

Guidance on AI Usage Within Submissions and Opportunities – Writing East Midlands – Oct 2026

Introduction

This document sets out Writing East Midlands' (WEM) guidance on assessing creative writing submissions that use Artificial Intelligence (AI). It applies to all WEM open calls, application opportunities and competitions, including the Mentoring Scheme, Aurora Prize for Writing, Solstice Nature Prize for Writing and *Pulse* magazine competitions.

This guidance does not reflect a general stance on the use of AI in creative writing, nor does it reflect the attitudes of individual WEM staff members towards the use of AI in creative writing, as we recognise the complexity and ongoing debate of this rapidly-evolving issue.

This technology is evolving quickly and WEM therefore retains the right to update this guidance as regularly as required.

Please note: This guidance does not apply to The Free Reads Scheme, which is managed by WEM in the East Midlands on behalf of The Literary Consultancy (TLC). As such, decisions made by WEM on behalf of TLC with regards to submissions to this particular scheme will be made based on TLC's own AI guidance, [here](#), and based on case-by-case direct communication with TLC staff.

Definitions

In this guidance, we are specifically referring to **Generative AI** (Gen AI), which according to this definition, is "a group of algorithms and models (including Large Language Models or LLMs) that are capable of producing entirely new content, including text, images, videos and strategies", such as ChatGPT, Claude, Grok, DeepSeek, Gemini and Grammarly, among others.

There is substantial evidence to prove that the original, copyrighted work of artists and writers has been used to train LLMs without their consent, without credit and without remuneration. We included an article on this subject in *Pulse magazine issue 5*. For more information on the impact of Gen AI on authors, writers and the publishing industry as a whole, including the role of Gen AI in the theft of creators' work, job loss and copyright infringement, [read this guidance document by the Society of Authors](#).

Human produced writing/imagery is defined as work whose substantive creative or intellectual contribution is made by a human rather than generative AI.

AI-generated work is defined as writing/imagery produced by generative AI tools in response to a prompt provided by a human user. We also include writing that was originally human written but that has had substantial portions rewritten using word-for-word suggestions from Artificial Intelligence to the extent that it is now significantly different to its first iteration. Creative pieces that include portions of purely human-written content alongside substantial portions of AI-written/AI-generated content are included in this definition.

Use of AI in Our Projects and Opportunities

Writing East Midlands is the literary development agency for the region and an Arts Council-funded National Portfolio Organisation. It is part of our mission to actively encourage creativity and provide opportunities for adults and young people to develop the skills to express themselves creatively. As such, we believe it is important that our schemes, programmes and competitions for which we take written submissions and entries, are in part designed to showcase the development of creative skill, celebrate the hard work behind developing that skill, provide opportunities to further improve upon that skill, champion writers who have put significant time and energy into honing their craft, and provide opportunities for creative expression.

We believe, strongly, that the writing/imagery we choose to represent and benefit from our schemes, programmes and competitions should be human produced/written.

However, as an organisation, we respect an individual's right to use AI as an access tool. As such, while the writing/imagery you submit to our schemes, programmes and competitions must be human produced, we will accept work that has used AI for spellchecking, proofreading or feedback purposes, as well as work that has relied on AI as a brainstorming tool or as an organisational tool (e.g. arranging notes or planning administrative tasks related to the work in question). If you are unsure if your work will be accepted based on your use of AI, please contact us via info@writingeastmidlands.co.uk.

Please note, while we accept work within our schemes, programmes and competitions that has relied on AI in the ways outlined above, using AI in platforms for editing, reviewing, and grammar and spellchecking will increase the percentage of AI generated content flagged in your work by our AI detection tool. Repeating this process will have an accumulative effect. See our *Reviewing Process* section and *Appendix 1* for more information on how we calculate the percentage of AI generated content.

Reviewing Process

When submitting your application or entry to one of our schemes, programmes or competitions, you will be asked **to declare if the submitted work has been written/generated by AI**. If you are unsure whether your work qualifies as being written/generated by AI, please see our definitions above.

WEM uses an industry standard AI detection tool which can detect the percentage of plagiarised content, AI-written/AI-generated content and humanised AI-written/AI-generated content per entry. Different percentage results indicate different levels of AI usage and therefore will necessitate different actions as set out on the table below.

Assessment	Indicator	Action
Low score of 0-20%	Very unlikely there is AI-written or AI-generated content in the writing submitted to our AI detection tool. Results at the upper end of this threshold are usually false positives or suggests low levels of AI usage, such as the use of LLMs to suggest prompts or brainstorm ideas, or for AI tools such as Grammarly to spellcheck the writing in question.	Does not require further investigation at this stage, unless something in your written statement requires further information.
Score of 20-60%	Stronger indication of AI-written/AI-generated content, especially at higher percentages.	Further investigation may be required, particularly if your written statement denies the use of AI in the work in question. We may ask for evidence. Please see <i>Appendix 1</i> to find out what we may ask for.
Score of 60% and above	Unlikely to be a false positive and tells us there is significant AI-	In the event your work scores 60% or higher, we will be in contact to ask for more

	written/AI-generated content in your writing	evidence. Depending on the evidence provided, we reserve the right to disqualify your work at this stage.
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You can find further details of our reviewing process in **Appendix 1**.

Disabilities, Neurodivergence and English as a Second Language

We acknowledge that disabled and Neurodivergent writers and writers for whom English is a second language are more likely to show a false positive in AI detection tools and may show a higher percentage likelihood of AI use even if their work is human written. For this reason, we provide the opportunity to produce a written statement, in which you may wish to state if you are a disabled or Neurodivergent writer or if English is your second language and have used tools to support your access needs so that we may take this into consideration. It is, in part, why we employ an investigation process to ensure due diligence and fairness during the reviewing process.

If you would like to ask any questions about our AI guidance, or if you would like to provide feedback, you can contact us via: info@writingeastmidlands.co.uk

Useful Resources

<https://literaryconsultancy.co.uk/ai-and-tlc-guidance-for-writers/>

<https://essays.uk/turnitin-ai-percentage-explained-for-uk-students/>

<https://authorsguild.org/resource/ai-best-practices-for-authors/>

AI and Publishing: FAQ for Writers | Jane Friedman

<https://societyofauthors.org/advocacy/protect/>

Appendix 1 - Reviewing Process for AI Content

When submitting your application or entry to one of our schemes, programmes or competitions, you will be asked **to declare if the submitted work has been written/generated by AI**, usually in the form of a yes/no checkbox. If you are unsure whether your work qualifies as being written/generated by AI, please see our guidance for definitions.

We use different submission software for different schemes. Currently this is Submittable for the Aurora Prize for Writing, and Duosuma for the Solstice Nature Prize for Young Writers, the Mentoring Scheme and *Pulse* magazine's open call. In some cases, the submission software we are using will not allow you to proceed with your application/entry unless you confirm that your work is not written by AI. If you have been prevented from entering/applying on this basis, or if you have questions about this distinction that the guidance definition does not clarify, you can contact info@writingeastmidlands.co.uk to discuss why you have been prevented from entering/applying at this stage and/or to confirm if you can proceed with your application upon further clarification.

Following this declaration, there will be a textbox asking you to enter a **written statement** detailing, in your own words, how and at what stages you may have used AI in your writing process, and whether or not any part of the text itself has been generated or written by AI, even if only a small amount. This includes using AI tools such as Grammarly (or an LLM) to check your grammar, spelling or flow; using any form of AI to generate prompts or ideas that inspire your writing and shape the direction of its content; and/or using any form of AI to provide feedback on your writing and suggest changes, among other uses.

Your answer to this question will not immediately disqualify your entry or application. We ask because we have found that the above uses of AI often trigger results indicating a (low) percentage of AI-written/AI-generated work in our AI detection tool.

Throughout the reviewing period of the scheme, programme or competition you have entered, we check for plagiarised content, AI-written/AI-generated content and AI-written/AI-generated content that has been run through a humaniser in each individual entry by running each individual entry through our AI detection tool as we read.

WEM uses an industry standard AI detection tool which detects the percentage of plagiarised content, AI-written/AI-generated content and humanised AI-written/AI-generated content per entry.

Different percentage results indicate different levels of AI usage and therefore will necessitate different actions.

A low score of 0-20% indicates that it is very unlikely there is AI-written or AI-generated content in the writing submitted to our AI detection tool. Results at the upper end of this threshold are usually false positives or suggest low levels of AI usage. This might include the use of LLMs to suggest prompts or brainstorm ideas, or for AI tools such as Grammarly to spellcheck the writing

in question. Unless something in your written statement (as mentioned above) flags to us a need for follow-up, a percentage indicating 0-20% AI-written/AI-generated content in your writing does not necessitate further investigation at this stage.

A score of 20-60% indicates a stronger indication of AI-written/AI-generated content, especially at higher percentages that may warrant further investigation, particularly if your written statement denies the use of AI in the work in question.

If your work has a result of 20-60% AI-written/AI-generated content, and subsequently progresses through to a later reading stage, we will first refer to the written statement on AI you submitted as part of your application. Following this, and particularly if you deny the use of AI in your statement, we may reach out to you via email asking for you to elaborate on your written statement, explaining any and all uses of AI at each stage of your writing process, and may ask you to provide further evidence that shows your work is human-written, according to the *Definitions* section above.

Your evidence could be in the form of early drafts (both digital and hardcopy accepted), notes used when planning your piece, feedback from your workshop group or beta readers, edits made by an editor, demonstrations of the different layers used in your digital design tool, photos of your artwork if it was originally a physical piece or proof of early concept, such as sketches. If you have used AI to offer feedback on your writing, spellcheck your writing, organise your notes, suggest creative prompts or brainstorm ideas, you may wish to include evidence of where you have and haven't used AI to prove that the writing submitted is human written (even if you have used it as an organisational, planning, editorial or idea generation tool).

Please also refer to the section on *Disabilities, Neurodivergence and English as a Second Language* in the guidance.

If your explanation and/or evidence is considered sufficient, we will let you know via email. The progress of your entry will not be impacted by this process, and competition judges and readers will not be informed of this investigation. If your evidence is deemed insufficient, we will inform you over email and your entry/application may be disqualified. Once this decision has been conveyed, we are unable to enter into a continued dialogue on the subject of your entry or provide feedback on your writing.

A score of 60% and above is very unlikely to be a false positive and tells us there is enough AI-written/AI-generated content in your writing for us to immediately investigate your entry.

Depending on the evidence provided (see above), we reserve the right to disqualify your submission. If you have paid to submit your writing (for example, to the Aurora Prize for Writing) and your writing has been disqualified on the basis of high likelihood of AI usage, we will not refund your entry and will not enter into a continued dialogue.