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DEAN'S DIGEST

Generative AI – where are we at ITU?

"Education at ITU is not simply a matter of producing fast learners, attending lectures, doing projects, and gaining diplomas. It is a matter of becoming part of a passionate culture of broad-minded deep thinkers and skilled practitioners and of becoming part of a social learning environment forging lifelong connections. Education allows us to care for each other and let that form the future use of digital technologies."

Dean of Education

During 2023, many students and teachers at ITU have been exploring Generative AI (GAI) applications to better understand the potential as well as pitfalls of this technology in an education context. We acknowledge that such tools will mark the future workplaces, so our core responsibility is to ensure that students learn to master GAI in an ethical way. We must ensure that using GAI enhances the learning experience and fosters critical thinking so we can distinguish between facts, fake, and fiction. At the same time, most of the GAI applications still bring GDPR and data protection challenges for all universities to handle.

What is the status so far?

Since Spring, ITU faculty and program coordinators have examined all courses to adjust exam formats to the GAI reality. This is because education at ITU comprises various class types with unique learning purposes, learning needs, and objectives.

Together with students, administration, and management, faculty are also sharing experiences on how to handle exams and exploring what new competencies students and faculty must develop and how future teaching, learning, and research should take place. I want to thank faculty for your important contributions as they help ITU understand the implications of GAI and how to navigate education-wise.

At this moment, we do not have safe and secure access to tools like ChatGPT4, nor do we have any proctoring or GAI detection tools to check student assignments. Like any other non-mandatory tools, ITU does not provide students or faculty with paid access to e.g., Chat-GPT 4. Tools like Microsoft Bing also present a risk of manipulation and malware, so we must be careful, critical as well as curious when exploring how to use GAI in a way that strengthens learning, critical and creative thinking, and ease our daily lives. At the same time, we want to make sure that students are treated equally and that we use GAI in a way that helps *all* students.

With this in mind, new guidelines provided by Danish universities are stating that *we do allow in certain cases that students use generative AI services to support their learning process*. Examples are brainstorming and idea generation, browsing and information retrieval, debugging code, to organize and structure thoughts and independently produced text, to train spelling and formulation skills, reading aloud, for study management purposes and personal tutoring.

What are the general ITU recommendations for students?

The use of GAI is only permitted if it is stated in the description of the course or the assignment. So, despite the disruptive nature of AI, we advise faculty and students to follow these recommendations.

Below you will find three general principles for the use of GAI, however, if the course manager has stated specific rules for the use of GAI in a course or exam, those rules take priority.

Independency: The students must still show their own independent contribution in the exam, including their project reports. It is not permitted to generate text that is directly inserted into the project report. If explicitly mentioned in the course description for the individual study element that the use of generative AI is allowed, students are still expected to provide proper source referencing. When students present ideas or statements that are not their own, they must be clearly referenced. If students are allowed to use GAI, they must clearly document the name and version of the AI tool and document all prompts and replies by available links or screenshots, when, and why they have used it.

Integrity: Following the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, students should be honest, transparent, and accountable and conduct good academic practice also when using GAI. Students should be reading course and exam criteria carefully while adhering to ITU's existing plagiarism rules.

Compliance: GDPR rules apply when using GAI so students must ensure not to insert personal information, other sensitive data, or copyrighted material. We offer all students at ITU a free online GDPR awareness course.

To avoid potential pitfalls, we advise faculty to read the Teaching guidelines on GAI as well as Principles and values for using new technology in teaching. To find opportunities, faculty are encouraged to explore how GAI can enhance the learning experience of all students and align with ITUs pedagogical principles. Please continue conversations with peers and students on ethical and legal issues as well as societal implications to foster critical thinking.

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