

MEF UNIVERSITY AI POLICY



Version 1.0 / March 28, 2024
I s t a n b u l

Contents

1. Purpose and Scope	2
2. AI Committee	3
3. Basic Principles	4
4. Use in Education - Teaching Processes	4
5. Use in Research - Development Processes	5
6. Use in Administrative Processes	5
7. Resources	5
8. Security and Ethical Standards	6
9. Implementation and Conclusion	6

1. Purpose and Scope

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to systems that exhibit intelligent behaviors by analyzing their environments and acting with a certain autonomy to achieve specific goals. AI systems are systems that learn from data. The advancements in AI systems in recent years are based on the development of artificial learning models that utilize large amounts of data. Common examples of AI systems include voice assistants, image processing software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems. AI software can also be integrated into hardware devices; for example, advanced robots, autonomous vehicles, drones, or Internet of Things tools.¹

The rapid launch of advanced AI technologies in recent times demonstrates a swift progress in terms of the accessibility and capabilities of AI. It is inevitable that AI technologies will develop even faster in the coming years, expand their scope, become an integral part of our daily lives, and significantly impact the way we learn, teach, conduct research, and work.

For academics to effectively utilize AI models, they need to understand and internalize the capabilities, working principles, and limitations of AI technologies within the context of their own disciplines and higher education. It is essential for students to understand the role AI will play in shaping their future and to gain skills in using AI. AI also has the potential to accelerate administrative processes and make teaching, learning, and research processes more effective and efficient. Along with these potentials, there are several ethical concerns brought about by AI, and addressing them is of great importance. Therefore, universities are obliged to produce clear policies that outline the development and use of AI technologies.

Moving forward from this point, MEF University is committed to developing and using AI technologies within the framework of the European Union (EU) values and principles² consisting of human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, transparency and explainability, responsibility and accountability, equality and fairness, sustainability and human oversight, in its education, research, and administrative processes. At the same time, all AI initiatives of the University will be aligned with the *European Union Artificial Intelligence Act*³, the *National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey* will be taken into account, and compliance with relevant legal regulations will be ensured.

This document provides a broad framework that can be customized to fit the proactive structure of MEF University for the development and use of AI models in curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation, research, and administrative processes. This document, first published in March 2024 and to be regularly reviewed by the MEF University AI Committee on a monthly basis, will be updated in parallel with developments in AI technologies.

¹ A definition of Artificial Intelligence: main capabilities and scientific disciplines (EU)

² EU guidelines on ethics in artificial intelligence: Context and implementation

³ Laying down Harmonised Rules on Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act) and amending Certain Union Legislative Acts

2. AI Committee

The AI Committee, established by the University Senate, consists of experts from different disciplines and relevant stakeholders on the development and use of AI. The Rector appoints one of the AI Committee members as the Chair. The responsibilities and duties of the members are as follows:

Responsibilities:

- Regulate the University's AI Policy and submit it to the University Senate for approval.
- Oversee the implementation of the University's AI Policy.
- Identify the parties responsible for implementing the AI policy and ensure accountability.
- Ensure regular auditing of the AI technologies used in terms of adherence to ethical principles, potential risks, and negative impacts.
- Ensure that high-risk AI applications⁴ developed or used at the University meet the relevant criteria specified in the EU Artificial Intelligence Act.
- Establish mechanisms for the University community to report concerns and issues related to AI, and provide timely solutions to the reported issues.
- Engage the University community and external stakeholders in dialogues about AI use in education, ensuring transparent and proactive collaboration with all stakeholders regarding the University's AI policy, practices, and developments.

Members and Duties:

- AI Researchers: Will communicate their findings and insights on AI technologies and their potentials.
- Data Scientist: Will provide insights on AI use with knowledge of data analysis and modeling.
- Ethics Committee Representative: Will highlight the moral and ethical aspects of AI applications in education and research.
- Legal Expert: Will continuously provide information on the legal aspects of AI, including data privacy, intellectual property, and compliance with legislation.
- IT Director: Will provide information on the integration of AI tools into the university's infrastructure and technical feasibility.
- Library Director: Will provide information on integrating AI into academic life, academic integrity, resource management, and the evolving nature of research and science in the AI era.
- Director of the Center for Research and Best Practices in Learning and Teaching: Will provide information on how AI can impact the learning and teaching process.
- Student Representatives: Will convey students' interests and expectations regarding the use of AI in their education.
- Industry Representatives: Will provide information on current trends in AI, potential collaborations, and applications in the business world.

⁴ According to the EU Artificial Intelligence Act, high-risk systems are AI systems that may pose significant risks in terms of fundamental rights such as health, safety, education, employment, and judiciary. In the field of education, AI systems used to evaluate students and determine access to educational opportunities fall into the category of high-risk systems. In the same context, examples of low-risk systems in the field of education include AI tools that provide students with personalized learning recommendations, automatically summarize or translate course materials, and check grammar and spelling errors in assignments and projects. Units developing AI need to consider all of the risk systems mentioned in the EU Artificial Intelligence Act.

3. Basic Principles

1. Basing the development and use of AI on EU values and principles.
2. Adhering to the principles of transparency, accessibility, and accountability in the development and use of AI.
3. Adopting a human-centered approach by ensuring human oversight and control over AI systems.
4. Considering the risk levels explained in the EU Artificial Intelligence Act in AI applications.

4. Use in Education - Teaching Processes

1. AI tools and skills are of great importance for students to enhance their learning experiences, assist in their professional careers, develop their digital skills, and adapt to a world where AI is increasingly prevalent. Therefore, it is important for academics to incorporate the use of such tools into their curricula and support and encourage appropriate, responsible, and ethical use by students.
2. Academics are recommended to integrate AI tools into their teaching and assessment practices⁵. For this purpose, academics collaborating with industry professionals to design AI-based learning activities and assessments based on AI use in the business world significantly contributes to preparing students for the industry.
3. Academics need to integrate only reliable, ethical, and auditable AI technologies into their courses, prioritize open-source solutions whenever possible, and have control and oversight over the AI technologies used.
4. Academics should consider the opportunities for accelerating the design processes by leveraging AI models in designing courses, learning and teaching activities, and assessment contents.
5. Academics are individually responsible for reviewing their assignments, exams, and assessment methods to minimize the impact of inappropriate use of AI tools by students.
6. Academics should provide written instructions and sample usage scenarios in their course content and assessments regarding the extent to which students can benefit from what types of AI tools.
7. In academic studies at undergraduate and graduate levels, when content, visuals, graphics, codes, and other elements generated by AI are used, they must be explicitly stated in the text and references. Presenting any work that is not the student's own, including those produced with AI tools, without citing the source, is against academic ethical rules. In this case, necessary action is taken regarding the relevant student in accordance with Article 54 of the Higher Education Law.
8. The use of any AI plagiarism detection tool within our University is not currently deemed appropriate. The reasons for this are: (i) the accuracy of these tools is not sufficient to be accepted as evidence by universities, (ii) there is a risk of data security breach as a result of submitting work to these tools.
9. In order to develop students' digital and AI literacy and skills, in addition to academics integrating AI tools and skills related to their use into their courses as mentioned above, the Center for Research and Best Practices in Learning and Teaching (CELT) will conduct research and studies to improve these skills of students.
10. To develop academics' digital and AI literacy and skills, CELT will organize digital and AI literacy and skill development trainings at several levels and conduct research.

⁵ Student evaluation using AI falls into the high-risk AI usage category.

5. Use in Research - Development Processes

1. Researchers should take necessary measures (such as anonymization) to protect the data they use in research processes and keep data access under control.
2. Researchers should ensure full compliance with ethical rules and human rights during the use of AI, as with other research tools, and establish a framework to prevent potential harms by minimizing potential risks.
3. AI algorithms used in research studies should be transparently documented, ensuring that the impartiality of AI algorithms is maintained and any biases that may cause discrimination are eliminated.
4. In research and academic studies, it is mandatory to cite content obtained from AI tools as a source.
5. The use of AI tools in research projects should be clearly stated as part of the research methodology.
6. The accuracy of the data and results obtained from AI generation should be critically and experimentally evaluated and reported by researchers.
7. Participation in collaborative research networks is necessary to examine the impacts of AI in education, identify best practices, and contribute to the development of standards and guidelines for ethical use.
8. In the research and development activities of AI systems, action should be taken in accordance with the principles and requirements of risk levels specified in the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act.

6. Use in Administrative Processes

1. AI should be used in a way that contributes to increased efficiency and productivity by accelerating administrative processes.
2. The use of AI aims to enhance the student experience and communication, make the support processes of the academic staff more effective, and manage university resources more efficiently.
3. In order to keep up with the continuously evolving potential of AI and use the technology effectively, administrative staff will be continuously informed and trained on AI technologies and applications by the IT Directorate.

7. Resources

1. Open-source AI technologies should be used whenever possible to ensure equal access to educational opportunities. Our University will provide access to known useful paid AI technologies through the "AI Cafe" service.
2. Through educational technologists employed at MEF University CELT, continuous advice, guidance, training, and resources will be provided to assist academics in effectively and ethically using AI tools in teaching and research. Educational technologists will actively collaborate with industry professionals to stay informed about the latest trends and AI innovations in their field of responsibility.
3. Resources such as technical support, legal advice, and training materials on the development and use of AI systems will be provided by the University.

8. Security and Ethical Standards

1. Personal data will be protected in accordance with the relevant legislation⁶ in the development and use of AI systems. In addition, high-risk AI systems developed and used to evaluate students and determine access to educational opportunities will be identified, these systems will be ensured to comply with the EU's requirements, high-quality and unbiased data will be used transparently, detailed documentation will be kept, users will be provided with clear information about the capabilities and limitations of the system, human oversight will be ensured, and high accuracy, robustness, and cybersecurity will be provided.
2. Trainings on the ethical use of AI will be provided to academics, administrative staff, and students.
3. Ethical AI, data protection, and AI security standards will be integrated into the curriculum of programs related to computer science, data science, engineering, and related fields.

9. Implementation and Conclusion

The MEF University AI Committee will make updates to the AI Policy according to developments and announce the updates to its stakeholders. These policy decisions, which express MEF University's supportive approach to the use of AI applications by academics, administrative staff, and students with the motto of Your Freedom in Learning, will be implemented throughout the University as of the 2024-2025 Academic Year. The implementation of these decisions for the 2023-2024 Spring Semester is left to the initiative of the academics.

MEF University

Huzur Mah. Maslak Ayazağa Cad. No: 4
34396 Sarıyer – İstanbul, Turkey

E-mail : mef@mef.edu.tr
Phone : +90212 395 36 00
Web : www.mef.edu.tr

⁶ The Law on the Protection of Personal Data No. 6698 (KVKK) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be taken as basis.