Generative AI for student, teaching, assessment and general use: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Sheffield Hallam University — Knowledge Applied

This handout can also be found as a [blog post on the Digital Learning Team's website](#) under the 'Guides' section.

AI (Artificial Intelligence): What is it and what tools exist?

What are generative AI tools in this context?

Generative AI tools are used for generating content from user entered prompts. They are so topical that even the [Department of Education published a statement in March 2023](#) about them.

At Sheffield Hallam, we believe these tools are transformative and disruptive; they will feature in many academic and professional workplaces; and that rather than seek to prohibit use of them, we will support staff and students in using them effectively, ethically, and transparently. [Watch the ChatGPT and Academic Integrity video](#) for more guidance.

What kinds of AI tools exist?

According to [theresanaiforthat.com](#), at the time of writing (Sept 2023) there are 7,642 AIs that exist for 2,095 types of tasks. The most common uses are for text or image generation based on prompts that the user enters, whether that be asking a tool to write an essay on a specific topic to a certain level with a word count, or to do something like create a picture of a raccoon throwing a tantrum.

The most commonly used tools are [ChatGPT](#), [Google Bard](#), [DALL-E 2](#) and [Github CoPilot](#), but more are constantly being created, and some of the software we already use daily such as Microsoft Office already have AI tools embedded within them - such as making ALT tags for images, but more features will be rolled out in the near future.

AI use at SHU: policy and practice

Can students use AI tools in their work?

Yes - if you have chosen not to ban use of AI in your module, if students use it to produce an assignment, they must describe and reference how they have used it. This is outlined in the [student guide for preparing to submit work](#) document, under the section titled "AI and you: learning and assessment".

What if I suspect AI use but a student hasn't declared it?

The standard procedure is to [make a contract cheating referral](#), as you would for any suspicion of academic misconduct or malpractice involving work you suspect was not written by the student themselves.

What are some pros and cons of AI tools?

Pros:
- Answering questions where answers are based on material which can be found on the internet.
- Drafting ideas and planning or structuring written materials.
- Generating ideas for graphics, images, and visuals.
- Reviewing and critically analysing written materials to assess their validity.
- Helping to improve your grammar and writing structure – especially helpful if English is a second language.
- Experimenting with different writing styles.
- Getting explanations of terminology and processes.
- Debugging code you have written.
- Getting over writer's block.
- Increasing literacy in AI for future employability.

Cons:
- Whilst their output can appear plausible and well written, AI tools frequently get things wrong and can't be relied upon for factual accuracy.
- They perform better in subjects which are widely written about, and less well in niche or specialist areas.
- Unlike a normal internet search, they don't look up current resources and are therefore some months out of date.
- They cannot currently provide references – they fabricate well formatted but fictitious citations.
- They can perpetuate stereotypes, biases, and Western perspectives.
- There is a harmful human cost to creating and testing these tools, [particularly in the global south](#).

Can I use AI tools in my teaching?

Yes - but first of all, remember that its always fine to not have an answer on how you can do this or what tools you can use. AI is a new and rapidly developing field, and there are so many tools available - please talk to the Digital Learning Team for advice.

Where can I find additional resources on using AI in teaching?
The short answer is - all over the place. UNESCO has published a [document on ChatGPT and AI in HE in 2023](#), there are various resources on creating teaching materials, or [marking criteria and rubrics](#)with tools like ChatGPT or Google Bard. YouTube is increasingly home to [videos on AI for teachers and students alike.](#) There is a wealth of academic material out there that explores AI and its ethics, and its application to teaching, in journals (eg [this open source one focused specifically on AI](#)) and other places like the [IISC website](#). There are also various frameworks on how we can [ensure staff and students are AI literate.](#)

Who can I talk to at SHU about AI related concerns?

Digital Learning Team
Your friendly neighborhood Digital Learning Team are also available to advise and support you with teaching, learning and assessment queries or issues through our email (digitallearning@shu.ac.uk) or our drop in room, available 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, except for Thursdays when it closes at 1pm.

References and links to tools

References

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Examples of AI tools to try if you wish:
(PLEASE NOTE: These are not sanctioned by SHU, and some require you to create an account which will retain the data you enter. Use at your own risk.)

ChatGPT - large language model based chatbot
Google Bard - large language model based chatbot
DALL-E2 - image creator
Adobe Firefly - image creator
Github Copilot - AI developer tool for coding
Voicemod - Real-Time voice filters
Lumen5 - AI powered video creation tool
Soundraw - royalty-free AI music creator
Craiyon - image creator, free but ad covered