Essex Student Journal's policy on the use of AI

Context

Generative AI or generative AI-assisted tools (both summarised here as "AI tools") have grown in utility and popularity over the past few years, leading to an increasing number of valuable uses for them, for example through assisting research and writing. However, the inner workings of AI tools are obscure at best, the quality and accuracy of their outputs variable, and the legality of many of their uses is still being debated.

Crucial to effective research are transparency and reproducibility, both of which require special consideration in relation to AI tools.

As such, this policy aims to provide guidance for authors, peer reviewers, editors, and readers on acceptable uses of AI tools at the Essex Student Journal.

This policy has been created based on the principles outlined by COPE and its [AI authorship position statement](#) and by taking inspiration from the AI policies of other academic journals. The guiding principles we have prioritised are:

- **Transparency** of AI use

- **Reproducibility** of research, including AI use

- **Confidentiality** of the publishing process

- **Legality** of AI use

If you have any questions about this AI policy or anything else related to the Essex Student Journal, please contact the Journal Team via journal@essex.ac.uk.

Definitions:

"**Create**": the generation of content where a substantive amount has been created by the AI tool, for example, asking an AI tool to write something itself from just a prompt(s) **or** to expand upon on example writing; asking an AI tool to create images itself from just a prompt(s) **or** to expand upon or duplicate an example image(s).

"**Edit**": the use of an AI tool to refine a human-created piece for the purposes of improving readability or understandability, or checking for/correcting grammar, spelling, or formatting issues.

"**Analyse**": the use of an AI tool to identify patterns in a dataset (quantitative, qualitative, or artistic), for example to run statistical analyses, thematic analyses, or image analyses, or generate the graphical outputs of such analyses.

The Editorial Team will make the final decision in cases where the any of the above are unclear in practice.

For authors

Please be aware that the privacy of AI tools cannot be guaranteed and that what you upload or otherwise share with AI tools may be shared with the tool's creator and their affiliates.

AI tools cannot be listed as an author or co-author. AI tools cannot be referenced or otherwise cited as a primary source of information except as outlined below.

AI tools cannot be used to create content intended to be published in the final manuscript. This includes (but is not limited to) text, images, videos, and audio recordings. AI tools can only be used to edit or analyse such content. The only exception to this is where the subject matter of the manuscript is directly related to AI or related technologies/issues and the created content is explicitly being used to explain or demonstrate a point in the manuscript.

Where the output of an AI tool is included in or has otherwise altered your manuscript, you are responsible for its accuracy and legality.

If an AI tool was used for analysis for any data that has been included or discussed in your manuscript, enough information must be provided in the Methodology section (or equivalent) to allow others to reproduce its use as closely as possible. Such information should include (but not necessary be limited to):

- Name of the AI tool used

- Version of the AI tool used

- URL to the AI tool (where relevant/available)

- The date the AI tool was used to produce the final output

- Prompt used in the AI tool and resultant output (only the final prompt and its output are necessary, but ideally include any prior iterations as a supplementary file(s) where feasible)

- Any settings for the AI tool that impacted its output (this can be as a written explanation or as a screenshot, whichever is clearer)

- Any other pertinent information that is necessary for someone to reproduce the output as closely as possible

If an AI tool was used to generate content for your manuscript but it wasn't directly included in the manuscript (e.g. generating ideas, fact-checking, literature searching, etc.), the name of the tool and how it was used should be included in the Acknowledgements section. **Please note** – we strongly advise against using AI tools as the only or primary source for fact-checking.

If an AI tool was used to edit your manuscript, this does not need disclosing unless it led to substantial changes to your work (e.g. removing or adding ideas). If this happens, it should be disclosed in the Acknowledgements section as outlined above.

Failing to accurately disclose the use of AI in your work may result in your submission(s) being rejected and you being barred from submitting to the ESJ again in the future.

For peer reviewers

Data uploaded to AI tools, including prompts and files, is available to the tool's creator and potentially their affiliates. Therefore, to ensure the confidentiality of the manuscript before publication, a manuscript and its supplementary files cannot be uploaded to AI tools nor excerpts from them analysed by one (e.g. as a prompt).

AI tools that are built-in to another software (e.g. Microsoft Editor or Grammarly in Microsoft Word), may be used for editing manuscripts and supplementary files. Ensure that your privacy settings for such AI tools are configured to prevent the unnecessary sharing of data.

Where in-built AI tools have the ability to upload files or to input a prompt (e.g. Microsoft Copilot or Notion AI), you are not permitted to share files or substantial amounts of content, as outlined in the first paragraph of this section.

Failing to follow these guidelines on the use of AI in your reviewing process may result in you being removed as a reviewer from your current submission(s) and potentially being barred from reviewing for the ESJ again in the future.

For editors (including copyeditors)

Data uploaded to AI tools, including prompts and files, is available to the tool's creator and potentially their affiliates. Therefore, to ensure the confidentiality of the manuscript before publication, a manuscript, its supplementary files, and correspondence relating to a submission cannot be uploaded to AI tools nor excerpts from them analysed by one (e.g. as a prompt).

AI tools that are built-in to another software, whether pre-installed or user-added (e.g. Microsoft Editor or Grammarly in Microsoft Word), may be used for editing manuscripts, supplementary files, and related correspondence. Ensure that your privacy settings for such AI tools are configured to prevent the unnecessary sharing of data.

Where in-built AI tools have the ability to upload files or to input a prompt (e.g. Microsoft Copilot or Notion AI), you are not permitted to share files or substantial amounts of content, as outlined in the first paragraph of this section.

Failing to follow these guidelines on the use of AI in your editing process may result in you being removed as an editor from your current submission(s) and potentially being barred from editing for the ESJ again in the future.

For readers

Publications with the Essex Student Journal are available open access. This means that their content is freely available to read. Limitations on its reuse are determined by the specific Creative Commons (CC) licence assigned to it.

As such, you are free to reuse our publications, including in AI tools, according to the restrictions of that CC licence and any copyright exceptions permissible under UK law.

Failing to abide by the CC licence (taking into account any relevant copyright exceptions) constitutes a breach of copyright law.

Acknowledgements