Hiram College AI Policy (Version 5.12.26)

Overview

The field of AI, or artificial intelligence, has rapidly increased in recent years. From a broad or generic standpoint, artificial intelligence is defined as the development and application of computer systems and machines to perform functions (decision-making, learning, reasoning, etc.) that require and/or mimic human intelligence. There are various types of AI based on capabilities and functionality; some common uses include chatbots, virtual assistants, and image generation. AI technologies can be helpful resources; they can aid in accessibility, speed up menial tasks, and provide support during the creative process. However, if used irresponsibly, this technology can hinder the development of critical thinking skills and creativity that are a key part of Hiram College's mission. Additionally, the content generated by AI technology is inconsistent in quality and is subject to biases from its training data, so it is crucial that this technology is utilized carefully and intentionally to prevent a decrease in quality of the work produced by Hiram College students and employees.

To ensure AI technology is integrated into Hiram College in a way that aligns with our mission to foster intellectual excellence and social responsibility, a campus-wide policy has been created. Our policy was created on the foundational principles of transparency, accessibility, privacy, and academic integrity so that AI use on campus is equitable, honest, and protects the rights of others. The use of generative AI software by any member of the Hiram College community – faculty, students, and staff – must adhere to the following policies. These policies do not supersede any other Hiram College policies, including all data governance policies, all policies in the Employee Handbook and the Faculty Handbook, and academic honesty policies. They also align with FERPA and HIPAA. (See Appendix for a quick guide to FERPA aligned AI use.)

Transparency

All use of AI technology, including coursework, instruction, and administrative tasks, should be disclosed and clearly explained, including which programs are used and how. Content generated by AI is not considered the work of the individual using the program and is therefore subject to the same expectations as the use of other outside works.

All members of the Hiram community have the right to opt out of its use, including refusing their information, IP, or likeness to be used (e.g. a student may refuse to allow their work to be entered into an AI-powered grading program).

Accessibility

Those using AI programs as an accessibility tool must have express permission to do so, with the details clearly outlined in their accommodation letter, which may be sought from the Office of Disability Access at OfficeofStudentDisabilityAccess@hiram.edu. Even with permission, users are still held to the same expectations of academic integrity and privacy. Any AI tool that is web-based must conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards.

Data Privacy and Security

Many popular AI-backed tools, such as ChatGPT, use the data inputted by users to further train their algorithm. This means that intellectual property and personal information entered could reappear in generated content for other users. Additionally, storing this data leaves it vulnerable to data leaks and theft, which may even be tied to identifying information like emails.

Given these concerns, no confidential information should ever be entered into unapproved programs; refer to the FERPA policy to see what is considered confidential information. (See Appendix for a quick guide to FERPA aligned AI use.) Additionally, anyone working with health information is responsible for following HIPAA guidelines and should never enter health information into an unsecure program.

Intellectual property should not be entered into any unapproved programs without the consent of the IP owner. Images, audio, videos of faculty, staff, and students should not be used with any AI software. If there is a need for the use of the likeness or creative works of one of these stakeholders, written permission must be given from the person whose likeness will be used. It is the responsibility of the user to be able to produce this permission upon request.

Responsibility for AI Tool Selection and Use

It is the responsibility of both students and faculty to make informed, ethical, and secure choices when selecting and using AI tools. Before using any AI technology for academic or administrative purposes, users must ensure that the tool complies with Hiram College policies, as well as FERPA, HIPAA, and intellectual property regulations. When in doubt about the appropriateness or security of an AI tool, students and faculty should consult with their instructor, department chair, or the college's IT department before entering any personal, academic, or proprietary information. (See Appendix for a quick guide to FERPA aligned AI use.)

By thoughtfully evaluating the risks and benefits of each AI tool, students and faculty help protect the privacy, security, and integrity of the Hiram College community.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Specifics of how AI technologies are used in the classroom are the decision of the course instructor. Each course will have a more specific AI policy which will be included in the syllabus. However, for all coursework, content created by generative AI is not considered one's own work and therefore is subject to the policies and expectations for any other outside source. This means that attempting to pass AI generated content as one's own work and improperly citing AI use both constitute academic dishonesty (see Academic Honesty and Plagiarism for full policy). Additionally, the use of AI technology that has not been approved by the college and individual faculty may also constitute academic dishonesty. Regardless of context, users of generative AI are responsible for ensuring the quality, integrity, and accuracy of the content they use in their work.

Faculty Syllabus Options for AI Use

Faculty may choose one of three options for AI use in their respective class and will add statements to their syllabi based on their choice.

1) If AI use is permitted only on specific assignments:

Using AI technologies to generate original work for assignments is prohibited in this course unless otherwise explicitly stated in an assignment. The statement will specify precisely what AI assistance is allowed, and all other AI use is prohibited. Any materials generated by or assisted by AI technologies must be properly cited. Failure to acknowledge AI usage, even when such usage is permitted, violates Hiram College's Academic Dishonesty policy because students are submitting work that is not their own.

2) If AI use is always permitted:

Using generative AI technologies is permitted in this course. Nevertheless, students are responsible for the work they submit, including the accuracy of AI generated material. All generative AI use must be properly cited. Failure to acknowledge AI usage, even when such usage is permitted, violates Hiram College's Academic Dishonesty policy because students are submitting work that is not their own.

3) If AI use is never permitted:

Using generative AI technologies is prohibited in this course. All submitted work must be generated solely by the student. Knowingly using generative AI technologies to complete assignments for this course constitutes academic dishonesty. If you do not know whether a tool or technology uses generative AI, check with your instructor to determine whether its use is permitted.

If you allow the use of AI tools in your classroom, you may wish to include citation examples in your syllabus or assignment sheets.

Citation Examples:

MLA (9th Edition)

OpenAI. "ChatGPT response to a prompt about the causes of the French Revolution." *ChatGPT*, 22 Apr. 2026, https://chat.openai.com/.

APA (7th Edition)

OpenAI. (2026, April 22). ChatGPT (Version GPT-4.1) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/

Chicago (17th Edition, Notes and Bibliography)

OpenAI. "ChatGPT response to a prompt about the causes of the French Revolution." *ChatGPT*. April 22, 2026. https://chat.openai.com/.

AI Use in Group Assignments and Collaborative Projects

Groups who use AI are governed by the same foundational principles as individuals, namely transparency, accessibility, privacy, and academic integrity. Groups should be aware that members share responsibility for AI use and disclosure. In courses that have a significant teamwork element, faculty should specify the appropriate level of AI use for group work, if any, and whether all group members are equally responsible for disclosure and for appropriate use if only some members used AI.

Enforcement and Consequences

Unauthorized or improperly cited AI use in the completion of coursework counts as academic dishonesty and is therefore handled as such. See the college catalogue regarding the enforcement and consequences of Plagiarism.

AI use is subject to the same privacy policies that all Hiram College employees and students are expected to uphold. Entering the personal data of others into an unsecure AI program could constitute a FERPA or HIPAA violation. See the respective policies regarding these acts and their enforcement. (See Appendix for a quick guide to FERPA aligned AI use.)

Final Comments

This policy is meant to ensure that the use of AI technology does not negatively impact the mission, culture, and people of Hiram College. It is not meant to be an endorsement or condemnation of this technology, nor is it a comprehensive review of all the ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI. As with any technology, we recommend you take the time to understand how it works, its impacts, and its stakeholders to come to your own decision on if and how you utilize AI-backed technologies. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to remain aligned with evolving technologies, ethical standards, and the mission of Hiram College; if you would like to make a suggestion, please email the AI Taskforce at OAADean@hiram.edu. Feedback from students, faculty, and staff is encouraged and will help ensure responsible and innovative use of AI across the institution.

Appendix: FERPA Aligned AI Use Quick Reference for Faculty and Staff

Under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), institutions are responsible for protecting the confidentiality of education records and limiting unauthorized disclosure of personally identifiable student information.

Many popular AI-backed tools, such as ChatGPT, use the data inputted by users to further train their algorithm. This means that intellectual property and personal information entered could reappear in generated content for other users. Additionally, storing this data leaves it vulnerable to data leaks and theft, which may even be tied to identifying information like emails. Entering FERPA-protected data into unapproved AI tools may result in unauthorized disclosure of student information and could place both the individual and the institution in violation of federal privacy regulations.

Definitions

- Education Records: Records related to a student and maintained by the institution.
- Personally Identifiable Information (PII): Information that can directly or indirectly identify a student.
- AI Tools: Any software or platform that uses machine learning or generative models to produce an output based on user input (e.g., ChatGPT, OpenAI, Grammarly AI, etc.).

If it comes from a student record or internal system, do not enter it into AI.

- Names, Student IDs, Email Addresses, Dates of Birth.
- Grades, Transcripts, Advising Notes.
- Financial Aid, Income Information.
- Billing, Payments, Balances.
- Application Data, Contact Information.
- Any combination of details that could identify a student.

AI Use Guidance

Do (FERPA-Aligned Practices)	**Do not (FERPA Violations & Risks)**
Use for general outreach email templates	Do not input applicant or student details
Revising public-facing text	Do not input GPA/transcript details
Use for general explanations	Do not input disciplinary/conduct information
Use for creating FAQ content	Do not input emails from students
Summarizing publicly available policies	Do not input financial or billing details

Before using any AI tool, ask:

1. Does this involve a real applicant or student?
2. Could the applicant or student be identified directly or indirectly?
3. Is this information part of an education record?
4. Has the College approved this specific use?

Take Aways

- Do not input anything you would not feel comfortable posting publicly.
- AI is only safe for generic, non-identifiable content.
- You are individually responsible for protecting the privacy, confidentiality, and security of applicant and student information when using any AI tools.

Glossary of Key Terms

Academic Integrity:
The commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic work, including proper attribution of sources and avoidance of plagiarism or unauthorized assistance.

Accessibility:
Ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, have equitable access to educational resources and technologies, often through accommodations or assistive tools.

Accommodation Letter:
A formal document from the Office of Disability Access outlining approved adjustments or supports for a student with a documented disability.

AI-Assisted Work:
Assignments or tasks where AI tools are used to support or supplement the user's own work, such as brainstorming, grammar checking, or generating drafts, but where the user remains responsible for the final content.

AI Technologies/Tools:
Software or platforms that use artificial intelligence to perform tasks, including but not limited to chatbots, virtual assistants, image generators, and automated grading systems.

Artificial Intelligence (AI):
The development and application of computer systems and machines to perform functions (such as decision-making, learning, and reasoning) that require and/or mimic human intelligence.

Citing AI Use:
The act of formally acknowledging when and how AI tools have contributed to an assignment or project, following the citation style specified by the instructor or institution.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act):
A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and restricts the sharing of personally identifiable information.

Generative AI:
A type of AI system that can create new content (such as text, images, audio, or code) based on patterns learned from large datasets. Examples include ChatGPT, DALL-E, and similar tools.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act):
A federal law that protects sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge.

Intellectual Property (IP):
Creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, and images, which are protected by law.

Original Work:
Work that is created entirely by the student or faculty member, without unauthorized assistance from AI or other external sources.

Plagiarism:
The act of using someone else's work, ideas, or expressions without proper acknowledgment, including content generated by AI, and presenting it as one's own.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):
A set of standards for making web content more accessible to people with disabilities.