the BSc degree in Psychology. They found that 94% of AI submissions were undetected. The grades awarded to AI submissions were on average half a grade boundary higher than those achieved by real students and across modules there was an 83.4% chance that the AI submissions on a module would outperform a random selection of the same number of real student submissions (Scarfe, et al. 2023).

Moving forward

This guide has highlighted some of the challenges we face in ensuring ethical use of GAIT in student work. It is likely that institutional guidance and policy on academic integrity and academic misconduct will evolve based on experiences during 2023-24. However, an increasing focus will be on the importance of authentic assessment as a way forward alongside the need to reinforce fundamental skills such as critical thinking, academic integrity, GAIT literacy and academic writing amongst others.

SUMMARY

The use of GAIT in instances where students have been not to use it, is considered academic misconduct under university policy. Turnitin's facility to detect AI use is turned off due its low reliability and the risk of false accusations of misconduct. Staff should be aware of the signs of AI misuse but should not submit students' work into GAIT for checking, on the grounds we do not have their permission to do this, and these checkers are not reliable.

Further resources on Generative AI can be found on our website
<https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/artificial-intelligence>

References and further reading

Chami (2023) *Artificial intelligence and academic integrity: striking a balance* [online]
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/artificial-intelligence-and-academic-integrity-striking-balance> last accessed 23rd November 2023

QAA (2023) Reconsidering assessment for the ChatGPT era [online] <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/reconsidering-assessment-for-the-chatgpt-era-new-qaa-advice-published> last accessed 23rd November 2023

Scarfe, P., Watcham, K., Clarke, A. D. F., & Roesch, E. B. (2023, October 14). A real-world test of artificial intelligence infiltration of a university examinations system: a "Turing Test" case study.
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