

## Pedagogical Responses to AI for Instructors of Writing-Intensive Classes

### When setting AI policies for writing in your classes:

Use caution about responses that emphasize surveillance or restrictions on the writing process that make the conditions of writing for class radically different from writing conditions students will encounter in other classes, work environments, and their personal lives. Focus on approaches to academic integrity that support students rather than punish them and that promote a collaborative rather than adversarial relationship between teachers and students.

### Collaborative, process-based pedagogy:

Some pedagogical techniques may reduce the chance that students will turn to AI as a replacement for their own intellectual work. Students most often engage in academic misconduct when they feel unprepared to complete high-stakes work, so **we encourage faculty to focus on writing as a process rather than simply a product:**

- **Sequence (“scaffold”) assignments.** – Break major assignments into smaller (low-stakes) pieces with periodic due dates so that they build toward a larger piece of writing over time. Remind students that “low-stakes” writing is not unimportant writing unworthy of their time (or yours), but rather that it is writing in which they are expressly encouraged to make mistakes, take risks, express partial understanding, etc.
- **Assign skill-building activities.** – Give students the chance to practice skills they will need to succeed in higher-stakes assessments, such as close reading activities, or analysis of a small dataset, miniature literature reviews, etc.
- **Require reflective writing.** – Reflective writing can get students to consider prior knowledge, explain their writing process, articulate their understanding of difficult concepts, and imagine future applications for their learning.
- **Focus on giving feedback (rather than grades).** – Build in opportunities to give students ungraded feedback on their writing’s strengths and weaknesses, and guidance about revisions and next steps. Make space to be their editor and collaborator, rather than simply their grader.

- **Integrate peer feedback.** – Well-designed peer feedback activities give students the chance to reflect on their own learning and understanding through the process of giving feedback. If students find it difficult to share their work, model the workshop process with samples of student writing.
- **Consider adopting alternative forms of grading.** – Traditional forms of grading can incentivize students to focus on grades at the expense of genuine learning. Alternative forms of grading (contract grading, labor-based grading, specifications grading, etc.) deprioritize the kinds of high-stakes assessment that often lead students to engage in academic misconduct.
- **Consider assigning work portfolios.** – Ask students to keep and resubmit their work and reflective writing as part of work portfolios that represent each stage of the writing and revision process. Portfolios allow faculty and students to **see the process as the product.**

While none of these offers a perfect solution, each one engages students in habits of thought relevant to our courses and disciplines. They likewise invite students to engage with writing as an on-going *process* (of critical thinking, listening, reflecting, and revising) rather than a static product (word count, page count) that could be effortlessly generated by AI.

### **When reading and evaluating student writing:**

**Be very cautious about relying on AI text detection tools**, including those provided by TurnItIn. These tools are both unreliable and opaque: they are prone to making mistakes about the source of written work, and they offer no verifiable evidence that their determinations are valid. If you rely on them, consider the possible effects of false accusations on students, including negative effects that may disproportionately affect marginalized groups.

**This handout was drafted by Sarah Weiger (Director of the Writing Center) and Joshua Swidzinski (English) and relies on ideas and language drawn from the following sources:**

Basgier, Christopher, "Responding to Artificial Intelligence: Guidelines for Faculty," February 2023.  
<<https://auburn.edu/academic/provost/university-writing/resources/?tag=Artificial%20Intelligence>>

Modern Language Association and Conference on College Composition and Communication, "MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI Working Paper: Overview of the Issues, Statement of Principles, and Recommendations," July, 2023.  
<<https://aiandwriting.hcommons.org/working-paper-1/>>