SWC

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Artificial Intelligence Policy

Policy Owner:	Director of Curriculum
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1. Scope

1.1 This policy applies to all staff and students who use or manage Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems within South West College. It also applies to all AI-enabled tools used in curriculum delivery, administrative services, and support functions.

2. College Statement

2.1 South West College is committed to supporting staff and students develop their skills and understanding of AI, ensuring ethical and environmental concerns are managed. AI will be used to enhance teaching, learning, administration, and innovation, while maintaining ethical, transparent and responsible standards consistent with the College's values and statutory duties. All AI users are expected to comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and maintain overall Data security. The College is obliged to follow sectoral guidance and all current government regulations in place.

2.2 The College's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) should comply with all relevant UK and Northern Ireland legislation, regulations, and guidance, including but not limited to:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring the lawful, fair, and transparent processing of personal data;
- With relevant Northern Ireland equality legislation, promoting fairness, accessibility, and non-discrimination in all AI applications;
- The UK Government's AI Regulation White Paper principles, emphasising safety, transparency, fairness, accountability, and governance; and
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance on AI and Data Protection, to ensure responsible design, deployment, and oversight of AI systems.

2.3 The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) has provided principles and guidance for AI use in Further Education Colleges, on which this policy is based.

Due to the evolving nature of this area, guidance and security mitigations around AI may change quickly and the College must adapt appropriately, when necessary.

3. Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)

3.1 AI has transformed how society, work, and education operate creating new possibilities that were once considered beyond reach. It is essential when adopting any new technology, that appropriate measures are implemented to ensure secure, ethical and responsible use, and in addition, aligning with the College vision of "Inspiring Learning, Empowering People". This policy provides a framework to ensure responsible, secure, and effective use of AI by staff and students

3.2 Generative AI (GenAI) is an Artificial Intelligence technology that generates content in response to user prompts. Users should understand that information generated through GenAI may be inaccurate, incomplete, and that appropriate subject knowledge and critical judgement are necessary when reviewing its outputs

4. Types of AI

4.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to systems that perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Generative AI** – systems that create text, images, audio, or code (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, DALL-E);
- **Predictive and Analytical AI** – models used in forecasting, diagnostics, or learning analytics;
- **Adaptive and Assistive AI** – accessibility and personalisation tools that adjust learning experiences;
- **Recommendation and Search Optimisation Systems** – tools that suggest content or resources;
- **Automation and Workflow AI** – process-efficiency tools within administration or data processing.

4.2 These AI categories demonstrate the wide range of current and emerging tools relevant to education, research, and administration.

4.3 Text generative AI is trained on vast amounts of text data which enable it to improve its performance from data, e.g. ChatGPT generative pre trained transformer (GPT), has been pre trained on larger amounts of data, and language models that capture language nuances.

4.4 Image creation and analysis of AI tools use trained models to generate, interpret or modify visual content.

4.5 Many versions of GenAI models continue to be developed and become embedded into many of the search engines and Information Technology (IT) products we use.

5. Principles of AI Use

5.1 There are several principles that the College must maintain:

(i) Prioritise the safe, ethical and responsible use of AI.

(ii) Provide necessary training and develop skills for staff and students, allowing appropriate use of AI in various environments.

(iii) Provide access to appropriate AI tools.

(iv) Maintain academic integrity.

(v) Work collaboratively with other Colleges and maintain best practice.

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5.2 Safety and Security

5.2.1 The online safety of all staff and students is paramount. The College will provide training for staff and students, which will allow them to understand the benefits and risks of AI and how to use it appropriately. Training will inform users how to protect personal data and necessary actions, should an incident occur. It will also provide insight into how data can train the model and advise of any necessary consent requirements which must be sought. Any AI systems that will be used by the College will be tested and piloted, prior to any training taking place. Staff and students must not enter personal, confidential, commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted College information into an AI system unless it has been approved by the

College for that purpose.

5.3 Transparency

5.3.1 If the College has used AI for a particular task, it will provide information outlining the rationale for this, i.e. how it has been used and for which purpose it has been used.

5.3.2 AI may be used to support College activities such as creating learning resources, curriculum delivery, assessment/monitoring and data analysis.

5.3.3 AI may also be utilised across College support services to improve efficiency, insight, decision-making and Policy Development.

5.3.4 In these applications, the College will ensure AI use remains transparent, ethical, and explainable, with clear communication on how data is processed and how AI contributes to decision-making. All corporate AI systems must align with data protection, equality, and accountability principles and be subject to regular review and oversight by the Digital Steering Committee.

5.3.5 Students will be informed and must understand that AI information used in their work, must be acknowledged appropriately and that AI detection methods are in operation also.

5.3.6 Students must clearly identify where and how AI has contributed to their work, and staff must model transparency in their use of AI for educational or administrative purposes.

5.3.7 The College must also protect any Intellectual Property rights of work product belonging to staff, students and associated businesses.

5.4 Equality And Accessibility

5.4.1 The College recognises the potential of AI tools to enhance inclusion and accessibility through adaptive technologies, personalised feedback, and assistive applications. AI will be used appropriately to support equitable learning experiences. The College will promote inclusive and ethical practice by ensuring

staff and students understand when and how AI can be used appropriately within learning and assessment activities.

5.4.2 All software is assessed and tested prior to procurement, including AI resources, to ensure they provide the optimal user experience whilst allowing appropriate security measures to be implemented. Acquired/purchased AI resources are a limited resource which are restricted by budgets and therefore can only be allocated based on requirements. However, free AI resources are available, and the College will work to ensure accessibility for everyone to use.

5.4.3 An Equality Screening was completed on 18 September 2024, with no adverse impacts identified.

5.5 Accountability and governance

5.5.1 AI models used by the College will be monitored for performance and accuracy

5.5.2 The Digital Steering Committee will monitor use within the College.

5.5.3 As AI systems performance may change over time, for example when the underlying AI models change or encounter new types of data. Usage and performance are to be reviewed each academic year to ensure AI systems remain fit for purpose.

5.6 Contestability

5.6.1 The College is affiliated with many Awarding bodies and we must comply with their specifications for assessment. Their criteria for AI use varies and is different for academic levels also.

5.6.2 AI may be used to assist some departments/areas within the College, with aspects of the assessment process. The College will provide information for staff and students, advising them on the process of how to contest an assessment outcome or other decision which has been associated with an AI application. The college will ensure learners and staff are clear on how to contest the output of any AI system if they feel they have been unfairly disadvantaged, which may require students to be questioned on their submission via another assessment method

further to their submission. These activities will be discussed during new academic year induction.

6. Skills Development

6.1 AI Literacy

6.1.1 As AI is evolving rapidly and becoming integrated into many services we use and activities we participate in, it is essential that staff and students develop their understanding of how to use AI tools and evaluate which are best suited to their needs.

6.1.2 It is crucial that, whilst adopting new technologies into the educational and workplace setting, all AI users understand the importance of Data Privacy and Cyber Security and are clear on the measures in place should an incident occur.

6.1.3 The College will embed AI literacy into digital skills programmes and CPD frameworks, ensuring all users understand ethical, pedagogical, and technical dimensions of AI.

7. Acceptable Use of AI

7.1 Students should work to develop a strong knowledge and understanding of their chosen area of study. Assessment enables both academic staff and students to identify gaps in knowledge or where additional work is needed. Use of AI in assessment must be fair and consistent, therefore several key points must be observed:

- **Integrity:** Students must submit their own independent work.
- **Acknowledgement of AI:** If AI has been used to assist the completion of an assessment, it must be cited appropriately and how it was used.
- **Misuse of AI:** All users should understand the risks associated with AI use and necessary precautions that should be taken to protect data.
- **Plagiarism:** The College currently uses software designed to detect unoriginal work submissions. Plagiarised and AI-plagiarised submissions

may result in further action being taken both internally and externally.

- **Appropriate and Prohibited Use:**The extent to which AI may be used depends on the type and purpose of assessment.
- **Formative work:** Students may use AI for idea generation, grammar or structural feedback, and skill practice.
- **Summative coursework:** Students may use AI for research planning or referencing support but must not use it to generate analysis, conclusions, or reflective content.
- **Examinations:** Use of AI is prohibited unless specifically authorised as an accessibility tool.
- **Presentations or creative artefacts:** AI tools may support design or production, but the student must be able to explain and evidence their own contribution.
- Detailed guidance will be provided for each programme area and updated as technologies and awarding-body rules evolve.
- **Excessive or Inappropriate Use:** Where lecturers have reason to believe that AI has been used excessively or inappropriately within any assessment, they may apply additional or alternative assessment tools or methods—such as a viva, in-class task, or further evidence of understanding—to validate the authenticity and integrity of the assessment.
- **Assessment Integrity:** AI detection tools will inform but not determine academic integrity decisions. Staff retain professional judgement and may seek additional evidence of a student's understanding if AI use is suspected.

8. Efficiencies

8.1 The College recognises that AI can improve efficiency in teaching preparation, assessment design, administrative processes, and data analytics. AI should be used to enhance—not replace—human judgement. Responsibility for any action, decision or material produced with AI assistance remains with the relevant member or authorised decision maker.

8.2 AI training and skills development will be ongoing for everyone. A major advantage of AI is the ability to make some efficiencies with time management.

When AI resources are utilised appropriately, they can support many of the College's Academic and Support staff needs and give insight into alternative approaches with tasks such as:

- Email formation
- Lesson plans
- Creating assessment materials
- Optimal experimental designs and engineering creations
- Alternative explanations
- Tailored/Individual teaching plans

8.3 The AI Hub will be a maintained resource from which staff can access and locate further guidance.

9. Management of AI

9.1 The Further and Higher Education Colleges in the Sector will continue to work together to maintain a collaborative approach for consistent and beneficial use of AI for all staff and students. Additional AI guidance materials are accessible via the College website.

9.2 All Students will be provided with guidance regarding the appropriate and acceptable use of AI to support their assignments and assessments and AI detection tools that will be utilised.

9.3 AI detection tools will be used as part of a broader academic integrity process, not as sole evidence for misconduct. They can on occasion indicate that AI has been used when it has not. Therefore, Student assignments and assessments previously submitted will be reviewed when significant differences occur with their general standard of work.

9.4 AI systems introduced to the College must undergo a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and receive approval from the Data Protection Officer. Associated AI infrastructure, integrations and access arrangements must also be appropriately assessed, approved and managed.

9.5 A guidance document will be circulated to learners during induction week.

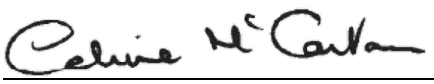
10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 Because AI technologies are developing rapidly, the College will review and update this policy, associated guidance, and training materials regularly. Updates and emerging good practice will be communicated promptly to staff and students through the AI Hub, Gateway, and relevant induction or CPD sessions.

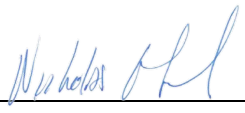
10.2 Specific aspects of AI use, including assessment and examinations, safeguarding, and data protection, will continue to be monitored, reviewed, and reported under the College's existing policies, structures, committees, and processes, such as the Higher Education Academic Board, Examination Boards, and the Quality and Assurance Meeting.

10.3 The broader use and implementation of Artificial Intelligence across the College will be monitored by the Digital Steering Committee, which will review progress, compliance, and alignment with legal requirements, sectoral guidance, and emerging technologies.

10.4 Findings from these monitoring activities will inform annual reviews and updates to this policy, and outcomes will be reported to the Governing Body as part of standard governance reporting.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: 

Date: 04 November 2026

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: 

Date: 04 November 2026

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Information Security Policy	Gateway	Director of Corporate Services
Information Governance Policy	Gateway	Director of Corporate Services
Acceptable Use Policy	Gateway	Director of Corporate Services
Electronic Communication Policy	Gateway	Director of Corporate Services
Equal Opportunities, Good Relations and Cultural Diversity Policy	Gateway	Head of People & Culture
Employee Standards and Ethical Practice Policy	Gateway	Head of People & Culture
Student Disciplinary Policy	Gateway	Director of Curriculum
Data Protection Policy	Gateway	Data Protection Officer
Examinations Malpractice Policy	Gateway	Head of Quality & Student Engagement

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Section 2.2	Equality Act (NI) 2010	Northern Ireland Equality legislation
Section 3.2	Generative AI description	Description contents updated to allow clearer understanding
Section 4.4	Image Creation and Analysis AI	Description updated to include generate, interpret and visual content
Section 5.2.1	Added in caution on entering in data to AI	Staff and students not to enter personal, confidential, commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted info
Section 8.1	Added in responsibility for actions	Decisions or material produced remain with Relevant staff or authorised decision maker
Section 9.4	Additional information added	Elobrated on Data Protection, access management. Appropriately assessed and approved

Communication

Who needs to know (for action)	All Staff
Who needs to be aware	All Staff

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	Executive Support Officer	On approval
Communication to key staff	Director of Curriculum	On approval

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development and review of this policy:

Name	Role
Padraig McNamee	Director of Curriculum
Sinead McGee	Head of Engineering Information Technology and Creative Arts
Tracy Sharkey	Lecturer
Sharon McGrath	Director of Corporate Services
Paul Wade	Head of IT Services

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
Principles for the Use of AI in FE Colleges	JISC	September 2024
JCQ AI Use in Assessments guidance.	Joint Council for Qualifications	September 2024

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	04 November 2026

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review. Yes/No If yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
V1.0	8 October 2025	Padraig McNamee Sinead McGee Tracy Sharkey Sharon McGrath Paul Wade	Yes	V2.0	No	
V2.0	September 2026	Padraig McNamee Paul Wade	Yes	V2.1	No	No