Policy Title:
Use of Artificial Intelligence

Policy Identifier:
USCSOMC – AIT – 1.01

Prepared by: FSOM AI Task Force	Creation Date: 3/18/2025
Reviewed by: Curriculum Committee, MD Program Policy and Procedure Committee, Executive Committee	Review Dates: 9/29/2026
Approved by: Executive Committee	Effective Date: 10/13/2026
Category: Artificial Intelligence	

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All faculty, students, staff, and affiliated researchers associated with the University of South Carolina Floyd School of Medicine.
- All AI systems, whether institutionally provided or externally sourced, that are used to process, analyze, generate, or interpret data related to university activities.
- Any use of AI for university-related purposes, including education, clinical care, research, administration, and institutional operations, must comply with this policy, regardless of the device, location, or account involved.

This policy does not apply to the personal use of AI tools where no university data, intellectual property, or work-related activities are involved. Individuals conducting university-related education, research, or clinical activities within affiliated healthcare organizations remain subject to the policies and procedures of those organizations in addition to this policy, where applicable.

Policy Statement

The University of South Carolina Floyd School of Medicine (USC FSOM) is committed to the responsible, ethical, and secure use of AI in education, clinical practice, research, and administration. This policy ensures alignment with applicable regulations and policies, including but not limited to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), and USC's academic integrity and ethical standards. In addition to the requirements outlined in this policy, users are responsible for complying with all applicable policies, procedures, and regulatory requirements established by affiliated clinical partners, parent institutions, government agencies, funding bodies, licensing organizations, and academic journals. When conducting activities within affiliated healthcare organizations, users must also comply with the policies and requirements of those organizations. Compliance with this

policy does not supersede the requirements of affiliated healthcare organizations, research sponsors, or other governing entities. Where multiple policies apply, users are responsible for complying with all applicable requirements.

AI may be used to enhance education, support clinical and research activities, and improve administrative efficiency, provided that its use remains subject to appropriate human judgment, professional accountability, and institutional oversight. AI must not replace human decision-making in patient care, student evaluation, research, or institutional operations. Sensitive, confidential, or regulated data must be used only within approved university systems that have been subjected to review by the USC Division of Information Technology (DoIT) and should not be entered into unapproved or external AI tools, which are officially considered non-secure environments. AI-assisted work must be disclosed in accordance with applicable institutional, sponsor, and publication standards.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the responsible, ethical, and secure use of AI within the USC FSOM to support innovation while mitigating risk. This policy ensures that AI integration in education, clinical practice, research, and administration adheres to applicable standards, including but not limited to HIPAA regulations, USC's academic integrity policies, IACUC regulations, and IRB standards.

This policy is established with multidisciplinary input in accordance with the USC Policy Development and Approval Process (UNIV 1.00) to provide a clear framework for AI adoption and governance at FSOM. All AI users must uphold the principles of the Carolinian Creed, as well as institutional ethics and honor code policies.

Definitions

- AI-Assisted Decision-Making: The use of AI models to support clinical or administrative decisions, where human oversight remains mandatory.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computational systems designed to simulate human cognition, including machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing.
- Faculty: University personnel who are engaged in research, instruction both inside and outside the classroom, service and/or administration (taken from The USC Faculty Manual and ACAF 1.00) Full-time faculty includes all faculty members who are considered by the medical school to be full-time, whether funded by the medical school directly or supported by affiliated institutions and organizations. (copied from the Glossary of Terms for LCME Accreditation Standards and Elements in LCME's Functions and Structure of a Medical School). Faculty can be further classified as having tenure-track, professional-track, or honorific appointments Furthermore, this definition also includes part-time faculty, such as adjunct and affiliate faculty.
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): U.S. law that establishes national standards for protecting the privacy of student education records from unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Generative AI: AI that produces new content based on training data, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Bard, or DALL·E.

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA): U.S. law that establishes national standards for protecting sensitive patient health information from unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC): Regulatory body that oversees and evaluates animal research programs to ensure humane treatment and compliance with ethical and legal standards.
- Institutional Review Board (IRB): Committee responsible for reviewing and approving research involving human subjects to ensure ethical standards and regulatory compliance.
- Principal Investigator (PI): The individual—normally an academic appointee—who holds primary responsibility for the scientific and technical conduct, reporting, and fiscal/programmatic administration of a sponsored project
- Protected Health Information (PHI): Individually identifiable medical data protected under HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).
- Staff: Personnel who are not appointed as faculty but are paid by the University of South Carolina. This includes staff who are part-time or full-time and serve either academic or non-academic functions. It also includes student employees.
- Student: Any individual enrolled either part-time or full-time in an academic program at the School of Medicine Columbia or actively engaged in educational, research, or clinical experiences under the supervision of SOM Columbia faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, visiting students from other institutions, undergraduate or graduate students from USC or external universities conducting research or shadowing experiences, and students participating in collaborative academic projects involving SOM Columbia faculty.

Procedures

I. Guiding Principles

1. Individual's Right to Privacy
    - AI systems must comply with FERPA, HIPAA, IRB, and South Carolina state or federal regulations when handling sensitive data.
    - Student education records and Protected Health Information (PHI) must not be entered into external or publicly accessible AI platforms unless explicitly approved by USC Division of Information Technology (DoIT) and, where required, with appropriate consent.
    - Public AI tools must be treated as non-secure environments. Users are responsible for ensuring that no confidential, sensitive, or personally identifiable information is disclosed in effort to avoid security violations.
2. Academic Integrity & Ethical Use
    - Use of AI in academic work, research, and scholarly activity must be appropriately disclosed in accordance with institutional and publication standards.
    - AI-generated content must not be misrepresented as original work.
    - Students must comply with instructor-specific AI use policies.
    - AI tools may not be listed as authors on scholarly works and must not be used in peer review unless explicitly permitted by the reviewing entity.

- Use of AI in research or clinical activities must comply with applicable requirements and oversight entities, including but not limited to IRB, IACUC, clinical partners, sponsors, licensing bodies, and journal policies.
- Students must obtain Principal Investigator (PI) or clinician approval before using AI tools for scientific writing, clinical, and research-related activities.
- Inputting unpublished, proprietary, or sensitive data into AI platforms is prohibited without prior authorization from the appropriate supervising authority (e.g., PI, clinical supervisor, or institutional office).

3. Human Oversight and Accountability
    - AI must not replace professional, clinical, academic, or scientific judgment.
    - Users remain responsible and accountable for decisions made with AI assistance.
    - All AI-assisted outputs must be reviewed and validated by a qualified individual prior to use or implementation.
    - Faculty, supervisors, and administrators are responsible for ensuring appropriate oversight of AI use within their areas.
4. Transparency and Ethical AI Use
    - Users must assess AI outputs for accuracy, bias, and limitations prior to use.
    - Known or suspected errors or biases must be addressed before utilization of AI outputs.
    - When AI is used in clinical care or research, disclosure to patients, participants, or stakeholders must occur when appropriate and required.

II. Acceptable Uses of AI at FSOM

1. Education and Learning
    - AI may be used to support teaching, learning, and curriculum development (e.g., simulations, tutoring, content generation)
    - Students may use AI tools in accordance with course-specific guidelines and institutional academic integrity policies. Faculty should clearly define and communicate expectations for AI use in course syllabi and assignments.
    - AI may be used to support accessibility, and accommodation needs consistent with institutional disability services, accessibility standards, and applicable laws and policies.
2. Research Applications
    - AI may be used to support research activities including data analysis, hypothesis generation, and study design, provided no sensitive university data is input into unapproved tools.
    - AI use in human or animal research must comply with IRB and IACUC requirements and receive appropriate approvals where required.
    - AI-generated outputs must be validated against empirical data and subject to appropriate scientific review.
    - Use of AI in scientific writing, grant development, and publication must comply with journal and sponsor policies.
3. Clinical Applications
    - AI may be used to support but not replace clinical decision-making.
    - AI tools used in clinical settings must comply with applicable regulatory requirements and the policies of the institution or healthcare organization in which they are being used.

- Use of AI in patient care must comply with HIPAA and all applicable privacy and security standards.
- Clinicians are responsible for validating AI-generated recommendations prior to application in patient care.

4. Administrative and Operational Efficiencies
    - AI may be used to improve administrative efficiency (e.g., scheduling, documentation, data organization), provided that sensitive or regulated data is not disclosed to unapproved systems.

III. Prohibited and Restricted AI Uses at FSOM

1. Handling of Sensitive, Regulated, and Institutional Data
    - Users must not enter, upload, transmit, or otherwise process PHI, identifiable student education records, identifiable research data, or other confidential, proprietary, or regulated university information in AI systems that have not been reviewed and approved by the USC DoIT.
    - Publicly available or otherwise unapproved AI platforms must be treated as non-secure environments and may not be used to process institutional data that is confidential, regulated, proprietary, or otherwise restricted.
    - Use of AI in research involving human subjects, identifiable data, or regulated research activities must comply with applicable IRB requirements and receive any required approvals before use.
    - Users remain responsible for ensuring that AI use complies with applicable federal and state laws, university policies, sponsor requirements, and contractual obligations governing the data being used.
2. AI as a Sole Decision-Maker
    - AI cannot serve as the sole authority for:
        - Clinical diagnosis or treatment decisions
        - Student grading or academic evaluation
        - Research conclusions or peer review determinations
        - Institutional or administrative decision-making
    - Human review and accountability are required in all such contexts.
3. Bias, Safety, and Ethical Concerns
    - AI tools that demonstrate significant bias, inaccuracy, or unsafe outputs must not be used until concerns are addressed.
    - Faculty and supervisors must review AI-generated materials used in educational or operational settings to ensure that they are appropriate and accurate.

IV. Data Security and Compliance

1. AI tools must comply with USC cybersecurity, data governance, and data storage requirements.
2. Research data involving AI must be stored and managed on approved secure systems.
3. Vendor agreements for AI tools must include provisions addressing data security, privacy, and appropriate use.

4. Use of AI as an accessibility or assistive technology resource should comply with institutional disability accommodation and accessibility policies.
5. All AI tools must undergo formal review and approval by USC Division of Information Technology (DoIT), including security, privacy, and compliance assessment, prior to use.

V. Compliance and Enforcement

1. Violations of this policy must be reported to the appropriate institutional office (e.g., Student Conduct, Research Compliance, HR), consistent with the nature of the violation.
2. Noncompliance may result in disciplinary action consistent with USC policies.

VI. Approval and Governance

1. This policy is implemented in accordance with USC Policy on Policies (UNIV 1.00).
2. Responsible committees and institutional leadership will oversee implementation, interpretation, and periodic updates.
3. This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently as needed, in response to regulatory, technological, industry, and stakeholder developments. The policy will be revised as appropriate to ensure continued alignment with evolving best practices, institutional priorities, and applicable standards.
4. FSOM or parent institution may develop training, guidance documents, and implementation resources to support responsible AI use.
5. Feedback from faculty, learners, staff, and institutional stakeholders may be incorporated into future revisions of this policy by using the FSOM AI support form.

Related Policies, Procedures, and Resources

- USC AI Guidebook
- Purchasing AI Guidelines
- Using AI in Meetings Guidelines
- Garnet AI Foundry
- FSOM AI Support Form
- FSOM AI in Medicine
- USC Policy on Policies (UNIV 1.00)
- Academic Responsibility – The Honor Code (STAF 6.25)
- Handling of Student Records (ACAF 3.03)
- Honor Code and Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct (STA 1.10)
- University of South Carolina Ethics Policy (HR 1.02)
- Misconduct in Research and Scholarship (RSCH 1.00)
- HIPAA Compliance (UNIV 1.60)
- Data and Information Governance (UNIV 1.51)
- Responsible Use of Data, Technology, and User Credentials (UNIV 1.52)
- Digital Accessibility (IT 5.00)
- Carolinian Creed

Contacts

SOMC AI Task Force
SOMC Office of Research
SOMC Student Promotions and Honor Committee
Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
Office of Research Compliance
Division of Information Technology
USC AI Educators

History

Date of Change	Change
9/29/2026	Alignment with AAMC and USC AI Guidebook for Artificial Intelligence Integration into the University Environment