

# Academic Freedom and AI in Research and Creative Work

CU Faculty Council AI Committee | Guidance for Faculty | AY 2026–27

*This document offers guidance on [APS 6012](#) (Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence) and related Regent Law. It is advisory and does not create policy. Updated October 22, 2026.*

**In practice: whether and how you use or study AI in your scholarship and creative work is your decision. It is your responsibility to ensure that AI tools and outputs are appropriate to the methods of your field and the policies of your publication or creative outlet as well as your funding agency. You are responsible for adhering to the University's data management policies.**

## The governing principles and documents

[Regent Law 5.A.1.B](#) places principal responsibility for decisions concerning research and scholarly or creative work with faculty and APS 6012 states that this responsibility includes decisions about the use of AI tools in those contexts. Regent Law 5.B.2(A) defines academic freedom as it relates to research and scholarly/creative work: *Academic freedom is the freedom to inquire, discover, access, publish, disseminate, and teach truth as the individual understands it, subject to no control or authority, save the control and authority of the rational methods by which knowledge is established in the field.*

## What this means for your research and creative work

- **Faculty are responsible for determining whether the use of AI meets the standards of the field.** Faculty determine whether and how to use AI in their own scholarly and creative work. Reviewers, editors, funders, juries, and colleagues in the field are primary determiners of appropriate AI use. Individual faculty are responsible for ensuring that their use of AI is appropriate to the methods, norms, and expectations of their field.
- **Faculty also have a responsibility for risk assessment.** APS 6012 requires attention to risk (II) lists components of risk assessment including *potential risks related to bias, fairness, or unintended effects on individuals* and *effects on existing content, data, technology and business processes* (III.C). Recognize that publisher policies and joint authorship may cause professional and reputational risk from AI errors such as data fabrication and citation misconduct, that extend beyond CU.
- **Sensitive data should only be used in approved AI tools.** Under APS 6012 (III.A) and [APS 6010](#), confidential and highly confidential data may only be entered into AI tools reviewed and approved for that classification.
- **Human subjects research may require disclosure of AI use.** If an AI tool will process participant data, such as for transcription, coding, analysis, or recruitment, confirm with campus IRB whether your protocol requires modification and whether consent documents must disclose AI use. Identifiable participant data may only be entered into tools, AI or otherwise, that are approved for the applicable data classification.
- **GenAI depictions of real people generally require consent, with an exception for uses intended to support academic freedom.** APS 6012 (III.D.7) prohibits creating or distributing GenAI representations of real people, including images, voice, video, or 3D representations, without their explicit, informed consent, **unless** the use is intended to support academic freedom.
- **The use of AI alone is not a merit criterion for scholarly or creative work.** Chairs, directors, administrators, and reappointment, tenure, and promotion committees should evaluate scholarship and creative work according to established primary unit criteria and disciplinary standards, neither rewarding nor penalizing the use of AI in and of itself. The effect of AI use on the rigor or validity of a method should be evaluated like any other methodological choice.

## **Brief Recommendations on Best Practices (coming soon)**