

IREC Policy On Generative AI



General statement

Generative AI (Gen AI) offers many potential benefits for individuals, communities, and societies. However, at present it also offers major ethical challenges, including:

- Gen AI makes mistakes (sometimes called ‘hallucinations’), which can be difficult to spot because they are presented in the same way as accurate information.
- Gen AI does not currently reflect human diversity.
- Gen AI can undermine confidentiality, because material uploaded to a Gen AI tool may be used to train that Gen AI tool or others, and may be held in ‘the cloud’ which can be insufficiently secure.
- Gen AI may be used but the use not declared; that is dishonest.

There is one exception to the final point, which is when Gen AI is used as a disability accommodation. There are no restrictions on using Gen AI as a disability accommodation, and declaration of its use for that purpose is not required.

For applicants

Generative AI is increasingly being used to speed up research-related, project management and administrative tasks. Applicants may not use gen AI tools to generate their IREC applications. It is acceptable to use these tools exclusively for copy editing, if needed. If AI is used, applicants must state which AI tool they used (e.g. ChatGPT, Claude), and disclose how they used it (e.g. checking spelling or grammar, support with translation).

For panel members

Panel members may not use gen AI to construct their feedback on IREC applications. Applicants need your own original thoughts generated from your engagement with the documents they submit. These are what IREC pays you to provide.

Gen AI tools may be used exclusively to check spelling, punctuation and grammar (for example if English is not your first language). If you have used AI for this purpose please disclose it in your feedback.

For panel chairs

Panel chairs may not use gen AI to construct their responses to applicants. This is a complex and nuanced task which requires understanding of the contexts for the application and for the panel’s comments. These are what IREC pays you to provide.

Gen AI tools may be used exclusively to check spelling, punctuation and grammar (for example if English is not your first language). If you have used AI for this purpose please disclose it in your feedback.