Senate Committees

Report to the Graduate Studies Committee

Discussion Item

Topic: Principles for assessment in the era of artificial intelligence (updated)

Date of Meeting: November 24, 2026

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1. Purpose of the Report

- To discuss and receive feedback on an updated draft set of principles for assessment that have undergone additional consultations since the end of the previous Senate year. These principles are intended to guide the design and support of learning assessments at the university at a time when the proliferation, integration, and adoption of artificial intelligence continue to challenge traditional approaches to learning assessment.

2. Background

- Ever since the advent of ChatGPT and other generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) platforms, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI) has provided guidance to Brock's educators on the use of GenAI in the context of teaching and learning. This guidance has been updated over time, including to reflect updates to the university's academic integrity policy and to address the use of AI detection tools. Additionally, CPI launched an asynchronous workshop on GenAI on the new Faculty and Instructors CPI Teaching and Learning Brightspace site along with a Community of Practice on Generative AI and Assessment to complement its ongoing synchronous workshops for instructors and teaching assistants.
- On July 17, 2025, OpenAI released ChatGPT agent, which users can empower to log in to and navigate websites while performing complex tasks. Although users

were previously able to use ChatGPT and other GenAI tools to support their work (whether authorized or unauthorized), the release of this new “agent mode” in ChatGPT marked a further development with AI, in that this use now requires far less human oversight and intermediation. This development and subsequent advancements have brought serious implications for all web platforms, including Brightspace, Brock University’s learning management system.

- In August 2025 the Vice Provost, Teaching and Learning provided guidance for instructors concerning agentic AI and summative assessment while clarifying that “whereas students who engage in unauthorized use of AI will be in clear violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, any user of Brock University systems that utilizes ChatGPT’s agent mode (or other agentic AI tools) to access Brightspace or other university systems will additionally be in violation of Brock’s IT Acceptable Use Policy and Standards.”
- That same communication from the Vice Provost indicated that, starting in Fall 2025, CPI would convene a series of conversations across the university concerning the future of assessment. Accordingly, over the Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 terms, CPI staff facilitated numerous such conversations with interested programs across multiple Faculties.
- Insights from these conversations were distilled and augmented with research on innovative institutional frameworks and promising pedagogical strategies being tested and adopted at universities across the world.
- The draft principles, which also reflect the five institutional priorities outlined in Brock University’s Academic Plan, were brought to the Teaching & Learning Policy Committee and Graduate Studies Committee for discussion and feedback in April 2026.
- Following these meetings, CPI engaged in additional consultations, including with the newly formed Teaching and Learning Practices working group of the university’s AI taskforce.
- The draft principles have been revised to reflect the feedback received by the Senate committees and other consulted groups, along with ongoing research by the CPI team, including on assessment principles currently being developed at other Canadian universities such as Queens University and the University of Calgary.

- A collection of promising assessment practices that align with these draft principles has also been curated by the CPI team and will be continuously updated.

3. Appendix

- Draft principles for assessment in the era of AI

Draft principles for assessment in the era of artificial intelligence

The following 24 principles were developed by the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation following discussions and extensive feedback concerning the future of assessment held with academic departments, academic support units, academic leadership, the teaching and learning practices working group of the university's AI taskforce, and Senate committees between September 2025 and September 2026. These principles reflect insights distilled from these conversations and consultations, as well as research on innovative institutional frameworks and promising pedagogical strategies being tested and adopted at universities across the world. They also reflect recommendations in the Council of Ontario Universities AI Taskforce Report and mirror guidelines or principles developed by regulatory bodies such as Australia's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency and post-secondary institutions such as MIT.

Importantly, these principles are not intended to guide the use nor address responsible governance of artificial intelligence (AI) at the university, work that is being led by the university's AI taskforce and that is also informed by existing policies, including the university's Senate-endorsed Ethical Framework for Educational Technologies. Rather, they are intended to guide and inform the design and support of learning assessments at the university at a time when AI continues to transform teaching and learning practices by introducing new affordances while simultaneously destabilizing traditional approaches to the evaluation of student learning.

It is understood that these principles, which also reflect the five institutional priorities outlined in Brock University's Academic Plan, will be reflected in assessment practices that are appropriate for specific disciplines. To that end, specific assessment practices and practical strategies that align with these principles and that are suitable for implementation at the university will be continuously shared by the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation.

Purpose, authenticity, and applicability

1. Reaffirming the university's commitment to fostering the development of knowledge, skills, and capabilities essential to students' personal and professional success
2. Aspiring to design assessments that preserve the productive friction of intellectual struggle and challenge students to embrace the vulnerability and desirable difficulties inherent in academic learning

3. Valuing assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning

Reality

4. Appreciating the rapid proliferation and widespread integration and adoption of AI, including in the context of the Government of Canada's National AI Strategy, and supporting structural changes to assessment that reflect this reality
5. Recognizing that AI fluency may be essential to students' future success, while cultivating the discernment necessary to deploy these technologies strategically, critically evaluate their outputs, and reflect on their own intellectual contributions
6. Preparing students for the contemporary workplace and integrating critical AI use into program and course outcomes, where appropriate

Individual agency and collective decision-making

7. Where AI skills are not integrated into program or course outcomes, supporting agency of instructors who may wish to engage with AI in different ways
8. Where AI skills are not integrated into program or course outcomes, supporting the agency of students who may wish to opt-out of engaging with AI
9. Reaffirming the freedom of individual instructors to determine their pedagogical approach concerning AI and assessment, while empowering collective faculty decision-making within disciplinary contexts (e.g., a program-level approach to assessment)

Consistency

10. Adopting a common framework and terminology across the university when describing assessment in the context of AI
11. Encouraging collaboration and consistency concerning the approach to AI within teaching teams, including the primary teaching team such as teaching assistants, lab demonstrators, and marker-graders and specialist contributors such as professional librarians and learning services staff
12. Modeling appropriate disclosure of AI use to students

Inclusion

13. Ensuring that assessment practices remain accessible (e.g., tool use, student support needs, language, etc.)
14. Resisting reactive, punitive, and potentially exclusionary practices that undo progress towards universal design for learning

15. Where feasible, reducing the assessment burden (e.g., the number of discrete/non-sequential summative assessments) on both students and instructors

Efficacy

16. Debunking false promises of technology-mediated approaches, and recognizing the limitations of detection- and surveillance-based responses to academic integrity concerns
17. Acknowledging that whereas any approach to assessment carries weaknesses, a combination of complementary approaches to assessment greatly enhances overall assessment integrity (i.e. the "Swiss cheese model")
18. Promoting assessment practices that draw on uniquely human capacities for creativity, connection, and knowledge exchange

Academic integrity

19. Fostering an environment of trust in which students take accountability for coursework, highlighting both the origins of intellectual effort and their positional human voice
20. Sharing clear expectations specific to use of AI with students, describing allowable use and disclosure requirements
21. Highlighting connections between learning outcomes, assessments, and acting with integrity, and engaging students in opportunities to reflect on academic integrity as academic practice

Instructor and institutional capacity development

22. Continuously developing capacity to explore the use, benefits, and harms of AI in teaching and learning by supporting experimentation and through routine evaluation of emergent tools
23. Working in community to build and share leading practices and to contribute to the ongoing development of quality alternative assessment alongside AI
24. Value and uphold the human experience, expertise, knowledge, and wisdom applied to the grading process

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Internal consultations that informed the development of the draft principles:

Senate Committees:

- Senate Teaching & Learning Policy Committee
- Senate Graduate Studies Committee

Academic Departments/Faculties/Faculty groups[1]:

- Faculty from Master of Public Health program
- Environmental Sustainability Research Centre
- Department of Child and Youth Studies, Undergraduate Program Committee
- Department of Psychology, Undergraduate Program Committee
- Department of Finance, Operations, Information Systems
- Faculty from the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Department of Geography, Tourism Studies
- Faculty from MIWSPFA
- Department of Applied Disability Studies
- Department of English Language and Literature
- GenAI and Assessment Community of Practice
- Teaching and Learning Working Group of the AI Task Force
- Brock University Faculty Association
- All Chairs/Directors

Student Associations:

- Brock University Students' Union
- Graduate Students Association

Academic Leadership

- Associate Deans
- Deans

Academic Support Units:

- Centre for Pedagogical Innovation
- Student Accessibility Services
- Student Ombuds

[1] Academic departments across the university were invited to participate in these discussions.

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Other Committees

- AI Task Force
- Academic Integrity Advisory Committee
- Student Ombuds Advisory Committee

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