



Framework for Responsible and Ethical Use of AI at the University of Alberta

The University of Alberta acknowledges the potential Artificial Intelligence (AI) has to enhance learning, teaching, research, administration, and the other work we do at the University. AI tools have the potential to improve efficiency and enrich experiences in teaching, research, student life, and administration. However, these tools should be used with careful evaluation of their risks and alignment with [core commitments](#) as outlined in the University's strategic plans. AI systems often have limitations, including built-in biases and exclusion of certain types of knowledge. Engaging with these tools must align with our broader commitment to delivering innovative and impactful learning experiences, as well as promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and reconciliation, as outlined in the University's strategies and policies.

This framework provides guidance on the responsible and ethical use of AI at the University of Alberta. It seeks to [build trust](#) among those who will be impacted by our use of AI by ensuring we use these tools with a commitment to transparency, fairness, accountability, and mindfulness.

Principles for Ethical AI Use

The University of Alberta is committed to the ethical use of AI. The following six principles are founded in the University's strategic priorities and inspired by the Government of Canada's [Guiding principles for the use of AI in government](#). These principles are intended to act as a guide as you use AI in your work and learning at the University of Alberta.

Principle 1: Transparency

Be transparent about how you use AI. This applies to learning, research, teaching, or administration. Ensure there is clear communication about how these systems work, what data they use, and how decisions are made. Where appropriate, inform those impacted by your use of AI about when and how it is being used.

Principle 2: Inclusive, Equitable, and Accessible

When using AI, be critical of its outputs, being aware of inaccuracies or potential biases. AI systems can inadvertently produce imbalanced or fabricated results, especially when trained on incomplete or non-representative data. Be aware that many AI systems favor western ways of knowing and may struggle to produce outputs that are [equitable, diverse, and inclusive](#). It is important to recognize that not all students, staff, or faculty may have equal access to AI tools and we should ensure our use of these technologies does not unintentionally exclude individuals or communities from participating fully in learning, research, or other activities.

Principle 3: Mindfulness

Exercise awareness of the broader impacts of using AI. Reflect on how AI influences your work and decisions, considering its effects on learning, relationships, and your professional responsibilities. Use AI as a complementary tool, not as a replacement for thoughtful engagement.

Principle 4: Accountability

You are responsible for the ways you use AI and its outputs. Ensure that your actions and decisions align with the University's core commitments. Take ownership of the outcomes generated by AI, actively fact-checking and verifying content to maintain integrity in all contexts.

Principle 5: Privacy and Data Protection

Protect personal and sensitive information when using AI. AI tools must comply with privacy laws, including Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act). Particular care must be taken when handling Indigenous data, ensuring respect for data sovereignty which may mean not including these data. The collection, use and disclosure of personal and/or sensitive information must be completed with the highest degree of anonymity possible to ensure that AI does not compromise the trust of individuals.

Principle 6: Human Oversight

AI should be a tool that supports, not replaces, human judgment. Critical decisions, especially those affecting students, faculty, staff or those directly impacted by our work, must involve human oversight. Use AI to enhance your work, while retaining human-centered decision-making in critical areas.

Privacy and Legal Considerations

The University of Alberta's approach to AI is guided by principles that ensure the ethical, responsible, and transparent use of these tools. The following key considerations should shape the use of AI across the institution:

Privacy and Data Security

The University's use of AI tools must comply with Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act; or any successor legislation) as well as all relevant University policies, procedures, and applicable provincial, federal, and international privacy laws. Anonymized and/or de-identified information should be used. However, if the AI tool use case must involve identifiable personal information, the University is required by the FOIP Act to limit the collection, use and disclosure of the identifiable personal information to that which is necessary to meet the intended purpose. Special care must be taken when handling data related to Indigenous communities, in line with the Braiding, Past, Present & Future plan's emphasis on respecting data sovereignty and cultural sensitivity.

Individual Accountability

Your use of AI at the University should follow the procedures outlined in the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Procedure](#). While the University of Alberta encourages the use of AI tools to enhance learning, teaching, research, and administrative tasks, some AI tools may not have been reviewed by or have an official agreement in place between the University and the tool provider. In such cases, it is up to individuals to carefully consider and manage any risks that come with using these tools. It is the responsibility of the individual to have a base level of AI literacy to safely and appropriately use AI. The free online course *Navigating Generative AI* would be a good starting point.

Copyright Considerations

When using generative AI, be mindful of copyright and Intellectual property (IP) concerns, including the source of the content the AI is trained on, the ownership of AI-generated outputs, and any materials you upload to the system. Avoid presenting AI-generated content as original work without proper attribution. For guidance on protecting your work and ensuring compliance with copyright standards, please refer to the University's [copyright resources](#).

Privacy and Security Review

If you are unsure about your use of AI for a given project, you are encouraged to submit a [Privacy and Security Review](#).

Additional Support

For guidance on implementing this framework, or for support with specific AI projects, members of the University community can consult the following resources:

- The AI Steering Committee at the University of Alberta
- University legal services for advice on privacy and intellectual property
- Indigenous Advisors for guidance on culturally sensitive data use
- The [Information and Privacy Office](#) at the University of Alberta

AI Statement: OpenAI's ChatGPT 4o was used to assist in the development of this framework. All outputs were reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta's AI Steering Committee.

Document updated: December 19, 2024