# Guidance on the use of Generative AI systems

## Introduction.

The guidance below is offered to provide clarity for students about the use of Generative AI systems. Generative AI is a rapidly evolving area of innovation across the world so it can be expected that the advice below may change as Generative AI systems mature further.

The University of Westminster recognises that Generative AI tools can legitimately support learning in several ways. Some examples of ways in which Generative AI can normally be used as a tool to support learning include:

* Assisting with grammar and spelling checks.
* Utilizing Generative AI to identify internet keywords for an internet search.
* Aiding in the planning and development of an outline structure for a written assessment.
* Generating ideas for graphics, images, and visuals.
* Obtaining basic explanations of concepts.
* Assisting in debugging code.
* Helping overcome 'writer's block'.

However, there are risks involved when using Generative AI for an assessment. Using Generative AI improperly in the assessment process will lead to a breach of the principles of academic integrity and result in a penalty (see section 2 below).

## 2. Academic integrity and academic misconduct.

The use of Generative AI tools to directly\* produce a written or other form of output for an assessment is not acceptable and contravenes the principles of academic integrity that can lead to allegations of academic misconduct. Such improper use of Generative AI to create content for an assessment will be considered by the University of Westminster as plagiarism, and will be subject to penalties.  
  
*\*The only circumstance where the use of Generative AI tools to directly produce a written (or other form of output for an assessment) could be permissible, is when students have clear instructions to use a Generative AI tool from their tutors as an integral part of an overall assessment. For example, a tutor may wish students to generate a piece of writing, or an image using a Generative AI tool and then write their own original critique of that output. In addition, as Generative AI tools continue to mature, your tutors may advise you of some subject specific legitimate uses of Generative AI tools.*

**The University of Westminster defines academic misconduct as:**

“*Academic misconduct is where a student gains, or seeks, attempts or intends to gain, advantage in relation to assessment, either for themself or for another person, by unfair or improper means”*.

The list of offences that can be considered as academic misconduct include:

Plagiarism, self-plagiarism, plagiarism commissioning and collusion (for more details please see [our guidance).](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-misconduct/plagiarism)

The University’s definition of plagiarism includes instances where a student “*presents work for assessment which contains the unacknowledged published or unpublished words, thoughts, judgements, ideas, structures or images of some other person or persons. This includes material downloaded from electronic sources, and material sourced or contracted from a third party”.*

The use of Generative AI systems when completing an assignment (e.g., ChatGPT or Bing Chat) is academic misconduct if the use is not clearly cited and referenced in your work. Copying content generated by ChatGPT without citing and paraphrasing is like copying from anywhere else without referencing and paraphrasing.

AI tools that can be used to help improve your writing, such as Grammarly for Education (for correcting grammar and punctuation), are acceptable. Indeed, it is possible to use ChatGPT to provide advice on grammar and punctuation. It is acceptable to use ChatGPT to provide ideas for how an assignment (essay, report etc) might best be structured. However, it is not acceptable to submit a poorly written (but original) essay to ChatGPT and request the AI to re-write it in good, academic English. It would however be acceptable to use Grammarly for Education to get advice on how the essay could be improved in relation to grammar, spelling, wordiness, style, punctuation and tone.

Presenting the output of tools that write for you as your own work is academic misconduct. The University of Westminster may impose a penalty on the assessments of those found in breach of academic integrity. Part 3 of [Section 10](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/Section-10-Academic-misconduct-2022-23.pdf) of the University’s academic regulations, sets out the procedures relating to academic misconduct and penalties relating to academic misconduct.  
  
3. What if I use Generative AI to help me write an assessment?

Bearing in mind the general restrictions on use of Generative AI systems in assessment (see section 2 above), you can use tools like Grammarly GO or ChatGPT to legitimately support your learning or to help in the development of an assessment that you intend to submit as your own work, providing you take account of the following:

* When you include materials directly generated via a Generative AI system, this must be properly cited and referenced in your work i.e., the Generative AI should be treated in the same way as any other source, including using quotation marks for any text that derives directly from the Generative AI. Examples of how to reference Generative AI content can be found in Cite Them Right <https://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/citethemright> (log on with your University account to access this resource)  
    
  You should include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that used Generative AI in compiling your submission, explaining which Generative AI was used (including the version where relevant/known), what you used the Generative AI for and how you used it to get the results/final submitted draft of your assignment. Failure to do so is academic misconduct.
* Where Generative AI is used in assessed work, it is important to be transparent about its use. Content generated from AI is non-recoverable. That means it cannot be retrieved or linked to in the same way that other sources can. Accordingly, current convention is to cite Generative AI generated content as a “personal communication” (because it is based on asking a question or providing a prompt and receiving an answer).   
    
  A personal communication is normally cited for a written piece of work in-text only (i.e., in the body of the written work). Examples of how to cite in text Generative AI content can be found in Cite Them Right <https://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/citethemright> (log on with your university account to access this resource)

In addition, if you use any Generative AI tool (such as ChatGPT or Grammarly GO) to help you (for example, generate ideas or develop an outline plan), you should still acknowledge this, even if you do not include any Generative AI generated content in your submitted work. You should state at the end of the submission which Generative AI tool was used and describe how you used it.

* You must be accountable for the assignment submission content and how it was produced. Before submitting, you should reflect and satisfy yourself that if an interview was held with you to discuss your work, you would be able to explain and justify your work in developing and constructing the assignment.

You should be able to answer yes to the following questions:

* Can you be truthful about which ideas are your own and which are derived from other sources such as Generative AI?
* Are you certain that you are not trying to gain an advantage by unfair means: for instance, by passing off content generated by a Generative AI as your own?
* Are you confident that you are responsible for the content of your assignment and how this content was derived?

**It is important to note** that whilst Generative AI tools can be useful for some aspects of your assessments, there will always be important parts that require your own original and distinctive input, demonstrating understanding and critical thinking, structuring, and refining an argument, reflecting on your practice and personal experience, keeping up to date with research, and accurate referencing and citations.

**In addition, there may be instances where the legitimate uses of Generative AI listed in section 1 of this guidance may not be applicable due to specific requirements of certain subject areas or individual assignments. Any specific restrictions in relation to using Generative AI will be clearly outlined in the relevant assignment brief and instructions provided by your tutor(s).**

## 4. Warnings of issues when using Generative AI

Generative AI tools, and especially those that produce written outputs, make mistakes. They can essentially make up facts. This is why some assessments request students to critically evaluate Generative AI output. If a student uses Generative AI tools they run the risk of not only contravening the principles of academic integrity, but also of submitting the made-up facts that Generative AI can produce.

Low effort may produce low-quality output. If you use Generative AI to help you to write, you will need to refine the content, provide references, and check data.  This requires work.

## 5. In summary

There are a range of ways in which Generative AI tools can support your learning (see section 1 above for some example).

However, if you use a Generative AI tool like Grammarly GO or ChatGPT to help you with an assessment then:

* Using Generative AI to produce original content and claiming it as your own work is strictly prohibited. Your assignments and exams should demonstrate reflection and critical analysis generated by your own thinking.
* It is unacceptable to submit a draft essay or other written output and request a Generative AI system to simply rephrase it in proper English or restructure it.
* Including outputs from Generative AI systems, such as passages of text or images, in an assessment submission without acknowledging the source is not permitted (see section 3 above).

## 6. Have further questions or unsure what to do?

Refer to:

* Your Personal Tutor.
* The leader of the module for which you are completing a specific assignment.
* Support pages on the student hub that cover [Plagiarism](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-misconduct/plagiarism) and [Referencing your work](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/study-skills-and-training/research-skills/referencing-your-work).
* [The Students’ Union Advice Service](https://uwsu.com/advice/misconduct)