



MSc Blended and Online Education Guidelines for Students on Generative AI & Writing Assistance Tools

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GenAI tools continue to develop and integrate into other platforms. Some of these tools may aid you when working on your learning and assessments for this programme. As this is a topic relevant to all aspects of blended and online education, we encourage you to become familiar with these tools, even if you decide not to use them regularly. It is likely that your own learners or students will be doing the same.

The most common tools include:

- ChatGPT or any interface which uses a GPT
- Copilot
- Gemini
- Claude
- Perplexity
- Grammarly

And many, many other apps and websites, including not text based media e.g. image, video, music generation.



Caution!

Before using any tools, be aware of the following:

Many of these tools **require an account** and the collection of your personal data, including a phone number. Please exercise caution when giving any information to a third party.

Note, that your Edinburgh Napier student account can be used to log into Microsoft Copilot, but this does not provide any extra protection to your personal data or text you input into Copilot (staff accounts are different).

Do not input personal details, sensitive information or content created by someone else into any Gen AI platform. 'Temporary' chats are still retained for period of time, even if they are not used for training the tool. Treat anything you input as **potentially publicly visible**.

Many of these platforms use content input by users to train their models, making them better and contributing to the value of the tool and generating money for the company.

Some of these platforms have been known to use **exploitative and unethical practices** using labour from developing countries to 'clean' the data of violent and hateful content, causing harm to the people working on it.

Gen AI tools do not *think* or *know* anything, they predict what the next word is likely to be, but do so in a manner which can feel quite human. Never treat their answers as a single source of information as **these tools can invent fictional content** that looks real. Always verify with reputable sources.

These tools are trained on information which is **biased**, and the answers may reproduce this bias.



There is a growing body of knowledge which indicates that the development and use of these tools has a **significant impact on the environment**.

Gen AI tools have been trained on the **copyrighted work** of authors, creators and artists with no acknowledgement, and presents a threat to the future of human-created work.

You are not being asked to use any of these tools if you do not want to.

Misuse of these tools may result in **disciplinary action** (see end this document).

Three Rules

The First Rule of Gen AI tools:

Always look at the any AI-generated output with a critical eye. Ask:

- Is it factually **accurate**?
 - *Even though it sounds confident, it does not know anything, it is only guessing the next most likely word.*
- Is it **appropriate** for your context and topic?
 - *How much does the tool know about what you are studying and where you are?*
- Does it contain any possible **bias**?
 - *Is this content perpetuating dominant ways of thinking and excluding marginalised or non-Western perspectives?*
- Is it too **generalised** or superficial?
 - *Look out for bland content which says very little.*

The Second Rule of Gen AI tools:

Use the content **to help your learning, not do your learning** for you. Develop the skills to evaluate AI created content; this will help you evaluate and improve your own work.

Rather than viewing writing (or any other content generation) as a task to produce a



finished piece for assessment, see it as an ongoing process of refining your ideas and thinking. Writing and rewriting are integral to your studies and help you develop your own distinctive voice.

The Third Rule of Gen AI tools:

Always **correct, refine and improve** any AI created content, and remember to **document what changes you make** (see below). Using Gen AI tools can provide a foundation on top of which you can start to add your original ideas and unique perspective. If you use Gen AI to refine your own writing, be sure also to document this.

Ideas for how you might want to use these tools

1. **As a basic search engine for understanding:** Gen AI platforms will answer questions on topics you may be studying but struggle to understand. *Caution:* Gen AI can sound very convincing but be very inaccurate, so always check another source to verify accuracy.
2. **As an ideas generator:** Gen AI platforms can quickly come up with range of ideas for what you might want to focus on in your submission. Use this when you are finding it hard to get started.
3. **As a conversational partner:** Writing prompts is a skill. Practice refining your requests by responding with further prompts. Gen AI will learn from you and should improve and correct its answers.
4. **As a debating partner:** ask the tool to take a role or position on a debate. Argue with it to see what ideas it and you come up with. It can be very helpful if you are struggling to apply critical thinking to a topic.



5. **To suggest a submission structure:** ask the tool to provide you with a structure for your essay, report, presentation etc. Note, always check the Assessment Brief first and follow those instructions.
6. **Literature search aid:** in addition to the general Gen AI tools, there are an increasing number of specialised tools which can help with literature searching. See [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) and Literature Searching Libguide](#).
7. **To make suggestions to improve your communication of your ideas:** this might be your grammar, spelling, phrasing etc. Many tools can help with this, but always refine the answers further and don't just copy and paste.
8. **To keep you motivated:** If you find yourself stalling at any point, continue a conversation with a Gen AI on how you are developing your thinking. It will not only help you with responses, some platforms can provide friendly encouragement and affirmations which could help to keep you on track. Don't forget to document and reflect on this!

Note: For assessment submissions, always use the BOE Assessment Declaration Cover Sheet (Word document in your module in Moodle).

If you use Gen AI, please adhere to the following:

1. Regularly **save your work under different file names**, so if required, you can demonstrate the development of your work over a period of time.
2. Answer YES on the Assessment Declaration Cover Sheet.
3. Give information on the sheet in less than 100 words to describe how (and at which points) you have used such tools to support your completion of this assessment.



4. Include an **appendix** in your submission titled '**Use of Gen AI tools for this submission**'. This section is not included in your word count and should be after the reference list.
5. Provide:
 - a. What tool you used and which model e.g. ChatGPT 5.
 - b. Details on what input you gave the tool e.g. examples of your prompts.
 - c. At what stage of the creation of your submission you did this e.g. was it at the beginning to brainstorm ideas, at the end to check your writing?
 - d. A sentence evaluating the tool's response e.g. was it helpful, accurate or appropriate?
 - e. A sentence on whether using the tool helped you learn anything.
6. If you have used a Gen AI tool to create content which is in your final submission, please provide **sample screenshots** of your texts/prompts and the tool's responses/corrections.
7. **Do not cite** the tool nor list it within your references.

Note: to be able to fulfil the requirements above, you will need to keep documentation on your use of the tool throughout the modules, so make a note of dates, text prompts, document versions and AI-generated content so you can include them in your submission and produce them if required by the assessment markers and examiners.

1. If you are currently unable to access a tool which you wish to use for any of the purposes above, please contact your module leader for help and details of what text prompts you would to input. We recognise that access may be dependent on your geographic location and/or financial subscription to a product; we will endeavour to support all students whose learning would benefit access to specific



tools. Equally, if you would prefer not to use a tool for any of the reasons noted in the Caution section above, please contact your module leader.

2. Use of Gen AI is not compulsory for any assessment on this programme. If you choose not to use any Gen AI or writing assistance tools in your work, you will not be penalised. Please indicate this by tick the 'No' box in your Assessment Declaration.
3. Attempting to pass AI generated content as your own work in your assessment submissions is **academic misconduct** and may result in disciplinary action and interfere with your academic progress. See more information [ENSA's Academic Misconduct pages](#) and [My Napier Academic Integrity page](#).

Additional Guidance

For information on Edinburgh Napier University's position on Gen AI, see

<https://documentcentre.napier.ac.uk/-/media/files/university-governance/artificial-intelligence/edinburghnapieruniversityspositionongenerativeartificialintelligence.pdf>

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