

Developing a Responsible use of Generative AI training module – endorsed by researchers

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Background and Motivation

Integration of AI in Research

Generative AI tools are increasingly integrated into research workflows across various disciplines.

Ethical and Responsible Use

We need to also focus on addressing the ethical and responsible use of AI technologies in research.

Supportive Guidance Approach

The project promotes a reflective, non-prescriptive approach to AI use, supporting informed decision-making without rigid rules.

- Not tool agnostic

Why did this project start?

The good the bad and the ugly...

- Researchers wanted guidance, especially HDR supervisors.
- Use of Gen-AI had skyrocketed, and researchers were unaware of the risk.
- Research Integrity Gen AI cases had increased.



Generative AI use in research – finding a balance



Generative AI use in research – risk control / mitigation

Researchers need to make sure they are:

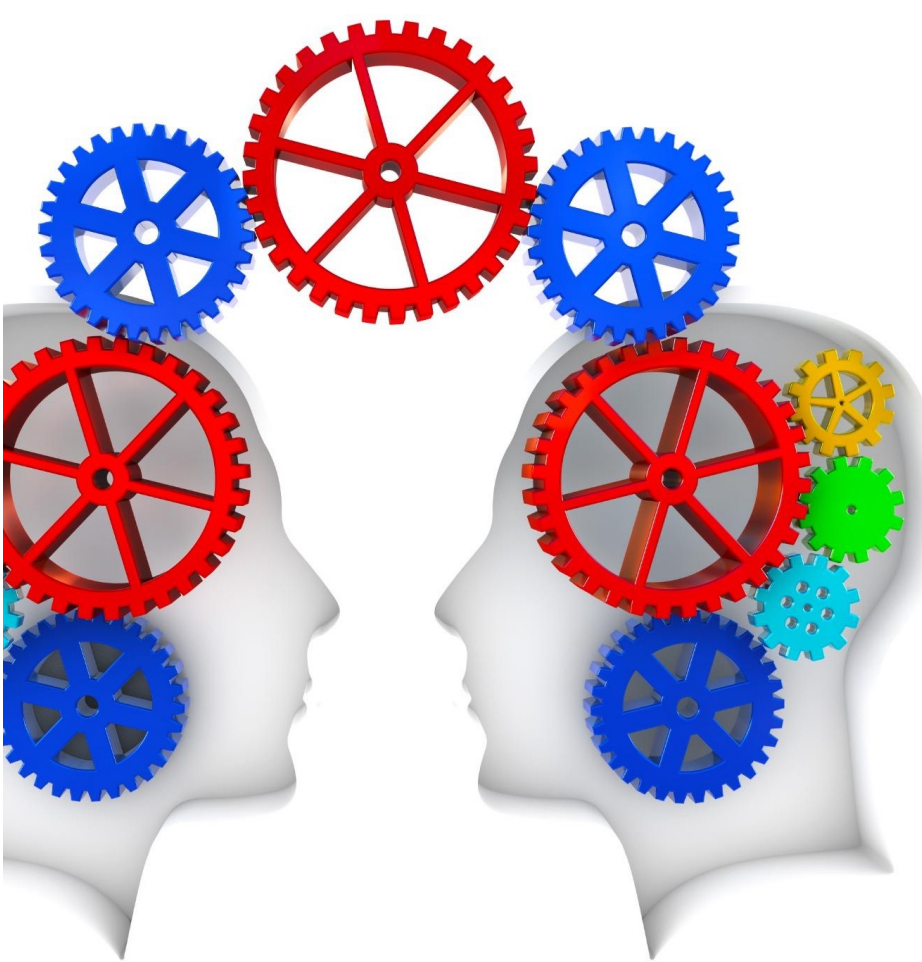
Informed and aware

- Able to identify risk profile.
- Familiar with contractual, ethical, funding and publishing obligations/requirements.
- Know how to access 'Protected' Copilot (via USyd login).
- Consider limiting downstream use of GenAI to 'assistance' tasks in research; verify and record GenAI contributions/content.
- Protect private and sensitive data .

Accountable for management of data in research

- Integrity, privacy, supervisory responsibilities.

Aware of resources, know where to go for support and information



Approach

Endorsement

We sought endorsement at an executive level
- RDAG

Stakeholder Consultations

Consultations and focus groups explored AI use and perceptions within the academic community to identify knowledge gaps.

Iterative Feedback

Feedback was collected through three iterative rounds with students and staff, shaping the module to user needs.

Key Findings

Need for Practical Guidance

Researchers require clear, non-technical resources to effectively manage generative AI complexities.

Agnostic approach

Provide researchers with the ability to approach any use case scenario.

Concerns about AI Risks

Legal, ethical, and reputational risks are primary concerns in generative AI usage among researchers.

Importance of Institutional Support



Timeline



**Initial
stakeholder
sessions**

**Research and
Content
development**

**User testing and
module design**

**Refining module
content and
design**

**Deliver final
module**

October 2024

November 2024

November /
December 2024

January 2025

February 2025

Outcome



Use cases

We have constructed some use cases to demonstrate a risk aware approach to using Gen AI in research.

Click on the role most relevant to you:



Research student



HDR Supervisor



Researcher

If more than one of these roles applies to you, you can come back and select multiple scenarios.



What research data are you allowed to use with Gen AI

You can use Gen AI tools

Public

Your data is safe to go in any Gen AI tool you choose! You can use external (cloud and open access), local (not connected to the cloud and exists on your computer) and University-protected tools.



See some data examples

Protected

Your research information and data can only be uploaded to the University-protected tool. Caution should be taken when uploading any Intellectual Property as this tool does send the data offshore for a short period of time. Local Gen AI tools that aren't connected to the cloud might be approved for use on a case-by-case basis.



See some data examples

You can't use Gen AI

Highly Protected/ Indigenous data

No research information or data should be uploaded into any Gen AI tool.

This includes the University-protected tool. There are severe risks and privacy impacts to individuals and the institution if you were to upload this classification of data to an AI tool.



See some data examples



Generate resources

- Responsible use checklist (I avoided tool advice and instead a use case approach).
- Attribution and Gen AI use guideline for HDR students.
- Responsible use of Gen AI guideline for supervisors.



Gen AI Researchers' Checklist

Purpose and Permissions

- Consider the purpose of using Gen AI in your research; what specific research tasks do you intend to use Gen AI for and should you be using it for that purpose.
- Check that the use of Gen AI is permitted in your:
 - **ethics protocols (including participant consent),**
 - **funding agreements,**
 - **journal guidelines for the journal you are intending to publish your research findings,**
 - **data sharing agreements, and**
 - **commercial contracts.**

Consideration: Are there restrictions in place about who can access your data, where it can transit/be stored, how long it can be retained by certain parties and/or whether it can be shared with third parties?

Data Privacy and Security

- Identify which Gen AI tool are you intending to use e.g. cloud based, open access, local tools without connection to the cloud, or the University-protected tool Copilot.
- Is the selected Gen AI tool appropriate for the [classification of your data](#)?
 - o **Public data** is generally safe to upload into Gen AI tools. You can use external tools (cloud and open access), local and/or the University-protected tool. However, check if the public material is subject to any copyright restrictions See [Copyright permissions](#).
 - o **Protected data can only be uploaded to the University-protected tool – Copilot.** Caution should be taken when uploading any Intellectual Property as this tool does send the data offshore for a short period of time. Local Gen AI tools that aren't connected to the cloud may be approved for use with protected data on a case-by-case basis.
 - o **Highly Protected data should not be uploaded into any Gen AI tool including the University-protected tool.** There may be severe risks and privacy impacts for individuals.
- Does the tool handle data privacy in a way that meets University research data management requirements?



Attribution: Shannon Taylor, Research Data Consultant, Research Integrity and Ethics Administration,
University of Sydney



Impact and next steps

- What did we see in the first 6 months of the module being live, alongside advertisement at training?
- Change module requirement to mandatory.



Thank you! Any Questions?