UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
School of Medicine Columbia

Policy Title:
Use of Artificial Intelligence

Policy Identifier:
USCSOMC – AIT – 1.01

Prepared by: SOMC AI Task Force	Creation Date: 3/18/2025
Reviewed by: MD Program Policy and Procedure Committee, Executive Committee	Review Dates: 10/2025
Approved by: Executive Committee	Effective Date: 11/20/2025
Category: Artificial Intelligence	

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All faculty, students, staff, and affiliated researchers at The University of South Carolina School of Medicine – Columbia (USC SOMC) using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or AI-driven applications for teaching, clinical care, research, administrative tasks, or community outreach.
- Any AI tools, algorithms, or platforms used for instruction, clinical decision-making, patient interaction, research, or operations at SOMC.
- Externally acquired AI tools used within the institution that process, analyze, or interpret medical data, patient records, or administrative workflows.

This policy does not apply to personal AI use on non-university digital devices.

Policy Statement

The USC SOMC is committed to the responsible, ethical, and legally compliant use of AI in education, clinical practice, research, and administration. This policy ensures AI integration aligns with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) policies, and USC's academic integrity and ethical standards. In addition to the requirements outlined, users are expected to comply with all applicable policies and regulations established by clinical partners, parent institution, government agencies, funding bodies, and academic journals.

AI may be used to enhance education, support human clinical decision-making, and improve administrative efficiencies. However, AI cannot replace human judgment in grading students, patient care, research, or institutional or clinical decision-making. Protected Health Information (PHI) must not be processed by external AI platforms and AI-assisted work must be disclosed in academic and research contexts.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the responsible, ethical, and legally compliant use of AI within the USC SOMC. This policy ensures that AI integration in education, clinical practice, research, and administration adheres to HIPAA regulations, USC's academic integrity policies, IACUC regulations, and IRB standards.

This policy is established in accordance with the USC Policy Development and Approval Process (UNIV 1.00) to provide a clear framework for AI adoption and governance at SOMC. All AI users must uphold the principles of the Carolinian Creed, as well as institutional ethics and honor code policies.

Definitions

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computational systems designed to simulate human cognition, including machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing.
- Generative AI: AI that produces new content based on training data, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Bard, or DALL·E.
- AI-Assisted Decision-Making: The use of AI models to support clinical or administrative decisions, where human oversight remains mandatory.
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC): Regulatory body that oversees and evaluates animal research programs to ensure humane treatment and compliance with ethical and legal standards.
- Institutional Review Board (IRB): Committee responsible for reviewing and approving research involving human subjects to ensure ethical standards and regulatory compliance.
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA): U.S. law that establishes national standards for protecting sensitive patient health information from unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Protected Health Information (PHI): Individually identifiable medical data protected under HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): U.S. law that establishes national standards for protecting the privacy of student education records from unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Faculty: University personnel who are engaged in research, instruction both inside and outside the classroom, service and/or administration (taken from The USC Faculty Manual and ACAF 1.00) Full-time faculty includes all faculty members who are considered by the medical school to be full-time, whether funded by the medical school directly or supported by affiliated institutions and organizations. (copied from the Glossary of Terms for LCME Accreditation Standards and Elements in LCME's Functions and Structure of a Medical School). Faculty can be further classified as having tenure-track, professional-track, or honorific appointments Furthermore, this definition also includes part-time faculty, such as adjunct and affiliate faculty.
- Staff: Personnel who are not appointed as faculty but are paid by the University of South Carolina. This includes staff who are part-time or full-time and serve either academic or non-academic functions. It also includes student employees.

- Student: Any individual enrolled either part-time or full-time in an academic program at the School of Medicine Columbia or actively engaged in educational, research, or clinical experiences under the supervision of SOM Columbia faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, visiting students from other institutions, undergraduate or graduate students from USC or external universities conducting research or shadowing experiences, and students participating in collaborative academic projects involving SOM Columbia faculty.

Procedures

I. Guiding Principles

1. Individual's Right to Privacy
   - AI systems must comply with FERPA, HIPAA, IRB, and South Carolina state regulations when handling patient or student data.
   - Student educational records and PHI must never be uploaded to external AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard) unless specifically approved by SOMC legal counsel and IT security and with the informed consent of the individual, where required.
   - Public AI tools are considered platforms for public sharing. Users must not input any sensitive, confidential, or personally identifiable information into publicly accessible AI engines. Doing so may result in unintended data exposure and privacy breaches.
2. Academic Integrity & Research Ethics
   - Students and faculty must disclose AI-assisted work in academic assignments, research, and publications to uphold USC's Honor Code.
   - Students are required to adhere to their instructor's established rules regarding AI use for classes.
   - AI-generated content must not be misrepresented as original work by students, faculty, or staff.
   - AI cannot be used in the scientific peer review process and cannot be listed as an author on publications.
   - Students must obtain Principal Investigator (PI) approval before using AI tools for scientific writing. Inputting unpublished data or results into AI platforms is strictly prohibited without prior PI consent.
3. Human Oversight and Accountability
   - AI cannot replace human decision-making in clinical care, diagnosis, patient interactions, and assigning grades or evaluations.
   - Faculty and administrators must ensure AI tools are used appropriately and do not produce harmful bias or errors in educational, research, or operational settings.
4. Transparency and Ethical AI Use
   - AI systems should be assessed by user for fairness, accuracy, and potential biases before being used.
   - If AI is used in clinical or research applications, disclosure to patients, study participants, or stakeholders is required

.II. Acceptable Uses of AI at SOMC

1. Education & Student Learning
   - AI may be used for teaching enhancements, including interactive simulations, AI-driven tutoring, and image analysis training.
   - Faculty may integrate AI case studies into medical curricula while ensuring ethical considerations are addressed.
   - Instructors of record should be explicit in their syllabus and their instructions to students about the extent to which students may use AI tools for their class.
2. Clinical and Research Applications
   - AI may support, not replace, clinical decision-making under IRB-approved research protocols.
   - AI-driven predictive models for diagnostics, risk assessment, or personalized medicine must undergo peer review, validation, and any required certification before deployment.
   - Any use of AI in clinical applications must comply with HIPAA regulations and ensure the protection of all PHI.
   - AI may support, not replace, decision-making under IACUC-approved research protocols.
   - AI may assist in data analysis, hypothesis generation, and experimental design in basic sciences research but must be validated against empirical results and subject to peer review.
   - Use of AI tools in scientific writing must comply with all applicable journal policies and submission guidelines.
   - Use of AI tools in grant writing must adhere to all relevant funding agency guidelines, policies, and disclosure requirements.
3. Administrative and Operational Efficiencies
   - AI may be used to support administrative tasks such as scheduling, transcription, data entry, and reporting, if no PHI or confidential student data is entered into external AI platforms.

III. Prohibited and Restricted AI Uses

1. Handling of Education Records and PHI
   - Education records and PHI must never be processed or uploaded into generative AI platforms unless explicitly approved by USC's IT security team and legal counsel.
   - AI tools must be reviewed by the IRB before use in patient-related studies.
   - Users should not enter any sensitive, confidential, or personally identifiable information into publicly accessible AI tools.
2. AI as a Sole Decision-Maker
   - AI cannot serve as the sole authority for determining grades on student work, medical diagnoses, treatment plans, peer review of scholarly works, or administrative policies.
   - All AI-assisted decisions must undergo human verification before implementation.
3. AI Bias and Ethical Concerns
   - AI tools found to reinforce bias or inaccuracies in patient care, research, or academic grading must be immediately reviewed and modified.
   - Instructors and faculty are responsible for verifying the appropriateness and ethical integrity of AI-generated educational materials before classroom use.

IV. Data Security and Compliance

1. AI tools used in research must follow USC-specific cybersecurity protocols and store data on USC-approved secure servers.
2. Researchers must ensure AI-generated data follows USC's IRB, IACUC, and Office of Research Compliance standards.
3. Vendor contracts for AI services must include data security and ethical use agreements.

V. Approval and Governance

1. This policy follows USC's policy-making procedures (UNIV 1.00) and must be reviewed every year.
2. Violations must be reported by faculty, staff and students to the appropriate governing body relevant to violation and the violation may result in disciplinary action.

Related Policies, Procedures, and Documents

- USC Policy on Policies (UNIV 1.00)
- Academic Responsibility – The Honor Code (STAF 6.25)
- Handling of Student Records (ACAF 3.03)
- Honor Code and Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct (STA 1.10)
- University of South Carolina Ethics Policy (HR 1.02)
- Misconduct in Research and Scholarship (RSCH 1.00)
- HIPAA Compliance (UNIV 1.60)
- Carolina Grants & Innovation Hub (CGI Hub)
- Carolinian Creed

Contacts

SOMC Office of Research
Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
Office of Research Compliance
SOMC Student Promotions and Honor Committee

History

Date of Change	Change