



VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY

POLICY IDENTIFICATION: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

RESPONSIBLE CONTACT: ASSOCIATE PROVOST ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 5, 2026

Purpose

Virginia Union University (VUU) recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) – including machine learning, generative AI, and related technologies – is rapidly transforming teaching, learning, research, and operations. This policy establishes a governance framework to ensure that all AI tools and systems are used *responsibly and ethically* in ways that support the University’s mission. In particular, the policy upholds VUU’s core academic values of fairness, privacy, transparency, accountability, and academic integrity. It integrates VUU’s existing Academic Integrity standards (which define cheating and plagiarism as violations) with current best practices in AI governance. By articulating clear expectations for AI use, this policy enables the University to harness the benefits of AI (e.g., personalized learning, research innovation, and administrative efficiency) while mitigating risks (bias, misuse of data, and erosion of trust). All members of the VUU community – students, faculty, staff, and authorized third-party vendors – share responsibility for implementing these standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all VUU academic units and programs, including the main campus, VUU Global (online/global education programs), and any affiliated entities. It governs the use of *all* AI tools and systems – whether developed in-house or procured from third parties (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Poe) – in teaching and learning, research, and university operations. All VUU students, faculty, and staff must comply when they access, deploy, or rely on AI technologies as part of coursework, scholarship, or job duties. Likewise, third-party vendors providing AI-related products or services to the University must agree to this policy as a condition of their contracts. This includes cloud-based or on-device AI, generative AI assistants (e.g., large language models), analytics platforms, and any system capable of automated decision-making or content generation.

Guiding Principles: All AI use at VUU will be guided by the following ethical and operational principles, which align with higher-education best practices:

- **Transparency:** VUU is committed to transparent, understandable disclosure of when and how AI is used. AI-generated content or decision-support must be identifiable to users (e.g., students are informed if an AI-assisted tool graded their work) and, where feasible, the logic of AI systems should be explainable. Transparency fosters trust and enables the campus community to engage critically with AI tools. The University will document AI policies and data practices in writing and share them publicly with stakeholders.
- **Accountability:** All users and developers of AI systems at VUU are responsible for their outputs. The University will maintain oversight of AI deployment, including vetting tools before adoption and monitoring their impacts. Decisions assisted by AI must include human review and final approval – AI may inform but not replace human judgment. VUU will hold itself and its vendors accountable for the ethical use of AI; this includes periodically auditing AI systems for compliance with these standards.
- **Fairness and Non-Discrimination:** AI systems must be designed and used to promote fairness. VUU will strive to ensure that AI tools do not introduce or amplify bias against any student or group. For example, AI tutoring or grading systems will be evaluated to prevent unfair disadvantages or stereotypes. The University will seek varied input in AI tool selection and require that AI datasets not systematically exclude underrepresented groups. As with all academic tools, AI use must *not* grant anyone an unfair academic advantage.
- **Privacy and Data Protection:** The University will safeguard personal and sensitive data in all AI processes. AI tools must comply with applicable privacy laws (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA, Title IX, as appropriate) and VUU’s own data policies. Personally identifiable or confidential information – including student records, health data, or proprietary research data – may not be entered into or used by an AI system without explicit authorization and secure data-handling procedures. All institutional data used for AI must be encrypted in transit and at rest, with strict access controls and audit trails.
- **Academic Integrity:** AI must be used in ways that uphold honesty and learning. Consistent with VUU’s Academic Integrity policy, students and faculty may not use AI to cheat or plagiarize. For example, submitting AI-generated text or solutions without attribution is prohibited. Instead, AI tools may be used as *learning aids*: for brainstorming, tutoring, or drafting, provided that the resulting work is original and all AI assistance is clearly acknowledged. Instructors will clarify in syllabi what AI uses (if any) are allowed for each assignment. Even when AI assistance is permitted, users remain responsible for verifying accuracy, citing sources, and ensuring that AI outputs reflect their own critical engagement.

Acceptable Uses: AI tools may be used in instructional, research, and administrative contexts, provided they align with the above principles and VUU’s values. Examples of permitted uses include:

- **Instructional (Teaching & Learning):** Faculty and students may employ AI tools to enrich learning, e.g., generating practice problems, summarizing readings, simulating virtual labs, completing low-stakes assignments and assessments, or providing personalized feedback. Students can use AI to collect data and information, allowing them to complete tasks using more complex cognitive skills at earlier stages in their academic career. Instructors can use AI to tailor lesson plans or create adaptive learning activities, and to automate routine administrative tasks (like generating quiz questions). All such uses must be approved by course faculty: for instance, an instructor might allow an AI tutor for homework but require students to cite any AI-generated ideas explicitly. In every case, AI should *supplement* – not replace – active learning. Students should always apply critical

thinking to any AI-generated content and ensure it is incorporated legitimately into their own work.

- **Research:** VUU researchers and students may leverage AI in data analysis, modeling, simulations, and scholarly content generation, provided ethical research practices are followed. This includes designing AI-assisted studies that are transparent about methods, mitigating bias in data and algorithms, and maintaining human oversight of conclusions. For example, using AI for statistical analysis or text mining is allowed if researchers validate results and acknowledge AI's role. VUU expects all research involving AI to explicitly consider privacy, reproducibility, and proper attribution of AI-generated artifacts.
- **Administrative and Operational:** Staff and administrators may use AI to improve institutional services – for instance, chatbots for student FAQs, predictive analytics for advising, or automated scheduling. Such uses should always preserve human oversight and confidentiality. Routine tasks like data entry or report generation may be automated, but final decisions (e.g., financial disbursements, admission determinations, disciplinary actions) must be reviewed by qualified personnel. VUU will provide only approved AI platforms (e.g., university-contracted systems) for handling any sensitive University data.

In all contexts, uses not explicitly permitted above (and those listed as prohibited below) are disallowed unless specifically authorized by Academic Affairs in consultation with IT.

Prohibited Uses: The following uses of AI are strictly forbidden at VUU:

- **Academic Dishonesty:** Using AI to cheat or plagiarize violates this policy and VUU's integrity code. Examples include submitting AI-generated answers as one's own on assignments or exams, using AI to fabricate lab data, or having AI write papers or solve quizzes on behalf of a student. Any AI-produced material incorporated into coursework must be cited and disclosed; failure to do so is treated as plagiarism.
- **Automated Decision-Making Without Oversight:** No person or system may rely solely on AI to make consequential decisions without human review. For example, an AI suggestion may inform but not replace a professor's grading judgment, an advisor's recommendations, or an administrator's action. All final decisions affecting students or employees must be made by humans, taking into account AI input as one of several factors.
- **Illegal or Unethical Content:** Generating illegal, hateful, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate content with AI is prohibited. Users may not prompt AI to produce offensive images, pornographic material, or content that violates University policies on harassment or hate speech. AI systems should not be used to fabricate false records, defame individuals, or engage in stalking or discrimination.
- **Non-Consensual Data Collection:** AI tools may *not* be used to collect or analyze personal data about VUU students, faculty, or staff without express consent and a lawful basis. In particular, uploading student work, grades, identifiable profiles, or any sensitive information into public or unvetted AI systems is forbidden. AI-driven surveillance of classrooms or monitoring of personal devices is not allowed unless specifically authorized by law and University policy (e.g., security cameras used by Facilities). Similarly, third-party vendors may not train their AI models on VUU's institutional data (including student transcripts or employee records) without written consent from the University's IT Office.
- **Privacy Violations:** Users must not use AI to attempt to de-anonymize data or violate confidentiality commitments (for example, inferring personal information about a student from anonymized data). Any AI integration that accesses medical, financial, or disciplinary

records must comply with all privacy regulations and University controls (and usually is disallowed).

- **Unauthorized Tools:** Only AI tools approved by VUU IT may be used with institutional data. Free or personal AI services are not authorized for processing University-owned confidential information. (For example, students may use ChatGPT on public websites for study purposes, but staff should never input confidential student records into such free tools.)

Any use of AI not listed above will be evaluated case-by-case; however, if it conflicts with any guiding principle (transparency, integrity, etc.), it will be deemed prohibited. Violation of these prohibitions will be subject to disciplinary measures (see Enforcement).

Roles and Responsibilities: Implementation of this policy is a shared responsibility:

- **Students:** All students must comply with this policy and with any course-specific AI rules set by their instructors. Students are responsible for learning these rules (e.g., via the syllabus) and consulting instructors if unsure about permitted uses. They must use AI ethically to support learning – for example, by using AI as a study aid rather than outsourcing assignments. Students must cite and disclose any AI assistance in their work and remain ultimately accountable for the originality and quality of their submissions. Violations by students will be handled through the University’s existing Academic Integrity processes.
- **Faculty and Instructors:** Faculty have the authority to determine how AI may be used in their courses. Each instructor will indicate in syllabi how AI tools may be employed for assignments, projects, or exams. Instructors should discuss AI expectations with their classes, ensuring clarity on key points (e.g., what attribution is required, what types of assistance are allowed). *Faculty must also stay informed about AI tools’ capabilities and limitations and update their practices accordingly.* When using AI in teaching or grading (such as AI-assisted grading), faculty must preserve transparency (inform students) and critically review AI outputs for bias or error. Faculty should report suspected policy violations (e.g., cheating with AI) through standard academic channels.
- **Staff and IT:** University staff – especially IT personnel – will play a central role in this policy’s implementation. IT must maintain a vetted catalogue of approved AI tools and ensure that any new AI services comply with VUU’s security and privacy standards. IT will configure and update AI systems to protect data (encryption, access controls) and monitor for vulnerabilities. The IT Department and the Academic Affairs office will also jointly organize training and awareness programs to ensure that all faculty, staff, and students understand the responsible use of AI. If a faculty or staff member wishes to adopt a new AI tool (including third-party software or platforms), they must submit it for review by IT for compliance (data agreements, etc.) before campus-wide rollout.
- **Administration (Academic Affairs and Leadership):** Academic Affairs, in collaboration with IT and the Provost’s office, will oversee AI governance. The Provost or designee will ensure that this policy is upheld across the University. Academic leadership will review any conflicts between AI use and University values and may seek guidance from appointed committees or ethical review boards. University administrators will incorporate AI governance into strategic planning and resource allocation, and will foster cross-campus committees (e.g., an AI Task Force) to monitor AI initiatives.
- **Third-Party Vendors:** Any vendor supplying AI solutions to VUU must sign an agreement acknowledging this policy. Vendors are required to obtain explicit, written

consent before using any VUU institutional data to train AI models. They must comply with VUU's Data Usage Agreements: using only the minimal data needed, protecting it with encryption and access controls, and deleting or returning data after use. Vendors are also expected to adhere to ethical AI practices (designing for fairness, transparency, and accountability) and to submit to periodic audits by VUU to verify compliance. Contracts with AI vendors will incorporate clauses requiring compliance with emerging laws and standards on AI and privacy.

Enforcement and Sanctions: Violations of this AI policy will be addressed through VUU's existing conduct procedures. Student infractions (e.g., academic dishonesty involving AI) will be handled by the Academic Integrity or Student Conduct processes, with sanctions ranging from assignment failure to course failure or suspension, as detailed in VUU's Integrity policy. Staff or faculty violations will be managed under applicable employee conduct policies and may result in disciplinary action. In all cases, AI-related misconduct (such as using AI to cheat or to collect data without consent) will be treated as seriously as the analogous non-AI offense. For example, using an AI tool to fabricate citations or essays will incur the same penalties as plagiarism. The University reserves the right to restrict access to AI tools on campus systems if they are being abused. Academic Affairs and IT will investigate suspected breaches (consulting Legal or Human Resources as needed) and may involve the Dean, Provost, or campus security authorities depending on severity. Guidance for adjudication will explicitly reference this policy and the Academic Integrity Policy.

Review and Updates: This AI policy is a living document. The Office of Academic Affairs and the IT Department will jointly review it **annually** (or more frequently as needed) to account for technological advances, new legal requirements, and campus experience. A standing AI Governance Committee (or similar body) will oversee this review process, solicit feedback from stakeholders (students, faculty, staff), and update the policy accordingly. Any changes will be approved by the Provost and communicated to the University community. This regular review ensures that VUU's AI guidelines remain aligned with evolving best practices and institutional goals.

References: This policy is grounded in current higher education AI governance frameworks and reflects compliance with federal, state, regional, and accreditor standards. In Virginia, Executive Order 30 directs public institutions and agencies to establish responsible AI policies that prioritize ethics, transparency, and human oversight. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) reinforces these expectations by promoting AI literacy, data protection, and academic rigor in postsecondary education. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) encourages AI integration with safeguards for privacy and equity. Regionally, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requires that institutions maintain integrity in instructional delivery and assessment, particularly when using emerging technologies like AI. Locally, Richmond-based institutions such as the University of Richmond emphasize AI accountability and consent-based data practices. This policy also reflects EDUCAUSE's national recommendations to uphold fairness, transparency, privacy, and responsibility, and integrates peer-institution practices such as vendor data-consent protocols, annual AI policy review cycles, and clear attribution rules. By codifying these principles, Virginia Union University affirms its commitment to ethical innovation, regulatory alignment, and academic excellence in the age of artificial intelligence.