



Curtin University

The background image shows a modern architectural structure. In the foreground, there is a brick wall with a large archway. To the right of the archway is a grassy slope. In the background, a large building with a geodesic dome is visible. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Guidelines for the use of AI in research

For researchers and research students



About the photographs: Designed in the 1970s, The Dome remains a rare architectural treasure in Western Australia, one of only two built in almost identical fashion. Its striking structure, aluminium tessellated panels and bold exoskeleton have long made it a campus icon.

In 2026, it entered a new chapter, reimagined into an open-air pavilion and gathering space that honours Country and community.

About these guidelines

These guidelines apply to all researchers at Curtin University, including research students in master and doctoral programs. They cover the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (text, images, audio, code and data applications) and generative AI-driven support platforms.

They should be read in conjunction with Curtin’s Artificial Intelligence Policy and other policies and processes relevant to your research, including those of publishers, funders and governments.

Curtin’s AI Policy is available at curtin.edu.au/about/governance/compliance-legal/find-a-policy.

Check curtin.edu.au/students/essentials or staffportal.curtin.edu.au/research for the latest version of this document.

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Background

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising research methodologies globally, and empowering researchers to tackle contemporary challenges in novel and sophisticated ways. At Curtin, we apply AI across diverse research domains – from the sciences to the humanities – promoting collaboration and driving impactful research and innovation¹.

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is a technology that uses machine learning to identify patterns within large training datasets. GenAI technologies can be used for many purposes, such as generating written text, images and videos and code. At Curtin, we encourage students and staff to use GenAI appropriately and ethically, and in ways that do not undermine the quality of their work.

Curtin encourages all researchers to reflect on the following key principles for the appropriate and ethical use of GenAI²:

- GenAI may produce content that is inaccurate, biased or entirely fabricated. It is your responsibility to verify all information and review outputs before using them, including confirming that any content generated is accurate.
- GenAI should support your thinking and learning, not substitute it. Relying on GenAI too heavily will undermine the development of your own skills and knowledge.
- Acknowledge when and how you have used GenAI, particularly in any work that will be assessed, published or shared with others.

As of 2026, Curtin no longer uses AI detection tools when assessing student work, including HDR student theses².



Using AI in the design and conduct of research

Research can be enhanced with AI tools that quickly summarise or refine text to increase readability, analyse large data sets, craft and debug code, communicate research results and streamline repetitive tasks.

While there are many benefits, it is also important to ensure³:

- intellectual integrity and authorship;
- the safeguarding of intellectual property, including Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property;
- the culturally appropriate use of data and adherence to Principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty;
- repeatable, transparent and reliable content free from bias;
- the centrality of human knowledge and expertise;
- appropriate human oversight and individual expert judgement; and
- the minimisation of energy usage and environmental impacts as far as possible.

AI tools must never be used as a substitute for human critical thinking, expertise and evaluation. AI tools should always be applied with human oversight and control. Ultimately, authors are responsible and accountable for the contents of their work⁴.

S.E.C.U.R.E GenAI use framework

You should exercise caution with the information you enter into AI tools and use the SECURE framework when making decisions about your AI use.

S – Security credentials

Input must not contain:

- Login credentials
- Passwords
- API keys
- Other sensitive security-related data that could compromise Curtin systems or personal accounts.

E – Ethical Use

Input must not contain:

- Data that raises human rights or ethical concerns
- First Nations cultural IP
- Data that breaches policy or law
- Discriminatory/harmful information.

C – Confidential Information

Input must not contain:

- Information that could cause harm to Curtin
- Sensitive information (e.g. contracts)
- Financial information
- Proprietary information
- Information considered confidential, protected or confidential:legal by Curtin or others.

U – Use of Personal Information

Input must not contain:

- Information that directly or indirectly identifies, or is traceable to, a person
- Personal information as defined by law
- Confidential or personal information.

R – Rights Protection

Input must not contain:

- Works protected by copyright, trademark or patent law — including teaching and research materials
- Information only currently available to staff and students.

E – Evaluation of Outputs

Ensure you:

- Assess GenAI output for accuracy, reliability and bias
- Don't use GenAI in isolation for decisions directly affecting individuals.

Adapted for Curtin University from S.E.C.U.R.E.GenAI use framework for staff, © 2025 Mark A. Bassett, Charles Sturt University Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

If you don't meet the S.E.C.U.R.E. criteria

If your usage doesn't meet one or more of the criteria, your use of GenAI is not Curtin approved. If you want to proceed, you must:

- **Evaluate:** which category triggered the response? What's the specific risk? Can input be reworked to meet the criteria?
- **Mitigate:** could an alternative approach or safeguard reduce the risk (e.g. anonymising data, changing how output is used)?
- **Revisit:** apply S.E.C.U.R.E. criteria to the adjusted input.
- **Seek advice:** if it still doesn't meet the framework, email ai@curtin.edu.au with details and await approval before proceeding.

Intellectual property and privacy

Information provided to generative AI may enter the public domain and be accessed by unspecified third parties, and information produced by generative AI may inadvertently use the intellectual property of others or be factually incorrect⁵. You must check the terms and conditions of any AI tool that you use to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of your data and inputs, including your unpublished or published manuscript, report or thesis. Care should be taken with any personally identifiable data⁴; Curtin Privacy Impact Assessments are required for compliance with Section 16 of the *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (WA)*.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property

Inputting or retrieving Indigenous knowledge, language, art or any other content may breach Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights through lack of attribution, disregard for cultural protocols or use of Traditional Knowledge without Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the relevant knowledge holders. This is additional to standard ethics approval.

If your project touches on ICIP, consult Talia Elliot, Executive Officer Indigenous in the Research Office at Curtin, for guidance and support before incorporating AI into your project design or data handling.

Using enterprise-licenced GenAI tools

We recommend you use GenAI tools provided under a Curtin University enterprise licence to ensure the security of your data. At Curtin Perth, Microsoft Copilot is available to staff and HDR students, and Claude is available upon request to DTS. Staff and students at other Curtin campuses should check their campus's enterprise licenced tools.

HDR students and writing your thesis

A thesis must represent your own original work. A thesis submitted for examination is assessed work, so the key principles of verifying all AI outputs and acknowledging when and how GenAI has been used apply, and you should be transparent with your supervisors about the tools you have used.

Where thesis chapters are prepared for publication, the funder, publisher and journal requirements described later in this document also apply (see **Writing research publications** on page 7 and **Writing grant applications** on page 10).

Enterprise licenced GenAI tools can be used as a ‘critical friend’ to review thesis drafts, identify gaps in logic or context, and suggest alternative interpretations and limitations.

You may also find GenAI useful for suggesting analysis techniques and tools for the types of data you have generated. Always check these suggestions with your supervisor to ensure they are relevant for your context.

Example disclosure statement for theses

Use of AI, including the software name and version, is to be disclosed in your thesis (e.g, in the methodology and acknowledgements section). Preferably, this would be accompanied by an appendix of AI prompts used. AI tools must not be cited as authoritative sources.

Primary literature or data must always be referenced.

An example disclosure statement that can be used in a thesis:

“This thesis has benefited from the use of Generative AI tools (specifically ChatGPT (GPT-5.5)) to improve the clarity, structure, and readability of certain sections. All substantive intellectual contributions, including the conception of ideas, research design, data analysis, and interpretation of findings, are entirely the author’s own.”

Writing research publications

Most publishers recognise the potential of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to help authors work efficiently and achieve better outcomes, provided the work meets their AI policy⁴. Principles of authorship, accountability and disclosure are generally at the core of these policies⁸.

Authorship

You should not list AI tools as an author or co-author, nor cite AI tools as an author. Authorship implies responsibilities and tasks that can only be attributed to and performed by humans. Each individual author is accountable for ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved⁴. A generative AI tool cannot be listed as an author because, being non-human, it cannot take accountability for the content of a manuscript⁶.

Accountability

Authors are accountable for the contents of their work. This includes accountability for⁴:

- carefully reviewing and verifying the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and impartiality of all AI-generated output (including checking the sources, as AI-generated references can be incorrect or fabricated);
- editing and adapting all material thoroughly to ensure the manuscript represents the author’s authentic and original contribution and reflects their own analysis, interpretation, insights and ideas;
- ensuring the use of any tools or sources, AI-based or otherwise, is made clear and transparent to readers; and
- ensuring that no content is uploaded to any AI tool which might infringe the author’s or the publisher’s intellectual property.

These principles also apply to industry reports describing demand-driven research. Ensuring that proprietary data and resulting IP are not disclosed through AI tools is particularly important.

Disclosure

There is consensus among reputable publishers that authors must disclose the use of GenAI in their work, however you should familiarise yourself with your publisher's specific requirements for AI disclosure prior to submitting your manuscript.

Typically, publishers advise authors to disclose the use of AI in their Acknowledgements when AI is used to assist with drafting, editing, translation or formatting; in their Methods when AI is used to assist with research methodology, data collection or analysis, or literature review processes; and in figure captions when AI generates or edits any visual content^{9, 10}. This ensures that the disclosure of AI usage appears alongside relevant content, where reviewers and readers would naturally expect to find it.

Wiley, for example, recommends sharing the following in an AI disclosure statement when included in your Acknowledgements⁹:

- AI technology name and version
- Date/year of use
- The AI technology's role in your work (language translation, substantial editing or text generation, organisation of document or argument flow, etc.)
- Specific sections where the AI was used in the document
- The author's role in directing or reviewing the work of the AI technology

Wiley also provides the following example disclosure statements:

"The authors acknowledge the use of Microsoft Copilot (accessed August 2024) to generate a first draft of the Acknowledgments section and translate the Methods section from Spanish to English. Gemini (accessed July 2025) was used to reorganize the Discussion section for clarity and flow. All AI-assisted text was reviewed and revised by the authors to ensure accuracy and clarity of meaning."

...

"The authors acknowledge the use of Claude 3.5 Sonnet (accessed July 2025) to support creation of the abstract and to suggest reorganization of Discussion section for clarity and flow. All AI-generated suggestions were reviewed, revised, and approved by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the work."

Figures, images and artwork

Publishers generally do not permit the use of GenAI or AI-assisted tools to create, enhance or otherwise alter images in submitted manuscripts, however there are exceptions, and authors should check the rules of their chosen publisher.

Journal and publisher policies

Follow the links below to explore the AI guidelines for the largest five academic publishers:

- Elsevier: elsevier.com/en-au/about/policies-and-standards/generative-ai-policies-for-journals
- Springer: group.springernature.com/gp/group/ai/ai-guidance-for-our-researchers-and-communities
- Wiley: wiley.com/en-au/publish/article/ai-guidelines
- Taylor & Francis: taylorandfrancis.com/our-policies/ai-policy
- SAGE: sagepub.com/journals/publication-ethics-policies/artificial-intelligence-policy



Writing grant applications

Generative AI can be a valuable tool to assist in drafting, summarising and streamlining grant applications, or to assist with English language editing. These tools have the potential to reduce the time burden associated with drafting grant applications and increase the time spent on research and innovation⁵. Funding agencies recognise that applicants may use generative AI tools to support the preparation of grant applications, for instance in testing ideas, improving language, and summarising text. Applicants should take care that any such use does not compromise their intellectual contribution or introduce flaws or incorrect data³.

Always exercise caution when using generative AI tools in the preparation of grant applications, given it may not be possible to monitor or manage subsequent use of information entered into generative AI databases⁵. Use of Curtin-provided enterprise solutions such as Copilot and Claude are strongly recommended to protect Curtin's, and your own, intellectual property.

Applicants bear the responsibility for the content of their application and are considered the author of the content they submit. Applicants are expected to be transparent about their AI use when this information is requested³. Applicants and their Administering Organisations must certify that all information provided in their applications is accurate and are accountable for any misinformation and factual errors more broadly, including those resulting from the use of generative AI in their applications⁵.

Administering Organisations

Administering Organisations, as the applicant, are also responsible for³:

- ensuring that applications submitted are complete and all details in the application are accurate and current at the time of submission; and
- ensuring that applications do not contain false or misleading information, or otherwise breach the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018*.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research or their delegate or equivalent at an Administering Organisation is also required to certify applications on submission to the funding agency. This includes certification that all participants are responsible for the authorship and intellectual content of the application, and that they have not impinged the IP rights of intellectual contributions of others³. The Research Office at Curtin relies upon disclosure and appropriate use of AI by researchers when certifying applications.

Assessing grant applications & manuscripts

Assessing grant applications

Peer reviewers must not input any part of a grant application, or any information from a grant application, into an AI system to assist with the assessment of applications. The use of generative AI by peer reviewers may compromise the integrity of the peer review process and may breach the Peer Review Principles and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Peer reviewers are to treat applications in-confidence and must not disclose any matter regarding applications under review, as entering confidential application information into generative AI would breach these confidentiality requirements and obligations⁵.

The use of generative AI tools by assessors may be permitted, provided:³

- assessors meet their obligations to provide detailed, high quality and constructive assessments grounded in their own expert judgment. Assessors should not use AI to assist in forming an opinion of the quality of the application they are assessing. Unchecked or irresponsible use of generative AI risks compromising the integrity and trustworthiness of the peer review process.
- confidentiality of all application materials is preserved. This includes the ideas (intellectual property) within an application, and the actual content (text, data and images). Inputting any application material into public generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Perplexity etc.) is regarded as a serious breach of confidentiality and is not permitted.

Assessors may only use generative AI tools to correct or help with grammar, spelling, formatting and readability of drafted assessments. Assessors will be asked about their use of AI in assessments and are to be transparent when this information is requested. Where the inappropriate use of generative AI by an assessor is suspected, the assessment will be removed from the process, and an assessor found to have breached the Code may face consequential actions in addition to any imposed by their employing institution³.

Reviewing manuscripts

For journal peer review, uploading manuscripts into generative AI tools is not allowed during the peer review process. Doing so is unfair to authors, who trust that they will receive feedback from a human expert in their field, and feeding an unpublished manuscript to a large language model potentially compromises the confidentiality of the peer review process.

Reviewers who wish to use any AI tools to assist in writing a review should first ask the editor whether their plans fall under an acceptable use case⁶.

Relevant policies

Those involved with the assessment of applications or manuscripts should familiarise themselves with the relevant policies of the funding body. Visit the links below to view the ARC and NHMRC policies governing the use of AI for assessment and review:

- ARC: arc.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications
- NHMRC: nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/policy-use-generative-artificial-intelligence

References

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10. Generative AI policies for journals. Elsevier. elsevier.com/en-au/about/policies-and-standards/generative-ai-policies-for-journals

Need support?

For questions regarding the use of AI in research,
email ai@curtin.edu.au.

Join the Curtin Research Community on Microsoft Teams

To get the latest updates for all student and staff
researchers at Curtin, join the Curtin Research Community
on Teams.

bit.ly/curtinresearchcommunity



curtin.edu.au/research

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