AI FRAMEWORK FOR CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Draft
August 18, 2025

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we work, learn, teach, and create new knowledge. From generating ideas to advancing research and streamlining everyday tasks, AI is becoming an essential part of daily life. Many of the tools we rely on, such as document and spreadsheet applications, image editors, learning management systems (LMS), and research databases, are already powered by AI.

Carleton University recognizes the important role of AI in higher education and its potential to empower academics, students, and staff to work more efficiently, deepen learning experiences, and foster innovation. To fully leverage this opportunity, we must consider several key questions:

- How can AI enhance our teaching practices and students' learning experiences, while human creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, judgment, empathy, and decision-making take centre stage?
- How can we reimagine teaching and learning where AI is incorporated into curricula to enhance personalized learning, identify areas of focus to support student academic success, and equip our graduates with the in-demand skills needed to succeed in an AI-driven economy?
- How can Carleton lead in AI and machine learning research, and in what ways can AI assist faculty research?
- How can AI contribute to organizational excellence, improve our administrative tasks and processes, and enhance our productivity?
- What steps should we take to mitigate risks associated with AI developments, such as inequities, biases, and concerns regarding intellectual property and privacy rights?
- What steps should we take to ensure our data governance and cybersecurity systems are used in a responsible way that protects personal and institutional data?
- How can we ensure continued professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to remain up to date on the rapid evolution of AI technologies?

To succeed in this new era, the university must act intentionally by strategically integrating AI tools, promoting critical AI literacy within our community, and fostering a culture that embraces change.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This framework provides guidance on the use of AI at Carleton University, ensuring that academics, staff, and students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to use AI tools effectively, responsibly, and ethically. The framework aligns with Carleton's strategic priorities outlined in the Strategic Integrated Plan, Indigenous knowledge

systems as outlined in Kinàmàgawin Calls to Action, and global ethical AI frameworks such as:

- OECD AI Principles,
- UNESCO's Human-Centered AI,
- Microsoft's Responsible AI principles, and
- Frameworks set forth by federal and provincial governments.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Creativity & Innovation

Carleton is dedicated to continuous improvement, lifelong learning, and inclusivity. We strive to create a university experience that is forward-thinking and responsive to the evolving needs of our campus community and society at large. To this end, we aim to foster a safe environment where academics, staff, and students can explore and experiment with AI tools, collaborate, and voice their concerns about specific aspects of AI use.

1.1 Literate & Empowered

- Use AI to support creativity and innovation, not replace it.
- Develop critical digital literacy across all roles.
- Encourage experimentation and ongoing learning.

1.2 Purposeful & Aligned

- Integrate AI where it enhances learning, work, or insight.
- Ensure the AI use is tied to authentic, outcome-driven goals.
- Prepare our community for an AI-integrated future.

2. Responsible & Ethical Use

Carleton will utilize AI tools in ways that are fair and equitable, while protecting private and confidential data, and minimizing the risk of harm and biases. We will promote AI literacy so that students, educators and staff can engage critically with AI tools that are always in service of learning and human growth.

2.1 Inclusive & Equitable

- Prioritize equity, accessibility, and diverse epistemologies.
- Challenge AI-generated bias.
- AI must NOT reinforce bias or inequity.

2.2 Privacy-respecting & Secure

- Use only Carleton approved tools for confidential personal and institutional data.
- Uphold privacy and academic integrity standards.

3. Human Agency & Transparency

AI is a supplementary tool and cannot replace human decision-making. Humans remain responsible for all aspects of their work: academics are accountable for the integrity of their research projects, as well as for AI-supported course design and assessment; students are accountable for learning honesty, authenticity and integrity; and staff are responsible for the accuracy of their work and decisions.

3.1 Human-centered & Accountable

- People - not tools - are responsible for outcomes in research, teaching, learning, and operations.
- Maintain human judgment in feedback, research, teaching, learning, and decision-making.
- Respect the right to opt out of AI use where appropriate.

3.2 Transparent & Explainable

- Disclose the use of AI clearly and explain how and why it is applied.
- Foster an open, reflective culture around AI engagement.
- AI involvement should be clear and understandable to all users.

> *The principles outlined above apply to the broader university community, including academics, students, student-employees, professional staff, contractors, and service partners. These principles are reflected across all areas of the university through distinct responsibilities in research, teaching, learning, and administration.*

FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

Teaching

- Make expectations for AI use clear in the course outline and discuss them early in the term, with reinforcement as required. Ensure that students understand when the use of AI is inappropriate.
- Use AI to support pedagogical goals, not replace human interaction.
- Strive to integrate at least one AI-related topic or activity in each course to build student AI literacy.
- Design assessments that encourage authentic work and reflection on AI. Foster conversations about AI's role in learning and society.
- Embed AI competencies in teaching activities and materials to prepare graduates for the use of AI beyond university.

- Balance the use of AI tools and developing learners' creative and critical thinking skills.
- Contextualize AI activities to highlight the importance of human skills and creativity.
- Stay current with AI developments and explore AI tools.
- The final evaluation of students' work is always the responsibility of the course instructor.

Curriculum

- Regularly review and update programs and courses to reflect the evolving impact of AI on disciplines, careers, and society.
- Critically assess the relevance of program-level outcomes to ensure alignment with employment trends, evolving skill sets, employer expectations, and technological advancements.
- Integrate AI-related competencies and skills, such as prompt engineering, ethical reasoning, critical evaluation, and data literacy, across curricula to ensure our graduates are equipped for the future.
- Leverage Carleton's commitment to interdisciplinarity by fostering collaboration and integration across programs to bolster AI literacy and to help students navigate AI's ethical, societal, and technical dimensions.
- Actively involve program and university stakeholders (students, academics, alums, and industry) in the curriculum renewal process to ensure graduates are well-prepared to meet current and emerging job market demands.

Learning

- Students should use AI as a learning aid, not a shortcut.
- Reflect on how AI impacts your learning.
- Learn how to critically evaluate AI outputs.
- Students must follow the rules and guidelines about AI use in the course syllabus and as laid out by the course instructor.
- Safeguard your private information.
- Review the Academic Integrity Policy and your responsibilities.
- Verify the information provided by AI with other sources and use it as a supplement rather than a replacement for traditional search methods.
- Acknowledge the use of AI when appropriate, use citations and AI disclosure statements.

Research

- Leverage AI tools to explore ideas, generate hypotheses, process information, generate summaries, or assist with grant applications.
- Be aware of potential bias and blind spots.
- Validate AI outputs and remain accountable for research accuracy.
- Ensure confidential or sensitive research data is used only with Carleton University approved tools.

- Disclose AI use when drafting manuscripts, literature reviews, or data summaries.
- Consult the guidelines on AI use and disclosure provided by journals, funding agencies, and professional associations.

Administration

- Use AI to streamline repetitive tasks (e.g., summarizing, drafting, data analysis), provided such tasks would not result in the disclosure of sensitive or confidential information.
- Protect institutional and personal data; avoid using non-approved tools.
- Promote human-centered automation that supports rather than replaces judgment.
- Always check the accuracy of AI output and ensure human oversight for any AI-generated content.
- Acknowledge the use of AI when appropriate.
- Become familiar with the process of approving new AI tools by ITS and the AI Acceptable Use Policy.
- If you are uncertain about the appropriateness of AI use, consult your managers and departmental leads for guidance.
- Learn about AI tools.

Carleton University Leadership

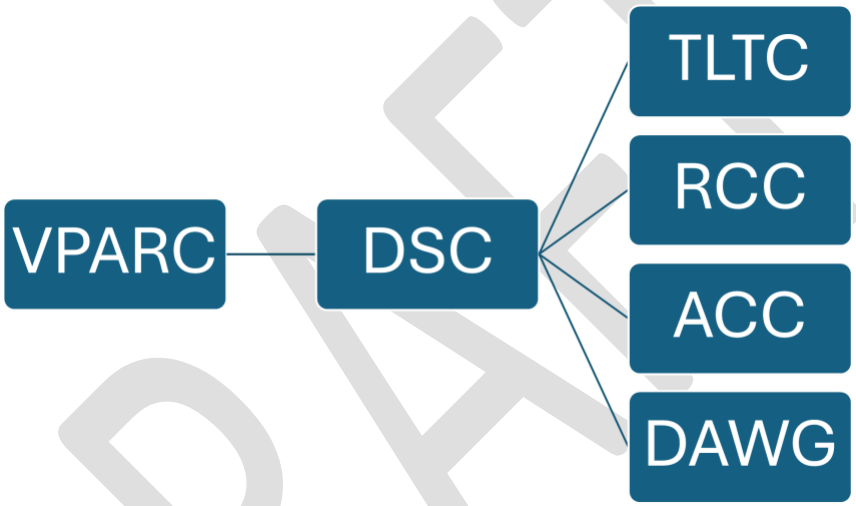
- Ensure that cybersecurity and data governance protocols, along with AI guidance and considerations are updated regularly to reflect advancements in AI.
- Proactively engage with stakeholders from a change and communications perspective (staff, unions, management, students, governance groups) to ensure alignment on the use of AI across the university.
- Encourage consistent, university-wide communication and guidance regarding AI.
- Ensure considerations of Bill 194: Strengthening Cybersecurity and Building Trust in the Public Sector Act, 2024.
- Ensure that financial and other resources are available to support AI activities on campus.
- Monitor the development and implementation of AI initiatives across the university's functions (teaching, learning, research, and administration). Identify potential gaps and recommend appropriate actions.

GOVERNANCE

The Vice-President Academic & Research Committee (VPARC) will approve the strategic directions and priorities of AI implementations on campus, ensuring that they are aligned with the university's strategic priorities and transformation efforts.

The Digital Steering Committee (DSC)[1] will ensure representation from academic and non-academic departments on AI initiatives across campus. It will discuss and guide the overall AI strategy related to teaching, learning, research, and administration and will propose items for VPARC's consideration and approval.

The Digital Steering Committee will receive support from existing bodies - the Teaching and Learning Technology Committee (TLTC), the Research Computing Committee (RCC), the Administrative Computing Committee (ACC), and the Data Administration Working Group (DAWG). These groups will provide regular input and recommendations about the use of AI to be prioritized in their respective areas.



[1] The committee's membership is defined in the IT Governance Document.