

Generative Artificial Intelligence Acceptable Use Policy for Authors, Editors & Reviewers

The capabilities and use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in research and scholarship are rapidly expanding. At the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR), we recognize the potential of AI to enhance our work while maintaining our commitment to ethical and responsible use. Both staff and volunteers, including those at *Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research (SPUR)*, play a key role in leveraging AI effectively and responsibly.

We expect that all authors, editors, and reviewers will always be transparent about AI's involvement in their work, especially when generating content, summaries, or ideas. They must take responsibility for reviewing and validating any AI-generated outputs before presenting or using them in SPUR activities. Plagiarism or passing off AI-generated work as solely their own is unacceptable.

This policy outlines guidelines for the appropriate use of AI across SPUR journal activities, ensuring that AI serves as a tool to enhance the publication's work without compromising human oversight, creativity, or integrity. We have based our current journal AI use policy on recommendations proposed by the Council on Publication Ethics, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, and the Modern Language Association-Conference on College Composition & Communication Joint Task Force on Writing and AI. It aligns with CUR's AI Use Policy for Staff and Volunteers. We will continue to monitor the evolving landscape and adapt our policy as needed.

AI Authorship

AI tools cannot take responsibility for their contributions or approval of the final manuscript, nor can they address issues of authority, integrity, and originality; therefore, they do not meet the requirements for inclusion as an author.

AI Use in Manuscript Development

SPUR authors are welcome to use AI tools ethically and responsibly in their research and manuscript writing as long as they align with existing journal policies and practices. For example, authors may use generative AI tools to:

- Improve grammar, spelling, punctuation, tone, and overall readability of their manuscripts. Authors must ensure their final work reflects their expertise, voice, and originality.
- Use as part of their research methodology (e.g., data analysis, image processing, or modeling). The acceptability of AI-assisted image creation depends on the image's purpose and the rights to use the image. In general, authors should document how and when AI-generated images were created, keep a record of the AI tool's terms of service at the time of creation, and confirm that the AI tool's terms allow reuse of the generated image.
- Perform literature discovery. For literature discovery, authors must ensure the citations are accurate by always checking the primary resource and that any claims made by the AI about the paper are real and correct.

Authors using AI tools must mention this in their cover letter and also detail it in the methods and acknowledgments sections. Authors need to specify their use of AI tools, whether it's in data collection and analysis, drafting and editing their writing, or creating graphics or images. The methods section should include specifics like the tool's name, version, and an explanation of how it was used.

Importantly, all prospective authors submitting manuscripts using AI must agree to take responsibility for the accuracy of any work AI tools may produce, ensure there is no plagiarism, and that all original sources have been correctly identified, credited, and cited.

AI Use in Editorial Assessment and Peer Review

The editorial assessment and peer review processes are human activities and should not be delegated. Importantly, editors and reviewers may not share manuscripts with anyone, including student trainees at any level or AI services. Assigned editors and reviewers are ultimately responsible and accountable for providing unbiased expert assessments and peer review reports. Editors and reviewers must treat both the manuscript and data received from the journal, the review report, and related correspondence as confidential. Upon completion of any review assignment, editors and reviewers are expected to delete any copy of the manuscript in their possession.

Aligned with these practices to ensure confidentiality, neither editors nor peer reviewers should upload manuscripts or any parts of them, including figures and tables, to GenAI technology, as these third-party AI tools may use the input data for training, generate future text, or serve other purposes. This could violate the confidentiality of the peer review process, the privacy of authors and reviewers, and the copyright of the manuscript under review. Sharing any part of the submission or peer review report with a text generation service or any other third-party tool constitutes a breach of this confidentiality and violates the journal's ethical guidelines.

However, an editor or peer reviewer can use AI tools to enhance the spelling, grammar, tone, and clarity of their written feedback. The use must be disclosed when submitting the peer review report to the manuscript's handling editor, and the editor must also declare this when submitting their written feedback.

Editorial Discretion

The editor may, at their discretion, decide that the amount of AI use in a submission is too great, including (but not limited to) AI tools used to create substantial commentary or detailed literature reviews. This decision may result in the manuscript being rejected or a request for revision to remove or reduce AI-generated content.

The editor may, at their discretion, determine that the use of an AI checker by the editor or reviewer violates the confidentiality of the review process. Editors and reviewers must uphold the confidentiality of the manuscripts they evaluate. They cannot not disclose any information about the work or use it for personal gain, ensuring the integrity of the editorial assessment and review process. If the Editor-in-Chief finds that the use of an AI checker by an editor or reviewer has breached review confidentiality, the author will be informed and appropriate action as determined in the sole discretion of the Editor-in-Chief will be taken with respect to the editor or reviewer. Such action may, depending on the circumstances, include a written reprimand or warning to the editor or reviewer, suspension of the editor or reviewer for a period of time, or termination of the editor or reviewer.

If you have any questions or concerns about AI use in your work as a SPUR author or volunteer activities as an editor or reviewer, please reach out to the Editor-in-Chief and the Publisher (spur@cur.org).

Last Updated: 12.01.2025