

# Nicholls State University Academic AI Policy

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## 1. Purpose

This policy establishes standards for the responsible and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic settings at Nicholls State University. Nicholls is committed to fostering academic excellence and innovation while maintaining the highest standards of integrity.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Nicholls State University faculty, staff, students, contractors, and affiliates who access, procure, or use AI systems or services for academic-related purposes, including instruction, research, and coursework.

University standards for the responsible, secure, and ethical use of AI technologies (including data classification and confidentiality, authorized applications, and vendor management) are covered by the Nicholls State University Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.

## 3. Governance and Oversight

Oversight of this policy is managed by the Office of Academic Affairs and a convened academic AI taskforce, which includes representatives from Academic Affairs, Information Technology, faculty, and students. Acknowledging the rapid pace of technological change, this policy will be reviewed annually by the Office of Academic Affairs to reflect emerging best practices and updates from the University of Louisiana System and Board of Regents.

## 4. Student Use and Academic Integrity

Nicholls State University emphasizes that AI should serve as a tool to augment, rather than replace, human critical thinking and curiosity. The submission of AI-generated work as a student's own, without proper authorization or attribution, constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for understanding course-specific AI policies found in the course syllabus and university policies regarding academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism as stated in the Nicholls [Student Policy and Procedure Manual](#).

Faculty may use Turnitin similarity and originality reports as a first step in determining prohibited AI use. However, additional information is necessary to begin formal

academic dishonesty procedures as described on the [Academic Affairs Academic Integrity webpage](#). Faculty may ask students suspected of using AI inappropriately to complete an alternative assignment, such as an oral exam or in-person writing, to determine level of knowledge.

When AI use is permitted, students must indicate how AI was used and cite the specific AI tool used. Faculty may require additional information regarding the use of AI in an assignment. Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of all AI output used in coursework.

## **5. Three Levels of AI Use in Courses**

Faculty will clearly communicate which of the following levels of AI use is permitted for each course and/or assignment.

### **Red Level: AI Prohibited**

- AI is not permitted for any task related to the assignment or course.
- The assignment or course is designed to build foundational skills, memory, and independent thinking.
- Faculty may use Turnitin AI detection software to aid in determining if AI was used inappropriately.
- Example syllabus/assignment statement: “The use of generative AI is strictly prohibited. Any use will be treated as academic dishonesty.”

### **Yellow Level: AI Limited**

- AI is permitted only for specific tasks or assignments as specified by the instructor.
- AI acts as a planning tool for brainstorming or as a grammar editor while the student remains the primary content creator.
- Students must indicate how they used AI-generated ideas or corrections in their own original work.
- Faculty may use Turnitin AI detection software to aid in determining if AI was used inappropriately.
- Example syllabus/assignment statement: “Generative AI may be used for \_\_\_\_\_ only. Final drafts must be original work. Students must include an AI disclosure statement.”

### **Green Level: AI Integrated**

- Students are expected to use AI as a tool to complete assignments, explore problems within a specific discipline, or build AI-literacy skills.
- Assignments model professional environments where AI is an integrated part of the workflow.

- Students must cite AI use appropriately. Generative AI can be [cited](#) in APA, MLA, and other standard formats.
- Example syllabus/assignment statement: "Use of generative AI tools is a required part of this course. Students will build AI skills and receive instructions on how, when, and why to use specific AI tools."

## **6. Faculty Use of AI**

Faculty are encouraged to redesign assessments considering the impact of AI on learning, critical thinking, and the future of work in their discipline. Faculty may use AI tools approved by the Office of Information Technology to enhance pedagogy and optimize workflow.

All AI-assisted grading or evaluation should be disclosed to students and reviewed by the faculty member. Faculty are responsible for the fairness and accuracy of all grades.

Faculty may use Turnitin AI detection software but it should not be the sole determinant of academic misconduct. Faculty may not enter any student work or data into unauthorized generative AI or AI detection tools. Turnitin AI detection and Google Gemini are the University's current broadly-approved tools. Google Gemini should only be accessed using Nicholls account login information for any work-related use.

Faculty may use AI to advance scholarly research, provided its use aligns with the highest standards of academic integrity. Faculty members are accountable for the accuracy, originality, and validity of all research outputs. Faculty must disclose the use of generative AI tools in their methodologies or publications and adhere to external funder AI guidelines. In order to protect intellectual property and data privacy, faculty should not upload proprietary or confidential information into unsecured or unauthorized AI tools.

## **7. Institutional Compliance**

All academic use of AI must comply with the Nicholls State University AI Policy, specifically regarding the protection of sensitive student data (FERPA) and the use of institutionally approved platforms. Faculty, students, and staff should consult the Office of Information Technology for the current list of authorized academic AI tools.