

AI Policy

for UniDistance Suisse

Version: May 2026



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1. Context and Scope

The AI policy for UniDistance Suisse provides institution-wide principles for the lawful, ethical, fair, and efficient use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across learning, teaching, research, and administration at UniDistance Suisse. It establishes overarching principles. Faculty- and service-level guidelines (developed by faculties and services) translate these principles into concrete procedures adapted to specific contexts.

1.1 Scope

The policy applies to the use of AI within the framework of UniDistance Suisse by students, academic and teaching staff, researchers, research-support staff, administrative staff, and contractors or partners having access to data or systems of UniDistance Suisse. It covers the design, development, procurement, deployment, and use of AI systems in institutional activities, including tools developed internally or provided by third parties.

1.2 Definitions

- **AI / AI system**
A machine-based system that infers from inputs how to generate outputs, e.g., predictions, recommendations, content or decisions, that may influence physical or digital environments. AI systems vary in autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment (based on Art. 2 of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence).
- **Public AI tool**
AI services not contractually bound to the institution under approved data protection agreements.
- **Institution-wide principles**
Binding principles that apply across UniDistance Suisse.
- **Faculty- / service-level guidelines**
Faculty- or service-level implementation provisions that concretise and operationalise the policy (e.g. syllabus clauses, IT procurement checks, research disclosure rules).
- **AI users**
All individuals who engage with AI tools or systems provided by or connected to UniDistance Suisse, including students, academic and teaching staff, researchers, research-support staff, administrative staff, and any contractors or external partners with access to UniDistance Suisse data, systems, or services.

1.3 Legal context

This policy aligns with the Swiss legal framework, which remains technology-neutral and relies on existing regulation (e.g. data protection, civil and criminal liability, labour law, sector-specific rules), interpreted consistently with international human rights obligations. It also considers relevant national and international developments, including

- the Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI¹ (signed by Switzerland), and
- the EU AI Act², whose requirements may (in)directly affect Swiss actors engaging with EU partners.

Where this policy imposes stricter safeguards than external regulations, UniDistance Suisse members must follow the stricter requirements.

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/the-framework-convention-on-artificial-intelligence>

² <https://aiactinfo.eu/>



2. The 5-Principle Policy

1. Human responsibility & verification

AI may support work and decision-making, but responsibility remains with the user. AI outputs should be reviewed and used with appropriate human judgment. The level of verification and oversight should be proportionate to the potential impact or risks associated with the use of AI.

2. Transparency & proportionate disclosure

The use of AI systems within UniDistance Suisse should be transparent. Where AI systems substantially contribute to the production of content, their use must be appropriately disclosed in accordance with legal, ethical, and academic standards. Minor or purely assistive uses generally do not require disclosure. AI is neither an author nor in principle a primary source, and sources must be cited where applicable.

3. Data protection & confidentiality

The use, development, deployment, or integration of AI systems with data subject to official or professional secrecy, data classified as internal, confidential or otherwise non-public information, including personal data and copyright protected content, is generally prohibited, unless specific safeguards are in place. More precisely, such data may only be processed through institutionally approved systems specifically designed to handle these types of data securely, provided a prior validation by the CISO and the DPO. Any accidental disclosure of such data must be reported immediately to the CISO and the DPO. Copyright-protected material may be used in institutionally approved AI tools provided the tools do not expose such material to users who do not have lawful access to the original content.

4. Ethical, fair & sustainable use

The use, development, deployment, or integration of AI systems must be purposeful, proportional, inclusive and fair. Users should take reasonable steps to identify and mitigate biased, discriminatory or potentially harmful uses of AI. UniDistance Suisse aims to minimise environmental impact. Lower-impact options should be preferred where reasonable.

5. AI literacy & support

UniDistance Suisse provides regular AI literacy training, including risk awareness, critical evaluation of outputs, limitations, and prompt fundamentals. These resources are regularly updated. Faculties and services foster the sharing of best practices.

Contact

ai.support@unidistance.ch