Policy for the Use of AI Tools at the University of Nicosia

1. Overview

The University of Nicosia recognizes the significant impact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including various forms such as generative AI, machine learning, and natural language processing, are set to have on society. As AI continues to evolve, it presents a myriad of opportunities for innovation in teaching, learning, research, and operational efficiency. This policy provides a comprehensive framework to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI technologies while harnessing their potential to enhance the university's effectiveness and efficiency.

This policy applies to all members of the university community, including faculty, staff, and students and has been developed in line with the "Senate Resolution for the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools", submitted by the Rector and approved by the Senate during its 142nd Meeting, March 2023.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the proactive integration of AI tools into the university's ecosystem, ensuring their effective and ethical deployment in educational, research, and operational activities. It sets a framework for the University, enabling it to prepare students for a future where AI is an integral part of the workforce and society, while also maintaining the university's commitment to academic integrity and excellence.

3. AI and Teaching

3.1. Strategic Integration of AI in Teaching and Learning

3.1.1. **Embracing AI as a Productivity Tool**: The University recognizes that AI, in its generative and other forms, is an essential tool for enhancing productivity and quality across various domains. We are committed to incorporating these tools into degree programs to maintain our position at the forefront of academic innovation and integration with the latest developments in industry.

3.1.2. **Preparing Students for Success**: In alignment with our vision as a forward-looking institution, we are dedicated to equipping our students with the skills necessary to leverage AI tools effectively. This includes integrating AI into learning assignments and assessments, ensuring our graduates are adept at navigating a future where AI is ubiquitous.

3.1.3. **Reevaluation of Assessment Modalities**: Recognizing that certain traditional assessment methods may become less effective in the context of advanced AI capabilities, the University is committed to evolving its assessment strategies. We will shift our focus away from methods that can be easily circumvented by AI, such as standard essays or basic problem sets, and instead emphasize assessments that require critical thinking, creativity, and complex problem-solving.

3.1.4. **Prioritizing AI-Resistant Assessment Methods**: The University will prioritize the development and implementation of assessment methods that are robust against the use of AI tools. These may include oral examinations, live presentations, practical demonstrations, and other dynamic forms of assessment that necessitate active engagement and the application of knowledge in real-time contexts.

4. Strategic Integration of AI and Research

The University of Nicosia acknowledges the expansive opportunities presented by Artificial Intelligence, particularly through the advent of generative large language models (LLMs), in reshaping research methodologies and outputs. The integration of AI into the research domain can be articulated as follows:

4.1. Augmentation of Research Processes

Generative LLMs can augment the research process by assisting in the generation of scholarly content. Such augmentation has the potential to enhance productivity and foster innovative approaches to academic inquiry, when used ethically. The University of Nicosia acknowledges that generative LLMs can also be used inappropriately to gain unfair advantage in academic teaching and research, and recognises its responsibility to address this.

4.2. Synthesis of Complex Data

Generative LLMs can be instrumental in synthesizing and analyzing large volumes of data, offering researchers condensed insights and aiding in the discernment of intricate data patterns. This capability can significantly contribute to the depth and breadth of research findings.

4.3. Facilitation of Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The application of generative LLMs can serve as a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration, enabling researchers from diverse fields to coalesce around shared objectives and methodologies. These AI tools can assist in translating specialized knowledge into a more universally comprehensible format, thereby enhancing collaborative efforts.

4.4. Ethical Considerations and Critical Evaluation

The critical evaluation of generative LLMs is essential, particularly in the context of potential inaccuracies in their output. Researchers can be guided to approach AI-generated content with a discerning eye, verifying the accuracy and reliability of information before its application in scholarly work. Following the assessment of accuracy, attention must also be given to identifying and addressing any inherent biases within these models. Ethical deployment of generative LLMs should be conducted with a commitment to transparency and accountability, ensuring that their use aligns with the University's academic standards.

As such the University shall set out policy statements to ensure that AI tools are deployed effectively and ethically in teaching, learning and research.

4.4.1. Ethical Usage

Respect for Individual Rights: Users of generative AI tools must uphold principles of privacy, consent, and data protection. Personal data must be handled in compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and explicit consent should be obtained when required.

Mitigating Hallucinations and Bias: It is crucial for the University to guide users in critically evaluating the accuracy of AI-generated content and to be vigilant about 'hallucinations'—instances where AI tools generate false or misleading information. Efforts should be made to identify and mitigate biases in AI

outputs, promoting fairness and inclusivity in AI applications. Expectations in relation to this shall be set out for faculty, staff and students.

Transparency and Accountability: Users should be transparent about the use of generative AI tools and clearly indicate when AI-generated content is being utilized. Accountability should be upheld, and users should be responsible for the outcomes produced by generative AI tools.

4.4.2. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism: The use of generative AI tools to create or submit work without proper attribution or to produce work that falsely represents an individual's abilities is considered plagiarism and a breach of academic integrity.

Authenticity of Work: Users should ensure that generative AI-generated work is appropriately identified and credited. If generative AI tools are used for collaborative work, proper acknowledgment should be given to the contributions of all participants.

Academic Misconduct: Any attempt to use generative AI tools for cheating, such as unauthorized collaboration or gaining an unfair advantage in assessments, is strictly prohibited.

4.5. Educational Initiatives in Generative AI

The University can offer educational initiatives aimed at enhancing researchers' proficiency with generative LLMs. Such initiatives might encompass workshops, seminars, and resource materials that elucidate the capabilities, best practices, and limitations of these AI tools within a research context.

By embracing the potential of AI, and generative LLMs in particular, the University of Nicosia can significantly enrich the research capabilities of its scholars, promoting a culture of innovation and excellence while upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and ethical practice.

5. AI and Cooperation with Industry, Sustainability, and Social Contribution

The University of Nicosia envisions AI, particularly generative LLMs, as a bridge to industry, a tool for sustainable development, and a contributor to societal well-being. The potential for AI to foster such connections and contributions can be outlined as follows:

5.1. Partnership with Industry

Generative LLMs can facilitate robust partnerships with industry by providing advanced solutions to complex problems and by driving innovation in products and services. These collaborations can serve as a conduit for knowledge exchange, where academic research informs industry practices and vice versa, leading to mutually beneficial advancements.

5.2. AI for Sustainable Development

AI tools can play a pivotal role in advancing sustainability goals. By analyzing large datasets, AI can uncover patterns and insights that inform sustainable practices and policies. The University can leverage AI to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as climate action, clean energy, and responsible consumption.

5.3. Social Contribution and Ethical AI

The integration of AI into social initiatives can enhance the University's contribution to societal welfare. Generative LLMs can be employed to analyze social trends, inform public policy, and create educational content that is accessible to diverse populations. It is imperative that these contributions are underpinned by ethical considerations, ensuring that AI is used to promote equity and inclusivity.

5.4. Fostering a Culture of Responsible Innovation

The University can foster a culture of responsible innovation by encouraging the use of AI in ways that are considerate of ethical, legal, and social implications. This includes promoting the development of AI applications that are aligned with human values and societal needs.

By harnessing the capabilities of AI, the University of Nicosia can strengthen its ties with industry, contribute to sustainable development, and make meaningful social contributions, all while nurturing a responsible approach to technological advancement.

6. Good Practices

The University of Nicosia is committed to establishing and maintaining good practices in the use of AI across its operations. These practices are designed to ensure that the deployment of AI technologies, including generative LLMs, is beneficial, ethical, and aligned with the University's values and objectives.

6.1. Training and Education

The University will provide training programs for faculty, staff, and students to enhance their understanding and proficiency in using AI tools. These educational initiatives can include workshops, seminars, and online courses that cover the fundamentals of AI, ethical considerations, best practice, and the practical and responsible application of AI in academic and administrative contexts.

6.1.1 Technical Support: Adequate technical support will be made available to users of generative AI tools to ensure their effective and ethical use. This includes troubleshooting assistance, guidance, and access to resources.

6.2. Workflow Integration

AI tools can be integrated into the workflows of faculty, staff, and potentially students, to streamline processes and increase efficiency. The University can explore and implement AI-driven workflow tools that assist in administrative tasks, research data management, and personalized learning experiences, ensuring that these tools are accessible and user-friendly.

6.3. Transparency and Accountability

The University will advocate for transparency in the use of AI tools, ensuring that users are aware of when and how AI is being utilized. Accountability measures should be in place to address the outcomes of AI use, with clear guidelines on how to handle errors or misrepresentations resulting from AI interventions.

6.4. Copyright and Intellectual Property

The University will establish clear policies regarding copyright and intellectual property rights in the context of AI-generated content. This includes defining the ownership of AI-created materials and ensuring that all AI-generated work is properly attributed and, where necessary, licensed in accordance with copyright laws.

By adhering to these good practices, the University of Nicosia can foster a responsible and informed AI culture that supports academic excellence, operational effectiveness, and ethical standards.

7. AI Policy and Initiatives Committee (AIPIC)

The University of Nicosia establishes the AI Policy and Initiatives Committee (AIPIC), a dedicated group of stakeholders tasked with the detailed policy work and the implementation of AI-related initiatives.

The objectives of AIPIC will include:

- Developing a detailed AI policy that addresses the ethical, legal, and practical considerations of AI use within the University.
- Reviewing and enhancing all related policies, periodically, to ensure alignment with technological advancements, ethical considerations, legal requirements, and the evolving needs of the University.
- Creating and overseeing training courses to enhance the AI literacy of the University community.
- Actively monitoring the AI landscape for new developments and technologies that could benefit the University.
- Gathering and incorporating stakeholder feedback to inform the work of the "Accelerate" development team.
- Providing regular reporting and updates to the Senate, Council, Schools, and Administrative Departments, with a current cadence of quarterly updates to reflect the rapid pace of AI development.

This Committee will ensure that the University of Nicosia remains at the forefront of AI integration in higher education, fostering an environment of responsible innovation and continuous learning.

AIPIC will be composed of the following people and will be chaired by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs.:

7.1. Senior Vice Rector and Vice Rectors for Academic Affairs and Faculty and Research

The Senior Vice Rector and the Vice Rectors, each one in his/her area of responsibility will provide leadership and strategic direction for the integration of AI across the university activities, ensuring that AI policies align with the University's mission and academic standards. Their responsibility and set of actions include amongst others the following:
- Senior Vice Rector: Ethical use of AI, Sustainable Development and Social Engagement and Contribution
- Vice Rector for Academic Affairs: development and offering of academic programmes and teaching and learning, including training for students
- Vice Rector for Faculty and Research: Research and Training and Development of Faculty Members and Doctoral Degree students.

7.2. EVP of Health

The Executive Vice President (EVP) of Health will oversee the application of AI within health-related disciplines, ensuring that AI tools are used responsibly and contribute to advancements in health education and research.

7.3. Heads of the Technology-Enabled Learning Center (TELC), Pedagogical Support Unit (PSU) and e-Pedagogical Support Unit (e-PSU)

The Heads of TELC/PSU/e-PSU will be instrumental in identifying and developing training courses for the effective use of AI in teaching and learning. They will also play a key role in the active monitoring and dissemination of new developments in AI education technologies.

7.4. Head of the IT Department

The Head of the IT Department, working with the "Accelerate" development team, will provide technical expertise and support for the implementation of AI tools. They will facilitate stakeholder feedback and contribute to the continuous improvement of AI applications within the University.

7.5. Representatives of the Law and Social Sciences Department

One representative of the Department of Law and one representative of the Department of Social Sciences with expertise/interest in AI, who will provide input pertaining to legal and societal aspects of the use of AI.

7.6. Representatives of the Schools

One representative from each School with expertise in AI (excluding the Schools hosting the Departments of Law and Social Sciences), who will be providing their School's perspective and will be the link for the Schools and their faculty members.

7.7. Experts on assessment

Experts on assessment will act as the intermediary between AI technology and assessment procedures, ensuring the effective and responsible utilization of AI technology. They will provide guidance throughout the development and implementation of AI assessment tools and systems. Additionally, they will educate faculty, staff, and students about the proper use of AI in assessment, ensuring alignment with university policies and best practices, and promoting a fair assessment environment.

8. Compliance and Enforcement

8.1. **Policy Compliance:** All users of generative AI tools at the University of Nicosia are expected to comply with this policy. Failure to adhere to the policy may result in disciplinary actions, following established university procedures and internal regulations.

8.2. **Monitoring and Reporting:** The University may implement monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with this policy. Users are encouraged to report any concerns or violations related to the use of generative AI tools to the AI Policy and Initiatives Committee.