

Guidelines for Using Third-Party AI Tools at Terra State Community College

Purpose

These guidelines help ensure that third-party artificial intelligence (AI) tools are used responsibly, ethically, and securely by Terra State faculty, staff, and students. References to third-party AI tools encompass any free or licensed tools obtained for personal use by faculty, staff, or students, as well as any other external AI solutions not provided by the institution. They aim to protect sensitive data, uphold academic integrity, and ensure compliance with institutional, state, and federal regulations—particularly when using AI platforms that are not covered by a paid license or enterprise agreement with the college. They are not intended to cover every circumstance that you may encounter.

Protecting Data and Privacy

To keep college data safe and comply with privacy laws:

- Never enter sensitive personal information into third-party AI tools. This includes staff or student names, ID numbers, birthdates, Social Security numbers, addresses, health records, or financial data.
- Never enter information that traces directly back to, or identifies, any specific employee or student.
- Do not upload internal college documents such as system credentials, budget reports, or unpublished academic materials.
- Never use AI tools to process student records, grades, or advising notes unless the tool is officially approved by the college.

Academic Integrity and Responsible Use

To support learning and uphold academic standards:

- Always disclose when AI-generated content is used in assignments or communications, if permitted.
- Do not use AI tools to complete coursework unless your instructor has given explicit permission.
- Faculty should guide students on appropriate use and citation of AI-generated content.
- Do not input course materials, exam questions, or student submissions into third-party AI platforms.
- AI tools should support -- not replace -- critical thinking and original work.
- AI tools should be used to enhance learning and feedback, but they cannot replace student critical thinking or the instructor's professional judgment.
- Contact your academic division for more specific guidance regarding academic use of third-party AI tools.

Acceptable Use Examples

You may use third-party AI tools for:

- Drafting templates for emails, newsletters, or procedural documents.
- Creating draft outlines for slides, video scripts, or word documents.
- Brainstorming lesson plans or discussion questions.
- Enhancing or clarifying text previously written provided that the content within the text does not violate the AI rules outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy.

Avoid using third-party AI tools for:

- Submitting or analyzing student data or institutional records.
- Uploading confidential or proprietary college information.
- Grading or evaluating student work unless the tool is institutionally vetted.

Acceptable Third-party AI Tools:

- Microsoft CoPilot
- OpenAI ChatGPT
- Google Gemini

Know the Tool Before You Use It

- Review the AI tool's privacy policy and terms of service. Third-party tools may store or reuse anything you submit.
- Whenever using a third-party AI tool, always assume your input is public.

Staying Compliant

- These guidelines support existing college policies on technology use, FERPA, data governance, and academic integrity.
- Violations may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of access to college systems.
- Report any suspected misuse or data breaches to the IT department immediately.

Tips for Safe Use

- Use college-approved or college-licensed AI platforms.
- Remove all identifying information from documents before submission into AI tools not provided by the institution; never share names, grades, or personal identifiers such as System ID numbers or SSN.
- Treat third-party AI tools like public spaces—assume all inputs are visible.
- Use sample or anonymized text for demos in class.
- Keep confidential data inside college-licensed systems.