

Huston-Tillotson University Artificial Intelligence Policy

Purpose and Scope

Purpose

This policy establishes clear expectations for the responsible, ethical, and transparent use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies within Huston-Tillotson University (HT). Its purpose is to:

- Ensure that AI tools are used in ways that support student learning, teaching, research, and administrative efficiency
- Protect academic integrity and uphold institutional values
- Promote safe, secure, and privacy-compliant use of AI systems
- Provide guidance for evaluating risks, limitations, and appropriate applications of AI
- Clarify responsibilities for individuals and units using AI in academic or operational contexts

HT approaches artificial intelligence as an institutional tool that must serve the University's educational mission and civic purpose. AI can increase speed and access to information, but it can also weaken learning if it substitutes for comprehension, judgment, and responsibility. AI use is a matter of institutional design that requires norms, practices, and supports that strengthen learning, trust, and shared responsibility across the campus community.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of HT, including:

- Students – for academic work, learning activities, and course-related use
- Faculty – for teaching, assessment, curriculum development, and scholarly activities
- Staff and Administrators – for operational, administrative, and decision-support
- Researchers and Research Teams – for designing, developing, employing, or studying AI systems in research projects
- Contractors, Consultants, and External Partners – when using institutional data or working on AI-enabled systems on behalf of HT

Definitions

Term	Definition
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Any computational system that performs tasks typically associated with human intelligence, including natural language processing, image recognition, decision-making, and content generation. For purposes of this policy, AI encompasses both narrow/task-specific systems and general-purpose large language models.
Generative AI	A subset of AI systems trained on large datasets to produce new content, including text, images, audio, code, and data visualizations, in response to user prompts. Examples include large language models (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot) and image generation tools (DALL-E, Midjourney). Generative AI is the primary form of AI addressed by this policy's academic integrity provisions.
AI-Generated Content	Any text, image, audio, code, data analysis, or other output produced substantially or entirely by an AI system. Content is considered AI-generated even when a human has lightly edited it. For purposes of disclosure requirements, AI-generated content includes outputs that form the structural or substantive basis of a submitted work, regardless of post-generation modification.
AI-Assisted Work	Work primarily conceived, developed, and authored by a human, in which AI tools were used in a supporting role — such as editing for clarity, checking grammar, brainstorming, outlining, or debugging code. AI-assisted work differs from AI-generated content in that the human's intellectual contribution is primary and the AI's contribution is auxiliary.
Disclosure	The practice of transparently identifying, in submitted work or professional communications, the AI tools used, the nature and extent of their contribution, and the steps taken to verify or revise AI outputs. This policy distinguishes three disclosure

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Human Oversight	contexts: academic disclosure (student to instructor), research/publication disclosure (researcher to journal or public record), and administrative disclosure (institutional to employees regarding AI use in consequential processes). The meaningful review, verification, and accountability exercised by a qualified person over AI-assisted or AI-generated outputs before those outputs are submitted, published, applied in decision-making, or used to affect another person. Human oversight is not satisfied by cursory review; it requires the responsible party to be able to explain, defend, and take accountability for the content or decision.
Institutional Data	Any information created, received, maintained, or transmitted by or on behalf of Huston-Tillotson University in the conduct of its educational, research, or administrative functions. Institutional data includes, but is not limited to student academic records, personnel files, financial records, research data, donor information, and any information subject to legal protection under FERPA, HIPAA, state privacy law, or contractual agreement.
FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)	Federal law (20 U.S.C. § 1232g) that protects the privacy of student education records. Under FERPA, HT may not disclose personally identifiable information from student records without student consent except as permitted by law. Student education records may not be entered into public AI tools or non-compliant third-party systems. Violations of FERPA carry institutional penalties.
IRB (Institutional Review Board)	HT's Institutional Review Board, the federally mandated committee responsible for reviewing and approving research involving human subjects. Any research project that uses AI tools to interact with, collect data from, or generate outputs about human participants must be reviewed by the IRB to

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	ensure compliance with federal ethical standards (45 CFR 46, the Common Rule).
Academic Integrity	The commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic work. Under this policy, academic integrity in AI use means disclosing AI assistance transparently, submitting only work the student can explain and defend, not misrepresenting AI outputs as independent intellectual work, and following instructor and institutional guidelines on permitted AI uses.
AI Detection Tool	Software purporting to identify AI-generated text by analyzing writing patterns, perplexity, or other linguistic features. HT does not recognize AI detection tools as definitive or reliable evidence of academic misconduct. Detection tools have documented high false-positive rates, particularly for non-native English speakers. Academic integrity concerns must be investigated through established processes, not resolved solely by detection tool output.
Approved AI Tool	An AI platform or application that has been reviewed and authorized by HT's Department of Information Technology for use with specified categories of institutional data. Approved tools have contractual privacy and data handling protections that public AI services lack. The Department of Information Technology maintains the current list of approved tools and their authorized data categories.
Consequential Decision	Any decision that meaningfully affects a person's academic standing, employment status, access to resources, compensation, promotion, discipline, or similar interests. Under this policy, consequential decisions including hiring, promotion, grading, academic advancement, and disciplinary action, must not be made by AI alone; a qualified human being must review and take accountability for the final determination.

Term	Definition
Reproducible AI Process	An AI-assisted research workflow that is documented with sufficient specificity (e.g., tool name, version, parameters, prompts, and data inputs) that another researcher could substantially replicate the process and evaluate its validity. Reproducibility is a prerequisite for publication of research findings that depend on AI-assisted data analysis or generation.

Core Values and Principles

HT has a long history of preparing students to lead, serve, and make a difference. Since AI is becoming an increasingly ubiquitous element in teaching, learning, and work, this policy outlines an AI usage framework that embodies the same commitment to human dignity, equity, and justice that has guided our institution since 1875.

AI should serve people, not the other way around. These tools can expand opportunity and enhance community accomplishment if used thoughtfully and equitably.

This policy recognizes that HBCUs have always been institutions of democratic formation. AI practices should reflect that tradition by cultivating civic capacities such as discernment, shared responsibility, and the ability to act together in common life. AI can support those capacities when used transparently and with appropriate boundaries.

Academic, Institutional, and Professional Integrity

The University affirms that education is not the production of answers but the formation of understanding. Responsible AI use must protect the conditions of learning including attention, interpretation, argument, and the ability to explain what one claims to know. The goal is to ensure that AI use remains accountable to comprehension and to the standards of our academic community.

Relationship Between AI Use and Plagiarism

The university's existing plagiarism and academic conduct policies apply fully to work produced with artificial intelligence tools. Submitting AI-generated content as one's own original work without proper disclosure and attribution constitutes academic misconduct. This includes text, images, data analysis, code, or multimedia produced substantially or entirely by AI systems.

Using AI to generate work and passing it off as one's own is a violation of the HT Academic Conduct Code, just like any other form of academic dishonesty.

Expectations for Original Work

Unless explicitly allowed by an instructor or research supervisor, original work must be primarily conceived, developed, and authored by the student or researcher. AI may not replace demonstrations of learning outcomes, creative thinking, or professional judgment.

AI may be used to support learning when it helps students develop understanding they can demonstrate in their own words. AI use becomes inappropriate when it substitutes for the student's own comprehension or when it produces work the student cannot explain, defend, or revise.

A simple institutional test applies: if a student cannot describe the steps, reasons, or choices that produced the work, then AI has displaced learning. Faculty may therefore require process evidence, oral explanation, revision history, or other demonstrations of understanding when AI tools are used.

AI may be used to support competencies such as critical reasoning, analytical writing, experimental design, and reflective practice.

Attribution and Citation Requirements

Students, faculty, and researchers must clearly acknowledge any use of AI tools in the creation of academic or professional work.

Required disclosure should include:

- The name and version of the AI tool used
- The nature of assistance provided (e.g., drafting, proofreading, coding support, data visualization, idea generation)
- The extent to which the final product incorporates AI-generated content

AI tools should be cited in accordance with discipline-appropriate standards (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). When in doubt, authors must err on the side of transparency.

When AI tools materially contribute to an assignment, students must disclose the tool used and the nature of the assistance. Disclosure is not punitive. It is the condition of trust and the basis for fair evaluation.

The University encourages instructors to normalize disclosure as part of responsible professional practice, comparable to acknowledging other forms of assistance. Students and faculty should treat AI outputs as provisional. AI can be helpful for brainstorming, outlining, translation support, example generation, or feedback on clarity. But AI is not an authority. Claims, citations, and factual assertions must be verified using appropriate sources and disciplinary standards.

Failure to appropriately attribute AI assistance will be treated as a violation of academic and professional integrity standards.

Teaching, Learning, and Pedagogy

Guidance for Faculty

Faculty are encouraged to design learning experiences that reflect the realities of AI-enabled environments while remaining aligned with course learning objectives. Instructors must set rules for AI use in their courses. Course rules will vary: some classes may prohibit AI entirely, others may allow it for specific purposes such as brainstorming or research, and some may require its use. Every syllabus must clearly state the course's AI policy. Violations of the course-stated AI policy are considered violations of the Academic Code of Conduct and will be treated as such.

When instructors permit AI, they should specify the allowed uses and the required disclosures for the assignment. When instructors prohibit AI for a particular task, the prohibition should be explicit and tied to the learning objective being protected.

The Office of the Provost in coordination with the Faculty Senate and Center for Academic Innovation and Transformation will provide annual updates to the "Faculty Guidance for AI Usage in the Classroom" document which will detail faculty best practices that are in alignment with this policy.

Research Standards

Ethical AI Use in Research

Researchers must ensure transparency, reproducibility, and responsible use of AI systems in all phases of research. This includes:

- Verifying the accuracy, reliability, and limitations of AI-generated analyses
- Maintaining human oversight of data interpretation and methodological decisions
- Documenting AI tools, algorithms, and parameters used in data processing or analysis
- Ensuring compliance with IRB/ethics review protocols when AI interacts with human subjects or personal data

Publication Standards

Manuscripts and presentations must include clear disclosure of any AI tools used in writing, data analysis, figure generation, or methodology. AI may not be listed as an author.

Issues Specific to AI-Assisted Research

Researchers must avoid:

- Using AI to fabricate or alter data
- Relying on AI outputs without verification
- Using proprietary AI tools in ways that violate license agreements or data governance policies
- Publishing findings that depend on undisclosed or non-reproducible AI processes

Researchers using AI tools must ensure compliance with any applicable data use agreements, Institutional Review Board requirements, and sponsor restrictions. Some grants and contracts may prohibit the use of AI tools with research data, or require specific security measures. Researchers must review grant obligations before incorporating AI into research workflows.

Professional Standards

The use of AI must align with ethical norms, accreditation standards, legal regulations (including data protection laws), and discipline-specific codes of conduct. Students and employees in professional programs must follow the ethical guidelines of their accrediting bodies regarding AI use.

AI must not be used in ways that compromise confidentiality, privacy, human safety, or professional judgment.

Equity and Accessibility

AI literacy is becoming essential for career success across virtually every field. HT is committed to ensuring all students have meaningful access to AI tools and the knowledge to use them effectively. No student should be disadvantaged because of differences in prior exposure to these technologies.

AI tools can also support students with disabilities—through text-to-speech, writing assistance, or other accommodations. These applications must be implemented in a manner which ensures that they complement rather than circumvent learning objectives.

Because unequal access to AI tools can create unequal academic opportunity, the University will seek to provide equitable access to approved tools and to the training needed to use them responsibly. Equity is not only a matter of access to technology, but access to understanding: students must be supported in learning how to evaluate AI outputs, verify claims, and maintain academic voice and agency.

The University will monitor for disparate impacts, including whether AI policies unintentionally advantage students with more time, money, or technical familiarity by incorporating AI usage questions in the course evaluation process. Where such impacts

appear, the University will adjust supports, training, and permitted-use guidance to protect fairness.

Bias, Fairness, and Transparency

When AI systems are used to make or inform decisions that affect people, such as admissions, hiring, grading, or resource allocation, there must be transparency about AI's role and meaningful human review of the outcomes.

AI systems can produce biased results, particularly for historically marginalized groups. Any use of AI in institutional decision-making should include mechanisms to identify and address such bias. People affected by AI-assisted decisions have the right to understand how the decision was made and to request human review.

Intellectual Property Rights

Questions about who owns AI-generated content are still being resolved in courts and legislatures. For now, HT's existing intellectual property policies apply to work created with AI assistance. Those who use AI tools in research or creative work should be aware that copyright protection for AI-generated material remains uncertain.

AI tools are trained on vast amounts of content, often without permission from original creators. Users should thus be thoughtful about this when using AI for creative work, and avoid using AI to deliberately imitate the style or voice of specific artists or writers.

Data Privacy and Security

Protecting Sensitive Information

Users must assume that information supplied to an AI tool could be stored, used for training, or seen by others. Public AI tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and similar services do not have the security protections required for sensitive university data.

The following must NEVER be entered into public AI tools: student records and any information protected by FERPA; personal information such as Social Security numbers, financial data, or health information; proprietary research data; confidential personnel information; or any data subject to legal, contractual, or regulatory restrictions.

University-Approved AI Tools

The Office of Information Technology will maintain a list of AI tools that have been reviewed and approved for use with distinct types of university information.

If a student or employee wants to use an AI tool that is not on the approved list, or if an existing tool adds AI features, they may contact the Department of Information Technology and request a review. New tools need to be reviewed for privacy, security, and data handling practices before they can be approved. The review process will also consider human labor practices and environmental impacts of AI.

Workforce Impact and Employment Considerations

A Human-Centered Approach

AI should make work better, not just cheaper. HT's approach to AI in the workplace prioritizes enhancing what faculty and staff can accomplish. AI cannot replace the people who make this institution what it is.

When considering AI tools for administrative or operational functions, the goal should be to reduce tedious work, improve services, and free people to focus on what humans do best: teaching, mentoring, building relationships, and exercising judgment in complex situations.

Transparency

Employees have a right to know when AI is being used in processes that affect them. If AI tools are used to screen job applications, evaluate performance, or inform decisions about compensation or employment status, that use must be disclosed.

Changes to job responsibilities that involve AI should be communicated clearly and in advance, with opportunities for employees to ask questions and provide input.

Human Oversight in Employment Decisions

Consequential employment decisions, including hiring, promotion, discipline, and termination, must not be made by AI alone. AI may be used to support these processes, but a qualified human being must review and take responsibility for the final decision. Employees who believe an AI-assisted process has produced an unfair outcome have the right to request human review and to understand how AI was used in their case.

Protection of Academic Roles

The work of teaching, research, and mentorship is central to HT's mission and cannot be reduced to tasks for automation. AI may support faculty in their work but should not diminish the role of faculty in the educational experience. Decisions about how AI is integrated into academic work should involve faculty governance and respect for academic freedom.

Fair Labor Practices

If AI adoption changes the nature of certain roles, HT is committed to providing affected employees with reasonable notice, retraining opportunities, and support in transitioning to new responsibilities.

AI systems are often built on the labor of content moderators, data labelers, and gig workers who are frequently underpaid and exposed to harmful content. When selecting AI tools and vendors, HT will consider the labor practices behind these systems and prefer providers who treat their workers fairly.

Governance, Oversight, and Implementation

The University will not adopt AI tools in ways that compromise student privacy, faculty intellectual work, or institutional confidentiality. Any institutionally supported AI system must be reviewed for data handling, security, and compliance obligations before deployment.

Institutional use of AI must preserve human responsibility for consequential decisions. AI systems may assist in administrative tasks, but they must not become unreviewed decision makers in areas that affect student standing, employment outcomes, discipline, grading, or access to resources.

The University will maintain clear lines of accountability: tool selection, authorized use cases, training requirements, and reporting pathways for concerns. Where AI is used in University operations, the University will specify the human decision owner responsible for oversight and correction.

Training and Support

AI policy will succeed only if paired with training, shared templates, and practical classroom guidance. The University will provide:

- Clear guidance to faculty via an “AI Use Guidance for Faculty” document generated by the AI Working Committee in coordination with the Office of the Provost. Faculty Senate input will be incorporated into this document. It will be updated annually.
- Clear guidance to the University community via an “AI Use Guidance for the University Community” document generated by the AI Working Committee in coordination with the Office of Information Technology. It will be updated annually.

- Opportunities for faculty and staff development on assignment design, disclosure norms, and assessment that protects comprehension.
- Student training in verification, citation discipline, and responsible tool use.
- Access to approved AI tools.

Review and Revision Process

The AI Working Committee will review this policy annually, with input and review of any changes by the Campus Technology and Library Resources Committee, Academic Council and the Administrative Council.

AI Policy Version 1.1; adopted on _____ by action of the Campus Technology and Library Resources Committee, Academic Council and the Administrative Council. ,
This document does not replace a prior policy.

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