



Belmont Policy - 106

Acceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Responsible Offices: Provost Office, Human Resources, Legal Counsel, Information Technology

Responsible Administrators: CIO, Provost, Deputy University Counsel

Policy Approved by the BPRC: February 13, 2025

Policy Statement

This policy establishes guidelines for the ethical and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by students, faculty, and staff. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the use of AI tools, including generative AI, in a manner that fosters academic integrity, intellectual property protection, privacy, and compliance with legal obligations. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and students and applies to AI use in teaching, learning, research, professional practice, the creative arts, and administration.

Scope

This policy applies to all Belmont faculty, staff, and students.

Policy

The university recognizes the value of AI in enhancing educational experiences, advancing research, promoting creative experiences, and improving efficiency. However, generative AI (GAI) tools, while powerful, present unique legal and ethical challenges, particularly in areas such as copyright, intellectual property rights, and privacy. As a result, all AI use must adhere to university policies, including those governing academic integrity, intellectual property, and data privacy.

General Usage

Approved Generative AI Tools

The only Belmont-wide approved GAI tool is Microsoft Copilot, which is intended to provide a secure virtual environment for AI work. Copilot is included in all Microsoft products. Usage of other commercial GAI products for university use must be approved by Belmont's department of Information Technology.

Exposure of Sensitive Information

Belmont faculty, staff, and students may not submit sensitive information, in full or in part, to unapproved generative AI tools. This includes personal, free or paid AI and GAI tools. Sensitive information includes, but is not limited to:

- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, Social Security numbers, and other unique identifiers.
- **Trade Secrets and Intellectual Property:** Proprietary business information, research data, and unpublished works.
- **Sensitive Belmont Documents and Contracts:** Internal reports, strategic plans, legal agreements, and financial records.
- **Faculty and Staff Evaluations:** Performance reviews, disciplinary records, and other personnel-related documents.
- **Creative Artifacts:** Original works of art, literature, music, and other creative outputs, unless consent is given.
- **Academic Records:** Grades, transcripts, and other student-related information.
- **Internal Communications:** Emails, memos, and other forms of internal correspondence containing sensitive information outlined here.

Generative AI tools are not generally considered secure, and any information posted to them should be considered generically exposed.

In addition, many AI tools, especially generative AI, collect and process large amounts of personal data. Faculty and students must comply with data privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), when using AI tools that require the submission of sensitive information.

Commercial AI Tools

The use of commercial AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and others, should be properly used as outlined in the license agreements for educational or research purposes. Using unauthorized or pirated versions of AI software is strictly prohibited. Faculty and students must familiarize themselves with the terms of service of any commercial AI product they use. Many AI tools restrict certain uses, including generating content for commercial purposes or creating outputs that violate intellectual property laws.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including academic sanctions for students and professional sanctions for faculty and staff. Legal consequences may also apply if the use of AI tools results in copyright infringement, privacy breaches, or other legal violations.

Use of AI by Staff

Staff are encouraged to use AI as a tool to perform, scale and optimize tasks in the normal course of their job. This includes the ethical use of AI to enhance productivity, improve decision-making, and support innovation. While staff are encouraged to explore AI solutions that improve efficiency, over-reliance on AI at the expense of creativity, critical thinking, or quality work is discouraged. All AI outputs should be validated for accuracy before being shared or acted upon.

Staff must ensure AI is used ethically, taking care to avoid bias, protect confidentiality, and comply with all applicable data protection laws. Limitations and exclusions to the use of AI listed in this document apply to all staff. While AI can support decision-making, it should not replace human judgment in high-impact decisions. Critical decisions should always involve human oversight to ensure accuracy and fairness.

AI-generated content should respect intellectual property rights, and staff should never use AI for deceptive practices or personal gain in the course of their duties. If AI involves external stakeholders, legal counsel should be consulted to ensure compliance.

Use of AI by Students

GAI and AI can be used to enhance student learning in a variety of ways: from research, planning, to fully writing an assignment or project. Students may use AI generated content in their assignments to the extent determined by the faculty member of record in the course syllabus. Instructors may require within the scope of entire courses or on a per assignment basis that students clearly disclose when and how AI was used in their academic work (e.g., assignments, essays, projects). In these cases, misrepresenting AI-generated content as their own original work without attribution and/or in violation of instructor requirements constitutes a form of plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is a violation of university academic integrity policy and will be handled by the Academic Misconduct Committee.

Accommodations

Belmont allows for reasonable exceptions on AI usage in academic work for students with accommodations. The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS), in consultation with faculty, will determine if students who require specific accommodations may be permitted to use AI tools as part of their learning support. Approved AI usage must enhance accessibility without compromising academic integrity or the essential learning outcomes of the course. OAS will provide faculty and students acceptable scope of AI assistance, including guidance on how to monitor AI tools to ensure they serve as a legitimate support rather than a substitute for personal academic effort.

Use of AI by Faculty

Course Design and Instruction.

Faculty are encouraged to integrate AI into their teaching to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. However, faculty must inform students when AI-generated materials (such as lecture notes, assignments, or exams) are being used. Faculty may also use AI tools for administrative tasks, such as grading assistance or providing AI-

generated feedback for student review, provided their use is clearly communicated in the syllabus, and does not violate specific accreditation standards where they exist.

Faculty *may not* rely exclusively on AI to generate course materials, assignments, or assessments without human oversight and intervention. All final decisions on grades must involve human judgment and review.

Research and Publication

Faculty must be cautious when using AI tools for research or academic publication, particularly when generating text, data, or images. AI tools must be disclosed according to journal and granting agency policies. AI-generated outputs may infringe on existing copyrights or intellectual property. Faculty must ensure that any AI-generated content used in research complies with legal standards and is appropriately cited or attributed.

Syllabus

All Belmont faculty are expected to include a declarative statement of scope for the acceptable usage of AI for each specific class. Faculty are encouraged to create thoughtful and clear AI limitations based on course content, expected student outcomes, and tools typically used in the academic space. Although not required by policy, faculty may also wish to provide explicit guidelines to how AI usage should be cited.

Bias and Fairness

AI systems can perpetuate biases present in their training data. Faculty must exercise caution when using AI for decision-making or evaluation and ensure that AI tools do not unfairly disadvantage any group of students. Faculty should ensure that AI applications do not create barriers for students with disabilities.

AI in Art, Music, Literature, and Creative Disciplines

GAI tools pose specific legal and ethical challenges in creative fields.

Copyright Concerns

AI tools can produce works that resemble existing copyrighted materials. Faculty and students must avoid using generative AI to create derivative works that may infringe on the intellectual property of others. This applies to AI-generated music, images, artwork, and written content.

For example, generating music using commercial AI platforms like OpenAI's Jukebox or images using DALL·E may inadvertently violate copyright law if the outputs closely mimic copyrighted works.

Creative Ownership

AI-generated content raises questions about ownership and authorship. Faculty and students should be aware that under current law, AI systems themselves cannot own copyrights; however, the human operator or user may hold rights if significant human input is involved.

Exceptions: In cases where AI is used to create content as part of a collaborative process in creative courses, faculty and students should maintain clear attribution and documentation of originality.

Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, including learning, reasoning, and self-correction.

Generative AI (GAI): A subset of AI capable of producing text, images, audio, video, and other media formats, including tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT, DALL·E, Gemini, Adobe Firefly, and Midjourney.

Commercial AI Products: AI tools developed by for-profit companies, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google Gemini, MidJourney, Adobe Firefly, Microsoft Copilot, Grammarly, and others.

References

1. FERPA, HIPAA

Notes

1. Date of official approval of current version: N/A
2. Date of original approval: N/A
3. History: N/A