

Policy on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research Funding Applications and Assessment

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Yorkshire Cancer Research's position on the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in funding applications and the assessment of funding applications submitted to the charity.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all those involved in applying for, administering or reviewing funding applications from Yorkshire Cancer Research, including applicants, research teams, host institutions, external reviewers, panel members and other individuals involved in the assessment of funding applications.

3. Definitions

Generative AI

A type of artificial intelligence that identifies patterns and structures within data and generates new content, such as text, images, computer code or other media, in response to instructions or prompts.

Host institution

The university, research institute or other organisation at which some or all of the research funded by Yorkshire Cancer Research will be conducted.

Research integrity

Yorkshire Cancer Research is committed to maintaining the highest standards of research integrity. We aim to achieve honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and accountability in the conduct of research.

4. Key principles

We recognise that generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and other large language models, may offer benefits to researchers, including support with drafting content, coding and administrative tasks. However, their use must not compromise research integrity, confidentiality, intellectual property rights, legal obligations or the robustness of our funding processes.

Researchers, reviewers and institutions are responsible for ensuring any use of generative AI is appropriate, transparent and compliant with applicable policies and legislation.

4.1 Requirements for funding applicants

We encourage applicants and their teams to exercise caution when using generative AI tools and to remain up to date with guidance provided by their institutions, funders and the wider research sector.

Applicants **must**:

- Uphold the highest standards of research integrity throughout the preparation and submission of funding applications.

- Ensure any use of generative AI complies with applicable legal, ethical and data protection requirements.
- Use generative AI tools responsibly and critically, taking full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, validity and reliability of all content included in a funding application.
- Ensure funding applications do not contain inaccurate, fabricated, misleading or plagiarised information generated by AI tools.
- Clearly disclose and appropriately acknowledge use of generative AI tools in funding applications. This should include details of the tool used, the model version (where known) and how it contributed to the content.
- Follow their host institution's policies and procedures relating to the use of generative AI, including those relating to plagiarism, authorship, research conduct and intellectual property.
- Not use generative AI to produce an entire application, or a substantive section of an application, without meaningful intellectual input, review and approval from the applicant team.

When approving and submitting an application to Yorkshire Cancer Research, host institutions accept responsibility for ensuring the application complies with applicable research integrity requirements.

4.2 Requirements for external reviewers and panel members

Yorkshire Cancer Research operates a rigorous, confidential expert review process to support fair and robust funding decisions.

As outlined in the charity's [confidentiality requirements](#) for members of the Research Advisory Panel and external reviewers, all funding applications, review materials, discussions, correspondence and assessment documentation are strictly confidential.

External reviewers, panel members and all individuals involved in the assessment process **must not**:

- Upload, input or share any content from a Yorkshire Cancer Research funding application with a generative AI tool or platform.
- Upload, input or share concepts, unpublished data, intellectual property or other confidential information contained within an application to a generative AI tool.
- Use generative AI tools to generate, draft, edit or refine review comments, critiques, assessments, scores or recommendations relating to funding applications.

These restrictions exist because the use of generative AI tools may create risks relating to confidentiality, intellectual property, data security and research integrity.

All external reviewers and panel members must comply with Yorkshire Cancer Research's confidentiality requirements and confirm that application materials and review content will not be uploaded to, shared with or processed by generative AI tools.

4.3 Action following a potential breach

Where a potential breach of this policy is identified:

- Yorkshire Cancer Research **should** be informed as soon as reasonably possible.
- Individuals should provide all relevant information to enable the matter to be reviewed appropriately.
- We will consider each case individually, taking account of the nature and extent of the breach.

Where appropriate, Yorkshire Cancer Research reserves the right to take action, which may include:

- Excluding an application from further consideration.
- Withdrawing funding or requiring corrective action.
- Restricting future participation in expert review activities.
- Excluding individuals from future funding opportunities.
- Taking other action considered appropriate in accordance with our research integrity and governance procedures.

Before determining an outcome, Yorkshire Cancer Research will normally give the applicant, host institution, reviewer or other individual an opportunity to provide information about the circumstances. Decisions will be proportionate, documented and made in accordance with the charity's applicable research integrity and governance procedures.

4.4 The use of generative AI by Yorkshire Cancer Research

Yorkshire Cancer Research will not use generative AI to make funding decisions or to replace the judgement of appropriately qualified staff, reviewers or panel members.

Any use of generative AI by the charity in administering or processing funding applications must be approved through the charity's relevant information governance, data protection, information security and procurement processes. Its use must be proportionate, transparent and subject to meaningful human oversight.

4.5 Policy review and updates

Generative AI technologies are evolving rapidly. Yorkshire Cancer Research will continue to monitor developments, engage with sector-wide guidance and review this policy periodically to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

5. Guidance for researchers

Researchers funded by Yorkshire Cancer Research should follow these principles when using generative AI tools:

Protecting confidential information

- Do not enter confidential information belonging to Yorkshire Cancer Research, a host institution or any third party into a generative AI tool.
- This includes information about new inventions, research findings, unpublished results or other material that has not yet benefited from intellectual property protection.
- Sharing this information may compromise confidentiality and could affect the ability to protect intellectual property or commercialise research outputs.

Protecting personal data

- Do not enter personal data, special category data or confidential information about another person into a generative AI tool unless there is a documented lawful basis, the processing has been approved by the relevant institution, affected individuals have been provided with appropriate privacy information, and suitable security and contractual safeguards are in place.
- Unauthorised disclosure of personal data may breach data protection requirements.

Protect copyrighted material

- Do not enter copyrighted material into a generative AI tool unless you have permission from the copyright holder or another lawful basis for doing so.
- This may infringe intellectual property rights and expose the individual or organisation to legal risk.

6. Risks relating to the outputs of generative AI

Researchers must not assume that outputs from generative AI tools are accurate, complete or reliable, and should always review and verify any AI-generated content before use. Researchers remain fully responsible and accountable for the accuracy, integrity, originality, appropriateness and use of any content produced or modified using generative AI.

Generative AI tools may:

- Be based on training data that has a cut-off date and may not reflect current information.
- Produce inaccurate or fabricated data, information, examples or references that appear credible.
- Reflect bias in the datasets on which they have been trained, leading to biased outputs.
- Risk infringing third-party intellectual property rights.

It should be noted that the use of generative AI is an energy intensive practice and the environmental impact should be considered before using these tools.

If you have any questions about this policy or the use of generative AI in relation to Yorkshire Cancer Research funding activities, please contact research@ycr.org.uk