# Tool for Determining Allowable Uses of AI

# with Writing Assignments

Authored by Mary McCaffery (Manager, Writing Services)
Christopher Laursen (Educational Developer, Office of Teaching and Learning)

**How can instructors clearly determine and communicate allowable
uses of artificial intelligence (AI) in their courses, if any, when
assigning written work?**

### Step 1: Communicate with Your Students about Generative AI and Build AI Literacy

**The purpose of this tool** is to help faculty members demonstrate awareness of generative AI functions in relation to writing assignments, while establishing boundaries that promote learning. In determining allowable uses of generative AI with assignments, consider being candid with your students, explaining your intention to be transparent about your expectations on how AI may or may not be used. If possible, make time to ask students to share their perceptions, feelings, or ideas about generative AI, and to visit your office hours with any concerns or questions. You can build AI literacy for your own benefit, and to open conversations with students, by learning more about artificial intelligence in higher education through [our resources](https://otl.uoguelph.ca/resources-instructors-ai). **Contact the Office of Teaching and Learning for personalized guidance on assessment design with AI in mind** (contact info at bottom of this document).

### Step 2: Define Skills-Based Learning Objectives

An increased focus on skills-based learning objectives will be helpful when determining boundaries for the use of generative AI.Different from content-based learning objectives (e.g., disciplinary concepts, formulas, etc.), skills-based learning objectives highlight what a student should learn to do by completing a learning activity (e.g., synthesize sources in paragraphs based on unifying ideas). In other words, before determining permissible uses of generative AI, consider the skills you want students to learn.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of skill-based learning objectives for reference:

#### **Writing Skills**

* Write essays with clear links between stated theses and subpoints
* Write paragraphs that are tightly bound to single unifying ideas or concepts
* Paraphrase source material with a high degree of content accuracy
* Integrate sources with clear links to subpoints and theses
* Compose text with logical flow and organization

#### **Critical Thinking Skills**

* Establish categories and sub-categories among concepts
* Apply concepts and ideas to solve a problem or interpret phenomena
* Define ethical implications of ideas or concepts
* Identify bias in sophisticated text and media
* Create new ideas by combining source material

#### **Research Skills**

* Identify credible sources based on their origin, purpose, and time of publication
* Examine sources to ensure relevance
* Incorporate sources without distorting the intentions of their authors
* Consider sources presenting opposing views and arguments

### Step 3: Indicate Allowable Uses of Generative AI

The checklist below can be included in your course outline or assignment instructions. Use the checklist to let your students know when they can and cannot use generative AI as they complete the assignment. The selections in this checklist will prioritize some skill-based objectives over others. For example, an assignment where students fact-check, revise, and edit material retrieved by AI may encourage critical thinking and document preparation, the checklist may not encourage pre-writing composition skills, like brainstorming and outlining. Although we cannot teach everything in every assignment, it is important to be aware of the skills we are prioritizing in our instruction.

### Contact and Feedback

As this is an open template, you may add categories and functions not included in the above list. If you have any categories or functions you feel should be added to the template, **please contact us** (otl@uoguelph.ca). We welcome your feedback to improve this tool!

## Template: Allowable Generative AI Functions for [assignment name]

[Note to Instructors: Add the words “do not” in front of non-allowable uses of generative AI (e.g., “Do not ask AI questions to generate or advance ideas.”) For clarity, list allowable uses (if any) first, followed by non-allowable uses. Feel free to copy and paste into a new MS Word document, but please keep [accessible formatting](https://guides.lib.uoguelph.ca/c.php?g=709173&p=5052501) (e.g., headings and bulleted lists). If possible, use Paste using Keep Source Formatting option.]

For [assignment name], you can use Generative AI (such as ChatGPT or Jasper) for functions below. **If you wish to use AI in a way not described below, please ask your instructor for permission first.**

#### **Brainstorming and Pre-Writing**

* Ask AI questions to generate or advance ideas
* Ask AI to make connections between two themes or ideas
* Ask AI to create a plain-language summary of source material
* Ask AI to classify and categorize information
* Ask AI to offer an opposing position to an argument
* Ask AI to structure unstructured data (e.g., a variety of written sources) for further analysis

#### **Outlining**

* Ask AI to create an outline for the writing
* Submit your own outline to AI and ask for constructive feedback

#### **Composing**

* Ask AI to write a text that will be central to a learning activity
* Ask AI to modify sentences or suggest alternative phrasing
* Ask AI to summarize or paraphrase a source to include in the assignment
* Paraphrase or quote written content from generative AI (note: cite content using style guide)

#### **Revising & Editing**

* Submit whole text to AI for constructive feedback
* Ask AI to simplify or clarify the language in text
* Ask AI to remove jargon from text

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) International License