

Astrophoria Foundation Year: Guidance on student use of AI

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the principles that define the Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme's engagement with artificial intelligence (AI). This is not intended to be an exhaustive guide, but to instead outline the principles that students on the Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme should follow. Students should also refer to their tutors or supervisors on any specific issues regarding the use of AI. Where specific guidance is not provided for an assignment, this document outlines the basic principles that students should follow.

One of the main aims of the Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme is the development of the academic skills that students will need to access and thrive in undergraduate studies. It is important therefore to recognise that the use of AI to complete specific tasks can reduce the number of opportunities to develop, practice and embed these skills within an individual's own skill set. As such, it is important for students to learn to make judgements about when it is appropriate to use AI as a tool for learning, and when using AI removes the opportunity for skills development, which is central to academic success.

Astrophoria Foundation Year principles on AI use

Led by the Russell Group Principles¹ on the use of generative AI tools in education, the Astrophoria Foundation Year (AFY) Programme supports students who may wish to use AI to complement their learning. At the same time, the AFY Programme wishes to ensure that students are aware of the limitations and biases associated with AI which can result in misleading or incorrect information. The AFY Programme promotes the use of AI as a research tool, but recognises that it is not a substitute for original work.

| Principle of AI use | The AFY Programme response |
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| Use of AI as a research tool | The AFY Programme recognizes the value of students using generative AI as a research tool, and to develop concepts and ideas. However, the writing and final ideas presented in assessments must be the student's own. This |

¹ <https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/Russell%20Group%20principles%20on%20generative%20AI%20in%20education.pdf>

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| | principle helps to ensure that AI supplements students' intellectual development rather than replacing it. There are some examples of how to use generative AI as research tools on the university website . |
| Use of generative AI for explanatory purposes | The AFY Programme recognizes the value of students using generative AI for explanatory purposes and non-assessed tasks, and there are some good examples and suggestions of how to use generative AI tools for explanatory purposes on the university website . |
| Use of AI effectively | Students must be aware of the need to engage critically with AI tools, to track their use and document AI-generated content in their reference list. Support of the development of this skill will be delivered by course and PUGS teams within the AFY Programme, and can also be accessed via iSkills workshops . |
| Use of AI responsibly | Generative AI applications may store or use the data students upload to improve their models, depending on the platform's terms of service. Before using any AI tool, students are advised to review their privacy policies to understand how their data will be handled. This includes the students having responsibility to avoid uploading or pasting private or copyright information into software outside the university parameters (e.g. exam papers and sample papers, sections of books, confidential emails etc), as sharing these could be a breach of copyright and IT policies. |

Use of generative AI in submissions and other assessments

Within the AFY Programme,

- For all **in person invigilated exams**, the use of generative AI is **prohibited**. Spelling and grammar checkers will only be permitted where cited as an examination adjustment.
- For all **assessed submissions**, the use of generative AI should be **minimal**. Further detail can be found in the FAQ below.

It is imperative that students understand that submitting work for assessment that contains AI generated content as their own work, constitutes a breach of academic integrity and is considered [plagiarism](#), which is a disciplinary offence. **You are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the content of your submitted work which should reflect your original thinking.**

Should a student be unclear, students are advised to contact their tutor or supervisor in the first instance, or their subject or course lead for advice.

FAQ on the appropriate use of AI tools in assessed submissions

NOTE: Course leads, subject leads and tutors will **explicitly identify where AI is not to be used in assessed submissions**, otherwise students can assume that the guidance below is permissible.

| | YES | NO |
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| Can I use AI tools such as spelling and grammar checkers in my coursework and assessments? | AI tools that focus on automation, rather than creating new content, may be used for supporting tasks (e.g. to check for spelling and grammatical errors) | Submitting assessed work that has been created by writing assistants (such as GrammarlyGO) is prohibited. |
| Can I use AI tools such as text prediction in my coursework and assessments? | Some programmes have the facility to predict the next word in a sentence as the author is writing it. Students are permitted to use text prediction in this way, but are reminded to use it critically, and advised to ensure that the originality of thought remains what the author was trying to convey. | Submitting work for assessment that has been created by generative AI is prohibited. Students are advised to turn off automated AI agents where they wish to develop specific skills, to avoid being biased by information presented by AI. Support to do this is available from the AFY Programme Team, should students request this. |
| Can I use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to generate ideas or outlines for my essays? | You may use generative AI tools to assist with brainstorming for ideas, gathering information, organizing your thoughts, or refining your research direction. However, the ideas, analysis, and final work must reflect your own critical thinking, creativity, and writing style. AI should support your process, not replace your unique insights and learning. | If AI tools contribute significantly to your work, and your tutor has approved their use or the specific assessment requires it, you must acknowledge and cite their use. Information on citing AI can be found here . Students will be expected to make appropriate use of the AI declaration (see Canvas). |
| Are AI tools allowed for translation purposes? | The use of AI translation tools e.g., Google Translate, is permitted for reference purposes such as understanding unfamiliar words or phrases or checking grammar. | Students should be wary of depending on the accuracy of the results, which should be checked. Consultation with tutors is advised, as students may be penalised for inaccuracies. |

Note: All students will be required to complete a declaration into their use of Generative AI (which can be found on Canvas for current students), for all assessed submissions.

Use of AI for tutorial work (that does not form part of an assessed submission)

NOTE: Course leads, subject leads and tutors will **explicitly identify where AI is not to be used in assessed submissions**, otherwise students can assume that the guidance below is permissible.

Students are permitted to use AI to support their tutorial work in the manner outlined in the assessed submission information above for work that does not form part of an assessed submission. Tutors, subject and course leads will provide explicit guidance where this is not permitted.

Use of AI to prepare for an in-person invigilated exam

NOTE: Course leads, subject leads and tutors will **explicitly identify where AI is and is not to be used when preparing for an in person invigilated exam**, otherwise students can assume that the guidance below is permissible.

Students are permitted to use AI to support their preparation for in-person invigilated exams but students should be clear it is their responsibility to avoid uploading or pasting private or copyright information into software outside the university parameters (e.g. exam papers and sample papers, sections of books, confidential emails etc), as sharing these could be a breach of copyright and IT policies. Before using any AI tool, students are advised to review their privacy policies to understand how their data will be handled. In addition, students are reminded of the need to engage critically with AI tools when using them for this purpose.