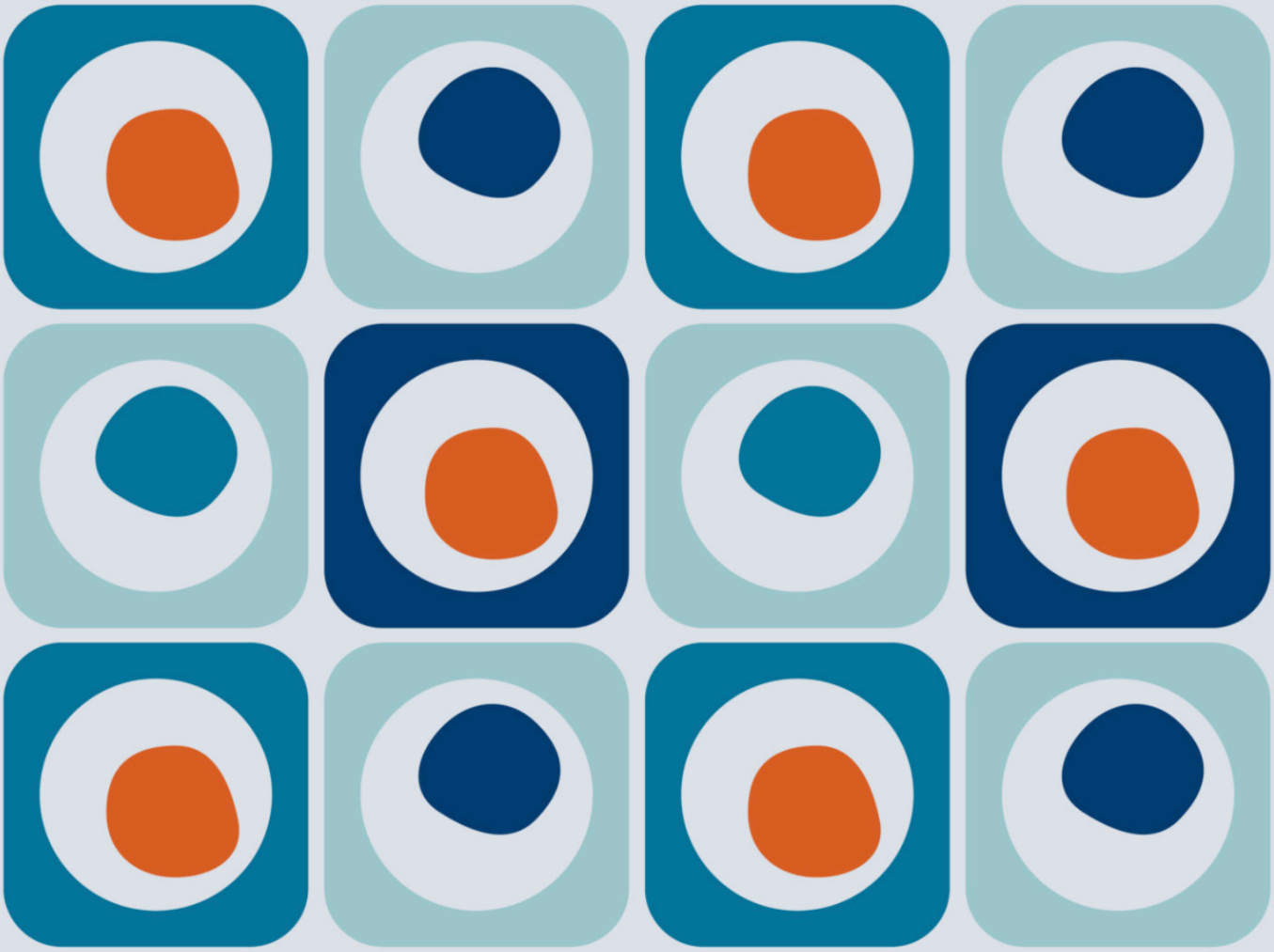
25 September 2025

McGuinness Institute

AI Protocol



MCGUINNESS INSTITUTE
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McGuinness Institute AI Protocol

(as at 25 September 2025)

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to clarify how the Institute is currently using AI and how this tool will be acknowledged in our publications. This is not a strict protocol, but rather a collection of guiding principles that will guide the research team as they go about their work.

2.0 Principles

Given AI will continue to grow and evolve at a rapid pace, it is important to have a clear set of principles that help guide the research team in the use of this technology. The following four principles have been adapted from the 2024 OECD paper *AI principles.*[1]

1. Transparency – The Institute is committed to transparent and responsible disclosure regarding the use of AI systems. This will help foster healthy dialogue and build a general understanding regarding the capabilities and limitations of AI.

2. Accountability – There is some risk in using AI systems, including inbuilt biases in the AI; safety, security and privacy; and labour and intellectual property rights. It is important to disclose when *and how* we have used AI (including the risks that come with that use) so that it is clear for readers.

3. Privacy – Information given to an AI system often informs future answers provided to you by that AI system, and may also inform what information the AI holds and provides to people around the world. It is important to ensure that any information you feed into an AI system is not confidential and, preferably, is already in the public domain. Any information that is not publicly available (e.g. personal contact details, staff or patron information, data that belongs to someone else, or works in progress) should therefore not be shared with external AI systems.

4. Accuracy – A major risk of using AI is that it is prone to making mistakes, in terms of factual content, completeness and nuance. It is important that we verify the accuracy and precision of any text generated by AI, just as you would seek to verify the work of other researchers. Bias should also be checked for. This means that researchers should explore and, where appropriate, reference a range of sources. References can come in many forms and serve various purposes. For example, minority views may not be identified or included in AI output, and so these views should be sought out; or a primary source may be missing, so this should be found and checked (such as a current policy, rule or standard). This is where experience, robust thinking and a curious mind is essential. The researcher needs to continually question the AI output and be highly aware of the purpose of each reference sought. There is a risk that they regurgitate AI output rather than maintaining constant awareness that AI is a tool and will not always provide an accurate picture of the state of play.

3.0 Our approach

As mentioned above, this protocol focuses on broad principles and will continue to evolve. The following subsections provide further advice, guided by the four principles.

3.1 Our disclaimer statement

Going forward, all disclaimer statements, found at the front of all our publications, will include the following sentence.

> The Institute uses AI in our research and analysis (see our AI protocol on our website, Publications/McGuinness Institute/AI protocol).

3.2 How to cite AI use

This table explains when AI should be cited. However, if in doubt, please cite. Although it is up to the researcher to make the decision, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts with other researchers or the chief executive. This is an evolving issue, and we are all learning.

Table 1: McGuinness Institute AI disclosure requirements

AI use	When to disclose	Where to disclose	Comments
1. Generating a research question/hypothesis	Always	Methodology*	Considered *substantial*
2. Designing a table of contents/structure of a paper	Always	Methodology*	Considered *substantial*
3. Finding ideas you have not previously thought of	Always	Methodology* and endnote**	Constitutes plagiarism so need to acknowledge AI as the source
4. Modifying images	Always	Methodology*	This is normal practice, but the AI use needs to be acknowledged
5. Relying on data or information that has not been found in your earlier scoping work	Always	Methodology* and endnote**	AI influences core scientific processes so need to acknowledge that risks might exist
6. Generating figures or tables	Always	Add endnote to source of figure/table **	Affects interpretation and presentation
7. Rewriting sentences or paragraphs that contain no new content. This might include using AI to change the structure of a sentence, put text into point form, put points into a paragraph, rewrite as a recommendation, improve grammar, or check spelling.	Sometimes	General disclaimer at front of doc is sufficient	This is a judgement call and depends whether it fulfils a similar role to more traditional search engines and editorial systems. The test is whether it provides new content or not and whether the text makes sense from a human perspective. In other words, could it have been written by a human?
8. Obtaining or checking references using our chosen referencing style.	Not required	General disclaimer at front of doc is sufficient	This is using AI as a very low-level tool/short-cut and does not need to be disclosed as the independent researcher and the editors will naturally check this.

Note:

* A reference in the methodology should include a specific reference to the section that relied materially on AI, the exact AI tool used, how it was used, and the date the output was generated.

** Add an endnote to the table/diagram/text. The endnote itself should cite the AI tool as author and should include the date and time the text was generated. This also means the AI output should be printed out in our hard copy folder as evidence.

Useful references

[1] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2024). *AI principles*. [online] Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/ai-principles.html [Accessed 16 Sep. 2025].