

Acceptable AI Usage Guidelines for Essay Evaluation

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1. Acceptable AI Use Standards

Scholarship essays must be predominantly written by the student applicant. Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, Claude) may be used only in the following limited ways:

- Topic brainstorming: Applicants may use AI tools to explore ideas or generate potential perspectives related to the essay prompt.
- Grammar and style checks: Applicants may employ AI or grammar tools (e.g., Grammarly, Hemingway Editor) only to refine grammar, punctuation, or readability of text the student originally authored.
- Citation formatting: AI-generated suggestions for formatting citations (e.g., MLA, APA) are permitted, provided the student's original content remains intact.

Strictly prohibited: AI-generated content that contributes substantive portions of the essay (e.g., multi-sentence paragraphs, argument construction, or entire sections) not authored by the applicant. All core ideas and narrative must originate with the human-author. View full AI usage guidelines below for more details.

2. AI Detection and Judging Options

To enforce acceptable use the Scholarship Committee utilizes a three-tiered AI detection review process for every essay submission:

COMMITTEE MUST SELECT OPTION

- Option A – OpenAI / GPTScore or AI Text Classifier (*Use case: Quick, scalable screening for potential AI-generated text.*)
 - Utilize tools such as OpenAI's AI text classifier or GPTScore to provide a likelihood estimate that text was AI-generated. These tools analyze linguistic patterns and usage to flag content that may not be human-authored.
 - Recommended tools:
 - OpenAI AI Text Classifier
 - GPTScore
- Option B – Third-Party AI Detection Tools (Web-based or SaaS) (*Use case: Secondary validation when Option A signals potential AI assistance.*)
 - Employ purpose-built AI detection services that use ensemble models and pattern detection (e.g., Turnitin with AI writing detection, Copyleaks AI Detector, GPTZero Pro) to evaluate essays for unnatural language, consistency anomalies, and AI writing signatures.
 - Recommended tools:
 - Turnitin with AI detection module
 - Copyleaks AI detector
 - GPTZero Pro
- Option C – Manual Review Calibration by Committee (*Use case: Human judgment for borderline or ambiguous cases.*)

- In cases flagged by automated tools, the committee may conduct a manual review comparing stylistic coherence, voice consistency, and logical flow against expected student writing patterns.

3. AI Scoring Threshold and Disqualification

To balance fairness with reasonable machine assistance (e.g., grammar tools), the committee may use a quantitative AI likelihood score as a threshold for evaluation:

- Essays scoring above 30% AI-generated probability on any two independent detection tools shall be subject to further committee review.
- Essays scoring above 45% AI-generated probability on aggregated detection results shall be disqualified from consideration.

These thresholds reflect a presumption that benign stylistic enhancements may occur, but substantive AI authorship is not permitted. These levels align with emerging academic integrity standards in education and scholarship adjudication.

4. Reviewer and Applicant Communication

Disclosure statement: By submitting a scholarship application to U.S. Postal Service Federal Credit Union, the applicant certifies that they have read and understand the Scholarship AI Usage Policy. The applicant affirms that their essay is their own original work and that any use of artificial intelligence tools was limited strictly to the permitted uses outlined in the policy, such as grammar or formatting assistance only. If it is determined that AI was used outside of these guidelines, the application will be subject to disqualification.

Committee training: Scholarship judges should receive guidance on AI detection score interpretation, false positives, and manual review best practices.

Appeals process: Applicants flagged for AI concerns may submit a brief written explanation or evidence demonstrating the work's originality.