Guidelines for Generative AI usage at IISER Pune

Adopted on : 11-March-2026

Development Process

1. The Director, IISER Pune, constituted the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (henceforth the AI Committee) vide circular no. IISER-P/002-RO dated 10-July-2025.

2. The AI Committee consisted of the following members:

Sutirth Dey (Chairperson), Chairperson IT Advisory Committee (ex-officio), Chief Technology Officer (ex-officio), Amit Apte, Bejoy K Thomas, GV Pavan Kumar, Girish Ratnaparkhi, Kaneenika Sinha, MS Santhanam, Neena Joseph Mani, Seema Sharma and Shabana Khan.

3. The AI Committee conducted an online survey across all students and staff of the institute to get a feel for the general opinion of the community on various issues related to Artificial Intelligence.

4. The AI committee, after due deliberations, then produced a first draft of the guidelines, which was shared online with all students and staff of IISER Pune for comments.

5. The final version of the guidelines were produced after detailed discussions with various stakeholders.

6. This version was then tabled and ratified during the 48th Meeting of the IISER Pune Senate on 11-March-2026.

1. Objectives

To formulate guidelines for the responsible and ethical usage of Generative AI in education and research, while remaining within the broader rules and regulations of IISER Pune.

2. Definitions

2.1 Generative Artificial Intelligence: Generative Artificial Intelligence (henceforth GAI) refers to artificial intelligence systems that can generate novel content (e.g., text, images, music, video, or software code) in response to natural-language prompts (Holmes & Miao, 2023). As used in this document, GAI includes systems based on any machine-learning architecture (e.g., transformers, generative adversarial networks, diffusion models etc.) as well as tools and services built on them (e.g., Scite, Midjourney, NotebookLM etc.). To ensure durability, this definition should be interpreted functionally: it also covers any emerging technology that performs similar generative or autonomous roles, regardless of changes in nomenclature.

2.2 Documented output: All reports, assignments, thesis and articles formally submitted either as part of a course or an academic program (e.g., BS-MS or PhD), or in a professional capacity. This category also includes talks, posters or videos that are part of a course, an academic program or a professional activity.

2.3 The Institute: In this document, the institute or the institution shall refer to the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune.

3. Scope

3.1 The relevant sections of the guidelines formulated in this document will be applicable to the following cases:

3.1.1 All reports, assignments and master's thesis submitted by students related to the BS-MS program.

3.1.2 All reports, assignments and thesis submitted by students related to the MSc, PhD, Integrated PhD or any other academic program of the institute.

3.1.3 All scientific articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals by students and staff of the institute.

3.1.4 Any other documented output (see Section 2: Definitions above) submitted by anyone with or using an IISER Pune affiliation (including, but not limited to students, faculty, staff, post-docs, project students and the alumni) to the institution or any other national or international body.

3.2 All use cases of GAI not covered explicitly in this document shall be governed by other relevant laws, regulations or policies of the institute or of India, as the case may be, including but not limited to laws relating to information technology, digital personal data protection, copyright, consumer protection, etc.

3.3 In case of non-compliance with the provisions of this document, the following shall be the authorities for recommending the appropriate actions against the corresponding

users:

3.3.1 Dean Academics, or appropriate committees constituted by them, for all documented outputs mentioned in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

3.3.2 Institutional Ethics Committee for all documented outputs mentioned in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

3.3.3 Where a documented output falls under more than one of the above categories, the authorities identified in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 shall consult with each other. In the event of disagreement, the matter shall be escalated to the Director.

3.4 For persons who are no longer enrolled at or employed by the institute but have used or continue to use an IISER Pune affiliation in documented outputs, the institute reserves the right to: (a) declare that a particular documented output does not comply with these guidelines; and (b) depending on the nature and seriousness of the non-compliance, initiate appropriate proceedings under the institute's existing statutes and regulations. The determination of what constitutes a serious nature shall rest with the authorities identified in Section 3.3.

3.5 Relationship with external regulatory frameworks: These guidelines are intended to supplement, and not to replace, any existing or future regulations, directions, or advisories issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Ministry of Education, or any other competent regulatory authority. In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between these guidelines and any such external regulation, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate authority identified in Section 3.3 for resolution.

4. Guidelines

4.1 Unless explicitly forbidden by the competent authority, the use of GAI is permitted in all documented outputs and other activities of the students and staff of the institute (subject to the constraints of section 4.11 on Data Security).

4.2 Competent authority in 4.1 refers to the following:

4.2.1 Instructors in the case of academic courses.

4.2.2 Supervisors or corresponding authors in the context of uses related to research.

4.2.3 Departmental Heads in the case of administrative staff.

4.2.4 Appropriate authorities in all other cases (e.g., chair of a committee).

4.3 Responsibilities of the competent authority:

4.3.1 As a corollary to 4.1, if the competent authority does not want the authors/users to use GAI in a particular context, they must intimate the same unambiguously, in writing.

4.3.2 In the absence of such a prior written intimation, punitive actions cannot be taken against anyone for the mere act of using GAI. However, the absence of a prior written prohibition will not be considered as a defense against violations of academic integrity, data protection, or any other independently applicable rule or law.

4.3.3 Although 4.1 states that the use of GAI is permitted, the competent authority

cannot expect the authors/users to use GAI by default, unless they have issued specific instructions about the same.

4.4 In all cases of GAI usage, the user(s) will bear full responsibility and accountability for the content of the generated output(s). This implies two things.

4.4.1 The user(s) shall be solely responsible for any errors of omission or commission related to the content, accuracy, originality, or attribution of GAI-generated output and shall be liable for attendant consequences (if any) under applicable institutional rules. In particular, it is the user's responsibility to verify the veracity of the contents and offer appropriate arguments and/or citations in support thereof. Guidelines for appropriate attribution of GAI usage are specified in Sections 4.6 through 4.8. For data security related obligations in the context of GAI usage, see Section 4.11.

4.4.2 If, due to the usage of GAI, some learning goals are not met/fulfilled, then the user shall bear full responsibility for that. Thus, for example, if a student uses GAI to solve a problem in their thesis or assignment, but then during an oral examination, it turns out that they have not understood the underlying concepts, then the responsibility for that will be with the student and not with the instructor or the supervisor for allowing the usage of GAI.

4.5 Establishing the unfair/wrong usage of GAI:

4.5.1 The reliable automated detection of AI-generated textual output remains a significant challenge (Erol et al., 2025) even for commercial platforms (e.g., Turnitin) (Hadra et al, 2026). Thus, in the absence of other corroborating evidence(s), it is difficult to prove unauthorized usage of GAI based on the textual output alone (it might be easier for other kinds of outputs, such as visual or audio). Accordingly, the current guidelines do not recommend usage of automated detection as the primary means of enforcement.

4.5.2 If the competent authority declares that GAI cannot be used in a certain context, they must also communicate how compliance with the prohibition will be verified or enforced (e.g., viva-voce or an honor-based system).

4.6 Depending on the nature and what fraction of the documented output is GAI-generated, we define two categories.

4.6.1 The first category involves situations where the output of GAI does not directly become a part of the final document output. These include (but is not limited to) using GAI for searching the literature, understanding concepts, brainstorming, or getting comments from GAI related to some text written by the user. In all these cases, it is not necessary to attribute GAI. Usage of grammar-checking software (e.g., Grammarly), or taking the help of GAI for copy-editing or improving the flow of a few sentences (without changing the original idea), falls in this category. Similarly, using GAI to identify a bug in user-written code does not require attribution. It should be noted that, even in these cases, the user must exercise due diligence in checking the GAI output, as outlined in Section 4.4 above.

4.6.2 The second category includes those situations where the output of GAI forms a much more substantial part of the final documented output. Operationally, the term substantial shall mean anything beyond what is mentioned in section 4.6.1.

In such scenarios, along with due diligence in verification, it is mandatory for the user to acknowledge the use of GAI. We highlight a few major cases below with the explicit understanding that these cases are not exhaustive and might expand with advancements in the field of GAI as well as the disciplines where they are used.

4.6.2.1 Generating substantial chunks, refactoring or commenting computer codes. The competent authority shall decide what constitutes "substantial", based on their professional judgment. For specific guidelines for attribution, see section 4.8.3.

4.6.2.2 Generating complete sentences / paragraph(s) / section(s) in a report that are used either unchanged or with some minor paraphrasing. An extreme case of this is using GAI for creating an entire documented output.

4.6.2.3 Generating figures or tables for a paper or a report. For specific attribution guidelines, see section 4.8.4.

4.6.2.4 Generating survey questionnaires.

4.6.2.5 Generating proofs or complex derivation.

4.6.2.6 Generating systematic literature mapping using tools like Scite or Elicit, and using them directly.

4.7 Attribution of GAI usage in theses:

4.7.1 All theses (including but not limited to PhD, BS-MS, Masters, and Integrated PhD) must contain an AI attribution statement on the "Contributions" page.

4.7.2 It is the responsibility of the author of the thesis to ensure that an appropriate and accurate attribution has been made.

4.7.3 An author who has not used GAI at all, or whose use of GAI falls entirely within the cases described in Section 4.6.1, must include an appropriate declaration on the Contributions page. Suggested formats for each situation are provided in Appendix 1 (A2.3).

4.7.4 When GAI has been used in a way that needs to be attributed as per section 4.6.2: The author should provide a brief overview of the way in which GAI was used in the thesis in a subsection of the "Contribution" section called "Generative AI Usage". The declaration should at least include what was the nature of the GAI output and which particular model was used. Any modification of GAI output made by the author also needs to be mentioned (excluding the details). For a suggestive example, see appendix (A2.4a).

4.8 GAI Attributions for other cases:

4.8.1 For academic papers to be submitted to journals:

4.8.1.1 Almost every journal has its own policies about GAI usage and its attribution. We recommend that the authors follow the policies of the journal to which they wish to submit.

4.8.1.2 In case the guidelines of the journal are more permissive than those of the institute, the author(s) may, at their convenience, follow either the journal's guidelines or those of the institute. This flexibility is intended to reduce the compliance burden on authors publishing in journals with different attribution norms.

4.8.1.3 It is the corresponding author's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate GAI usage and attribution guidelines have been followed.

4.8.1.4 As a corollary to 4.8.1.3, we recommend that when an author with an IISER Pune affiliation is not a corresponding author on an article, they should follow the appropriate GAI guidelines of the journal or the institute with which the corresponding author is affiliated. This is because IISER Pune does not wish to impose mandatory attribution obligations on its members for co-authored external papers. The corresponding author (who does not belong to IISER Pune under this scenario) will be the competent authority in this case.

4.8.2 For all other reports or assignments to be submitted to the institute or external bodies by members of the institute (students and staff):

4.8.2.1 Unless explicitly required otherwise by the guidelines under which the documented output is being produced, the attribution of GAI should follow the general framework mentioned in 4.6.

4.8.2.2 As a non-binding recommendation to the authors we suggest that the attribution can be placed in a brief section called "AI-usage" just before the "Reference" section.

4.8.3 Special Use Case 1: Code generated by GAI

4.8.3.1 When GAI is used to generate whole or substantial parts of any computer code, whether through natural-language prompts (informally called vibe-coding) or other means, there must be at least one comment within the code itself stating that GAI was used, along with the name of the model. In the context of a thesis, this attribution is in addition to the attribution in the "Contribution" section, as outlined in section 4.7.4.

4.8.3.2 When such code is used to produce scientific or analytical results (including but not limited to statistical analyses, numerical simulations, computational models, and data-processing pipelines), the generated script must additionally be included as part of the submission. The format and modalities for this are to be decided by the corresponding competent authority.

4.8.4 Special Use Case 2: When GAI is being used to make a video or an infographic or a visual element (picture, table etc.), then the same must also be mentioned in the legends.

4.9 Consensus on GAI usage

4.9.1 When there are multiple authors/investigators associated with a study, a consensus on the usage of GAI must be reached before the work begins, and must be revisited whenever the scope of GAI usage changes materially.

4.9.2 The responsibility of compliance lies with the corresponding author.

4.9.3 For ongoing projects that were started before these guidelines were issued, the project leaders are advised to fulfill this requirement on a best-effort basis and as soon as practicable. Where consensus cannot be reached among existing collaborators, the matter should be documented and resolved on a case-by-case basis by the competent authority.

4.10 Authorship: GAI cannot be attributed as an author on any study, thesis, or report.

This is in line with the current general practices in publishing (COPE 2023). However, we note that this clause may need to be revised in the future if the consensus in scientific publishing changes.

4.11 Data security:

4.11.1 All information that is uploaded to a GAI (either as a file or pasted in a chat box) can potentially be used by the respective service provider to either train a model or for other purposes. Therefore, anything uploaded to GAI must be treated as if it has been posted on the internet.

4.11.2 All users of GAI must avoid putting proprietary research data, unpublished results, personally identifiable information (PII) of research participants or any other confidential information on any GAI platform that is not in line with the policies governing the usage of that data.

4.11.3 All lapses related to this will be subject to the appropriate institutional disciplinary and data-security policies.

4.12 As far as the relationship between the user and the institute is concerned, GAI-assisted work shall be governed by the institute's existing policy on Intellectual Property (IP). The use of GAI as a tool in the creation of such work shall not, by itself, alter the ownership of the intellectual property so created. However, all claims to intellectual property in GAI-assisted work are subject to the requirements and limitations imposed by the relevant patent-granting or copyright authority, and by applicable Indian and international laws. Where such external requirements create a conflict with the institute's IP policy, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate institutional authority for resolution.

4.13 Adoption, Review and Amendment:

4.13.1 These guidelines shall come into effect on the date of their adoption by the IISER Pune senate.

4.13.2 These guidelines should be reviewed at least once every two years from the date of their adoption, or earlier if warranted by significant changes in the legal, regulatory, or technological landscape relating to GAI.

4.13.3 The Director, or an authority designated by the Director, shall constitute an appropriate committee for the purpose of the said review and amendment.

Note on AI-usage: The first-draft of this document was written without any help of Generative AI beyond what is described in Section 4.6.1. This version was then commented upon extensively by the students and faculty of IISER Pune. We then had multiple brainstorming iterations with GAI models (Gemini 3.1 Pro and Claude Opus 4.6) to sharpen the ideas, pressure-test various scenarios and accordingly clarify the language.

References

COPE Council (2023). COPE position – Authorship and AI – English. `https://doi.org/10.24318/cCVRZBms`

Erol, G. et al (2025). Can we trust academic AI detective? Accuracy and limitations of AI-output detectors. *Acta Neurochirurgica*, *167*(1), 214.

Hadra, M., Cambridge, K., & Mesbah, M. (2026). Evaluating the accuracy and reliability of AI content detectors in academic contexts. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, *22*(1), 4.

Holmes, W., & Miao, F. (2023). Guidance for generative AI in education and research. UNESCO Publishing.

Appendix 1

A1. Ethics

A1.1 We recommend that a separate section 6 (titled 'AI and Ethics') is added to the existing "Guidelines on Academic Ethics" and the current sections 6–8 are renumbered accordingly.

A1.2 The content of the section to be inserted should be as follows:

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6. AI and Ethics

The institute has formulated a document entitled "Guidelines for Generative AI usage at IISER Pune". The guidelines presented in this document are relevant for the ethical usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in research, training and administration. All students, faculty and staff are required to abide by these guidelines in the context of GAI usage.

A2. In Thesis

A2.1 Since the GAI use cases are going to vary substantially across disciplines, it is difficult to come up with a standardized way of attribution that will be acceptable / applicable to all.

A2.2 One possible solution in this context is IBM's AI attribution toolkit (https://aiattribution.github.io/), which seems to be reasonable for many (though perhaps not all) usecases. Therefore, usage of this tool is suggested but not mandated.

A2.3 Some representative (but not mandated) formats for the case mentioned in Section 4.6.1 (i.e., no attribution needed) are as follows:

a) "I/We declare that the use of Generative AI in this thesis did not extend beyond what is described in Section 4.6.1 of the 'Guidelines for Generative AI usage at IISER Pune', and accordingly, no attribution is required."

b) "I/We declare that no Generative AI was used in this thesis."

A2.4 Some representative (but not mandated) formats for the case mentioned in Section 4.6.2 (i.e., attribution needed) are as follows:

a) "The draft code generated by Gemini 3.1 Pro was appropriately edited before execution".

b) "This figure was generated using Gemini Nano Banana with the prompt: 'Prepare a graphical abstract based on the abstract pasted below' ".

A3. In the Student Handbook

The following statement may be added as a bullet point under the section "Computing Ethics" on Page 20 of the Handbook of Guidelines (BS-MS Dual Degree Programme, October 2022, ver 2.0, updated September 2023)

"Students must abide by all the student-related rules and norms stipulated in the document entitled 'Guidelines for Generative AI usage at IISER Pune'."

A4. On Course Announcement Forms

The following field may be added on the Course Announcement Form:

"Generative AI Policy"