Use of artificial intelligence: Assessment and academic integrity

Rapid developments in generative artificial intelligence (hereinafter, GenAI) have provided the population and, by extension, the university community with a series of IT tools which make it easy to create different types of content (text, images, programming code, music and video). The emergence of GenAI has triggered a debate within the realm of higher education about how these tools may be incorporated into teaching with a view to enhancing the students' educational experience.

Furthermore, the high quality of the documents produced using this technology is now forcing us to rethink issues concerning the academic honesty of students' work, making it necessary to draw a line between which uses of GenAI are considered legitimate and which are illegitimate. To this end, these instructions provide guidance about how to assess academic activities in which GenAI has potentially been misused.

1. Regulatory framework

GenAI tools are a resource that is available to students in the same way that dictionaries, reference works and online consultations are. As occurs with these other resources, these tools may be used legitimately or fraudulently or dishonestly, depending on the type of assessable activity and the instructions given to the students.

According to Article 11.g of the [Law on University Coexistence](#), academic fraud is defined as:

> any premeditated intent by students to falsify the results of an exam or assignment, be it their own or that of another person, which is required to pass a subject or certify their academic performance.

GenAI will therefore be considered to have been used fraudulently in any instance in which a student uses these tools to falsify the results of an assessable task, presenting as their own materials which they themselves did not produce. The maximum penalty for this type of behaviour is an administrative sanction via disciplinary proceedings. However, there is a great deal of grey area between uses that are considered legitimate and those which are subject to disciplinary proceedings; uses which must be handled properly by educational institutions.

2. Use of GenAI in assessable activities

Generally speaking, students may use GenAI tools for the following purposes:

1. To perform an initial search for literature or information
2. To improve or correct the way a text they themselves wrote is written
3. To translate their text into a different language
4. To generate a short piece of text, code, image, etc. as part of a larger assignment
5. To generate an initial text, code, image, etc. which they may subsequently improve or enrich
6. To generate part or all of an assessable activity

With the exception of the latter –which should under no circumstances be permitted–, these uses may be considered legitimate or illegitimate within the framework of an assessable activity depending on the purpose of the activity and the approach taken. As a result, it is up to the faculty member who designed the activity to determine the extent to which GenAI may be used. This may range anywhere from defining a task that must be completed using GenAI, designing an assignment in which GenAI may be used in certain parts or sub-tasks or prohibiting the use of GenAI in all tasks except searching for information (e.g. literature search).

Therefore, the assessment of how GenAI is used in assessable tasks must be based on transparency on the part of both the faculty member who assigns the task and the student. Faculty members are subsequently advised to specify which uses of GenAI tools are permitted and which are not in the activity instructions. In the event GenAI may be used, the assessable activity should include a section in which students are required to briefly summarise how they used this technology and to what end.

In any case, whenever a student includes text, codes, images, etc. generated using GenAI, they must identify and properly cite the source they used to generate them. Failure to explicitly identify any such excerpts will be considered academic dishonesty and, as such, will be subject to a negative assessment or penalty.

3. Assessment of the misuse of GenAI

The illegitimate, dishonest or unauthorised use of GenAI in assessable activities is considered a reprehensible attitude, which the University condemns, and must be sanctioned. The way in which these cases are assessed will depend on the severity of the student's actions. To weigh this severity, several factors must be taken into account, including the type of assessable activity (whether it is part of the ongoing assessment, a subject's final activity or a TFG or TFM), the extent of the illegitimate use of GenAI (whether it is a brief excerpt, a substantial portion of the activity or the entire assignment) and the way in which GenAI is used (a poor citation or accidental mistake or an incidental mistake in which the student claims as theirs an activity which is not).

Given the limitations of the tools available to detect the use of GenAI, it is often difficult to prove that GenAI has been used when not permitted. In the event of the suspected misuse of GenAI or indications thereof, the faculty members in charge of assessment are advised to contact the student to determine whether they have committed fraud –through an interview, a series of reasoning questions, etc.

In the event GenAI tools have been misused, the faculty members may decide to penalise the student's mark in varying degrees, in accordance with the following general guidelines:

1. In the case of accidental illegitimate use (misquotations, poor explanation of the use made of GenAI) or a limited extent, the faculty members may penalise the mark of the assessable activity.
2. In the event the extent of the illegitimate use is greater, i.e. a substantial portion or all of the assignment, or it affects particularly relevant parts of the assessable activity, the assignment may be given the mark of fail.
3. If GenAI is misused in a final assessment activity or on a final exam, the student may be given a mark of fail for either the activity or the subject, depending on the severity of the academic fraud detected.
4. Academic fraud in the case of TFGs and TFMs is particular serious. As a result, the faculty member may decide to either give the project a mark of fail or refuse to accept it (with the subsequent loss of the right to a second sitting), depending on the extent of the academic fraud detected.

In any case, in cases 2, 3 and 4, the situation must be reported to the head of studies (dean or Department director), who will determine whether or not to request the initiation of disciplinary proceedings.

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