UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION TOOLS BY STUDENTS

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1. Introduction

1.1 The University recognises the potential benefits of transcription and translation tools for student learning and engagement. These tools can help students access information in different formats, facilitate personal study and note-taking, and support language development. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are making these tools increasingly sophisticated, enabling features such as real-time transcription and translation. Whilst these advancements offer new possibilities for learning and teaching, they also necessitate careful consideration of their ethical and responsible use by students within their learning experience.

1.2 It is important to be aware that these tools can capture (record) and share conversations without the knowledge or consent of all participants, raising concerns about privacy and data security. It should therefore be assumed that all transcription and translation tools possess this functionality, and their use in supporting student learning should be considered accordingly.

1.3 Teaching staff should note that some students may have in place a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) permitting the use of audio recording tools within teaching sessions. Where this is the case, teaching staff will have been notified in advance.

1.4 This document seeks to provide guidance on the appropriate use of transcription, translation and personal recording tools for both students and staff. It aims to balance the potential benefits of these tools with the need to uphold academic standards, protect the privacy of all members of our university community, and ensure their use complies with the University's *General Conditions of Use of Computing and Network Facilities.*

1.5 The University has particular regard to the importance of freedom of speech, and to securing that freedom of speech for staff, students, and visitors, so far as reasonably practicable. Nothing in this document is intended to interfere with the ability of staff, students, and visitors, to freely and lawfully express their views, in line with the University's duty under s43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 and the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

2. Definitions

2.1 For the purposes of this guidance note, the following definitions apply:

- **Transcription Tools:** Software or devices that convert spoken language into written text in the same language.
- **Translation Tools:** Software or devices that convert text or spoken language from one language to another.
- **Personal Recording Tools:** Software or devices that record audio or video.

3. Use Within Learning and Teaching Activities

3.1 Students are permitted to use transcription, translation and personal recording tools for personal study and note-taking purposes provided that they do not infringe on the privacy of others or violate the University's Code of Practice on Academic Integrity. This means that students can use these tools to create transcripts or translations of lectures, seminars, or other learning materials for their own personal use only.

3.2 However, students must obtain permission from the member of teaching staff before using any transcription, translation or personal recording device in lectures, seminars, tutorials, or meetings/supervisions in line with section 5.5 of the Code of Practice on Lecture Capture, which states:

> "*. . .students are permitted, should they wish, to make personal audio (but not video) recordings of lecture and other group-based teaching and learning activities that may, or may not, be recorded by other means. Students wishing to make such recordings must seek the permission of teaching staff prior to doing so*."

3.3 This is to ensure that the use of any such tool does not disrupt the learning environment or infringe on the privacy of others. The recording of another individual, be that staff member, student or visitor, without their knowledge or consent can be a breach of the University's Data Protection Policy. Teaching staff may prohibit the use of these tools in certain learning activities if they deem it necessary to protect academic integrity or the learning environment. For example, a member of staff may prohibit the use of these tools during a small group discussion to encourage active participation and engagement.

3.4 It is important to remember that whilst personal use is permitted with prior permission, the sharing of these recordings is generally prohibited in line with section 3.3 of the Code of Practice on Lecture Capture:

> *"Except where authorised by the University, recordings of University lectures (or other teaching and learning activities) are not for public consumption by any means. Such recordings must not be copied or passed on to anyone else, other than for transcription purposes."*

This means that students can use their own personal recordings, or those produced by Panopto, the University's lecture capture system, to create transcripts and/or translations, but those transcripts and/or translations should also be kept for personal use and not shared.

3.5 Students, and University staff themselves where they provide transcripts or translations of teaching sessions, are responsible for ensuring that the use of the tools to create them complies with all aspects of the University's Code of Practice on Lecture Capture and Data Protection policy. This means that any recordings made must be stored and shared securely, and that the privacy of all individuals is respected.

3.6 Where students are permitted to use real-time transcription, translation or personal recording tools during teaching sessions, they are responsible for ensuring their use does not disrupt other students or infringe on their privacy. For example, the real-time audible feedback from some tools may be distracting to others. Where the use of such tools is disruptive to the learning of others, teaching staff may rescind permission for their use.

4. Use in Assessment

4.1 The use of translation tools to produce assessed work is strictly prohibited as section A1.6 of the Code of Practice on Academic Integrity states:

> *"Rewriting or editing of text with the purpose of improving the Student's research arguments or contributing new arguments or rewriting computer code is not acceptable, whether undertaken by a person, by generative AI or by any other means, and may be deemed to be plagiarism.*
>
> *In particular, generative AI or other editorial assistance must not be used to. . .: Translate text into, or from, the language being studied."*

4.2 Students may use translation tools to aid their understanding of source material, but they must not use them to generate original text for submission. This is to ensure that all assessed work is the student's own original work and that academic standards are maintained.

4.3 Any use of translation tools in assessed work must be clearly acknowledged and referenced. This means that if a student uses a translation tool to understand a source written in another language, they must cite the use of the tool and provide a full reference to the original source.

4.4 Should a student fail to comply with these guidelines, this may be considered a form of academic misconduct as per the University's Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise. This could result in a range of penalties being applied.

5. Use in Student Conduct, Complaints or Appeals cases

5.1 The use of transcription, translation or personal recording tools is not permitted during interviews, hearings or other meetings relating to student conduct, complaints and appeals cases, unless a reasonable adjustment has been approved in advance by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) for a student. This is to ensure that the proceedings are conducted in a fair and transparent manner and consider all parties involved.

6. Accessibility and Inclusion

6.1 The University is committed to supporting students with disabilities and makes adjustments through its reasonable adjustments process to enable their full participation in learning and teaching activities. Students who require the use of transcription, translation or personal recording tools for accessibility reasons should contact the Student Disability Service. The Student Disability Support Service can provide advice and guidance on the use of transcription and translation tools and can help students to obtain the necessary equipment and support.

7. Privacy, Data Protection and Intellectual Property

7.1 Students must comply with data protection regulations when using transcription or translation tools. This means that consent must be obtained before recording any individual, and

ensuring any recordings made are stored and shared securely in line with the University's Data Protection Policy. No third-party AI transcription tools should be added to any Zoom or Microsoft Teams meetings without the prior written approval of both IT Services and the consent of all meeting attendees.

7.2 The recording of any individual without their explicit consent is strictly prohibited. This includes the audio and visual recording of lectures, seminars, tutorials, or any other University activity. Students must ensure that any recordings they make are stored and shared securely. This means that recordings should be stored in a password-protected location and should not be shared with anyone who does not have a legitimate need to access them. Subject to the consent of the meeting organiser and attendees, Zoom and Microsoft Teams meetings can be recorded with the built-in automated transcription tools used later.

7.3 When using AI-powered transcription or translation tools, students should be mindful of potential intellectual property implications. The output generated by these tools may be subject to copyright or other ownership rights, depending on the specific tool and its terms of service. Additionally, the content being transcribed or translated, such as lecture recordings or notes, likely belongs to someone else. The terms of use for the specific tool should always be checked to ensure any intellectual property rights are not being infringed.

7.4 All University staff and students have institutional access to Microsoft Copilot within Edge (for current staff and student access), a generative AI powered web chat tool that enables free access to GPT-4 and DALL-E 3 within a data protected environment. The use of Microsoft Copilot should therefore be prioritised over other generative AI tools by both staff and students.

7.5 Further information on the ethical and appropriate use of generative AI technologies can be found within the University's student guidance on using generative AI tools for work and study.

8. Related Policies and Guidance

8.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related Codes of Practice[1] and guidance:

- Code of Practice on Academic Integrity.
- Code of Practice on Lecture Capture.
- Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise.
- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.
- Data Protection Policy.
- General Conditions of Use of Computing and Network Facilities.
- Student guidance on Reasonable Adjustments.
- Student and PGR Guidance on Using GenAI Tools Ethically for Work

[1] The University introduced 'cohort legislation' in 2017/18. This means that the Legislation that applies to a student throughout their Programme of study depends upon their entry cohort, i.e. the year in which they started their studies. This should be selected accordingly.