Sheridan

Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence at Sheridan College

Introduction

Sheridan recognizes the transformative potential of generative artificial intelligence ("Generative AI") technologies while acknowledging its responsibility to ensure their ethical and effective use. These guidelines are designed to support our community in navigating changes brought about by these technologies, as well as related shifts in how we teach, learn, research and work.

The fundamental purpose of education - to develop critical thinking, creativity, and deep understanding through active engagement with ideas and practices - remains unchanged. Generative AI tools should enhance, not replace, this core mission. At Sheridan, we believe these technologies can be powerful partners in learning and creation when used thoughtfully and responsibly.

These guidelines reflect Sheridan's commitment to academic integrity, creative excellence, and responsible innovation. They are designed to address the distinct needs of teaching and learning, research, and administration while upholding consistent principles across all domains. As the understanding and use of these technologies evolve, these guidelines will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Sheridan recognizes its responsibility to advance truth and reconciliation in authentic and meaningful ways in keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and commitments within the Indigenous Education Protocol signed by Sheridan in 2018.

The fundamental values rooted in Indigenous cultures, such as Respect, Reciprocity, Relevance and Responsibility, must be taken into consideration.

For the purposes of these guidelines, the term “Indigenous Peoples” will be used to represent any person who self-identifies as being First Nation, Inuit, or Métis.

Context and Background

The key distinction between traditional AI and generative AI is in what they can do and how they're used. Traditional AI focuses on data analysis and making predictions, while generative AI not only analyzes but also creates new data that resembles its training data. Generative AI systems are trained on massive datasets to produce human-like outputs in text, images, code, and other media. While they can deliver impressive results, these systems have significant limitations including potential inaccuracies ("hallucinations"), biases, and privacy concerns. They also raise complex questions about originality, attribution, and the nature of human creativity – issues that are particularly relevant to Sheridan's identity as a leader in creative education and applied research. The field of AI needs to broaden its definition of intelligence, as the current Western approach assumes that users are individuals who prioritize their own well-being, whereas Indigenous researchers highlight that this perspective overlooks crucial aspects of human existence, such as trust, care, and community, which are fundamental to the true nature of intelligence.

Henceforth, for the purpose of these guidelines, “AI” refers to “generative AI”, and “tools”, “technologies” and “systems” are used interchangeably.

Aspirations for the Student Experience

At Sheridan, we envision a student experience enriched by the thoughtful integration of generative artificial intelligence technologies. These tools have the potential to enhance learning, spark creativity, and empower students to achieve their academic and career goals while upholding Sheridan’s core values of academic integrity, equity, and ethical responsibility.

We aspire for students to engage with generative AI in ways that deepen their critical thinking, creativity, and understanding of complex issues. These technologies should complement, not replace, human insight and ingenuity, enabling personalized learning experiences and fostering innovation. Sheridan is committed to helping students use generative AI as a tool for exploration and problem-solving, preparing them for lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world.

Sheridan strives to equip students with the skills and knowledge to thrive in this evolving landscape. Central to student success is the development of digital literacy skills to enable ethical and effective applications of generative AI tools. Sheridan is committed to fostering an ethical mindset in our students, encouraging them to critically examine generative AI's broader implications, including its impact on equity, privacy, and the workforce.

Sheridan is equally dedicated to students gaining practical expertise through curriculum enriched by industry input, work-integrated learning opportunities and accelerated access and training of leading-edge generative AI tools. This preparation will ensure our graduates remain competitive in the job market and adept at navigating AI's role across various professions.

By cultivating a balanced approach to generative AI — leveraging its benefits while addressing its challenges — Sheridan aims to empower students to shape a future where technology serves humanity responsibly and creatively.

Core Principles and Values for Generative AI Use at Sheridan

Sheridan's approach to generative AI use is guided by principles that prioritize human well-being, learning, and creativity while recognizing both the potential and the limitations of generative AI technologies.

Human-Centered Development

Generative AI tools should complement, not replace, human efforts across all areas, including teaching, learning, administration, and community engagement. This ensures that generative AI enhances human capabilities and supports the overall mission of a learning institution. The use of generative AI tools requires an understanding of how to evaluate their advantages and limitations.

Fairness and Equity

Generative AI technologies should be accessible and beneficial to everyone in our community. We recognize that generative AI systems can perpetuate or amplify existing biases and inequities. Our guidelines aim to ensure generative AI use promotes rather than undermines inclusion, accessibility, and equitable outcomes for all members of the

college community to ensure fair opportunities for learning, working, and participating in college activities.

Transparency and Accountability

Clear communication about generative AI use is essential to maintaining trust in educational, research and administrative processes. Faculty, students, and staff must be transparent about when and how they use generative AI tools. This includes properly attributing generative AI-generated content and clearly documenting generative AI use in assessments, research, and administrative functions.

Privacy and Data Rights

Protection of personal and proprietary data and privacy rights is paramount. The use of generative AI must honor Indigenous data sovereignty and adhere to community protocols for the use and sharing of Indigenous knowledge, intellectual property, and data. It is essential to prevent harm caused by false information about Indigenous communities, cultures, knowledge, histories, and contexts. The Sheridan community must understand the data implications of generative AI use and implement appropriate safeguards. This includes using institutionally approved tools with proper privacy protections, being mindful of what data is shared with generative AI systems and adhering to agreed upon use (or not) of generative AI with external partners. While for many educational and administrative uses, this may include using institutionally approved tools with proper privacy protections, these tools are likely insufficient when using generative AI for research purposes. For further details regarding what is acceptable for research, please refer to the Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Research.

Environmental Responsibility

The use of generative AI has broader societal and environmental implications. It is important to consider the environmental impact of generative AI systems and its effects on labour, creativity, and social structures. However, the development and deployment of generative AI technologies lead to significant computational resource consumption. As generative AI demand increases and becomes more widespread, its environmental impact and the potential effects of generative AI on creative industries and employment continues to grow. This means paying attention to how much we use generative AI and how it might impact jobs and creative fields. We should promote sustainable practices and ensure that

generative AI technologies contribute positively to both the community and the environment.

Academic and Creative Integrity

While generative AI tools can support learning and creation, they must not compromise academic and creative integrity. It is essential to balance the use of generative AI tools with one's responsibilities as a contributor. Establishing clear guidelines for appropriate generative AI use, along with assessment designs that emphasize human understanding and creativity, help uphold academic and creative integrity by establishing clear guidelines for generative AI use in teaching, research, and creative projects. Ensure that generative AI supports, rather than undermines, the integrity of academic work and creative endeavors.

Professional Judgment and Autonomy

Faculty and staff retain autonomy in determining appropriate generative AI use within their roles. This includes making informed decisions about generative AI integration in teaching, research, administration, and community engagement.

Guidelines for All Generative AI Use at Sheridan

1. Sheridan expects all members of the Sheridan community to uphold the highest standards of **academic and professional integrity** when using generative AI tools. This means:
    - Citing and acknowledging generative AI use in coursework, any (un)funded research or other innovation activities, and administrative functions;
    - Following specific guidelines regarding permitted and prohibited generative AI use;
    - Preserving human creativity and insight, rather than over-relying on generative AI generation;
    - Clearly documenting generative AI use in teaching, research, or administration to support transparency and maintain trust within the academic community or with external partners/funders.
2. Sheridan expects all members of our community to **protect personal and institutional data**. Community members should use only institutionally approved generative AI tools when handling sensitive information.

- Sheridan has selected enterprise-level tools (Microsoft Copilot and Adobe Firefly) that provide appropriate privacy protections and institutional oversight.
- The use of other generative AI tools requires careful review to ensure alignment with our values and obligations.
- For research purposes, please refer to the Guidelines Specific to Research when using proprietary data and/or human participant data.

3. We expect all members of our community to **exercise judgement and critically appraise** all generative AI generated content – specifically for accuracy and bias - by personally evaluating and verifying any AI generated content before incorporating it for use in teaching and learning, research, or administrative work.
4. Sheridan recognizes the importance of **training and support** to foster a better understanding and responsible use of generative AI. While specific training and resources are available and in development, Sheridan expects faculty, students, and staff to recognize the limits of their own knowledge and seek support and training, as needed, to use these tools responsibly.

Guidelines Specific to Teaching and Learning

Faculty, staff, and students should approach generative AI use in teaching and learning contexts with careful consideration of learning objectives and academic integrity. Sheridan recognizes that different disciplines and courses may require different approaches to generative AI integration.

1. Course outlines and assignment instructions should clearly specify the permitted and prohibited uses of generative AI for both learning activities and assessments. This should include distinct guidance for:
    a. Learning and Study Activities - Faculty may identify appropriate uses of generative AI tools for activities like concept review, brainstorming, or practice exercises.
    b. Assessments and Evaluation - Faculty should explicitly state whether and how generative AI tools may be used in assignments, projects, tests, and creative work. (see Appendix A for sample statements)
2. If a course outline does not include explicit guidance on generative AI use, the program team should be encouraged to include a program-wide statement. Faculty members are required to review their generative AI guidelines with students during the first week of classes and demonstrate relevant examples of appropriate and inappropriate use for their discipline.

3. Generative AI detection tools are one data point in identifying generative AI generated content at Sheridan. Instructors using generative AI detection tools should use the results to start a conversation with a student and follow the academic integrity policy and process.
4. If using third-party technology tools, faculty must avoid tools that sell student data or use student data to train generative AI models or to improve services and products.
5. Experiential learning, co-op, and work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences should identify and document the appropriate use of generative AI for student learning and assessment, in collaboration with both the faculty member and the employer, as relevant.
    a. When collaborating with industry partners for WIL experiences, the use of generative AI by students or faculty should consider the conditions or terms of use by the collaborator. Memorandum of Understanding and other agreements may help establish transparency and ground rules for all parties.
6. Instructors who intended to use generative AI tools for assessing student work should consult with their Associate Dean to ensure appropriate tool selection or use.

Guidelines Specific to Research

Researchers using generative AI tools must maintain research integrity while leveraging these technologies' capabilities. Specific to research activities, researchers should at least:

1. Review expectations of specific granting agencies and publishers to verify expectations on appropriate use of generative AI.
2. Ensure research ethics protocols document and disclose the use of generative AI.
3. Document generative AI use in research protocols and publications according to standards and expectations of the granting agency, publication, or dissemination venue.

In June 2024, Sheridan College has issued guidelines for the use of generative AI in research to ensure responsible and ethical practices:

- **Usage Philosophy**: Generative AI tools should be used as supplemental aids in research, and mentors must ensure research students understand and follow these guidelines through regular discussions.
- **External Guidance**: Researchers must consider external guidelines, such as those from funding bodies and publication ethics committees, when using generative AI in their work.
- **Human Oversight**: Generative AI can assist but not replace intellectual contributions, and researchers are responsible for verifying and citing all information generated by generative AI.
- **Proprietary Information**: Uploading proprietary information to generative AI is akin to public disclosure, and such actions must be explicitly outlined and agreed to in collaborative agreements.
- **Documentation and Disclosure**: The use of generative AI must be transparently documented and disclosed at all stages of the research process, including in collaborative agreements and informed consent documents.
- **Potential Risks**: Researchers must be aware of the potential inaccuracies, biases, and intellectual property issues that may arise from using generative AI.
- **Practical Examples**: Examples are provided in Generator's guidelines to illustrate when generative AI can be used, such as in grant writing without proprietary information, and when it cannot, such as in preparing reports for external partners.

Guidelines Specific to Administration

Administrative use of generative AI tools should enhance efficiency while maintaining appropriate oversight and documentation.

1. **Strategic Risks and Benefits**

   Administrators should evaluate the strategic risks and benefits of generative AI. This includes understanding how generative AI can support institutional goals, such as improving educational outcomes, enhancing operational efficiency, and fostering innovation. Additionally, it is essential to identify potential risks, such as ethical concerns, data privacy issues, and biases in generative AI algorithms.

2. **Efficiency Opportunities**

   Generative AI can drive efficiency in various operations within the institution. Administrators should explore opportunities to:

- Automate routine tasks, such as administrative paperwork and scheduling.
- Improve decision-making with data-driven insights, enabling more informed and timely decisions.
- Enhance student services with personalized recommendations, such as academic advising and career/employment related support
- Optimize resource allocation, ensuring that resources are used effectively and efficiently.
- Write and develop policy, procedure, and business documentation.
- Support the development of lectures and workshop preparations.

3. **Compliance**

   Compliance with regulations, particularly those related to data protection and privacy, is paramount. Administrators must ensure that generative AI systems are used in a way that complies with all relevant laws and regulations. This includes:

   - Conducting regular audits to ensure compliance.
   - Implementing robust data protection measures.
   - Providing staff with training on data privacy and security best practices.
   - Developing an Algorithmic Impact Assessment tool and capability to evaluate and assess new generative AI tools.

4. **Roles and Responsibilities**

   Clearly defining and communicating the roles and responsibilities of staff in managing generative AI systems is essential. Administrators should:

   - Assign specific roles for overseeing generative AI implementation and maintenance.
   - Ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities in maintaining IT security.
   - Provide ongoing training and support to staff to keep them updated on the latest generative AI technologies and best practices.
   - Ensure staff understand the principles for how to use generative AI

5. **Resource Allocation**

   Administrators must carefully consider the allocation of resources for generative AI initiatives. This involves:

   - Balancing investment in generative AI against other institutional priorities to ensure a well-rounded approach.

- Evaluating the cost-effectiveness of generative AI projects to ensure they deliver value for money.
- Monitoring and adjusting resource allocation as needed to maximize the benefits of generative AI while maintaining financial sustainability.

6. Digital Literacy Focused on AI

Develop and implement a digital literacy program that educates and empowers the whole College community to understand, use, and interact with generative AI systems. This program should cover:

- The basics of generative AI and its potential impacts and implications.
- Ethical and social issues raised by generative AI.
- Skills and competencies needed to navigate generative AI systems.
- Critical thinking and awareness about the sources, quality, and reliability of information generated by generative AI systems.

7. AI for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDI-D)

When using generative AI systems, we strive to promote equity, respect diversity, and support inclusion while acknowledging the technology's current limitations. This includes:

- Actively examining generative AI outputs for potential biases and inequities, recognizing that these systems can reflect and amplify societal prejudices.
- Working to make generative AI tools accessible while acknowledging varying effectiveness across different languages, cultures, and contexts.
- Understanding that generative AI systems are trained primarily on Western knowledge systems and taking steps to center Indigenous voices and knowledge when using generative AI in Indigenous contexts.
- Developing practices that respect Indigenous knowledge and rights, while recognizing generative AI's current limitations in understanding Indigenous worldviews epistemologies.
- Building digital literacy that promotes critical awareness of generative AI's capabilities and limitations, particularly regarding equity and inclusion goals.
- Incorporating EDI-D considerations into the framework, governance, review process, and digital literacy programs.

Support and Resources

The following resources are available or in development to support faculty, staff, and students in the responsible use of generative AI at Sheridan.

- AI Ethics, Governance and Adoption Framework (in development)
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Integrity Procedure
- Information Access and Privacy
- Faculty Guide on the Use of Turnitin AI Detection Tool
- Library resources:
    - Digital Skills Guide
    - AI Tools for Students
- Research Integrity Policy
- Using Generative Artificial Intelligence for Research
- SPARK workshops – Harnessing AI to Enhance Education

Questions about these guidelines can be directed to [relevant contact information].

Note: Generative AI tools were used in the development of the guidelines during the drafting process. (November - December 2024)

Appendix A: Sample Syllabus Statements

Example One

Students may use generative AI in this course in accordance with the guidelines outlined for each assessment, and so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside assessment guidelines or without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use for each assessment and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

Example Two

Students may use generative AI for [editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc.] their work throughout the course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside the stated use of [editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc.] without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

Example Three

Students may freely use generative AI in this course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside assessment guidelines or without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

Example Four

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward as necessary.