

Guiding Principles on Artificial Intelligence at DePaul

DePaul University's approach to artificial intelligence¹ is grounded in our mission to promote peaceful, just, and equitable solutions to social and environmental challenges while supporting the integral human development of our students. Catholic Vincentian values guide our use of all technology, including AI, ensuring innovation while upholding the material, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of our diverse local and global communities. Pope Leo XIV has highlighted the importance of an ethical framework for use of AI: “the ability to access vast amounts of data and information should not be confused with the ability to derive meaning and value from it. The latter requires a willingness to confront the mystery and core questions of our existence, even when these realities are often marginalized or ridiculed by the prevailing cultural and economic models.”²

The following principles establish the ethical foundation that governs how AI is used across DePaul regardless of role or area.

1. Human-Centered and Mission-Aligned Use

At DePaul, AI systems are understood as tools that may support human learning, creativity, judgment, and care; however, they must never substitute for ethical responsibility, professional expertise, or relational obligations of faculty, staff, and students. AI use should align with DePaul's mission to serve the common good, particularly by expanding access to education, supporting inclusive pedagogy, and avoiding harm to vulnerable or marginalized populations.

2. Academic Integrity and Intellectual Honesty

The integrity of teaching, learning, and scholarship is central to the university's mission. AI tools have a variety of uses in academic settings, but they must not obscure or misrepresent human authorship, understanding, or intellectual contribution. All members of the DePaul University community share responsibility for ensuring that AI use does not undermine the credibility of academic credentials, trust between faculty and students about their effort, or infringe upon intellectual property; its use must preserve the rigor and trustworthiness of research. This principle applies equally to course materials, student work, research outputs, grant proposals, creative products, institutional communications, and other areas of professional practice where human judgement, values, and accountability are critical. See [DePaul's Academic Integrity policy](#).

3. Transparency and Explainability

Meaningful and trustworthy use of AI requires transparency such as critical evaluation of AI limitations, biases, and errors. When AI tools influence educational content, assessment, research outcomes, or administrative decisions, their role should be disclosed to stakeholders

as appropriate. Where AI systems are used in decision-support contexts, humans must be able to understand, question, and override AI-generated recommendations.

4. Equity, Fairness, and Non-Discrimination

AI systems can reproduce and amplify historical inequities embedded in data, institutions, and social structures. AI systems require natural resources and produce environmental costs, often distributed unequally, that must be taken into account within the scope of our mission. DePaul is committed to evaluating AI tools for disparate impacts overall and as related to race, gender, disability, language, socioeconomic status, immigration status, and other protected or vulnerable characteristics.

5. Privacy, Data Stewardship, and Security

AI use should not diminish the right to privacy and autonomy of students, employees, donors, research participants, and community partners. Personal, institutional, research and other data must be handled in compliance with FERPA regulations, IRB protocols, contractual obligations, and all other applicable university policies. See DePaul's [Information Services Generative AI guidance and policies](#). Due to their general lack of transparency, irreversibility of workflow, and non-deterministic output, generative and agentic AI tools that retain, reuse, or train on user-submitted data present additional risks and require heightened evaluation before use in academic or administrative contexts.

6. Accountability and Shared Governance

Ethical responsibility for AI use is distributed across many roles and structures. University-level decisions about AI use policy should involve shared governance, staff expertise, student voices, and ethical oversight. There must be transparent accountability processes according to role(s), university codes of conduct, and use cases.

¹ *Artificial Intelligence* (AI), in broad terms, refers to systems that perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence such as perception, language production, or decision-making. It includes everything from rule-based expert systems to modern neural networks. Machine Learning (ML) is a subset of AI in which systems learn from data and identify previously unknown patterns or make predictions. Spam filters, recommendation engines, and fraud detection are classic applications of ML. *Generative AI* is a subset of machine learning focused on producing content, including text, images, audio, code, and video; these models learn statistical structures from vast amounts of training data and generate plausible new samples. Large language models like Claude and image generation models like Stable Diffusion are examples of generative AI models. *Agentic AI* refers to AI systems (typically built on top of generative models) that don't just produce a single output but autonomously pursue goals over multiple steps, and possibly over significant spans of time, by planning, using tools, and taking actions in their environment.

² ["Address of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to Participants in the Conference 'Artificial Intelligence and Care of Our Common Home'"](#) (5 December 2025). In ["Drawing New Maps of Hope"](#) (28 October 2025), Pope Leo XIV writes "no algorithm can substitute for what makes education human: poetry, irony, love, art, imagination, the joy of discovery and even learning from mistakes as an opportunity for growth." See also ["Message of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV for the 60th World Day of Social Communications"](#) (24 January 2026) and ["Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence"](#) (14 January 2025).