

Introduction

As an innovative, purpose-driven university, the University of New England (UNE) recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) may transform the way professional staff work, faculty teach, and students learn in positive ways. UNE seeks to foster the appropriate, responsible, and ethical use of AI tools to improve efficiency and enable personalized learning while ensuring that UNE's educational environment remains fundamentally human-centered. This Institutional AI Policy provides the overarching framework for AI use at UNE. More detailed operational expectations are set out in the AI Acceptable Use Policy, the AI Policy Guidance for Faculty, the AI Policy Guidance for Students, and the Guidance for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research, all of which should be read together with this policy. The AI Governance Committee Charter describes how the Committee administers this policy.

Definitions

These definitions are intended to apply across the Institutional AI Policy, the AI Acceptable Use Policy, the AI Policy Guidance for Faculty, the AI Policy Guidance for Students, and the Guidance for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research, so that all documents use a common set of terms.

Artificial intelligence (AI): Any machine-based system that autonomously performs tasks commonly associated with human intelligence or generates outputs such as predictions, recommendations, or decisions based on a set of objectives.

Agentic AI: Autonomous systems designed to pursue complex goals with minimal human intervention. Unlike traditional AI, which depends on structured instructions and close oversight, agentic AI demonstrates adaptability, advanced decision-making capabilities, and self-sufficiency, enabling it to operate dynamically in evolving environments.

AI tools: Any data system, software, hardware, application, tool, or utility that operates wholly or partially using AI.

Confidential information: Any data protected by law, contract, or University policy, and whose unauthorized disclosure could compromise privacy, security, or institutional interests.

Emerging technologies: Any technology, including digital or computational systems, that introduces new capabilities, risks, or ethical considerations for UNE.

Enterprise private AI tools: AI tools that are licensed, contractually protected, and approved by the University, with guarantees of data isolation, no external access, and no model training on University data. In practical terms, these are institutionally licensed AI tools that community members access with their UNE credentials, not free tools available to the general public.

Generative AI: Any machine-based tool designed to consider user questions, prompts, and other inputs (e.g., text, images, videos) to generate a human-like output (e.g., a response to a question, a written document, software code, or product design). Generative AI includes both standalone offerings and offerings that are embedded in other software.

High-risk data: Data that requires the highest level of protection, including Protected Health Information (PHI), student education records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), PCI and financial data, Personally Identifiable Information (PII), or confidential organizational information.

Intellectual property (IP): Creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, and images used in commerce, which are legally protected.

Large language model (LLM): A type of AI trained on very large amounts of text so that it can recognize patterns in how people write and speak. A large language model can answer questions, draft emails and documents, summarize information, translate between languages, and support many other language-related tasks.

Publicly available AI tools: AI tools that are accessible to the general public via the internet, without UNE vetting, procurement, or approval.

Guiding Principles

UNE's approach to AI is grounded in a set of guiding principles that ensure AI is used in ways that uphold ethical standards, protect the rights and well-being of all community members, and support UNE's mission. Each principle applies to faculty, professional staff, and students, and together they define shared expectations for responsible AI use across the University.

1. Do No Harm

AI systems must prioritize the well-being of individuals and the community and must be used in ways that protect privacy, security, and equity for all UNE community members.

All community members are expected to use AI tools in ways that avoid harm. This includes choosing tools that protect personal and institutional data, being cautious about what information is entered into AI systems, watching for unintended negative effects, and promptly reporting any concerns about misuse, safety, or potential harm.

2. Integrity and Accountability

Users are responsible for ethical AI use and for the actions and outcomes that result from using AI tools. AI use must align with ethical standards, academic honesty, professional conduct, and UNE policies.

All community members remain accountable for the work they create or decisions they make when AI tools are used. This includes being honest about when and how AI has been used,

following academic integrity and professional standards, correcting errors introduced by AI, and seeking guidance when unsure about appropriate use.

3. Transparency and Explainability

AI processes and their impacts should be clear and understandable so that AI use builds, rather than undermines, trust across the University.

All community members are expected to be open about when and why AI tools are used, especially in learning, assessment, research, clinical care, and decision-making. This includes providing clear explanations of AI's role, avoiding secret or hidden use of AI where it affects others, and asking for clarification when the use or impact of AI is not clear.

4. Collaboration

AI should support collaboration, shared learning, and collective responsibility in how it is developed, evaluated, and used at UNE.

All community members are encouraged to share effective practices, lessons learned, and concerns about AI use across departments and roles. This includes collaborating on AI-related projects, designing processes together that use AI responsibly, and engaging in open dialogue about how AI can best support teaching, learning, research, clinical practice, and administration.

5. Respect for Autonomy

AI use should uphold individuals' rights to make informed decisions about how they interact with AI and how AI is applied to their work and data.

All community members should provide and seek clear information about when AI is being used and what choices are available. This includes offering, where feasible, meaningful options to participate or opt out, honoring expressed preferences, and supporting individuals in making informed decisions about how AI interacts with their learning, professional practice, or personal information.

6. Privacy and Data Protection

AI use must safeguard personal and institutional information and comply with applicable privacy, security, and data protection standards, especially for high-risk or sensitive data.

All community members are expected to protect personal and confidential information when using AI tools. This includes using approved tools for sensitive data, limiting the sharing of identifiable or confidential information, following institutional policies and legal requirements, and reporting any suspected privacy or security issues promptly so they can be addressed.

7. Assessment of Risks and Benefits

AI use should be guided by ongoing evaluation of its benefits and risks, balancing innovation with care and caution.

All community members are expected to consider the potential impacts of AI tools before and while using them. This includes assessing when human review is necessary, identifying where risks may outweigh benefits, participating in pilots and evaluations, and adjusting or discontinuing AI uses that introduce unacceptable risks to individuals, programs, or the institution.

8. Continuous Improvement

UNE commits to ongoing learning, reflection, and refinement of AI practices to stay responsive to technological changes and evolving leading practices.

All community members are encouraged to engage in training, reflect on their experiences with AI, and provide feedback that can improve policies, tools, and practices over time. This includes updating courses, workflows, and procedures as AI evolves and incorporating new insights, research, and community input into how AI is used.

9. Ethical Use of AI

AI should be used in ways that respect human dignity, fairness, and social responsibility across teaching, learning, research, clinical care, and administration. Institutional AI choices and practices should reflect these values.

All community members are expected to avoid using AI in ways that deceive, manipulate, harass, or harm others or that shift responsibility away from human decision-makers. This includes declining uses of AI that reinforce harmful biases, erode trust, obscure who is accountable, or bypass meaningful learning and professional responsibilities, and instead choosing uses of AI that support learning, quality care, ethical practice, and the public good.

Policy Statement

The University of New England (UNE) embraces the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to enrich education, research, and administrative operations in ways that advance the University's mission and strategic objectives. AI technologies offer significant opportunities to improve learning, increase efficiency, support innovation, and expand access to information and services. UNE has established clear guidelines and policies that apply to all community members and use cases. Faculty, professional staff, and students are expected to follow these standards, ensuring both legal compliance and commitment to a human-centered educational environment. UNE's AI Governance Committee, in collaboration with academic and administrative leaders, provides institutional oversight for AI-related governance, standards, and enterprise AI tool approvals.

UNE remains proactive and adaptable as AI technologies evolve, regularly reviewing and updating its policies to reflect technological advances, regulatory changes, and emerging ethical considerations. By balancing innovation with safeguards, UNE strives to set a benchmark for ethical and effective AI integration in higher education.

Acceptable and Prohibited Uses of AI

Operational requirements, permitted uses, prohibited uses, data protection requirements, and compliance expectations are set forth in the AI Acceptable Use Policy.

Conclusion

UNE is dedicated to safe, ethical, and innovative AI integration. Adherence to this policy and the AI Acceptable Use Policy ensures a secure and enriching environment for all.

Related Documents and Policies

- AI Acceptable Use Policy
- AI Policy Guidance for Faculty
- AI Policy Guidance for Students
- Guidance for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research
- AI Governance Committee Charter

Policy Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and updated as needed to reflect changes in regulations, technology, or University practices. Last updated August 20, 2026.