AFTRS
Australian Film Television and Radio School

AFTRS & Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Creativity-first Approach

As the national screen and audio school, AFTRS delivers world-leading education that equips the next generation of Australian storytellers with the capabilities, craft and confidence to build careers that will grow Australia's screen and audio industries and shape our stories and culture.

The approach outlined in this document applies across the AFTRS community, including students, academic staff, professional staff, industry practitioners and collaborators.

This is a living document that will evolve and progress to meet the needs of the school, its staff and students.

As AI becomes increasingly present in contemporary creative and industry practice, AFTRS is committed to leading critical, ethical, practical and constructive AI use and engagement.

Our position is grounded in a simple belief:
Technology should serve human creativity, not replace it.

AI and Learning at AFTRS

As national leaders in creative education, AFTRS has over 50 years of experience supporting students to develop their craft and adapt to emerging technologies through a distinctive hands-on approach to learning. Our role is not simply to respond to new technologies, but to help the creative industries understand, evaluate and decide when to responsibly use them while preserving the central role of human creativity.

We continue to champion human-led storytelling and recognise our obligation as an educational institution to remain informed about available and emerging tools and trends that influence the screen and broadcast industries and impact the future of storytelling. AFTRS is committed to developing AI literacy alongside creative craft, ensuring graduates understand both the opportunities and limitations of AI technologies and can apply critical judgement in their professional practice.

In the spirit of inquiry and education, AFTRS embraces the need to prepare students to navigate a changing media environment, to encourage them to interrogate the use and implications of new tools and technologies and to ensure that human creativity remains at the centre of their storytelling.

Generative vs Assistive AI

Many forms of AI type and application exist. In broad terms AFTRS makes a clear and important distinction between two key AI categories:

- **Generative AI**, which produces creative content, such text, images, audio, code and videos – often from scratch and based on prompts – by learning patterns from massive datasets and generating completely original output that raises unresolved questions about authorship, consent, copyright, creative labour, bias and environmental impact; and
- **Assistive AI**, which is designed to enhance human productivity, supporting human work without replacing creative intent, by automating routine tasks, such as scheduling, transcribing, providing research support, improving accessibility and organising information. It responds to user input and does not operate independently.

While some usages of AI might blur this distinction, understanding the differences in the type and specificity of AI allows AFTRS to better protect craft and authorship while also embracing tools that improve access, inclusion and efficiency when used transparently, responsibly and ethically.

Clear Boundaries, Transparent Practice

Storytelling, authorship, performance and creative responsibility are fundamentally human practices. At AFTRS, learning is built on experimentation, struggle, collaboration and reflection. AFTRS believes AI will never replace the work of becoming an artist.

AFTRS draws a firm line between supporting creative process (Assistive AI) and substituting creative work (Generative AI) with an approach grounded in *human-in-the-loop (HITL) principles.

For example, Generative AI must not become a substitute for creative artifacts, including, but not limited to:

- scripts or dialogue;
- performances, characters or creative voice;
- assessment work presented as original authorship;
- core learning of craft, technique and creative problem solving;

- reflective practice.

Where AI tools are used by students in use cases including development, pre-production, look development (look-dev) or planning, transparency and disclosure are required, both internally (to AFTRS teaching staff) and externally (such as credits). These expectations are not only a measure of academic integrity, but also a reflection of professional standards.

Where AI tools are used by staff the same standard of transparent, ethical and responsible use is required.

All use of AI is subject to existing AFTRS policies and procedures.

For more detailed protocols on AFTRS' expectations in relation to student workflows, assessments and disclosure of use, see the Production Guidelines and Teaching & Learning Guidelines (currently being developed) and AFTRS policies and procedures.

Preparing Graduates for Future Roles

While hands-on learning and human creativity are at the centre of what we do and who we are at AFTRS, our curriculum will continue to reflect industry practice, embrace innovation and be future facing to ensure our graduates are best equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make relevant and valuable contributions in future industry roles.

This requires AFTRS to:

- build critical AI literacy alongside creative craft;
- support students to build adaptable skills to navigate changing industry roles and evolving entry-level pathways;
- prepare graduates with the skills and confidence to work successfully within AI frameworks and policies adopted by prospective employers and collaborators.
- develop a reflective culture that allows students to bring curiosity, and strategic and critical thinking to the use and application of emerging tools and technology.

AFTRS will continue to evolve its curriculum, skills and faculty expertise in step with industry developments – grounded in hands-on, human-centred creative practice for which we are renowned – ensuring our graduates are equipped not just to enter the future creative economy but to help shape it.

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Intellectual Property, ICIP and Cultural Authority

AFTRS recognises that AI raises particular risks and responsibilities in relation to:

- copyright and consent;
- Intellectual Property (IP) and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP);
- data sovereignty, attribution and cultural authority.

We believe AI systems must not use cultural knowledge or creative labour without consent. AFTRS supports approaches that centre Indigenous self-determination, ethical data practices and culturally-led frameworks for innovation.

Country and Environmental Responsibility

AFTRS acknowledges the general public and school community's concerns regarding AI's environmental impact. AFTRS believes these impacts cannot be separated from our responsibility to Country. In this context, AFTRS is committed to measuring, then reducing, the environmental impact of its productions, projects and practices, to continue to protect the land, space, and communities where we work and study as outlined in the AFTRS Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan (ESSP).

AFTRS as a Place to Lead, Not React

AFTRS sees AI not only as a regulatory challenge, but as an innovation and cultural policy opportunity.

We believe:

- Australian stories, data and creative labour are valuable national assets;
- in a supported, collaborative approach to developing government AI policies that centre ethical human creativity, self-determination and authorship;
- creative organisations should help define AI frameworks and not inherit them from global tech companies.

AFTRS is committed to collaborating with all relevant stakeholders – including policy makers, creators, technologists and ethicists – to help shape AI practices that serve culture, creativity and the public good, and to feed that back into our education practices.

AFTRS AI Policies and Guidelines

This document is supplementary to *AFTRS Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy*, which guides the School's responsible and ethical use of AI tools.

AFTRS is also developing guidelines to support the responsible use of AI across a range of potential applications across the School, including:

- Teaching & Learning
- Screen and Audio Production
- Corporate
- Marketing & Communication

AFTRS is committed to regularly reviewing its AI policies and guidelines to ensure they remain current, relevant and responsive to the rapidly evolving AI landscape, and that they accurately reflect the School's practices and approaches to AI.

AFTRS' use of AI is informed by the Digital Transformation Agency Policy for Responsible Use of AI in Government, industry needs, as well as directives and standards set by regulatory authorities for tertiary education.

References

* Human-in-the-loop (HITL): An 'AI model that requires human interaction. A human plays an active and integral role in decision-making, monitoring, and control in an HITL system. They are part of the loop that produces outcomes, and their input or oversight is crucial to the system's functioning.'
Digital NSW. (n.d.). Human-in-the-loop. In A common understanding: simplified AI definitions from leading standards. Retrieved August 5, 2026, from https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/policy/artificial-intelligence/a-common-understanding-simplified-ai-definitions-from-leading#anchor-terms-commonly-used-in-ai