An Oifig Sláine Acadúla
Academic Integrity Office

Literacy software and academic integrity

These guidelines provide advice on how to use literacy software responsibly and uphold academic integrity standards in your assignments at the University of Galway. This document is provided to students who are guided to use literacy software by the Disability Support Service (DSS).

What is literacy software?

Literacy software refers to specialised tools and applications designed to support reading, writing, and language comprehension.

Why might I use literacy software?

The DSS at University of Galway works with students who need supports or reasonable accommodations due to the impact of a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty. Students who have successfully applied for disability support may be guided to a range of software, e.g. Ginger, Grammarly, Rewordify, ATbar, depending on their needs.

What does this have to do with academic integrity?

One of the basic principles of academic integrity is that students submit their own work for assessment. As some literacy software supports students with additional needs by suggesting changes that they can make to their writing, there is a risk that excessive use of literacy software may result in writing that does not represent the student's own work.

How should I use literacy software?

Remember that literacy software is designed to assist with grammar, spelling, and writing style. It is not intended as a substitute for learning and improving your language skills. In that spirit, you should aim to use literacy software sparingly and as an aid to improving your writing independently.

What do I need to know about literacy software and AI?

Some literacy software uses Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) to power its features, while others offer paid services for additional GenAI-powered writing and summarisation tools. It's important to understand that work that you submit for

assessment should be your own and that excessive or irresponsible use of GenAI-powered literacy software may constitute a breach of academic integrity.

What is the university policy on using GenAI?

The Academic Integrity Policy identifies "Submitting all or part of an assessment item which has been produced using artificial intelligence ... and claiming it as your own work" as academic misconduct.

How can I avoid breaching academic integrity?

Use literacy software to assist you with grammar, spelling, and writing style, but avoid using it excessively, to the extent that your writing and expression no longer represents your own work.

If you are comfortable doing so, tell your instructor that DSS have approved your use of a particular literacy software. This is important information for your instructor to know if they suspect inappropriate use of GenAI. Consider including a statement in your assignment that describes your use of literacy software, e.g.

> *I have used literacy software recommended by the Disability Support Service in writing this assignment. Specifically, I used [name of software] for the purposes of correcting grammar, correcting spelling, correcting punctuation, adjusting the tone of writing, shortening or simplifying text, rewriting or rephrasing text [delete as appropriate and provide further detail, if necessary].*

What other steps can I take to use literacy software responsibly?

- Use only the literacy software (and their specific versions) officially approved by DSS. Some literacy software packages include generative features that have been switched off by DSS because they are not appropriate for users' needs and are potential threats to academic integrity. You should not use these features for your academic work in versions of the software that are not approved by DSS.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of using literacy software in a given assignment, consult your instructor.
- When literacy software highlights errors or suggests improvements, take the time to understand why. This will help you to internalise the rules of language and improve your writing independently.
- Look at the settings of the literacy software and customise accordingly. If you find some features distracting or unhelpful, you may be able to disable them.
- Proofread your own work manually. Trust your own judgment and don't rely solely on literacy software. Often, you will find edits that the software might miss.

- Use literacy software sparingly: challenge yourself to draft and write your work without it from time to time. This will help you to reduce your reliance on literacy software as your skills improve.
- Seek human feedback on your writing: ask your instructors to provide advice on your writing. Consider attending the [Academic Writing Centre](#).

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