Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Research: Policy, Information and Guidance Equality Impact Assessment

Audience:	Public
Applies to:	All Research Active Staff & All Students
Classification:	Academic Governance
Category:	Equality Impact Assessment
Subcategory:	Research and Research Degrees
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Owner:	Dean of Research and the Graduate School
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Stage 1: Rapid Equality Impact Assessment Checklist

"Proposal" is used as shorthand for any policy document, practice or project that might be assessed.

Please provide a brief description of the proposal:

The purpose of this paper is to set out Abertay University's position on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) to support research activities. It is an overarching institutional document which is relevant to all researchers including academic research staff, postgraduate research students (PGRS) and research supervisors.

The document aims to ensure our researchers can engage with, and benefit from, the opportunities of Gen AI tools for research, whilst protecting against potential ethical, legal

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and integrity issues to ensure that all research undertaken by Abertay staff and PGRS is carried out to the highest professional academic standards.

Reason for the Equality Impact Assessment: New proposal

Could any protected characteristics be affected by this proposal: No

If Yes, which protected characteristic groups could be affected (select all that apply)?

☐Age

☐Disability (including by association)

☐Gender Reassignment

☐Marriage and Civil Partnership[1]

☐Pregnancy or Maternity

☐Race (including ethnicity and nationality)

☐Religion or belief (including lack of belief)

☐Sex

☐Sexual orientation

Will the proposal have any impact on:

Discrimination?	No
Equality of opportunity?	No
Relations between groups?	No

If the answer to any of the above is 'Yes':

Is the impact only beneficial?	Choose an item.

Stage 2: Comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA)

Summary of the Proposal and Who will be effected?

What are the aims and objectives of the proposal?

The purpose of this paper is to set out Abertay University's position on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) to support research activities. It is an overarching institutional document which is relevant to all researchers including academic research staff, postgraduate research students (PGRS) and research supervisors.

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[1]Only the duty to eliminate discrimination applies to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect

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The document aims to ensure our researchers can engage with, and benefit from, the opportunities of Gen AI tools for research, whilst protecting against potential ethical, legal and integrity issues to ensure that all research undertaken by Abertay staff and PGRS is carried out to the highest professional academic standards.

How important is the proposal in terms of equality in the University? Does it relate to an area with known inequalities or where equality objectives have been set by the University?

The proposal is an overarching document which will be applied to all research staff and postgraduate students. It does not relate to an area with known inequalities and there have been no equality objectives set by the University in relation to this.

Who is affected by the proposal and how have they been involved in the development of it?

All academic research active staff, postgraduate research students (PGRS) and research supervisors. The proposal has been seen by several groups and individuals (e.g. AI working group, Research Executive, Grad School Forum, SMT) who have had a chance to feed into the development of the proposal and feedback on various drafts.

Are any persons affected by the proposal likely to benefit from it and in what way?

The proposal provides detailed information and guidance on the use of AI to ensure that all research undertaken by Abertay staff and PGRS using AI is carried out to the highest professional academic standards. All researchers will have the opportunity to benefit from the information in the Proposal.

Is there any evidence or concern that any of the protected characteristic groups have different experiences, issues or needs in relation to this document? No

If Yes, which protected characteristic groups could be affected (select all that apply)?

☐Age

☐Disability (including by association)

☐Gender Reassignment

☐Marriage and Civil Partnership[2]

☐Pregnancy or Maternity

☐Race (including ethnicity and nationality)

☐Religion or belief (including lack of belief)

☐Sex

☐Sexual orientation

Please provide further details:

N/A

How does the proposal fit into the broader strategic aims of the University?

The document aims to ensure our researchers can engage with, and benefit from, the opportunities of Gen AI tools for research, whilst protecting against potential ethical, legal and integrity issues. This is in line with the strategic aims of the University.

Consideration of available data

What do we know from existing data already held by the University?

There is no existing data relevant to this area held by the University.

What do we know from existing data which is available externally?

There is no known existing external data available which we can use.

Are there any apparent gaps in knowledge?

AI is an emerging and fast growing area with lots of gaps in knowledge.

Impact of Proposal

Could this proposal lead to any positive, negative, intended or unintended impact on the University or any of its stakeholders?

The policy is designed to help protect against potential ethical, legal and integrity issues and minimise the potential for data breaches associated with the use of Gen AI in research. This should help to protect the University against unwanted impacts.

Could there be a differential[2] impact on any protected characteristics? Could any differential impact be adverse?

No – the policy will be applied consistently across all research staff and postgraduate research students.

Please consider:

Is this policy directly discriminatory? If yes, is it intended to increase equality? If no, this is unlawful discrimination.

Is this policy indirectly discriminatory? If yes, is this justifiable or proportionate? If no, this is unlawful discrimination.

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[2] Differential impact = where the positive or negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

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If this policy is not indirectly discriminatory but could have an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics, you must provide details of how the University will act to address this.

Is this policy unlawfully discriminatory? If you find that it is, you must decide how the University will act lawfully.

Consultation

What did this equality analysis conclude?

That there are no equality issue concerns raised regarding the introduction of this policy.

Is any action required to be taken in response to the findings from the consultation?

No

What is the recommendation for this proposal following consultation?

Approve the proposal

Declaration

I confirm that this equality analysis represents a fair and reasonable view of the implications of the proposal for all protected characteristic groups, and that appropriate actions have been identified to address the findings.

Signature	Date	Individual
Dr Alison Eilliot, Head of Research Degrees, Impact and Researcher Development	17/04/2025	CEIA owner
Professor Nia White, Dean of Research and the Graduate School	17/04/2025	Line manager

* if appropriate

Action and Monitoring

We will be reviewing the policy annually due to the fast moving nature of Gen AI.

Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

What is the recommended outcome for this proposal?

Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the proposal will be robust.

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Definitions

For the purposes of this policy document and related policy documents, terms are defined in the Policy Document Library Glossary.

Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	Equality Act 2010; Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012
Strategy	Abertay University Strategic Plan and all sub-strategies
Policy	Equality and Diversity Policy; Policy Document Governance Policy
Procedures	Policy Document Governance Procedure
Guidelines	Equality Impact Assessment Guidance
Local Protocol	N/A
Forms	N/A