



HEI Guidelines and Policy for Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

The Health Effects Institute (HEI) has developed a policy and guidelines for members of its community — applicants, funded investigators, committee members, reviewers, and consultants — who are using or interested in using artificial intelligence (AI) in work related to HEI. This document was developed in accordance with best practices from reputable sources and is not intended to constitute legal advice. HEI anticipates updating this document as AI technology evolves.

Guidelines

HEI acknowledges the value of AI tools in various research contexts. Users of AI tools for HEI-related work, including applicants, funded investigators, committee members, reviewers, and consultants, should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Be responsible for verifying that AI-generated outputs are appropriate and accurate.
2. Be aware of the AI tool limitations.
3. Be aware of and follow all data security and privacy requirements appropriate to your project and the level of sensitivity of the data.
4. Be responsible for complying with all university policies and applicable state, federal, and international regulations, including those dealing with copyright and other intellectual property (adapted from George Mason University, n.d.).

HEI policy for specific contexts is provided below.

Policy

A) Research

Proposal Development: Use of AI tools will be evaluated in research proposals along with the rest of the research using criteria specified in all HEI research solicitations. HEI requires disclosure, for example, of which tools were used, which tasks (i.e., research, data analysis, editing, formatting, or improving clarity of the writing) were AI-assisted, and how and to what extent the tools were used at the proposal development stage.

Research Implementation: Use of AI tools in HEI-funded research is permitted. In research proposals and quality assurance and quality control plans, users must clearly document the AI tools used, their purpose, and the stages of the research in which they will be applied, including any parameters, training data assumptions (if known), and human oversight procedures. HEI requires disclosure of which tools were used at the proposal stage.

Investigator Report Preparation: HEI-funded investigators may use AI tools to assist with creating tables from data and in editing, formatting, and improving the clarity of the Investigator Report.

Authors are prohibited from naming AI tools as authors or contributors, citing AI tools as an author, or crediting AI tools as a contributor in the Acknowledgments because authorship implies responsibilities and tasks that can only be attributed to and performed by humans.

B) Peer Review

Reviewers are prohibited from uploading proposals, drafts, or reviews of HEI reports into AI tools or using AI tools to analyze, summarize, or evaluate proposal materials, as doing so can compromise confidentiality and intellectual property protections (National Institutes of Health 2023).

References

George Mason University. n.d. *AI guidelines for research*. <https://www.gmu.edu/ai-guidelines/ai-guidelines-research>. Accessed February 2, 2026.

National Institutes of Health. 2023. *The use of generative artificial intelligence technologies is prohibited for the NIH peer review process (NOT-OD-23-149)*. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-23-149.html> Accessed February 2, 2026.