

Course policy on the use of generative AI

Announced in Week 2 • applies to every assignment, the final project, and both examinations

This policy does not require your signature. It requires that you follow it, and that you declare what you did.

It is announced in class, posted on myCourseVille, and takes effect from Week 3.

1. Why the course has a policy at all

You will use these tools. So will every reviewer, editor and collaborator you ever work with. A prohibition would be unenforceable, and it would teach you to conceal a tool you are going to use professionally for the rest of your career.

What the profession actually requires is disclosure. Every major publisher — Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley, ACS, RSC — now requires authors to declare AI use, and all of them agree on one thing: an AI system cannot be an author, because it cannot be accountable. This course asks you to practise the professional norm rather than a classroom substitute for it.

The course does not use AI-detection software. Detection tools are unreliable — Turnitin's own documentation states that its score "should not be used as the sole basis for action" — and policing you with an unreliable instrument would be both unfair and beside the point. The mechanism here is your declaration.

2. The three tiers

	What it covers	What you must do
GREEN	Correcting the grammar, spelling or clarity of text you wrote yourself Formatting references Help with code that generates a figure from your own data Translating your own draft — see also Amber if the translation is substantial	Add one line to your submission noting the tool and what it did. No appendix required.
AMBER	Brainstorming structure or organisation Asking for counter-arguments or weaknesses in your own reasoning Screening or summarising literature that you then read yourself Generating a schematic or explanatory illustration Substantial translation of your own draft into English	Permitted, but you must attach an appendix logging the tool and version, what you used it for, and the prompts you used. The declaration is part of the assessed submission.
RED	Generating substantive text — an Introduction, a Discussion, an abstract — and presenting it as your own writing Asking a tool to produce references or citations Generating, altering or "improving" data Generating or altering images that represent experimental data	Prohibited. Treated under the Faculty's academic integrity procedures, not as a formatting error.

	What it covers	What you must do
	Uploading a classmate's manuscript to any AI tool during the Week 14 peer-review exercise	

3. Two rules that are easy to get wrong

- Fabricated references are the single most common serious failure. Language models produce citations that are correctly formatted, plausibly titled, and do not exist. If you did not open it, do not cite it. This is Red, and it is the reason it is Red.
- Confidentiality is absolute. In Week 14 you will review a classmate's manuscript. Do not upload it — not the text, not the figures, not the tables. RSC prohibits this outright for its reviewers; Wiley prohibits uploading any part of a manuscript; NIH bans it for grant review. The rule you follow here is the rule you will be bound by professionally.

4. What Red is, and what it is not

Two of the Red items — writing your Introduction from bullet points, and generating explanatory illustrations without checking the venue — are permitted by some publishers if disclosed. This course is stricter than the profession on those, deliberately and for one reason: you are here to learn to write and to build figures. Using a tool to skip the thing you enrolled to learn is not a rule violation in the outside world; it is simply a waste of the semester. In this course it is graded as one.

The rest of the Red list — fabricated citations, fabricated data, altered experimental images, breached confidentiality — is prohibited everywhere, by everyone, permanently.

5. The declaration you attach

During the preparation of this work the author used [TOOL, version] in order to [PURPOSE]. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.

- Name the tool and the version. "AI was used" is not a declaration.
- For Amber uses, attach the prompt log as an appendix.
- If you used nothing, write "No generative AI tools were used in the preparation of this work." A missing declaration is treated as a missing section, not as an absence of use.
- An inaccurate declaration is an integrity matter. An honest one, even of extensive Amber use, is not.

If you are unsure which tier something falls into, ask before you submit.

Asking has never cost anyone marks in this course. Guessing wrong has.