St. John's University
Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academia and Research

I.   Introduction & Purpose

St. John's University has developed the following guidelines concerning the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in academia and research. If artificial intelligence tools are used in academia and research, they should be used ethically, safely and responsibly. The guidelines described in this document are specific to academic and research activities and are intended to address privacy, data security, and the protection of academic and research integrity. This document provides guidance to supplement St. John's University Human Resources Policy 1038, [Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace](#), and includes guidelines, examples, and guardrails to facilitate its applications in academia and research. In the event of a conflict between Policy 1038 and these guidelines, Policy 1038 shall apply.

II.   Definitions

As defined in Policy 1038, Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace, artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These technologies enable machines to learn from data, detect patterns, process natural language, and interact with the environment to mimic human cognition. Generative AI is a specific type of AI capable of generating new content from text, images, music, and more. Generative AI integrates several technologies such as Natural Language Processing, Machine Learning, and Deep Learning systems and is trained on large volumes of data through Large Language Models (LLM)). Generative AI tools include Chat GPT, Bard, Claude, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and similar programs, which can answer questions, provide explanations and summaries, draft documents, and simulate discussions, among other things. Other examples of AI technologies are Voice Dictation and Speech Recognition, Computer Vision, Robotics, Recommender Systems, and Knowledge Graphs.

It is important to note that AI tools may pose certain risks, have limitations, and be biased in the information they provide. Hence, while AI offers innovative possibilities, its use involves careful consideration of privacy, accuracy, integrity, and ethical use within the University's academic and research framework.

III.   Scope

These guidelines apply to all instructors and students at St. John's University engaged in university-related academic activities. Law school instructors and students should also see Law School-specific documents.

IV.   Use of AI in Academia

4.1   St John's University adheres to the following principles defined by the US Dept. of Education regarding the use of AI in academic activities:

a. Humans in the loop: Instructors, students, and researchers must retain their agency to decide what data patterns mean, choose courses of action, and not use AI as an alternative to human decision-making.
b. Equity: AI and any other learning technology should be used to pursue educational equity, inclusive pedagogy, and the rooting out of data or algorithm-driven biases and discrimination.
c. Safety and Ethics: AI technologies should be used in ways that i) do not compromise students'

privacy and security and ii) adhere to ethical standards.

    d. Transparency: Academic uses of AI must be transparent regarding disclosure, explainability, and understanding of how AI models work in various general educational use cases to anticipate limitations, problems, and risks.

4.2   Instructor Expectations Regarding Student Use of AI

With regard to the use of AI in academic activities, instructors should explicitly outline their AI use expectations for students, clearly defining the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable uses. Students using AI must follow individual instructors' expectations outlined in teaching materials and the classroom. See art 4.5 for more information and consult www.stjohns.edu/AI for additional resources including samples of syllabus AI policies.

4.3   Disclosure and Responsibility

When engaged in university-related academic activities, instructors and students must always disclose and report the use of generative AI and be responsible for reviewing all AI-generated content for accuracy.

The appropriate method for citing artificial intelligence tools may vary across academic disciplines. Students and faculty are expected to follow the citation practices that are most appropriate to their field of study, as determined by the judgment, guidelines and/or standards of their discipline. When in doubt, individuals should consult or seek guidance from instructors or academic departments. An example of how to cite AI can be found here - link: https://campusguides.stjohns.edu/aiandinformationliteracy/citations

4.4   Guidance on the Use of AI for Instructors

Instructors are encouraged to explore innovative ways to incorporate AI tools into their teaching methods that enhances the learning experience and student outcomes while maintaining academic integrity. Faculty are encouraged to complete the introductory Canvas course "Generative AI in the classroom" and/or acquire the "Teaching with AI" micro-credential (access available at: https://www.stjohns.edu/academics/artificial-intelligence-ai-st-johns-university/academic-guidelines-and-resources - section Resources, via For Instructors) and to consult with St. John's University Information Technology Department for assistance if needed. For more course considerations surrounding the use of AI, see this guide: https://sites.google.com/ucsd.edu/crafting-a-genai-and-ai-policy . It is also expected that these AI-related concepts will be included in curricula to help prepare graduates who will need to be able to effectively, ethically, and responsibly work with AI tools. Within the boundaries set by instructors and under the obligation of disclosing the use of AI in the performing of academic work (see art 4.3), legitimate AI uses may include:

    a. Supplemental Learning: AI can be a supplementary tool to provide additional explanations, examples, and resources to enhance students' understanding of course materials.

    b. Discussion Facilitation: AI can stimulate discussions by generating prompts, questions, or hypothetical scenarios that encourage critical thinking and class participation.

    c. Ideation and creativity: Students can use AI to generate or improve creative content in tasks such

as idea generation, outlines, prototyping, and creation of alternative renditions and formats for concepts or visual artifacts.

d. Active Learning: Instructors can use AI to create engaging assignments in which students work in groups to conduct a comparative analysis of AI-generated content related to coursework and curricular content.

e. Personalized Feedback: AI can provide personalized feedback on assignments, projects, or assessments, addressing individual students' questions and concerns.

f. Language Practice: AI can allow students to practice language skills, simulate real-world conversations, or engage in various learning exercises.

g. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR): AI can enhance virtual and augmented reality experiences in education by creating immersive simulations and scenarios, allowing students to explore complex concepts in a more engaging manner.

4.5   Guidance on Ethical Considerations

The integration of AI tools must align with ethical standards and policies to ensure academic integrity. To aid in this alignment, instructors should outline in their syllabi and other documents, such as assignments, teaching materials, and course web pages, AI use expectations for students, clearly defining the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable uses. Examples of unethical uses include:

a. Lack of Transparency/Disclosure: Instructors should inform students whenever they use AI tools. Clear disclosure of the technology's involvement in classroom activities helps maintain trust and avoid confusion. Students should disclose how they used AI in performing academic work following the guidelines defined by their instructor. See art 4.3 for additional information

For sample language that can be incorporated into syllabi and assignments, see the templates or sample syllabi in the Canvas course "Generative AI in the classroom" (access available at: https://www.stjohns.edu/academics/artificial-intelligence-ai-st-johns-university/academic-guidelines-and-resources - section Resources, via For Instructors), or on your Canvas page if you took the course.

For suggestions about creating an AI policy for your class, see https://sites.google.com/ucsd.edu/crafting-a-genai-and-ai-policy and other samples and resources available at www.stjohns.edu/AI (access available at: Academic Guidelines and Resources https://www.stjohns.edu/academics/artificial-intelligence-ai-st-johns-university/academic-guidelines-and-resources - section Resources, via For Instructors)

Automating Student Assessment: AI tools must never be used to outsource or automate learning assessment and grading tasks to AI (see the "Human in the loop" principle, art 4.1). If instructors use AI to support grading, they must ensure this use adhere to the ethical principles listed in sec. 4.1 and disclose how AI was integrated in the grading methodology to the students.

b. Generating or Perpetuating Bias: AI models may inherit biases from the data they are trained on, which can lead to biased or unfair information. Offensive, violent, or otherwise inappropriate content may surface when AI uses biased input. Instructors and students should be vigilant and work to counteract these to ensure unbiased information is not created, shared, or perpetuated.

c. <u>Lack of Accessibility</u>: instructors should strive to ensure that using AI tools does not exclude any students with disabilities from participating in class activities. The technology should be used in a way that is accessible to all students.

d. <u>Reduced Learning Engagement</u>: Overreliance on AI may hinder deep engagement and cause a lack of understanding of course materials, leading to incomplete learning experiences.

e. <u>Lack of Awareness about the Ethical Development of AI</u>: instructors should encourage responsible use of AI and raise awareness about AI tools' limitations to help students better understand how AI technologies work, what they can or cannot do well, and their societal implications.

f. <u>Infringement of Academic Integrity</u>: Instructors should clearly define boundaries for student use of AI tools so that academic integrity is not compromised (see art. 4.5a). Instructors should also facilitate their students' understanding and avoid plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or using the tool to gain unfair advantage in assessments. Students must not use AI to cheat in any way. Content produced by AI does not represent the student's own original work and may be considered a form of academic misconduct or treated similarly to assistance from another person. Submitting AI-generated content as one's own is frequently equated with plagiarism. Students must strictly adhere to the St. John's University Academic Honor Pledge (link - https://www.stjohns.edu/life-st-johns/student-success/student-conduct/academic-honor-pledge) and the rules defined by the instructor when using AI in performing academic work. AI-enabled academic misconduct will be subject to the same processes and consequences as outlined in St John's Judicial Process for Violations of the Academic Honor Code (link - https://www.stjohns.edu/life-st-johns/student-success/student-conduct/academic-honor-pledge). Instructors can assume that students are infringing on academic integrity when the use of AI:

- undermines learning objectives and impairs the learning process;

- gives a dishonest impression of authorship, knowledge and abilities;

- violates the rules established by the instructor regarding the use of AI

g. <u>Plagiarism and Misattribution</u>: Instructors should urge students to disclose the use of Generative AI to avoid plagiarizing or failing to attribute AI-generated content, compromising originality, and properly citing AI-generated content. Instructors are encouraged to enforce the message that authorship implies responsibility. Therefore, AI models do not constitute authorship as they cannot take responsibility for the submitted work. See art 4.3 for more information

h. <u>Unauthorized Collaboration</u>: AI tools might be used for improper collaboration, blurring individual contributions, and violating academic integrity. When using AI tools for group assignments, all team members should agree on acceptable use and document individual contributions to maintain transparency and accountability

i. <u>Intellectual Property Infringement</u>: AI tools do not currently disclose whether the data used to train their underlying LLMs or the materials they generate in response to user input are protected by copyright. Therefore, students and instructors should exercise caution when creating or distributing texts or images created with AI. Similarly, students and instructors should avoid feeding AI tools with copyright-protected information. Faculty, students, and staff who use AI tools should be mindful that certain uses may generate liability for intellectual property infringement. See here for more information on artificial intelligence and copyright - https://www.copyright.gov/ai/

j. <u>Privacy Violation</u>: Users have no control over the data once the data is uploaded to an AI tool. Feeding these tools with sensitive information that could lead to privacy violations must be avoided. For instance, teachers should not use student information when using ChatGPT or similar tools. Students and faculty are encouraged to use AI tools endorsed or officially adopted by the University, since these tools come with security and privacy protection mechanisms. See [this web page listing the adopted tools](#) and the for more information.

k. <u>Environmental Considerations in AI Use</u>: While ethical AI use emphasizes fairness, transparency, privacy, and accountability, sustainability is another critical yet often overlooked pillar. Generative AI tools require substantial energy and water resources to operate—studies suggest that 20–50 prompts may use up to 500 milliliters of water. Students and faculty are encouraged to use AI tools thoughtfully and intentionally, balancing innovation with environmental responsibility in academic work.

4.6   Exercise Caution and Seek Guidance when using AI Software

While St John's University is working on defining more specific guidelines regarding the assessment of security or confidentiality concerns that can arise from using AI-empowered software, researchers and instructors should exercise caution in adopting such software tools and seek recommendations from the St John's Information Technology department when using or purchasing AI-software, following existing guidelines. Students and faculty are encouraged to use AI tools endorsed or officially adopted by the University, since these tools come with security and privacy protection mechanisms. See this web page listing the adopted tools and the Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace, for more information.

V.   Guidance on the Use of AI in Academic Research

Concerning the use of AI in research, all St John's faculty and students should ensure:

5.1   <u>Confidentiality</u>: Researchers must NOT enter confidential information and/or data into third-party AI tools. Any infringements may expose the University and its community members to potential privacy and security breaches. Examples include entering prompts and queries into tools like ChatGPT, which is a form of releasing that information into the public domain. Uploading research data, grant proposals, and analytical results into a public AI tool could also publicly disclose that content. See Policy 1038 Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace for more information, and [this web page](#).

5.2   <u>Accountability</u>: Researchers using AI tools for scholarship activities are fully accountable for verifying the accuracy and integrity of the generated content. Researchers using AI tools in manuscript writing, data collection, and analysis must be transparent in disclosing their use of AI tools. Researchers are responsible for checking and ensuring that the AI-generated output they are using is not incorrect, incomplete, or biased. Accuracy and integrity in scientific work are always the researcher's responsibility, for which they are accountable and not the AI. Similarly, grant applications should represent the researchers' original and accurate ideas. See art 4.3 for more information

5.3   <u>Disclosure</u>: The use of generative AI should be clearly, transparently disclosed and documented according to the professional and ethical standards for their respective field or discipline of research. The researcher involved in proposing, reviewing, performing, or disseminating research is responsible for abiding by the policies and

standards governing the use of AI in their field of study. See art 4.3 for more information

5.4   Biases: given the opaque nature of the source data for generative AI tools and the mission of St. John's University, researchers should make explicit attempts to mitigate biases within the generated content.

5.5   Authorship: St. John's University supports the [Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)](#) position statement on "[Authorship and AI tools](#)," asserting that AI models do not constitute authorship as they cannot take responsibility for the submitted work.

5.6   Peer-review: St. John's University supports the [NIH position](#) prohibiting AI use in peer-review processes.

5.7   Use of research software incorporating AI: While St John's University is working on defining more specific guidelines regarding the assessment of security or confidentiality concerns that can possibly arise from using AI-empowered software, researchers should exercise caution in adopting such software tools and seek recommendations from the St John's Information Technology department regarding the level of risk. *No specific guidelines are yet available to link here*

VI.   Privacy and Data Security

All instructors and students are expected to protect confidential data in academic activities as mandated by the St. John's University Human Resources Policy on Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace.

VII.   Review and Revision

These guidelines will be periodically reviewed and revised as needed. Please send any comments or suggestions to the University Artificial Intelligence Task Force.

VIII.   Approved by Dr. Simon Moller, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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