What to Do Instead of Using AI Detectors

AI detectors are unreliable and can cause harm when used as evidence of misconduct. Faculty can better promote academic integrity through trust, transparency, and thoughtful design rather than detection tools.

Why Not Detectors

False Positives and Bias
Detectors often misidentify non-native English writing and polished human writing as AI-generated.

Opacity
Most tools do not disclose training data or accuracy rates.

Erosion of Trust
Using detectors can damage student–faculty relationships and discourage honest conversation about learning.

Institutional Alignment
Penn State discourages detector use and recommends open dialogue instead.

When You Suspect AI Use

Pause and Inquire
Start with a conversation.

Document
Document evidence of process, not just output.

Consult
Consult with your college or department's Academic Integrity unit or procedures.

Discuss
Frame it as a learning opportunity — use the moment to discuss ethics, attribution, and authorship.

What To Do Instead

Redesign Assignments for Transparency
Encourage students to make their process visible:

- Include process artifacts (drafts, notes, AI prompts, reflections).
- Design iterative checkpoints rather than single high-stakes submissions.
- Use AI disclosure statements so students can responsibly describe how (if at all) they used AI tools.

Foster Trust Through Conversation
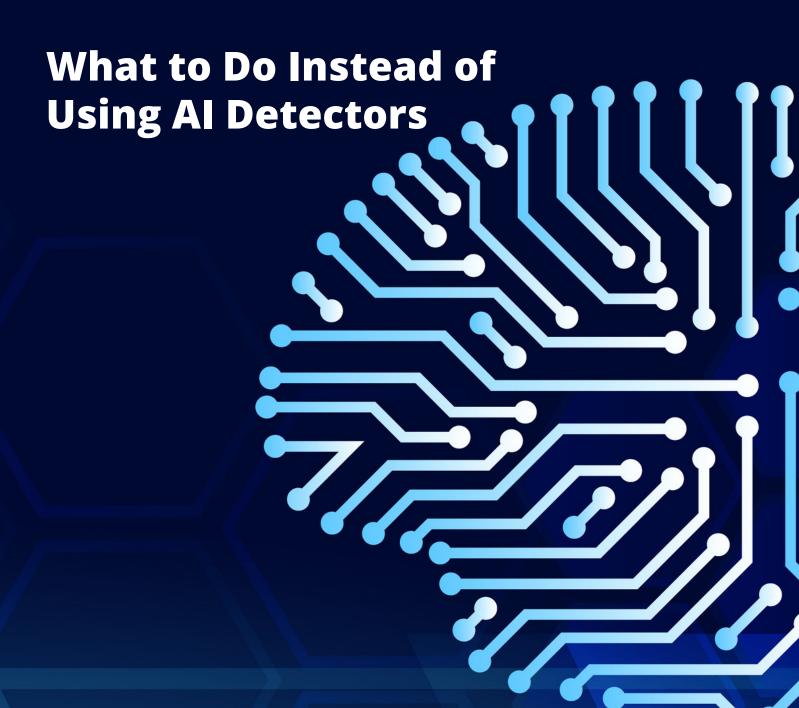*Open a conversation rather than opening a detector:*

- Discuss what appropriate AI use looks like in your field.
- Use "What was your process?" instead of "Did you use AI?"
- Emphasize curiosity and learning intent.

Build Explicit AI Policy Language
Provide clear, guidance in your syllabus:

- Define expectations ("You may use AI to brainstorm but not to draft complete responses").
- Emphasize why those expectations exist (learning goals, fairness, authenticity).
- Invite ongoing reflection as AI evolves.

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Selected References

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