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AI as an Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

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Across the globe, some universities are beginning to treat generative AI tools (like ChatGPT, Bard, or Claude) as assistive technology for students with disabilities. A few institutions now explicitly permit or pilot the use of AI in official disability accommodations, recognizing that these tools can help level the playing field for students who face learning, writing, or communication challenges. However, this practice is still emerging, and it raises important questions about academic integrity, equity, and proper implementation. Below we outline examples of universities allowing AI as an accommodation, informal programs underway, legal/regulatory discussions, and how AI is integrated into support services – along with concerns voiced by faculty and disability offices.

UNIVERSITIES EXPLICITLY ALLOWING AI IN ACCOMMODATIONS

Teachers College, Columbia University (USA) – Teachers College has acknowledged that some students have approved accommodations to use generative AI for coursework. In official guidance on AI policies, instructors are reminded that *“students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations... If you are a student registered with [the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities] with a generative AI accommodation, please speak with me directly about your needs.”* ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)). This means a student’s accommodation letter might explicitly authorize using tools like ChatGPT for certain tasks. The inclusion of this language in syllabus templates shows that the college anticipates and permits AI-based accommodations when justified by a disability.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville (USA) – The Student Disability Services (SDS) office at UT Knoxville introduced *AI-powered note-taking* as an accommodation. In 2022, SDS launched **Glean**, a web-based note-taking platform that uses artificial intelligence to transcribe and organize class information ([AI Expands the Volunteer Experience for Students with Disabilities - Student Life](#)). This tool is offered to students who need note-taking assistance, supplementing or replacing human note-takers. The results have been impressive – after deploying Glean, SDS saw an *85% reduction* in the number of classes requiring a peer note-taker (fewer human note-takers had to be assigned), meaning many students got notes through the AI system instead ([AI Expands](#)

[the Volunteer Experience for Students with Disabilities - Student Life](#)). This is an example of a university formally integrating AI into official accommodations (in this case, for notetaking), with the dual goal of empowering students and meeting rising demand for services.

Reasonable Adjustments in Australia – In Australia, where disability accommodations are called “reasonable adjustments,” advocates are pushing universities to explicitly allow AI tools. Australian disability activists argue that AI can be a “*revolutionary tool*” for accessibility and that universities should “*embrace the technology*” rather than ban it ([ChatGPT AI Stirs Debate Amongst Universities and Students with Disability - Centre For Accessibility Australia](#)). Under Australian law, students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable adjustments in learning environments ([As ChatGPT faces Australia crackdown, disabled students defend AI | Context](#)). This has led to discussion of including generative AI use as an approved adjustment. While formal policies are still evolving, disability groups note the “*tremendous potential*” for AI to be part of accommodations and urge that it be considered as such ([Sector News - As ChatGPT faces Australia crackdown, disabled students defend AI - ADCET](#)). For example, a visually impaired student at the University of Melbourne expressed concern that outright bans on ChatGPT ignore its assistive benefits; he called for a “*careful distinction between making things accessible and getting AI to think for us*” ([As ChatGPT faces Australia crackdown, disabled students defend AI | Context](#)) – highlighting that AI can be used to *support* disabled students without crossing into academic dishonesty.

Other Early Adopters – Beyond these cases, it’s widely expected that disability support offices will handle AI on a case-by-case basis. Universities rarely post individual accommodation letters publicly, but the growing acknowledgment in official channels (like Teachers College’s policy and Australia’s legal framing) indicates that **some students are already receiving permission to use AI** as an accommodation. For instance, it’s reported that some U.S. disability services have quietly added “use of AI-based grammar and writing assistance” for students with dyslexia or other language-based disabilities in their accommodation letters (similar to how spell-check or Grammarly might be allowed). Instructors at various institutions have been advised that if a student has an accommodation to use generative AI, that accommodation must be honored ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)). This trend remains in pilot stages but is becoming more explicit as universities update their policies for the AI era.

INFORMAL PROGRAMS AND PILOT INITIATIVES

Even where a blanket policy doesn’t exist, universities are **experimenting with AI to assist disabled learners**:

Note-Taking and Transcription Tools – As mentioned, UT Knoxville’s SDS now uses the AI note-taking app Glean campus-wide ([AI Expands the Volunteer Experience for Students with Disabilities - Student Life](#)). Similarly, many disability offices are evaluating AI-based transcription and study tools. Arizona State University’s disability support team (SAILS) has been “*investigating how they can level the playing field*” for students using platforms like ChatGPT in accessible ways ([Accessible Open AI and Chat GPT | ASU IT Accessibility](#)). ASU is exploring assistive tech integrations (like screen-readers or text-to-speech extensions) that make ChatGPT usable for students with print disabilities ([Accessible Open AI and Chat GPT | ASU IT Accessibility](#)). This is more about **making AI accessible** (so a blind student can use a chatbot with a screen reader, for example) than about granting permission in policy, but it shows universities preparing the infrastructure for disabled students to leverage AI.

Writing and Study Aids – Some professors and support staff have begun *informal arrangements* where students with certain disabilities can use AI-based tools for help with writing structure, grammar, or idea generation. For example, faculty at Wright State University report seeing how AI can “*level the playing field*” in writing assignments ([Why ChatGPT won't ruin writing class | WYSO](#)). Wright State's Office of Disability Services director, Tom Webb, envisions students prompting an AI to generate study guides or practice exam questions from class notes – something he says “*right there is a huge tool, and I don't see that being an unfair advantage.*” ([Why ChatGPT won't ruin writing class | WYSO](#)). This reflects a broader pilot mentality: disability services professionals are testing AI in tutoring or skills-building roles. At the University of Maine, researchers in special education are studying “*best practices for using AI to support students with disabilities*”, noting that some teachers are already innovating with AI to adapt course content in real time ([UMaine faculty investigating best uses for AI in special education | PenBay Pilot](#)).

Workshops and Training – Organizations that work with multiple universities are facilitating pilot programs. For instance, the professional association AHEAD (Association on Higher Education And Disability) is hosting webinars on “*AI for Inclusion*” where disability service teams share strategies ([AI for Inclusion: Empowering Access Without Compromising Integrity | Digital Accessibility](#)). Topics include using AI as an accommodation tool and distinguishing ethical use from cheating ([AI for Inclusion: Empowering Access Without Compromising Integrity | Digital Accessibility](#)). Such forums suggest that **some campuses have begun trial runs** – e.g. allowing a neurodivergent student to use ChatGPT for brainstorming under supervision, or letting an autistic student practice social interaction scripts with an AI. These pilots are often informal (not campus-wide policy yet), but they are crucial in shaping future official accommodations.

University Policy Experiments – A few institutions have issued interim guidelines that effectively allow AI use for those who need it. At Columbia University (Teachers College), the syllabus templates not only warn against unauthorized AI use but consistently add that any student with a documented AI accommodation should talk to the instructor to arrange its use ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)). This implies a *case-by-case implementation*: the policy is “no AI unless approved,” and disability services is one channel for approval. We also see **law schools** and other programs debating this: for example, some law schools have split on allowing ChatGPT in admissions essays, noting that if used as an accessibility aid (for someone with a writing disability), it enters a gray area of accommodation versus unfair aid ([Law Schools Split on ChatGPT in Admissions Essays](#)). While not formal pilots, these debates indicate that universities are actively figuring out how to integrate AI for those who truly need it.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY DISCUSSIONS

The practice of treating AI as an accommodation is so new that laws and regulations are just starting to address it. Key points in the legal/regulatory landscape include:

Disability Rights Laws (ADA, Section 504) – In the United States, the ADA and Section 504 require “*reasonable accommodations*” for students with disabilities in higher education. Legal experts suggest this could extend to AI tools if they are necessary for equal access. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has implicitly acknowledged this in recent guidance. For instance, OCR posed a scenario: *If a student with reading and comprehension difficulties could benefit from an app like ChatGPT to rephrase complex directions or text, must the school allow it?* The guidance asks whether the student will be “*allowed to use an application*”

like ChatGPT to obtain rephrasing of directions and/or difficult sections of text,” and if so, whether the school must provide access and training for that tool ([Office for Civil Rights Issues Guidance to Ensure Artificial Intelligence is Used in Nondiscriminatory Manner](#)). This line of questioning strongly implies that **denying a needed AI tool could be a violation** of a student’s rights. OCR even raises practical concerns – if the school gives computers to students, might it need to “*change its security settings to allow ChatGPT*” on a particular student’s device? ([Office for Civil Rights Issues Guidance to Ensure Artificial Intelligence is Used in Nondiscriminatory Manner](#)). While definitive rules aren’t issued yet, the OCR is clearly examining such cases under existing disability law. In short, if an AI tool is the modern equivalent of an assistive technology (like a screen reader or spell-checker), schools may be legally required to permit it as an accommodation.

Office for Civil Rights Examples – In guidance released in 2023–2024, OCR gave multiple examples of AI-related disability issues. One hypothetical case describes a student with a disability who freezes up on a complex project; the student uses ChatGPT to generate ideas and structure for the assignment. The question posed: if the student does this to help overcome disability-related challenges, would the school accuse them of cheating? And “*ultimately, what is being graded?*” – their learning or the mechanics of doing it unaided ([Office for Civil Rights Issues Guidance to Ensure Artificial Intelligence is Used in Nondiscriminatory Manner](#)). OCR’s framing suggests that if the *learning outcome* is demonstrated, using AI as an accommodation might need to be accepted. Another OCR example asks who will teach a student to use AI if it’s allowed: “*If a student is allowed to use ChatGPT... who will teach the student how to use it?*” ([Office for Civil Rights Issues Guidance to Ensure Artificial Intelligence is Used in Nondiscriminatory Manner](#)). These prompts from a federal agency signal that **regulators expect schools to grapple with accommodating AI**, and that outright bans without disability exceptions could trigger legal scrutiny.

“Reasonable Adjustments” Under UK/Australian Law – Similar principles exist elsewhere. In the UK and Australia, equality laws mandate reasonable adjustments (accommodations) for disabled students. Advocates argue that refusing a helpful technology like generative AI might run afoul of those obligations if a student demonstrates it’s needed. Leslie Loble, a professor working on tech and education policy in Australia, notes “*the benefits of AI for students with disabilities are undeniable*” and says we shouldn’t assume the technology is bad ([As ChatGPT faces Australia crackdown, disabled students defend AI | Context](#)). The conversation in those countries centers on balancing academic integrity with legal duties: *Even if technology offers genuine benefits for some students with disabilities, we need a societal mechanism to challenge the necessity of accommodations*, writes one commentator ([Higher education needs a mechanism to challenge student ...](#)). In other words, officials are aware that if AI truly helps a disabled student, universities might **have** to allow it unless they can prove an alternative exists. This area remains under discussion by policymakers and university legal teams.

Precedents with Other Tech – Legally, this situation has parallels to past cases of assistive tech. For example, students with dyslexia are often allowed to use spell-checkers or grammar-correcting software as an accommodation, even if other students might not. Generative AI can be seen as an extension of that continuum (a more powerful “writing assistant”). A disability attorney writing for a special education blog noted that schools should carefully consider requests for AI accommodations and that rejecting them without exploration could be viewed as discriminatory ([Sector News - As ChatGPT faces Australia crackdown, disabled students defend AI - ADCET](#)). We’re essentially watching *case law in the making* – as students start to request AI in official accommodation plans, universities must navigate between academic policies and disability rights law.

INTEGRATION INTO ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Where AI use is allowed or piloted for students with disabilities, how exactly is it integrated? Here are some **ways AI is being used as an accommodation**, according to university reports and expert insights:

Writing and Composition Support – Perhaps the most discussed use is helping students with writing disabilities (such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, or ADHD) to compose essays and written assignments. AI tools can assist with *idea generation, outlining, and proofreading*. For example, ChatGPT can expand on brief thoughts, suggest an outline for a paper, or rephrase awkward sentences. Experts note that this can reduce the cognitive load and stress for students who know the material but struggle to express it in writing ([ChatGPT for students with Dyslexia? Expert Opinion: Examining the use of ChatGPT as an Assistive Technology Tool for Students with Learning Disabilities](#)). Some universities have started treating these AI functions as analogous to a **human writing tutor or assistive software**. The key is that the student must still guide the content. A disability service provider described it this way: an AI can help a student “*get over the terror of the blank page*” by proposing a draft or introduction, which the student can then edit and refine ([How ChatGPT Could Help or Hurt Students With Disabilities](#)). In practice, an accommodation might state the student is permitted to use AI for drafting **provided** they cite it or get instructor approval on the process. Teachers College’s guidance suggests instructors specify *what uses are allowed* (e.g. brainstorming, grammar help) versus not allowed (e.g. writing entire essays) ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)) – effectively building the accommodation into class policy.

Reading and Comprehension Aids – AI models can simplify complex text or summarize readings, which is valuable for students with certain learning disabilities or language processing disorders. As a reasonable accommodation, a student might be allowed to paste class readings or assignment instructions into a tool like ChatGPT to have it *rephrase in simpler terms*. The Rocky Mountain ADA Center notes that ChatGPT can provide alternate explanations for difficult concepts and “*offer clarity and additional guidance...without judgment*”, which could greatly aid comprehension for some learners ([ChatGPT and Disability: Benefits, Concerns, and Future Potential | Rocky Mountain ADA](#)). We see integration of this in how disability staff talk about AI: for instance, an OCR hypothetical scenario explicitly raises “*rephrasing of directions and text*” as an accommodation use-case ([Office for Civil Rights Issues Guidance to Ensure Artificial Intelligence is Used in Nondiscriminatory Manner](#)). If implemented, a student’s accommodation letter might read: “Instructor must allow use of an AI tool to translate or simplify course materials.” In practice, this could also mean providing accessible technology that pairs with AI – e.g. screen readers working in tandem with ChatGPT’s outputs for blind students, or connecting AI to captioning systems for deaf students. The University of Texas at Austin’s accessibility staff have discussed AI-driven captioning for technical lectures (ensuring an AI is tuned to catch complex terminology) ([Office for Civil Rights Issues Guidance to Ensure Artificial Intelligence is Used in Nondiscriminatory Manner](#)). All of this falls under using AI to **present information in an accessible way**.

Note-Taking and Study Skills – As seen with UT Knoxville’s Glean deployment, AI is being integrated to assist with note-taking. Students who have attention or processing disabilities, or physical disabilities that make writing difficult, can use AI-based note takers to record lectures and even distill key points. Glean, for example, not only records audio but also uses AI to organize and highlight important concepts from the lecture ([AI Expands the Volunteer Experience for Students with Disabilities - Student Life](#)). This kind of tool can be officially

listed as an accommodation (e.g. “use of smart pen or AI note-taking app allowed in all classes”). Another integration is using AI to generate practice materials: Disability services professionals have floated ideas like allowing students to enter their class notes into ChatGPT and have it generate quiz questions or summaries as a study guide ([Why ChatGPT won't ruin writing class | WYSO](#)). This helps students with executive function challenges to identify what to focus on. Wright State's disability director gave the example of prompting AI to suggest likely exam questions from the notes – essentially training students *how to study more effectively* ([Why ChatGPT won't ruin writing class | WYSO](#)). While faculty might not formally list this in a letter, they are increasingly *open to it behind the scenes*, recognizing it as a supportive tool rather than cheating. As long as the AI isn't giving the student new information beyond the course content, faculty like Webb argue it's **not an “unfair advantage” but rather an equalizing strategy** ([Why ChatGPT won't ruin writing class | WYSO](#)).

Communication and Social Skills – A more novel accommodation is using AI for communication support. For students on the autism spectrum or those with speech/language impairments, chatbots can serve as *practice partners*. A student might be permitted to use a tool like ChatGPT for “social scripting” – for example, asking it to generate three polite ways to start a conversation in a group project ([How ChatGPT Could Help or Hurt Students With Disabilities](#)). This can be life-changing for a student who struggles with social communication, effectively acting as a personal coach available 24/7. Universities haven't widely formalized this in letters yet, but it's an area of active interest. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that students with autism could use AI to rehearse interactions, and such use has been encouraged by some teaching experts as a means of support ([How ChatGPT Could Help or Hurt Students With Disabilities](#)). Similarly, students with anxiety might use a chatbot to role-play presentations or Q&A sessions in advance as an approved accommodation. These integrations blur the line between academic and therapeutic assistance, but forward-thinking disability offices are beginning to recognize their value.

Assistive Tech Pairings – Often, AI is not a standalone accommodation but part of a *suite of tools*. Universities integrate AI into existing assistive technology. For example, Arizona State's exploration with **Kurzweil (a text-to-speech tool)** and **NaturalReader** for ChatGPT users shows how AI can be combined with traditional accommodations ([Accessible Open AI and Chat GPT | ASU IT Accessibility](#)). A student with a reading disability might invoke ChatGPT to summarize a chapter (AI accommodation) and then have Kurzweil read that summary aloud (text-to-speech accommodation). The *integration* here is seamless from the student's perspective – they get the information in an accessible format – but behind the scenes it's the coordination of multiple technologies. This requires disability services to train students and possibly configure systems (like enabling browser extensions or providing accounts for premium AI services). Some colleges have begun training staff on these configurations. For instance, ASU's SAILS office offers training appointments for students on using the Kurzweil plugin with ChatGPT ([Accessible Open AI and Chat GPT | ASU IT Accessibility](#)). We can expect more such pairings, where AI extends the capabilities of classic assistive software (speech recognition, captioning, predictive text, etc.), all under the umbrella of accommodations.

FACULTY AND DISABILITY SERVICES CONCERNS

Introducing AI as an accommodation isn't without controversy or challenges. Faculty and disability service providers have raised several **concerns and caveats**:

Academic Integrity and Fairness: The foremost concern is avoiding an unfair advantage or academic misconduct. Professors worry that if some students are essentially allowed to use ChatGPT for assignments (even for disability-related reasons), it muddies what is being assessed. The key counterpoint from advocates is that accommodations by nature *do give certain support to some students* – but this is to ensure equity (equal access), not to boost grades beyond ability. Still, universities are treading carefully. Many have clarified that any AI use must be *for access, not for doing the work*. As one Australian student put it, it’s about *accessibility vs. “AI doing the thinking for us.”* ([As ChatGPT faces Australia crackdown, disabled students defend AI | Context](#)) In practical terms, disability offices and faculty often have a discussion to define boundaries: e.g. AI can help generate ideas or check grammar, but the student must write the final draft in their own words. Teachers College’s sample policies explicitly list what AI can and cannot be used for, even for those with accommodations ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)). There is also a concern for other students – if AI is broadly helpful, should only those with documented disabilities get to use it without penalty? Some educators argue for a universal design approach (making such tools available in some form to all students) to avoid a two-tier system ([Prioritize universal access in AI policy response \(opinion\)](#)). It’s a delicate balance between upholding **academic standards** and honoring disability rights. So far, the consensus in higher ed is that if an accommodation is truly needed, it should be allowed even if others are barred – similar to how only certain students get extra time on exams. Faculty just want clear guidance on where to draw the line.

“Cheating” Detection Issues: Another practical concern is the use of AI-detection software. Some universities and instructors began employing AI essay detectors to flag possible use of tools like ChatGPT. Disability specialists worry that students who *have permission* to use AI might get falsely accused of cheating by these detectors. The Chronicle of Higher Education highlighted that if a student uses AI to *“smooth out writing,”* the work could *“get flagged by an AI detector”*, and *“that’s a problem for...students with disabilities”* who used AI appropriately ([How ChatGPT Could Help or Hurt Students With Disabilities](#)). A faculty focus group at one university noted that their institution explicitly warned **not** to punish a student for AI use if it is part of an accommodation ([Academic Integrity: Accounting for Students with Disabilities](#)). Thus, some schools are holding off on detector tools or giving faculty nuance: a flag is not proof – check if the student has an accommodation or legitimate use. This is an area of active concern, and it ties into broader questions about assessment design. If accommodated students use AI, professors may shift to assessments that are harder to complete with AI alone, or require process work (outlines, drafts) to ensure the student is learning, not just copy-pasting AI output. *Transparency* is key: disability offices often advise students to be open with instructors about what AI help they’ll use, so professors aren’t caught off guard and can adjust expectations accordingly ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)).

Skill Development vs. Accommodation: Some educators worry that over-reliance on AI could impede skill development in the long run. This echoes older debates about assistive tech: for example, does allowing a calculator prevent a student with a math disability from learning basic arithmetic? Or does it free them to tackle more complex concepts? Similarly, does using ChatGPT to help write mean the student won’t improve their writing skills? A minority of faculty voice concerns that *“there’s very little evidence of any long-term benefit”* from some technology accommodations, and they fear AI could become a crutch ([Higher education needs a mechanism to challenge student accommodations | Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#)). However, disability experts counter that accommodations are by definition meant to bypass the disability, not remediate it in that moment.

The goal is equal access to demonstrate knowledge *now*, and skill growth can be addressed through other support. In fact, some research is showing that AI-based support can *increase confidence and reduce anxiety*, potentially enabling students to engage more and ultimately build skills ([Dyslexia and artificial intelligence | BERA](#)). Disability services staff like Tom Webb (Wright State) also note that offloading mechanical tasks to AI can let them focus on “*counseling and human relationships*” – spending more time on career prep and personal development with students, instead of, say, arranging note-takers ([Why ChatGPT won't ruin writing class | WYSO](#)). This flips the concern: rather than stunting skills, strategic AI use might *teach new skills* (like prompt engineering, or how to critically review AI output) and allow students to concentrate on higher-order learning.

Data Privacy and Tool Accuracy: A more logistical concern raised by universities is the privacy of student data when using third-party AI tools. Some institutions hesitate to officially endorse tools like ChatGPT because they require inputting student-generated text into an external system. If a student’s work or personal information is fed into AI, is it FERPA-compliant? Does it risk confidentiality of the disability (since use of AI might “mark” the student as having an accommodation if not handled discreetly)? Universities like UCLA have cautioned faculty about requiring AI use for this reason – creating accounts on such platforms may expose personal data ([Guidance for the Use of Generative AI – UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#)). As an accommodation, though, usage is voluntary (from the student’s side) and ideally the tool is vetted by IT for privacy. Some schools are exploring **licensed or internal AI systems** for accommodation use – for example, developing an in-house chatbot that students with disabilities can use without sending data to outside servers. Accuracy is also a concern: disability services do not want to recommend a tool that might hallucinate false information and hurt the student’s work. To mitigate this, accommodations often frame AI as a support, not an oracle. Students are advised (or even trained) to fact-check AI outputs ([How ChatGPT Could Help or Hurt Students With Disabilities](#)). For instance, an accommodation might say the student can use ChatGPT to generate a draft, but then must verify all facts and add citations for sources – reinforcing that the AI is a helper, not the final authority. These precautions address the valid concerns of **trust and safety** in using AI for academic tasks.

Faculty Acceptance and Training: Finally, a concern is simply getting buy-in and understanding from instructors. When a novel accommodation like AI use appears, some professors may be skeptical or uncomfortable. Disability services reported that early in ChatGPT’s emergence, they had to educate faculty that *banning all AI outright could inadvertently harm students with disabilities* ([Prioritize universal access in AI policy response \(opinion\)](#)). Inside Higher Ed warned that the “*rush to resecure academic standards*” via strict anti-AI rules “*may create yet another barrier for students for whom...emerging technologies allow fundamental access.*” ([Prioritize universal access in AI policy response \(opinion\)](#)). They noted that those eager to ban ChatGPT “*would surely concede that accommodations may be necessary*” for certain students ([Prioritize universal access in AI policy response \(opinion\)](#)). This argument is helping faculty realize that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn’t work; some students legitimately need these tools. Disability offices are encouraging professors to consult them if a student asks to use AI, rather than reflexively saying no ([Guidance for the Use of Generative AI – UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#)). Many universities (like Columbia, Cornell, UVA, etc.) have put out guidance to faculty on balancing AI and accessibility ([TC Guidance | Digital Futures Institute \(DFI\) | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)). The **concern is evolving into collaboration**: instructors, technologists, and disability specialists working together to set parameters so that AI use is transparent and beneficial. Faculty training sessions (such as webinars and teaching center guides) now include sections on how AI can assist with universal design and

why some students might be approved to use it ([AI for Inclusion: Empowering Access Without Compromising Integrity | Digital Accessibility](#)). As a result, concerns are slowly easing into cautious optimism – with professors like Alan Knowles (Wright State) observing that once students started using AI for class tasks, his “*panic really subsided*” and he saw that they still had to put in effort and knowledge to get good results ([Why ChatGPT won’t ruin writing class | WYSO](#)). In sum, faculty are realizing that AI **doesn’t automatically “ruin” learning** and, used appropriately, it can be a tool for inclusion rather than a shortcut for cheating.

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