



**Higher Education Services  
AI Usage Policy**

**2026**

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION AND VERSION CONTROL

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| <b>Related documents:</b>                             | Brunel University, <a href="#">Using artificial intelligence in your studies</a><br>Roehampton University, <a href="#">The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Knowledge Exchange Activity Policy</a> |

| Version | Author       | Date     | Brief summary of changes                                                                                                   |
|---------|--------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | A. Watson    | 30/06/26 | Original version                                                                                                           |
| 2       | T. Summerell | 18/08/26 | 6.2d - Added reference to applicable academic integrity regulations.<br><br>12.0 - Revised section title to clarify scope. |

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# Higher Education Services AI Usage Policy

## 1.0 Applies to:

**1.1** All learners, educators, partner institutions and content teams using the FutureLearn platform.

## 2.0 Location

**2.1** This policy sits within FutureLearn's learning and teaching guidance, not within a misconduct or disciplinary process. Students on credit-bearing courses delivered with a partner university should also check that institution's own academic regulations, which take precedence for formally assessed work.

## 3.0 Rationale for the Policy

**3.1** FutureLearn's learners are a more varied group than any single university's student body; they include people studying out of curiosity, professionals building new skills, and students working towards credit or a qualification through one of our university partners. This policy is written with that range in mind:

1. FutureLearn placed this policy with learning support, not with disciplinary procedures.
2. FutureLearn starts from a position of trust rather than suspicion.
3. FutureLearn intends to keep shaping this policy with input from students and educators, not just handing it down.
4. FutureLearn cares more about students being able to judge AI output critically than how fluently they can operate an AI tool.
5. FutureLearn has made the policy easy to find, linked to the Student Hub rather than hidden in small print.

## 4.0 FutureLearn's Position on the Use of AI

**4.1** FutureLearn does not ban the use of generative AI. People now use these tools routinely for research, writing, design and study, and pretending otherwise wouldn't serve the learners well. FutureLearn's starting point is to help people use AI thoughtfully and be open about when they've used it, rather than treating every instance as a problem to catch. That said, some of the student's assessments, particularly anything that earns a certificate, academic credit, or a partner university's award exist specifically to show what a student can do unaided. Letting AI produce that evidence on someone's behalf defeats the purpose of the assessment and devalues the outcome for the students themselves.

## 5.0 Using AI Responsibly

**5.1 Building understanding.** Asking an AI tool to explain something in a different way, condense a long article, or generate questions the student can test themselves with.

**5.2 Generating ideas.** Especially on creative courses, using AI to explore directions, prompts or visual references, as long as the student is open about having done so and can explain the choices made afterwards.

**5.3 Checking writing.** Using AI the way a student might ask a friend to read something over, catching errors, awkward phrasing or unclear sentences without letting it rewrite the argument or content for the student. Wherever the course asks for the student's own work they should declare when AI has been used.

**5.4 Working on a draft.** Using AI to help shape or tighten something the student has written, as long as the student goes back over what it produces, changes it where needed, and can stand behind the result as genuinely reflecting the student's own thinking. Wherever the course asks for the student's own work they should declare when AI has been used.

## 6.0 Ways AI Shouldn't Be Used

**6.1** Whatever else varies between courses, one boundary stays fixed: if an assessment is meant to show what the student understands or can do, the student shouldn't hand AI-generated work in as their own without saying so.

**6.2** Specifically, learners should not:

- Submit AI-written text, code or creative work for a graded or certificated piece of assessment without disclosing it, wherever the course asks for the student's own work.
- Let AI invent information, data, quotes or references. These tools will happily produce convincing-sounding sources that don't exist. Always check anything an AI claims is a fact or a citation before relying on it.
- Paste confidential material, personal data, or someone else's copyrighted work into an AI tool without the right permission to do so. Something to be especially careful of on courses that use real case studies or client information.
- Use AI tools or AI browsing agents to complete timed, proctored, or otherwise explicitly 'no AI' assessments. Doing so will be treated the same as any other form of exam cheating. Please refer to the FutureLearn, Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy, or your Credit Bearing Partner university regulations.

## 7.0 Saying When AI Has Been Used

**7.1** If a course allows AI use for an assessment, FutureLearn asks students to say so plainly. FutureLearn will give students a short statement they can adapt, such as:

- *"I did not use AI tools for this piece of work."*
- *"I used AI to help with proofreading, organising my ideas, or both, but the content and conclusions are mine."*
- *"This work includes AI-generated material that I have reworked, as follows: [explain]."*

**7.2** For assessments where it matters more, academic teams may also ask students to note which tool they used and roughly how, for example, what they asked it to do.

## 8.0 Different Courses, Different Expectations

**8.1** A single rule can't sensibly cover a short creative writing course, a data skills microcredential, and an accredited module run with a partner university. Each course will say clearly where its assessments sit on a simple four-point scale:

| Level                          | What it means                                                                                                 | Example                                                              |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No AI                          | No AI assistance at all, usually in a timed or supervised setting.                                            | Timed quizzes, proctored exams.                                      |
| AI for support only            | AI can help with proofreading or explaining ideas, but the substance of the work must come from the students. | Most written assignments, discussion posts.                          |
| AI as a collaborator, declared | AI can help shape or draft content, as long as the student critically reworks it and says it was used.        | Reports, portfolios, extended projects.                              |
| Open AI exploration            | Students are actively encouraged to experiment with AI as part of what the course is teaching.                | Courses about AI tools themselves, or AI-assisted creative practice. |

**8.2** FutureLearn and/or the partner set this level for assessments and make it obvious in the course materials.

## 9.0 Creative and Portfolio Work

**9.1** On courses built around art, design, writing or other creative output, students can use generative AI to spark ideas or assist in producing work, provided they're upfront about it and can talk through the decisions that were theirs. Handing in something that's effectively unedited AI output, with little of the student's own judgement applied, won't be treated as a

fair demonstration of skill. This applies even where AI use is otherwise welcomed on that course.

## 10.0 Risks of AI

**10.1 AI gets things wrong, confidently.** AI tools can produce false information, fake sources and incorrect reasoning while sounding entirely sure of themselves. AI's answers should not be treated as proof of anything on its own.

**10.2 AI carries the biases of what it was trained on.** When using AI for topics involving people, society, health or current events, it's worth asking whose perspective might be missing or skewed in what produces.

**10.3 AI isn't cost-free to run.** Generating AI content uses real energy and resources, so it's worth using these tools with a purpose rather than reflexively.

## 11.0 Courses and Programmes Run with Partner Universities

**11.1** Where a course or programme leads to academic credit through a partner institution, that institution's own rules on academic integrity and AI use govern the assessed work. FutureLearn will make that clear within the course/programme itself. FutureLearn's role is to surface those expectations clearly and keep them consistent with this policy wherever we can, not to replace them.

## 12.0 FutureLearn Owned Academic Content Creation

**12.1** When building FutureLearn courses, teams should:

- Decide and state the AI-use level (see Section 6) for each assessment before students reach it.
- Where possible, create assessments that are rigorously designed even if AI is available, for example, asking students to reflect personally, apply ideas to a specific situation, or show their working, rather than relying on catching misuse later.
- Treat AI-detection tools as one signal among several, not as proof. These tools guess probabilistically and can be wrong, including more often flagging students who write in a language that isn't their first.

## 13.0 Academics' Use of AI

**13.1 Policy Principle.** Just as we expect transparency and critical thought from our students, FutureLearn expects academics and partner faculty to model responsible,

ethical, and transparent AI use in their teaching, content creation, and administrative duties.

**13.2 Teaching and Learning Materials.** Academics may use generative AI to help draft course outlines, learning materials, or case studies. However, the final content must be thoroughly vetted by the academic team for accuracy, currency, and bias.

### **13.3 Grading, Feedback, and Assessment:**

**13.3.1 Human-in-the-loop requirement.** AI tools must **not** be used as the sole or final arbiter for grading student work or awarding credit. Final assessment judgements require human academic expertise.

**13.3.2 Feedback generation.** Academics may use AI to help synthesise common feedback themes or refine the phrasing of constructive critiques. However, feedback must be tailored to ensure it accurately reflects the specific student's performance.

**13.4 Data Privacy and IP Protection.** Academics must never upload student submitted work, personal data, or confidential institutional information into **AI models not managed by FutureLearn (Google Gemini Pro is the default provided to all employees)**. Doing so breaches student privacy rights and intellectual property boundaries.

**13.5 Equitable AI.** When recommending specific AI tools for course activities, academics must ensure these tools are accessible to all students (e.g., avoiding dependencies on expensive, paid premium tiers unless provided by the institution) and suggest viable, accessible alternatives where necessary.

## **14.0 Monitoring**

**14.1** FutureLearn will review this policy annually. As AI tools and how universities respond to them keep shifting quickly, FutureLearn may also update parts of this policy between formal reviews. The version and date at the top of this page will reflect the latest update.