

Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence at the Pontifical Gregorian University

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Introduction

«Be prudent, be wise, take care that the use of AI does not limit your true human growth. Use it in such a way that, if it disappeared tomorrow, you would still know how to think, how to create, how to act on your own, and how to form authentic friendships.»¹

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now an established part of our world in increasingly complex and pervasive ways. It is our responsibility to face it directly and understand its opportunities and risks. This document, for the use of the PUG community, outlines the role of AI in relation to the Church and offers guidelines for the integration and management of AI within the University. The appendices include concrete examples for all three categories.

As the Spiritual Exercises teach, man must make use of created things «as much as they help him toward his end, and must rid himself of them as much as they are a hindrance to him»². The mission of the University is the integral formation of its members based on *cura personalis*, attention to the individual person. To this end, the University must ensure that AI tools are used to empower users and enrich their formation. The ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI is the responsibility of every member of the Gregorian community. These guidelines are designed to assist in the process of discernment.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

«Artificial intelligence is the tangible, real-world capacity of non-human machines or artificial entities to perform tasks, solve problems, communicate, interact, and act logically in ways comparable to biological humans»³. AI is used to support human beings in their work, not to replace them. Most importantly, it does not replace the faculties of reasoning, creativity, and generativity. In the university context, AI brings many benefits for learning, teaching, research, and administration. AI should be welcomed holistically for the opportunities it offers in supporting and enhancing our university's mission.

However, AI also raises challenges and risks for the ethical, pedagogical, and human fulfillment of that mission. The improper use of AI undermines the principles and work in which each of us is engaged. Whether through plagiarism, the use of invented or false sources, or the replacement of original thought with AI-generated output, the incorrect use of AI places its users at a disadvantage when they are called to demonstrate what they have learned and created, and the skills and abilities they have acquired.

¹ POPE LEO XIV, Digital Meeting with American Youth during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis (Indiana-USA), November 20-22, 2025.

² IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, «Spiritual Exercises», Edizioni ADP, Rome 1991, n. 23.

³ GIL DE ZÚÑIGA, H., GOYANES, M., & DUROTOYE, T., «A scholarly definition of artificial intelligence (AI): Advancing AI as a conceptual framework in communication research», in *Political Communication*, 41-2 (2023) 317-334.

Artificial Intelligence and the Church: Opportunities and Challenges

In his message to the Builders AI Forum held at the Pontifical Gregorian University in November 2025, Pope Leo XIV stated:

«The aim of this Forum to promote 'a new interdisciplinary community of practice dedicated to supporting the development of AI products that serve the mission of the Church' reflects an important issue of our time: not only what AI can do, but also what we are becoming through the technologies we build. In this regard, I would like to observe that artificial intelligence, like every human invention, arises from the creative capacity that God has entrusted to us (cf. *Antiqua et nova*, n. 37)».⁴

The Church does not shy away from the advent of AI, seeing in it possibilities for the growth of evangelization, communities, and research. Members of the universal Church have a particular vocation to ensure that the use of AI is aimed at fundamentally human purposes and that its tools promote faith, humanity, and knowledge. It is therefore our responsibility to make informed and judicious evaluations regarding the correct use of AI and to maintain awareness of its risks and challenges.

Guidelines for the Integration and Management of AI

The following section outlines principles to maximize benefits while cultivating an awareness of risk in the use of AI. The application of AI depends heavily on context. This section provides a separate starting point for PUG students, teaching staff, and administrative staff to facilitate a conscious and responsible use of this tool. Each category is accompanied by a use case. The purpose of these examples is not to encompass all possible AI functionalities, but rather to demonstrate the correct approach toward any tool or platform.

Students

Students can benefit from the use of AI in their learning and research, both for time-saving efficiency and for access to a wider range of materials. Appendix I provides a selection of concrete examples of appropriate use.

In any context where they are called to produce a result, such as a written paper, students are recommended to declare any potential use of AI and what type (such as citation generation, source searching, or spelling and grammar correction). Students are likewise encouraged to ask their professors for clarification when they are unsure about the appropriate use of AI in their work.

- **Use Case:** A student may ask an AI-based chatbot to generate a list of primary sources for a term paper or exam. However, the student should avoid asking the chatbot to analyze the sources or to draw conclusions from them. The student must also verify that the sources provided by the chatbot are real, academically appropriate, and, where relevant, in accordance with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Students must also ensure that their work complies with the University's "Norms on Plagiarism". In any case, these are actions that the student must exercise in their studies regardless of the use of AI.

⁴ POPE LEO XIV, Message to the participants of the Builders AI Forum, Pontifical Gregorian University-Collegium Maximum, Rome, November 6-7, 2025.

Teaching Staff

Members of the teaching staff can use AI tools to support their work and to enhance their pedagogical training. It is recommended that staff responsible for pedagogical development find ways to incorporate AI training into their programs, for example, with sessions at the beginning of the academic year.

- **Use Case:** A professor can use generative AI to develop new features for their courses, including identifying new materials and generating ideas and questions for assessment. AI can also be incorporated to help students think critically about materials produced by digital means. However, all evaluative, educational, and formative decisions remain the responsibility of the professor and cannot be delegated to AI systems. Similarly, professors are responsible for ensuring that their course materials and research are in accordance with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Appendix II provides a selection of concrete examples of appropriate use.

Administrative Staff

Administrative staff can use AI tools to improve organizational efficiency, procedure management, and support for university services. It is recommended that staff responsible for professional development seek ways to incorporate AI training into their programs.

- **Use Case:** Administrative staff can benefit from the growing proliferation of AI-based workflow optimization tools that allow for organizing work, managing priorities, and completing tasks within tight deadlines. AI can also assist in the translation of correspondence and other administrative documents, provided that the author verifies its accuracy. Such use must be fully compliant with current regulations on data protection and privacy, information security requirements, and the institutional mission of the University. In no case can AI replace the decision-making responsibility or generative abilities of administrative staff. Appendix III provides a selection of concrete examples of appropriate use.

Implementation

These guidelines are intended to provide general parameters to promote the exercise of discernment regarding the implementation and use of AI at the Pontifical Gregorian University and its three missions. Each Mission is entrusted with the task of deciding on a more precise application in line with its own context and needs. The decision on how to manage cases of incorrect use is left to the competence of each Mission, which will decide the appropriate procedures and its respective approaches in accordance with the existing "Norms on Plagiarism" and "Norms of University Ethics".

Appendices

The following appendices list appropriate (or "enhancing") and inappropriate (or "substitutive") uses of AI. By "enhancing", we mean the use of AI that supports the individual in their work, saving them time, increasing their efficiency, and providing greater access to and understanding of their tasks. By "substitutive", we mean any use that replaces the generative, creative, and original thinking and skills of the user, thereby undermining their human capacities for thought, creativity, and production.

These appendices are not intended to include every possible use; however, they comprise what are currently understood as the most prolific and common applications. Discernment remains the fundamental and prevailing principle.

Appendix I. Students

Appropriate / Enhancement Uses of AI

1. Writing support (detection of grammatical, spelling, and syntactic errors, the correction of which is the student's responsibility).
2. Translation of texts (where not otherwise stipulated as an academic exercise).
3. Organization of ideas and study materials.
4. Research and identification of study and research materials.
5. Creation of bibliographic citations and references.

Inappropriate / Substitute Uses of AI

1. Generation of academic texts, ideas, and arguments through AI tools, without a substantial creative contribution from the user and / or attributing them to oneself.
2. Significant modification of the tone, style, or original communicative intention of the text. AI must be limited only to the detection of errors, without altering or reinterpreting the content.
3. Use of AI tools during exams without the explicit permission of the professor.

Appendix II. Teaching Staff

Appropriate / Enhancement Uses of AI

1. Support for course design and pedagogical innovation.
2. Preparation of summary materials, outlines, and teaching aids.
3. Organizational and administrative support related to teaching and research.
4. Organization and review of teaching materials.
5. Support in assessment processes, without automated decision-making (which remains the sole responsibility of the professor).

Inappropriate / Substitute Uses of AI

1. Generation of academic texts, ideas, and arguments through AI tools, without a substantial creative contribution from the user, attributing them to oneself.
2. Significant modification of the tone, style, or original communicative intention of the text (AI must be limited only to error detection, without altering or reinterpreting the text's content).
3. Automated evaluation without human judgment.
4. Delegation of academic decisions to AI systems.

Appendix III. Technical-Administrative Staff

Appropriate / Enhancement Uses of AI

1. Support for document management (e.g., data synthesis, semantic search, classification).
2. Workflow optimization (e.g., automation of repetitive tasks, deadline monitoring).
3. Communication and information activities (e.g., translation of technical documents, grammar checking of texts, automatic transcription of recordings).

Inappropriate / Substitute Uses of AI

1. Replacement of correspondence and other forms of communication with AI-generated texts without review.
2. Entrusting final decisions to AI without human supervision.
3. Presentation of AI-generated texts without clear indication of their origin.