



University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) Guidelines on Institutional Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Purpose

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) permeates every aspect of university operations, it became apparent that in order to foster the University’s commitment to AI adoption, the institution should publish guidance that provides for a clear strategic vision, implementation, and ethical application of AI initiatives and uses across all University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) functional areas.

The USCB Artificial Intelligence Steering Committee (AISC) was established in Fall 2024 to provide this guidance. Building on the [State of South Carolina’s Artificial Intelligence Strategy](#) cornerstones of Protect, Promote, and Pursue, we establish guidelines for the adoption of AI within administrative and academic areas of the University.

With these guidelines, the committee will also give direction on how University departments can adhere to these practices. These guidelines should be incorporated into USCB’s official policies, handbooks, and procedures where appropriate. These guidelines will be updated as needed to ensure that they reflect current best practices around AI.

Committee Members

Dr. Eric Skipper – Co-Chair – Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Matthew Heightland – Co-Chair – Vice Chancellor for Information Technology and CIO

Dr. Brian Canada – Professor of Computational Science and Chair of the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics

James Jolly – Senior Director of Marketing and Communications

Dr. Kim Kelley – Director of Libraries and Professor

Mary Moonen – University Bursar

Dr. Angela Simmons – Vice Chancellor of Student Development

Dr. Murray Skees – Chair of Faculty, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Gary Sutton – University Registrar

Dr. Sarah Swofford – Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor of Composition and Rhetoric

Introduction

This committee endeavors to create a set of guidelines for university subject matter experts to utilize, to create responsible policies within their respective departments. While the committee is comprised of a diverse selection of university experts, we cannot hope to cover every aspect of how AI touches all University operations. These guidelines will serve as ‘guard rails’ in the process of policy creation/modification.

The following guidelines are designed to ensure that emerging AI tools are used ethically and responsibly at USCB for instructional and scholarly purposes. AI tools have promise for enhancing the education and professional practice of USCB students, faculty, and staff. Ensuring these tools are used responsibly is essential for alignment with good educational and scholarly practice.

These guidelines are offered for consideration by the USCB administration, staff, and faculty for review, edits, and implementation. They support the adoption of guidelines at the unit level which will have unique characteristics but should align with the University wide goals. These guidelines align with the State of South Carolina’s three “Ps” for AI: Protect, Promote, and Pursue.

Referenced Policy

[UNIV 1.51 – Data and Information Governance](#)

[UNIV 1.52 - Responsible Use of Data, Technology, and User Credentials](#)

[IT 1.00 - Information Technology Procurement](#)

[IT 3.00 - Information Security](#)

[216 – Confidentiality](#)

[220 – Use of Institutional Name](#)

[554 – Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Misconduct](#)

[309 – Academic Code of Conduct](#)

[406 – Responsible Library Computer Use](#)

Definitions

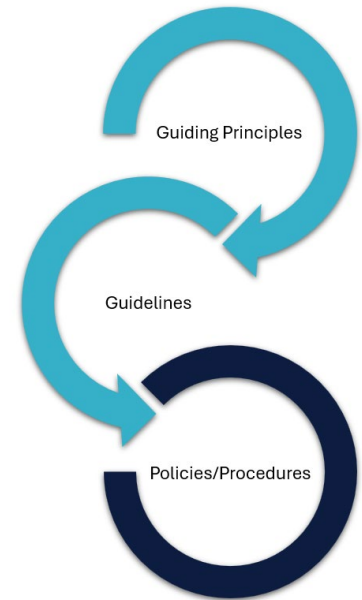
Guiding Principles: Taken from the [State of South Carolina’s Artificial Intelligence Strategy](#) cornerstones of Protect, Promote, and Pursue. These Principles will be used to create guidelines to Protect University constituents and their data through adequate Risk Management concepts; Promote a clear Strategic Vision around the utilization of AI; Pursue training opportunities for the University community to effectively utilize AI.

Guidelines: A set of ‘Guide rails’ to be used by departmental subject matter experts to build University Policies and Procedures around the use of AI. In many cases, these guidelines will be used to modify existing Policies and Procedures to consider the use of AI. The language adopted by this department must fall in between the ‘guardrails’ set out by this committee’s guidelines. For example: Student Development may build language around the utilization of AI into the Student Code of Conduct.

Policy: Official course of action taken by the institution on a particular subject

Procedure: Set of steps taken by individual departments in order to adhere to University Policy.

Generative AI: According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "generative AI is the next evolution of artificial intelligence. Generative artificial intelligence (sometimes known as Strong AI or Creative AI) is able to produce text, video, images, and other types of content. Popular tools like ChatGPT, Bard, and DALL-E are all examples of generative AI. Put simply, the key difference between traditional and generative AI is that generative AI is able to create something new." (See: Heaslip, E. (2024), What's the Difference between traditional and Generative AI? <https://www.uschamber.com/co/run/technology/traditional-ai-vs-generative-ai>).



Guiding Principles -> Guidelines -> Policies/Procedures

We separate University operations into two broad areas: Administrative and Academic. During our investigation, we could see that AI adoption within every area of the institution should adhere to a set of ‘core’ guidelines. The following sections will serve to drive Policy/Procedure changes throughout the University of South Carolina Beaufort.

Core Over-Arching Guidelines

Protect - Guideline 1: Risk Mitigation and Fiscal Responsibility

All University use of AI must maintain the security and privacy for all University constituents, be chosen with a long-term plan for maintenance and supportability, and be purchased in a fiscally responsible manner.

Key Takeaways:

Ensure Privacy

USCB faculty and staff will ensure they do not share restricted, sensitive, personal, or private data in AI systems. Additionally, USCB faculty and staff will protect the confidentiality and integrity of USCB data when building or using AI systems.

Assume Liability and Be Accountable

USCB faculty and staff assume liability if they agree to terms with any AI system that is not supported by the Office of Information Technology Services and Support (ITSS). Before adopting AI tools or agreeing to AI terms, USCB faculty and staff are encouraged to consult with ITSS to avoid liability and protect their and the university's data and reputation. USCB employees are accountable for their actions utilizing AI.

Identify and Mitigate Risk

There is inherent risk in adopting any AI system. To mitigate risks, USCB employees should engage in a risk assessment prior to adopting any AI tool and identify ways to mitigate the risk to protect personal and university data and intellectual property.

Actionable Item:

Include ITSS Partners

Ensure that departmental purchases are facilitated by USCB's Information Technology Services and Support (ITSS) Division. Including ITSS in the process will ensure that existing security, privacy, and contractual policies are applied to software purchases. Additionally, ITSS will help each department understand how long-term supportability, maintenance, and budgeting will affect the University.

Recommendation:

Create Governance Structure

The University should create a governance structure around maintenance of the University's position on AI. Until a structure has been formalized, this committee will serve to update these guidelines.

Promote - Guideline 2: Ethical Considerations

The University must choose AI tools that foster a safe, inclusive, and unbiased environment for the University Community.

Key Takeaways:

Humans at the Center

AI tools should have humans as the center of the deployment, with the intent of educating users on how to critically evaluate and use AI tools, exercise critical thinking skills, and judgement, and ensure humans retain control of the AI tools deployed.

Transparency

USCB employees and our stakeholders should be informed of the benefits, risks, and intended outcomes around the utilization of AI tools. Additionally, information should be given about how or whether university data is being used to train AI models. For more information, please see our Confidentiality Policy.

Be Fair and Don't Discriminate

The AI tools adopted should promote fairness and avoid algorithmic discrimination, i.e., errors due to computer systems that create unequal or impaired outcomes. USCB employees should actively work to mitigate any AI-generated biases in their use of AI tools to reduce their and USCB's liability.

Actionable Item:

Thoughtful Policy

Incorporate language into Policies and Procedures that ensures that:

- AI tools put humans at the center.
- AI offerings help to close digital divides that exist on campus.
- Use of AI is transparent, and one should feel confident that what they are doing with AI is not ethically questionable.

Guidelines for Administrative and Academic Areas

Promote/Pursue - Guideline 3: Strategic Vision - Administrative

The University must choose AI tools that are comprehensive, incorporate best practices inside and outside of higher-ed, and promote responsible innovation and growth.

Key Takeaways:

Appropriate and Beneficial

USCB AI tools should serve an important instructional or scholarly purpose. Uses should focus on achieving USCB's mission and vision and pursue innovative approaches to learning and scholarship that promote excellence across our institution.

Actionable Item:

Innovation and AI

Create departmental procedures that encourage the investigation of AI tools that 'anticipate the future' to place USCB at the forefront of AI innovation in teaching, research, and business processes. This can include optimization of data use, better efficiency, and less bureaucracy within each University Department.

Actionable Item:

Pursue AI Training

Create departmental policies that allow for employee development and training for the use of AI, enable faculty to streamline tasks not related to instruction and/or research, or research tools that allow us to assess whether we need to purchase external tools or create our own unique solutions.

Promote/Pursue - Guideline 4: Strategic Vision – Teaching and Learning

The university must create clear and concise policies on the acceptable use of AI, by both faculty and students within every academic department, while maintaining the academic freedom of individual faculty.

Key Takeaways:

Partnership, Not Replacement

AI is not a replacement for human intellect and creativity. USCB employees pursue the use of AI tools to enhance, not replace, their instructional and scholarly activities.

Actionable Item:

Communication Around AI

Have department chairs work with their faculty to develop guidelines for AI use for research and teaching that reflect the unique characteristics of their pedagogy and disciplinary norms.

Actionable Item:

Clear Expectations - Faculty

Update the USCB Faculty Handbook to ensure that:

- A professor has the discretion to define how, if, and when generative AI may be used in their courses.
- Encourage faculty to do their research on AI before drafting a policy, explain the rationale for your AI policies with your students, and if you are going to allow AI-generated content in your course, you must define what “acceptable use” is.
- When students (or faculty) use AI, it should facilitate rather than hamper their ability to think critically and clearly about a topic.
- Professors may not require students to give up personal data to AI tools required for courses.

Actionable Item:

Clear Expectations - Student

Update the USCB Student Code of Conduct to include language outlining when to use/not use AI in regard to academic honesty.

Promote/Pursue - Guideline 5: Strategic Vision – Research and Scholarship

The University will publish best practices on utilization of AI, within academic research, that fosters innovation and strengthens the University's response to regional needs.

Key Takeaways:

Respect for Intellectual Property

USCB employees and students will communicate their use of AI to ensure their use of AI adheres to USCB policy and the Student Code of Conduct. USCB employees and students will be proactive to ensure their intellectual property of others is acknowledged including their use of AI tools.

Actionable Item:

Research and AI

Language within these best practices should include guidance on:

- Privacy/Copyright/Intellectual Property concerns
- Enhancing research using AI, not replacing research
- Preventing misuse and misinterpretation of AI used research
- Clearly communicating use of AI
- Proper attribution when AI is utilized
- Understanding AI and its limitations
- Accountability, veracity, and transparency of AI use in research
- Adherence to publisher requirements

Next Steps

As AI continues to advance, the University of South Carolina Beaufort remains committed to refining these guidelines to address emerging challenges and opportunities. By fostering a culture of ethical AI use, strategic foresight, and continuous learning, the University of South Carolina Beaufort is poised to lead in the responsible adoption of AI, ensuring that its benefits are maximized while potential risks are mitigated.