

Guiding Principles for AI Tool Use at Pacific Lutheran University

These guiding principles for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) are rooted in our values and aim to foster responsible, ethical, and effective integration of AI within the various facets of campus life, including faculty, staff, and student engagement. As technology evolves, these guidelines will be reviewed and updated to reflect best practices and emerging considerations.

Summary Guidance

Use of AI should reflect the principles below as well as adhere to existing policies, including [I&TS policies](#), [the Faculty Handbook](#), [the Student Code of Conduct](#), and [Procurement policies](#).

- In working with AI:
 - Be very careful about personal data and sensitive information; non-public data should only be entered into secure AI technologies.
 - Coordinate with I&TS and/or the Provost's Office on secure and effective usage of AI technologies. When in doubt, ask for help!
 - Weigh both individual and collective risks and benefits of using AI, especially its potential to impact wellbeing, agency, and mental health. [Mental health resources available through [EAP](#)]

Faculty, staff, and students are 100% responsible for any AI output they use in any context.

Guiding Principles for AI Tool Use

This approach to AI use is shaped by PLU's [Core Elements in Lutheran Higher Education](#), ensuring that AI serves to enhance our mission of educating for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care – for other people, for their communities, and for the Earth. When considering the use of AI and especially when using it, members of the PLU community should consider these principles to guide their efforts.

1. **Human-Centered Approach & Critical Inquiry:** AI tools should augment human capabilities, not replace them. Critical thinking, human judgment, and creativity are all central to learning and to practicing the values of diversity, justice, and sustainability. AI-generated content or insights should always be subject to human review and evaluation. We encourage the critical questioning of the use of AI in addition to AI outputs, recognizing their potential biases and limitations, in alignment with PLU's emphasis on critical questioning of current knowledge and values.

2. **Accuracy, Accountability, and Transparency:** As with any tool or process, users are responsible for their use of all AI-generated information, especially in academic, administrative, or public communications. Misinformation or deceptive content generated by AI is prohibited as part of our commitment to truth-seeking and responsible scholarship. Users are accountable for how they use AI, including ensuring transparency where AI has been utilized to produce or assist with work.
3. **Intellectual Freedom & Ethical Responsibility:** The use of AI should uphold academic freedom, freedom of expression, and ethical conduct. Users must be mindful of potential biases embedded in AI models and actively work to mitigate them, fostering an inclusive environment. Respect for intellectual property and academic integrity is central to our commitments to learning and research in community. AI should never be used to facilitate plagiarism or violate copyright. If used, AI tools should be used strategically, reflecting our understanding of the immense human and environmental resources required to power these systems.
4. **Privacy, Data Security, and Stewardship:** Confidential, sensitive, or proprietary university data (e.g., student records, research data, personal information) must never be entered into public AI tools that lack robust privacy and security assurances. In some cases, entering information into AI tools is similar to posting information on a public website. Users are responsible for understanding the data privacy policies of any AI tool used.
5. **Vocation and Service:** AI tools can enhance productivity and efficiency, allowing individuals to focus on higher-level tasks and creative endeavors that serve the common good. We encourage exploring AI applications that support our mission of service to the advancement of life, health, and wholeness, and help individuals discern their vocation in the world, while always prioritizing ethical outcomes. When considering whether or not to engage an AI tool to support our work, weigh not only the efficiency of the process but the potential risks to individual and collective wellbeing associated with using the tool.

Based on these principles, below are prohibited uses of AI tools @ PLU:

- Entering confidential, private, or proprietary PLU data into non-approved publicly hosted AI models.
- Using AI to create false communications, manipulate data deceitfully, or spread misinformation.
- Submitting AI-generated content as original work without proper attribution or permission from instructors/supervisors.
- Relying solely on AI for fact-checking or accuracy verification.
- Generating images, audio, or video that falsely depict individuals, events, or intellectual property, or that could be misleading.
- Any use that violates existing PLU policies, legal statutes, or ethical standards.

For further information or clarification, please contact relevant university departments or the Provost's Office.

Example AI Tool Applications at PLU

Below are some illustrative examples of how AI might play out in our daily work. Again, the Guiding Principles for AI Tool Use at Pacific Lutheran University apply to all members of the PLU community — faculty, staff, and students — when engaging with AI tools.

For Faculty

- **Instructional Use:** Faculty may use AI tools to assist in course preparation, generate ideas for assignments, create outlines, or as a teaching subject to explore ethical implications and critical evaluation. Clear expectations for its use by students should be communicated in syllabi.
- **Research:** AI can support research by assisting with literature reviews, data analysis (with caution regarding data privacy), or drafting initial content, provided all AI-generated outputs are thoroughly verified and properly cited where applicable.
- **Administrative Tasks:** AI can aid in drafting communications, summarizing documents, or managing schedules, always with human oversight and review.

For Students

- **Learning & Study:** Students must understand instructor's policies, but may find AI a useful tool for brainstorming, outlining, summarizing texts, or generating practice questions.
- **Assignments:** Students must understand and adhere to their instructors' policies on AI use for specific assignments. Unauthorized use of AI to generate work may constitute academic misconduct.
- **Research:** AI can assist in finding information or structuring arguments, but students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and proper citation of all sources.

For Staff

- **Productivity & Efficiency:** Staff may use AI tools to automate tasks, draft communications, analyze non-confidential data, conduct research for work projects, or streamline workflows, always ensuring human review and accuracy.
- **Content Creation:** AI can assist in generating ideas, drafting social media posts, or creating outlines for communications and marketing materials, with strict adherence to brand guidelines and requiring human review and approval. Staff remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and proper citation of all sources.
- **Customer Service:** AI tools can support initial responses or FAQ generation, but direct human interaction remains essential for complex or sensitive inquiries.

Generally Accepted Uses of Generative AI (Examples)

- Brainstorming ideas, outlines, and initial drafts.
 - Assisting with search engine optimization (SEO) and keyword research.
 - Summarizing long documents or articles for internal understanding.
 - Editing, proofreading, or serving as a thesaurus for existing human-created content.
 - Generating generic illustrations or images that do not depict identifiable individuals, PLU intellectual property, or specific university events.
 - Personalizing messages or anticipating common questions for communication purposes.
-