CELA Policy on Ethical Use of AI in Manuscript and Abstract Submission and Review

This policy governs the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for all abstracts and presentations submitted to the CELA Annual Conference, as well as full papers submitted to the Landscape Research Record (LRR). This policy remains neutral regarding the use of AI in the design process, planning process, or as a subject of research. However, any resulting research products submitted to CELA or Landscape Research Record (LRR) must comply with the integrity standards outlined in this policy. This policy does not apply to CELA internal operational documents.

This document was developed with the assistance of Tier 1 and Tier 2 AI tools (Gemini 3) to synthesize peer organization standards and refine the final text.

I. CELA AI Ethics & Oversight Committee

Led by CELA VPR and consisting of CELA research committee members and track chairs, this body shall create a tiered system to keep pace with technology. The committee shall:

- review current standards on AI Ethics;
- create, maintain, and update a standard for CELA submission for annual conferences and Landscape Research Record (LRR);
- make recommendations for an accessible set of standards, including disclosure, for submissions;
- empower track chairs and other reviewers with a reporting framework;
- investigate flagged submissions, adjudicate cases of misconduct, and finalize all penalties.

II. Policies for Authors

CELA utilizes a three-tier system to determine the ethical standing of AI usage in scholarly work submitted to Annual Conferences and LRR.

Tier 1: Permitted: Editing & Assistive Use

- Definition: Using AI for basic linguistic polishing—such as grammar correction, spellchecking, or refining the flow of human-written text.
- Policy: Disclosure is not required.

Tier 2: Disclosure Required: Methodological & Structural Use

- Definition: Using AI as part of the research process, such as structuring literature reviews, generating base-level design renderings, or assisting in writing code for data analysis.
- Policy: Authors must include a Mandatory AI Disclosure Statement in the “Methods” section, naming the tool(s) used and the specific tasks it performed.

Tier 3: Strictly Prohibited: Content Generation & Replacement

- Definition: The submission of AI-generated core arguments, "synthetic" data, or unedited AI images as original work. These situations include, but are not limited to,
    - **AI-Generated Drafting:** Using AI to write initial manuscripts from scratch rather than refining human-authored content.
    - **Outsourced Research Frameworks:** Relying on AI to develop core logic, methodology, and variables instead of independent inquiry.
    - **Data Hallucination:** Presenting AI-generated data or conclusions that lack support from actual evidence.
    - **Automated Results Synthesis:** Allowing AI to predict findings without manual analysis or verification of the interpretive logic.
    - **Fabricated Citations:** Including AI-invented references to non-existent papers, authors, or journals.
- Policy: **Content Generation & Replacement (Tier 3 AI usage)** is strictly prohibited for submission materials. While authors may use AI to gather reference materials during the initial research planning phase, this content must not appear in the final submission. Violations will result in immediate rejection of the abstract/article submitted. Misconduct records can negatively affect the author’s future opportunities with CELA venues.

III. Policies for Reviewers

Reviewers are held to the highest standards of confidentiality, intellectual property protection, and expert judgment.

- **Prohibition of Data Uploads:** Reviewers are strictly prohibited from uploading any portion of a submission into a Generative AI tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude). This violates the author’s Intellectual Property and compromises the double-blind review process.
- **Ban on AI-Generated Reviews:** Reviewers must provide their own expert evaluation. Using AI to summarize a paper or draft a review is a dereliction of duty. If a review is found to be AI-generated, the reviewer will be immediately dismissed and will face a one-year ban from CELA venues.
- **Mechanism for Suspected Misuse:** If a reviewer suspects undisclosed AI use, they must not reject it based on a "hunch." Instead, they must flag the submission for a Track Chair Audit via the "suspected misconduct" reporting tool in the portal.

IV. Penalties for Submitter Non-Compliance

To protect the integrity of CELA and the *Landscape Research Record*, the following enforcement measures are in place:

- **Author Minor Violation:** Failure to disclose Tier 2 use will result in the paper being flagged. The author has 48 hours to provide a disclosure; failure to do so results in an immediate Desk Rejection.
- **Author Major Violation:** Passing off Tier 3 content as original work is considered academic misconduct. This results in Immediate Rejection, a one-year ban from all CELA-affiliated venues for all listed authors, and potential notification of the author's supervisor (including but not limited to Academic Supervisor, Department Head or Dean, or Firm Principals).
- **Reviewer Violation:** If a review is found to be AI-generated, the reviewer will be immediately dismissed and will face a one-year ban from CELA venues, and potential notification of the author's supervisor (including but not limited to Academic Supervisor, Department Head or Dean, or Firm Principals).
- **Audit Rights:** The CELA Board, VPR, and Track Chairs reserve the right to demand "Process Proof" (e.g., early sketches, draft history, or raw data logs) to verify human authorship.

V. Enforcement and Appeals

Action Item: The CELA abstract submission portal, presentation notification emails, and LRR submission protocols shall include a mandatory disclosure section regarding the use of Generative AI. This should be implemented via checkboxes and a formal declaration.

Submission Disclosure: Please indicate the extent of AI integration and usage in this submission by selecting the applicable statement(s) below:

- **[ ] Assisted Submission (Permitted):** I have utilized Tier 2 AI applications or interfaces to assist in the preparation of this submission. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - Structuring literature reviews.
    - Generating base-level design renderings.
    - Assisting in writing or debugging code for data analysis.
- **[ ] Original Authorship Declaration:** I hereby certify that I did **not** utilize AI-generated drafting (Tier 3) for the core content of this submission. I affirm that this work does not include:
    - **AI-Generated Manuscripts:** Using AI to write initial drafts from scratch rather than refining human-authored content.
    - **Outsourced Research Frameworks:** Relying on AI to develop core logic, methodology, or variables in lieu of independent inquiry.
    - **Data Hallucination:** Presenting AI-generated data or conclusions that are not supported by empirical evidence.

- **Automated Results Synthesis:** Using AI to predict findings without manual verification of the interpretive logic.
- **Fabricated Citations:** Including AI-invented references to non-existent papers, authors, or journals.

Evaluation of Suspicion: CELA acknowledges that AI detection software is often unreliable. We use a "Human Suspicion + Chair Review" model. If a reviewer flags a paper, the Track Chair will perform a manual audit of the work's logic, references, and spatial reasoning before applying penalties.

Appeal Process: Authors or reviewers penalized under this policy may submit a one-page appeal to the CELA AI Ethics & Oversight Committee within 7 days of the decision. They must provide clear "Process Proof" to demonstrate that the work was human led.

(Passed. 03-17-2026 CELA Board Meeting)