

Journal of Contemporary Issues in Open Distance and E-Learning

(JC-ODEL)

Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

1. Purpose, Scope, and Mission Alignment

The Journal of Contemporary Issues in Open Distance and E-Learning (JC-ODEL) is a peer-reviewed academic publication dedicated to promoting scholarly discourse and fostering critical thinking on contemporary issues in the ever-evolving field of open, distance, and e-learning (OD&E). This Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy establishes comprehensive guidelines for responsible use of AI technologies by authors, peer reviewers, and editorial staff. As AI technologies increasingly shape learning design, data analytics, and educational research, this policy ensures that their use in scholarly submissions is transparent, ethical, consistent with academic integrity, and aligned with Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines and international best practices. This AI Use Policy applies to all submissions to JC-ODEL, the peer review process, editorial decision-making, and journal operations.

2. Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, including but not limited to large language models (LLMs), machine learning algorithms, data analysis tools, generative AI applications, automated writing assistants, intelligent tutoring systems, learning analytics platforms with generative capabilities, and image and media generators.

Generative AI: AI systems capable of creating new content, including text, images, data, code, and other outputs based on learned patterns.

Disclosure: The explicit acknowledgment and documentation of AI tool usage in manuscripts and research processes.

Core Intellectual Contribution: The original conceptualization, design, analysis, interpretation, and critical judgment underlying research and scholarly work.

3. Permitted Uses of Artificial Intelligence

AI tools may support but not replace author scholarly judgment and expertise. The submitted manuscript's intellectual contribution, interpretation, and critical analysis must remain human-generated. Editorial decisions must also be human generated.

3.1 Research and Analysis

Authors may use AI tools for:

- Data collection, processing, and preliminary statistical analysis
- Literature review organization, categorization, and preliminary summarization
- Qualitative data coding and thematic analysis, provided human verification and interpretation occur
- Research design assistance and methodology refinement
- Translation of source materials from non-English languages, with author verification of accuracy
- Use of learning analytics systems and predictive modeling tools, when methods, algorithms, and limitations are transparently described and validated

3.2 Writing and Manuscript Development

Authors and contributors may use AI tools for:

- Grammar checking, spell-checking, and syntax improvement
- Clarity enhancement of prose and readability optimization
- Citation management and formatting assistance
- Structural organization and outline development
- Initial idea exploration and brainstorming, provided authors develop and validate final scholarly contributions independently
- Generation of tables and figures from author-provided data

3.3 Editorial and Administrative Functions

JC-ODEL staff may use AI tools for:

- Manuscript screening and initial categorization
- Plagiarism detection and originality verification
- Formatting verification and consistency checking
- Administrative correspondence and scheduling
- Preliminary quality assessment and desk review processes

3.4 Peer Review Process

Peer reviewers may use AI tools for:

- Organization of review materials and research literature
- Preliminary identification of methodological concerns
- Writing assistance in formulating review comments, provided the final review reflects the reviewer's substantive judgment

- Help in validating the existence of references cited or otherwise included in the manuscript

4. Prohibited Uses of Artificial Intelligence

The following uses of AI violate JC-ODEL's scholarly and ethical standards. These prohibitions apply to authors of submitted papers, reviewers, and editorial staff:

4.1 Prohibited Use, Authorship, and Attribution

- Presenting AI-generated substantive content—including literature review sections, conceptual frameworks, findings, interpretations, instructional designs, or learning interventions—as original scholarly work
- Generating core research findings, conclusions, or scholarly arguments without human verification and intellectual ownership
- Crediting AI systems as authors of submissions

4.2 Prohibited Data Generation and Research Activities

- Using AI to fabricate, falsify, or manipulate research data
- Employing AI to generate or substantially alter primary research data without transparent disclosure
- Creating or misrepresenting empirical results through AI-assisted processes
- Submitting AI-generated instructional designs or course prototypes as authentically implemented studies without real-world validation

4.3 Prohibited Plagiarism and Lack of Originality

- Using AI to paraphrase or reformulate others' published work to disguise plagiarism
- Submitting AI-generated content that constitutes substantial portions of the manuscript without disclosure
- Generating manuscript content wholesale through generative AI without substantive human authorship

4.4 Prohibited Use in Peer Review Processes

- Using AI to ghostwrite peer reviews or substitute AI output for genuine scholarly evaluation
- Uploading confidential manuscript content to publicly accessible AI tools
- Employing AI systems to identify reviewers, authors, or affiliated institutions for purposes of bias or manipulation
- Using AI to generate false or misleading reviews

4.5 Prohibited Use in Editorial Decisions

- Automating editorial decisions regarding manuscript acceptance, rejection, or revision without human editorial judgment
- Using AI generated decisions as the sole basis for desk rejection or acceptance decisions

5. Research Ethics in Open, Distance, and E-Learning Contexts

Given the unique ethical challenges in OD&E research—such as the use of student learning data, AI-enabled learning platforms, and automated feedback systems—authors conducting research involving these contexts must:

- Disclose the use of AI-enabled analytics, automated decision-making systems, or algorithmic interventions employed in studies
- Ensure compliance with institutional research ethics guidelines, institutional review board requirements, and learner privacy regulations
- Provide clear explanations of algorithms, data sources, limitations, and inherent biases in AI tools used in research
- Avoid overstating AI system capabilities or generalizing empirical results beyond the evidence presented
- Protect learner anonymity and data confidentiality in all AI-assisted research

JC-ODEL prioritizes transparency and learner protection in all AI-related educational research, recognizing that educational contexts involve vulnerable populations.

6. Disclosure Requirements

6.1 Author Disclosure

All AI use related to submitted manuscripts must be explicitly disclosed within the manuscript itself. Transparency is essential for scholarly integrity. Therefore, authors must disclose all uses of AI tools in a dedicated section titled "AI and Computational Tool Disclosure" or as a footnote in the methods section, as appropriate. This disclosure must include:

- Specific AI tools, systems, or models used (e.g., ChatGPT-5.1, Claude, Gemini, etc.)
- Purpose of use (e.g., data analysis, writing assistance, literature organization)
- Scope of use (e.g., which sections or analyses involved AI assistance)
- Any limitations or constraints applied by the authors when using AI
- Verification and validation methods applied to AI outputs

Disclosure should not be relegated to any supplemental materials but must be integrated into the main manuscript where appropriate. Failure to disclose AI use may result in rejection or retraction.

Example of a suggested disclosure statement format:

"The authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5.1) for language editing and to improve clarity. Qualitative data coding was performed using NVivo, with human verification of all coded themes. No generative AI tools were used to create conceptual content, core findings, or analysis. All interpretations and scholarly arguments reflect the authors' own intellectual work. The authors reviewed and validated all AI-assisted outputs prior to publication."

6.2 Submission Declaration

In the submission process, authors will be required to confirm one of the following statements:

- "No AI tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript."
- "AI tools were used as described in the AI and Computational Tool Disclosure section of this manuscript."
- "No AI tools were used for core intellectual contributions; minor uses (e.g., grammar checking) are disclosed in the manuscript."

6.3 Peer Reviewer Disclosure

Peer reviewers must disclose to the Editor-in-Chief if they employ AI tools in their review process. Such disclosure does not disqualify a reviewer but ensures transparency. Reviewers may use secure, institution-approved AI tools to support administrative tasks or language editing of their review reports only if no confidential manuscript details are input into public systems. Reviewers are encouraged to rely on their scholarly expertise—not automated critiques—to evaluate submissions.

7. Standards for AI-Assisted Work

7.1 Responsibility and Accountability

Authors, contributors, and peer reviewers remain fully responsible and accountable for all content in their submissions and reviews, regardless of AI involvement. The presence of AI assistance does not diminish authorial responsibility for accuracy, originality, ethical conduct, or compliance with journal standards. All human authors must contribute intellectually to the design, analysis, and interpretation of work; approve the final manuscript; and accept accountability for the work's integrity and accuracy.

7.2 Human Verification and Judgment

Any work generated or substantially assisted by AI must be verified, evaluated, and approved by human contributors. This verification must demonstrate:

- Critical assessment of accuracy and appropriateness

- Alignment with the author's intellectual argument and research questions
- Compliance with disciplinary standards and ethical norms
- Freedom from plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation

7.3 Limitations and Bias Awareness

Authors utilizing AI tools must demonstrate awareness of inherent limitations and risks, including potential bias, hallucination, or inaccuracy in AI outputs. Manuscripts should acknowledge when such limitations are relevant to the content, research conclusions and methodology.

8. Authorship and Accountability

AI systems cannot be credited as authors of JC-ODEL submissions. All human authors must:

- Contribute intellectually to the design, analysis, and interpretation of work
- Approve the final manuscript
- Accept accountability for the work's integrity and accuracy
- Verify that all AI-assisted content complies with this policy

9. Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

Editors and reviewers will evaluate AI-assisted manuscripts using the following criteria:

- Originality of conceptualization, research design, and scholarly interpretation
- Quality of human intellectual contribution and critical judgment
- Appropriateness of AI tool selection for the stated research purpose
- Adequacy of verification and validation of AI outputs
- Transparency of disclosure and compliance with this policy
- Overall rigor, validity, and contribution to the field

The permitted use of AI tools does not, in itself, affect a manuscript's acceptability. Acceptability depends on scholarly merit, methodological soundness, rigor, and contribution to the field.

10. Policy Compliance and Enforcement

10.1 Violations

Violations of this AI use policy include but are not limited to:

- Use of AI in prohibited activities as outlined in Section 4 (above)

- Failure to disclose AI tool usage
- Misrepresentation of AI-generated content as human-authored
- Falsification of disclosure statements

10.2 Consequences and Procedures

Upon detection of policy violations, the following procedures will be implemented:

Minor violations or inadvertent non-compliance:

Authors will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit with corrected disclosures and compliance with policy requirements.

Substantial violations:

Manuscripts may be desk rejected or reverted to authors with requirement for substantive revision and resubmission.

Severe violations involving research misconduct:

Manuscripts will be desk rejected and the matter will be referred to institutional research integrity offices and authors' institutions, consistent with Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines. Actions may include retraction of published articles, withdrawal of acceptance, notification to authors' institutions, or other sanctions as warranted.

Repeated violations:

Authors may be subject to temporary or permanent suspension from submission privileges.

10.3 Investigation

JC-ODEL reserves the right to investigate suspected violations, including requests for documentation of methods, data sources, verification procedures, and AI tool usage. Authors are expected to cooperate fully with such investigations. Failure to cooperate with investigations may result in submission rejection or published article retraction.

10.4 Final Decision

The Editor in Chief of JC-ODEL, in consultation with the reviewers of the manuscript in question, has the final decision-making authority in determining if any AI policy violations have occurred and to what extent any procedures included in Section 10.2 are to be implemented.

11. Policy Review and Continuous Evolution

Recognizing the rapid evolution of AI technologies, the Managing Board of JC-ODEL may review this policy at any time and update it as necessary to align with:

- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Code of Conduct and Guidelines
- Disciplinary professional association guidance
- Emerging best practices in distance and e-learning research
- Advances in AI technology and evolving scholarly consensus on appropriate AI use in academic publishing

Authors and stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on this policy to the Editor-in-Chief. In cases of conflict between this policy and contributing authors' institutional research integrity policies, the most restrictive standard shall apply.

12. Effective Date and Implementation

This policy is effective immediately upon adoption by the Managing Board of JC-ODEL. All submissions received on or after the effective date are subject to this policy. Authors of manuscripts currently under review will be notified of this policy and given opportunity to provide amended AI disclosures if applicable.

Appendix: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I use ChatGPT to write my entire manuscript?

A: No. AI tools may assist with writing and editing, but human authors must be responsible for core intellectual contributions. Substantial AI-generated content constitutes ghostwriting and violates this policy. Your scholarly arguments, findings, and interpretations must reflect your own intellectual work.

Q: Must I disclose minor uses of AI, such as grammar checking?

A: Yes. All uses should be disclosed in the AI and Computational Tool Disclosure section. However, routine uses such as grammar checking may be noted briefly (e.g., "Grammar checking was performed using Grammarly"). Transparency is essential regardless of the scope of use.

Q: Can I use AI to analyze qualitative data?

A: Yes, provided you: (1) disclose the tool used, (2) verify the accuracy of coding or themes identified by AI through human review, and (3) ensure that interpretation reflects your scholarly judgment, not the AI system's interpretation. Human validation is essential.

Q: Will my manuscript be rejected if I disclose permitted AI use?

A: No. Transparent disclosure of permitted AI use does not disqualify a manuscript. Evaluation is based on scholarly merit, methodological soundness, rigor, and contribution to the field. Honesty strengthens your submission.

Q: Can I use AI to organize my literature review?

A: Yes. AI tools can assist with organizing, categorizing, and preliminary summarization of literature. However, your final literature review synthesis, critical analysis, and thematic conclusions must reflect your scholarly judgment and intellectual contribution.

This policy was adopted by the Managing Board of the Journal of Contemporary Issues in Open Distance and E-Learning (JC-ODEL) Effective Date: 11TH

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