

Using Generative AI in your manuscript preparation

Generative AI tools can save you time and help you communicate your work more clearly. Elsevier's policy is designed to support you in using them responsibly, without compromising the integrity of your work. Below is a clear overview of what is permitted, what is not, and what you need to declare when you submit your paper.

You CAN use AI to

- Summarize the literature, spot gaps and spark ideas.
- Organize and structure your manuscript.
- Improve the language, clarity and readability of your text.
- Create explanatory images such as flowcharts and diagrams.
- Create data visualizations, when drawn directly from your own data using reproducible methods.



You must NOT use AI to

- Write substantive parts of the paper without your own intellectual contribution.
- Fabricate or alter data, results or references.
- Create or alter primary research images such as microscopy images or western blots.
- Make graphical abstracts with general-purpose AI tools, please use a dedicated scientific illustration tool instead.



The golden rule AI supports your work, but it never replaces your judgment. You are responsible for the accuracy, originality and integrity of everything you submit.

Protect your data and IP

Before you share any unpublished work with an AI tool, take a moment to check its terms and conditions. Find out whether the tool stores your content, shares it with third parties, or uses it to train the model. Also check whether you are allowed to publish what you create with it. Where possible, choose tools licensed by your institution. Protecting your unpublished work is your responsibility.



Check every reference yourself

AI tools can invent citations that look real but do not exist. Before you cite anything, you should:

- Find and read each source yourself.
- Confirm the reference exists and supports the claim you are making.
- Never cite a reference you have not read.

Which images can AI help with?

Image type	AI allowed?	Where to disclose
Explanatory images (flowcharts, diagrams)	Yes	Image caption + AI declaration
Data visualizations (plots, charts, graphs)	Yes, if derived directly from your own data, using reproducible methods	Methods section + image caption
AI imaging that is part of your research methods	Yes	Methods section
Primary research images (microscopy, western blots)	No	-
Graphical abstracts	Use a dedicated tool (e.g. BioRender) instead of general-purpose AI tool	Image caption

How to disclose your AI use



1. Declaration of AI use

Add a short declaration just before your references whenever you use AI to prepare the manuscript, including images.



2. Image captions

For every AI-generated image, state the AI use and name the tool in that image's caption.



3. Methods section

For AI data visualizations, give the tool name, version and developer.

Suggested wording for your declaration

"During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [NAME OF TOOL/SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication."

No disclosure needed for basic spelling, grammar and punctuation checks, or assistive technology used solely for accessibility purposes.

Checklist: Before you submit, you should confirm:

- ✓ I used AI only as support, it did not write substantive content for me.
- ✓ I reviewed and verified every AI output I included.
- ✓ I checked the tool's terms and conditions before uploading anything.
- ✓ I read every source I cite and confirmed it supports my claim.
- ✓ I did not use AI to create or alter primary research images.
- ✓ Any AI data visualizations come straight from my own data.
- ✓ I declared my AI use in the AI declaration statement and in image captions.

For the full policy please check Elsevier's Generative AI policies for journal authors:
<https://www.elsevier.com/about/policies-and-standards/generative-ai-policies-for-journals>
 In addition, you may review your journals' Guide for Authors for further instructions.