University of Southern Mississippi
Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Guidelines

Introduction

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) recognizes the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing education, research, and administrative functions. These guidelines establish a framework for the ethical, secure, and responsible use of AI at USM. The goal is to ensure AI tools and systems are used in alignment with the university's values of academic integrity, data privacy, and transparency while fostering innovation.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all students, faculty, staff, and affiliated individuals who develop, deploy, or utilize AI technologies in any capacity related to USM activities.

Guiding Principles

1. **Ethical Use**
    a. **Bias and Fairness**: AI systems may reflect biases that can lead to discrimination or unequal treatment. To ensure fairness, AI output should be critically evaluated particularly in areas like admissions, grading, or hiring.
    b. **Human Oversight**: AI decisions with significant consequences must involve human oversight. Individuals must have the ability to review, intervene, or override AI decisions when necessary.
    c. **Informed Consent**: When AI systems interact directly with individuals, e.g., research participants, students, faculty, or staff, informed consent is required. This includes clear communication of the purpose, scope, and potential impacts of data collection and analysis. Individuals should have the option to opt out without facing negative consequences.
    d. **Academic Integrity**: The use of AI in academic settings must uphold principles of academic integrity, fairness, and institutional values. Students should disclose AI assistance where applicable, and faculty must approve its use for coursework, supervised research, and examinations.
2. **Data Privacy and Security**
    a. **Data Classification:** Accurately classify all data used in AI systems, especially sensitive data. Avoid using high-risk data (e.g., student records, confidential research) unless verified secure by iTech and compliant with privacy standards.
    b. **Anonymization:** Personally identifiable information (PII) must be removed from datasets before AI analysis, particularly when dealing with student or patient data.
    c. **Compliance:** AI use must adhere to applicable data privacy laws and regulations, including FERPA and HIPAA.
    d. **Data Minimization:** Limit data collection to what is strictly necessary for AI application to reduce exposure to sensitive information.
    e. **Data Security:** Follow USM's information security protocols to safeguard AI data. When data is processed by AI, employ practices consistently with the USM Information Security Policy.

f. **Data Sharing:** Any data shared externally for AI use must comply with USM data policies, with explicit authorization, and appropriate safeguards.

3. **Accountability and Transparency**
   a. **Accountability:** AI users and developers are accountable for verifying AI generated outputs. Clearly define responsibility for verifying AI results and making final decisions particularly in administrative functions and evaluations. Regularly assess AI systems for performance, security vulnerabilities, and ethical considerations and promptly report any issues or malfunctions to the AI Incident Database (AIID), any required regulatory bodies, or the iTech Help Desk.
   b. **Transparency**: Maintain openness about AI capabilities, limitations, and use cases. Inform users when AI is involved in decision making processes, and ensure transparency regarding its role in education, advising, and administrative tasks.
4. **Guidelines for AI Use**
   a. **Acceptable Use of AI**
      i. **Low-Risk Applications:** AI may be used for tasks such as generating content drafts, language translations, or creating study materials, provided outputs are reviewed by a human.
      ii. **High-Risk Applications:** AI should not be used for tasks requiring accuracy and fairness, such as evaluations in hiring, grading, or any context involving private information without thorough human oversight and verification.
      iii. **Administrative Use**
      AI can enhance administrative processes, but final accountability rests with staff. AI must not independently make decisions that significantly affect individuals without human review. Ensure AI-driven administrative tools are accessible to all members of the USM community.
      iv. **Academic Use**
      AI tools used for educational purposes should enhance, not replace, learning. Faculty are encouraged to integrate AI thoughtfully into curricula while preserving core learning objectives. AI tools used for coursework must be cited appropriately.
      v. **Research Use**
      AI may be used in research provided it aligns with these guidelines. Researchers must consider ethical implications, obtain necessary approvals, and avoid bias in data or algorithm use. Ensure that AI research complies with institutional review board (IRB) protocols, ethical standards, and sponsor imposed contractual requirements. Researchers must consult with any intended journals and their editors on their policies and/or standards on the use of AI for what is allowed, not allowed, and required for publication.

vi. **Student Use**
Students must adhere to academic integrity policies when using AI. The faculty will provide specific guidelines on permissible AI use in coursework and supervised learning activities. AI should complement, not substitute, critical thinking and problem-solving.

b. **Prohibited Use of AI**
   i. **Malicious Activities:** AI must not be used for illegal, unethical, or policy violating activities.
   ii. **Unauthorized Data Access:** AI tools must not be used to access or manipulate data without authorization.
   iii. **Plagiarism:** AI generated content that violates intellectual property rights is prohibited.
   iv. **Surveillance and Monitoring:** Unauthorized surveillance of students or staff using AI is not permitted.
   v. **Automated Decision-Making Without Oversight:** AI must not autonomously make decisions with significant individual impacts without human review.
   vi. **Bias Reinforcement:** AI systems reinforcing biases or discrimination must be corrected through regular assessments and mitigation strategies.

c. **Accreditation**
   i. Use of generative AI in accreditation should be done by users who are familiar with the concepts and constraints of generative AI models in accordance with the guidelines of the "Artificial Intelligence In Accreditation" guidelines provided by SACSCOC.

Training and Enforcement

1. Training on the ethical and secure use of AI is the responsibility of each AI user and should be completed before using AI tools and systems. The university may from time to time provide workshops through venues such as the Center for Faculty Development. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to take advantage of training both internal and external to the university.
2. *Students, faculty, and staff:* Any student, faculty, or staff found to have violated these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or termination of employment in accordance with procedures defined by USM administrative policies stated in the handbook governing that individual.
3. *External Entities:* Any external entity, contractor, consultant, or temporary worker found to have violated these guidelines may be held in breach of contract and, as such, may be subject to grievances or penalties allowed by such contract.

Review

These guidelines will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with evolving AI technologies, ethical standards, and legal requirements. Community feedback is

encouraged for continuous improvement. For questions about these guidelines, please contact:

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