



Plagiarism & AI

Why this matters

AI tools are a fact of today's study routines, but the academic rules around them are often fuzzy. Most people use AI, but if you unintentionally overstep the boundaries, it can count as plagiarism. This applies even on modules where AI is allowed, because what counts as "allowed use" is rarely made explicit – and most students cross a line without realizing.

That matters because AI misuse can:

- **Damage your grades**, even when the mistake was unintentional
- **Breach your department or faculty rules**, which may be stricter than you expect
- **Put you at risk** at a time when almost everyone is using AI but only a few know how to stay within the boundaries

Understanding these rules protects your academic integrity and keeps your work – and your marks – genuinely your own.

These are the situations most likely to get flagged as cheating or misconduct:

- Letting AI write whole sections of your assignment and handing them in as if you wrote them.
- Presenting AI-generated text (ideas, arguments, or wording) as your own.
- Translating or paraphrasing a source using AI without citing the original.
- Copying AI-generated references or data that don't exist or come from unknown sources.
- Hiding tool use in an assignment where AI assistance is restricted or undeclared.

Even if the text is "original" in the sense that it isn't copied from a human author, it still misrepresents *authorship*. This counts as plagiarism under most university policies.

Our **MasterSheet: AI, Plagiarism, & Academic Integrity** includes the exact workflows that keep you safe – even if you rely heavily on AI in your study routine. You'll get:

- Real academic examples
- "Safe vs. unsafe" paraphrasing
- AI-safe note-taking discipline differences (STEM vs. Humanities)

Write with confidence. Find it in our shop (scrib.works/shop)

Grey areas that can still get you into trouble

- Using AI to “polish” a paragraph you didn’t fully write yourself summarizing or paraphrasing sources with AI when you haven’t read the originals.
- Relying on AI for explanations you don’t understand and can’t reproduce in your own words.
- Heavy translation with AI that changes meaning or obscures authorship.

Example: Let’s say you ask ChatGPT to completely rewrite a paragraph you dashed off quickly on your phone. If you can’t explain or reproduce every sentence yourself, most universities will treat that as plagiarism rather than “just editing”.

These situations feel harmless, but they can still breach academic integrity rules – especially if you can’t explain or justify the work yourself.

Quick rules: When AI is OK (and when it isn’t)

AI tools can genuinely support your learning and drafting – as long as you stay transparent and stay within your institution’s rules.

Allowed (with care)

- Grammar or spelling correction
- Brainstorming topic ideas
- Re-wording your own sentences for clarity
- Generating outlines or checklists that you then develop yourself
- Using translation tools to understand a text (not to copy its phrasing)

Only use these if your module allows AI at all – and always double-check your institution’s policy.

Not allowed

- Submitting AI-generated text as your own writing
- Letting AI paraphrase or translate a source and using that output without citation
- Using AI-generated references, quotations, or data
- Hiding or denying AI use when asked to declare it

These are the kinds of AI use most likely to be treated as plagiarism or academic misconduct.

Scrib.tip

AI can help you think. It can't take responsibility. Use it like a research assistant – not a ghost-writer. Your credibility depends on one thing: that your words and ideas are truly yours.

Scrib.check: Responsible AI use (tick before you submit)	
• I wrote, reviewed, and verified every sentence myself.	
• I fact-checked all information and references (no invented sources).	
• I have disclosed any tool use if required.	
• I can explain or reproduce every idea without the tool.	
• I saved prompts, drafts, and notes as evidence of my process.	



Want an in-depth worksheet on how to avoid plagiarism and use AI responsibly? **MasterSheet: AI, Plagiarism & Academic Integrity** gives you safe workflows, real student examples, and copy-and-paste templates you can reuse in every assignment.

Want more help with your academic writing? Explore **Scrib.sheets** and **MasterSheets** at scrib.works/shop/ and start building your personal writing toolkit.

How to cite or declare AI use

If your university allows AI, you need to **show** you've used it responsibly: Mention it briefly in your methodology, acknowledgements, or cover sheet.

Example: *Sections of this essay were proof-read using Grammarly. No text was generated by AI.*

or

I used ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025) to generate an outline, which I then rewrote in my own words.

If your institution requires formal referencing, include:

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT [Large language model].

<https://chat.openai.com>

Important: Replace with your tool/version; adapt to APA/MLA/Chicago/Harvard.

REMINDER: If AI use is disallowed in any of your modules, any undeclared AI text may be treated as plagiarism or misconduct. Check with your lecturer.

Fast disclosure template for all your assignments: (copy & adapt)

Model AI/tools statement:

Grammar checking via Grammarly; outline brainstorming via ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025). I drafted, rewrote, and verified all text and references. No AI-generated references or quotations were used.