Addendum: Authentic Assessment in Asynchronous Online Courses (GenAI Edition)
Guidance for MSU Denver Faculty

1. **Purpose and Scope**: This addendum supplements MSU Denver's Authentic Assessment in the Age of Generative AI guidance by focusing specifically on fully asynchronous online courses. It clarifies how the core principles of academic integrity, transparency, and authentic assessment apply in courses where students and instructors do not meet live.

   Asynchronous instruction introduces distinct challenges (such as lack of real-time interaction, self-paced workflows, and reliance on Canvas) as well as opportunities to design assessments more intentionally. The goal, however, remains the same: ensuring that student work truthfully reflects their own knowledge and skills. The strategies in this addendum help faculty uphold integrity and rigor while confidently adapting assessment design to the realities of asynchronous learning.

2. **Unique Challenges and Opportunities of Asynchronous Online Instruction**: The benefits of teaching and learning online, particularly in courses without scheduled class meetings, introduces unique challenges at the intersection AI and assessment:
   a. No Live Supervision or Q&A: Instructors cannot spontaneously verify understanding through in-class questions or proctor students in real time. This can increase the temptation or ease of unauthorized AI use.
      i. *Opportunity*: Instructors can proactively build in verification steps (like required video explanations or staged drafts) to simulate those check-ins in a planned way.
   b. Self-Paced, Unstructured Time: Students manage their own schedules, which might lead some to seek "shortcuts" (e.g. ChatGPT to do an assignment last-minute).
      i. *Opportunity*: Asynchronous courses allow flexibility to integrate reflective activities or iterative submissions that encourage students to engage continually rather than one-off, last-minute submissions.
   c. Reliance on the LMS: For most MSU Denver online faculty, instruction and assessment happens via Canvas where guidelines and expectations must be crystal-clear in written form, since there are no in-person reminders.
      i. *Opportunity*: Canvas provides tools (announcements, modules, quiz settings, etc.) that instructors can harness to communicate policies and design more individualized assessments (e.g. question banks for each student).
   d. Limited Personal Connection: Without face-to-face meetings, building trust and understanding around academic integrity can be harder.
      i. *Opportunity*: Instructors can leverage introductions, discussion boards, and feedback to humanize the class and underscore why authentic work is valued. Communication of this variety is a strong means for sharing how over-reliance on AI can undermine skill development or highlighting real-world implications of honesty in the field.

Understanding these factors helps in tailoring MSU Denver's AI usage policies (Allowed, Mixed, Restricted) to the online space, and in crafting assessments that remain authentic and fair.

3. **Implementing AI Usage Options in an Asynchronous Environment**: MSU Denver's framework defines three levels of generative AI use in coursework (Allowed, Mixed, and Restricted) which instructors select at the course or assignment level. In an asynchronous online class, the implementation of each option requires careful planning and communication. Below we outline practical strategies for each AI usage option in an online context:
    a. Option 1: Allowed Use: In an Allowed AI course, students are permitted – even encouraged – to use generative AI across most or all assignments. Key steps for online instructors include:
        i. *State Permissions & Require Disclosure*: Clearly announce in the syllabus and on Canvas that AI tools may be used on all coursework, with a brief disclosure statement for each use. For example, assignment instructions might say: "You may use tools like ChatGPT on this assignment. Include 1-2 sentences in your submission explaining what tool you used and how (e.g. 'Used ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas, then wrote the essay in my own words')." This sets transparent expectations that AI-aided work must still be owned and understood by the student.
        ii. *Model Ethical Use*: Provide examples (perhaps in a "Welcome" module or first assignment) of responsible AI engagement relevant to the respective discipline. For instance, demonstrate how to use an AI to generate practice questions or to get feedback on a draft, while still critically reviewing and editing the output. This guidance helps students see AI as a learning aid rather than an answer generator.
        iii. *Adjust Assessment & Feedback*: Revise rubrics and evaluation criteria to focus on skills like curation, analysis, and improvement of AI-generated content. Rather than grading only the final product, emphasize the student's process: how well did they incorporate sources or AI suggestions into original thought? In feedback, discuss their AI disclosure – e.g. "Good use of the grammar suggestions from ChatGPT, but be careful to put the analysis in your own voice."
        iv. *Include Verification Steps*: Even with AI allowed, incorporate small checkpoints to ensure learning. For example, after a major paper is submitted, require a short follow-up quiz or a reflection where students answer concept questions without AI. Alternatively, use the asynchronous oral defense approach (described below) to have them explain part of their submission in their own words. Such measures, which can be spot-checked, help verify that students aren't simply copying AI output without understanding.

    Allowed-use online courses align well with disciplines where using AI is a real-world skill (e.g. data analysis with AI tools, marketing content creation). The asynchronous format, coupled with clear expectations and reflective

checks, can turn AI into a resource for enhancing individualized learning rather than a source of misconduct.

b. Option 2: Mixed Use: A Mixed approach means AI is permitted for some assignments or parts of assignments and prohibited for others. This flexibility is useful but demands clarity so students don't get confused about when using AI is allowed. Strategies for implementing a Mixed policy online:
    i. *Define General Policy in Syllabus*: Explain upfront that the course uses a mixed AI policy, using the syllabus (and an announcement or module page) to provide broad examples of allowed vs. disallowed uses in the course context (e.g. "You may use AI to help brainstorm or outline written assignments, but you may not use AI to compose discussion board responses or exam answers". This gives students a big-picture understanding from day one.
    ii. *Label Each Assignment in Canvas*: For every assignment, quiz, or discussion, explicitly indicate its AI usage status. For example, include a prefix or tag in the assignment title like "[AI Allowed] Essay on Contemporary Marketing Practices in Hospitality" or "[No AI] Personal Reflection Journal," and reiterate in the instructions: "Generative AI use is not allowed on this assignment. Using AI will be treated as academic misconduct." Conversely, when AI is allowed, say so and require the disclosure of how it was used. Consistently using the same phrases and format in each instruction helps students recognize the pattern.
    iii. *Provide Rationale for Restrictions*: When forbidding AI on a task, consider briefly explaining why, to emphasize the value of authentic effort. For instance: "Discussion posts must be written entirely by you, because this exercise builds our learning community and lets me hear your personal perspective." If students understand the pedagogical reason, they are more likely to comply.
    iv. *Mix AI-Friendly and AI-Free Assessments Thoughtfully*: Common mixed-model practices include allowing AI for preliminary stages but not final submissions (e.g. "You can use AI to get feedback on a draft, but the final essay must be in your own words"), or permitting AI on certain low-stakes tasks but not on exams or personal reflections. Design the course schedule so that AI-free assignments test the foundational knowledge or personal insight (which AI can't easily fake), while AI-permitted assignments can focus on higher-order application or real-world simulation.
    v. *Monitor and Reinforce*: In an asynchronous setting, the instructor won't directly observe misuse, so set up ways to monitor compliance. Require AI usage disclosures whenever applicable and read them; if a student never discloses anything, that could be a red flag if their work suddenly seems beyond their ability. Additionally, periodically remind students of the policy (e.g. a mid-semester announcement re-stating what's allowed where). The consistency and repetition will reinforce

expectations and make it harder for students to claim ignorance of the rules.

By clearly compartmentalizing where AI fits into the course, Mixed-use policies in online classes can harness AI's benefits for learning without compromising assessments that must be wholly each student's work. The key is unambiguous communication and thoughtful assignment design for each case.

c. Option 3: Restricted Use: In a Restricted AI course, the default is that generative AI may not be used on any coursework, unless an assignment explicitly calls for it as part of the learning activity. This is essentially a "no-AI" policy for all standard assessments. Implementing this stance in an asynchronous course requires a proactive approach to uphold integrity:
    i. *Broadcast the Policy Clearly*: Make it unmistakable that AI use is prohibited. The syllabus should state that students may only use AI when an assignment's instructions explicitly allow it; all other use is unauthorized. In Canvas, echo this message in the course welcome section and on every assignment ("AI use is not allowed on this assignment unless specified."). Use firm language and link it to academic honesty (e.g. "Using AI content in your work is akin to plagiarism under the Student Code of Conduct") so the seriousness is clear.
    ii. *Design "AI-Resistant" Assessments*: Since students could theoretically consult AI at home, structure tasks that are difficult to outsource to a bot. Strategies include:
        1. Breaking large projects into smaller components submitted over time (topic proposal, draft, final, etc.), making one-off AI generation less useful because the student must show a process.
        2. Requiring personal or locally contextualized writing (for example, analyzing how a theory or concept applies to the student's own life or community). AI struggles with producing genuinely personal or up-to-date local content without the student's input.
        3. Choosing assessment formats that showcase individual understanding, such as open-ended problem solving with justification, case studies with unique variables, or multi-step projects where each step builds on the last. These authentic, higher-order tasks demand more than regurgitating facts.
    iii. *Introduce Verification Measures*: To further deter cheating in a no-AI class, include methods to verify student work:
        1. **Oral follow-ups**: For major assignments, have students do a brief recorded oral defense or explanation of their submission (e.g. a 5-minute video where they answer a couple of probing questions). This practice makes it "far more challenging for a student to submit AI-written work, since they must personally

discuss the concepts." If a student can't articulate their own process or reasoning, that signals a problem.

2. **Drafts and Version History**: Require students to upload draft versions or use platforms (Google Docs, Office 365 applications) that track changes. For instance, the instructor might ask for screenshots of the document's revision history or use Canvas's "submit a draft" assignment before the final submission. Seeing a natural progression of work (with edits, additions over days/weeks) makes it harder to present a one-shot AI-generated paper.
3. **Timed and Proctored Assessments**: When factual recall or basic problem-solving needs testing, use timed quizzes/exams with question pools so each student gets a slightly different test. Disable copy-paste if possible and consider using online proctoring or lockdown browsers for high-stakes exams.
    a. The Office of Online Learning and Office of Testing Services are available to support faculty interested in exploring online proctoring options. Please note, however, that online proctoring tools are expensive and are not full proof. Instructors are encouraged to evaluate their assessment philosophies and where more appropriate, to leverage the other approaches outlined in this document.
4. **Foster an Integrity Culture**: Emphasize to students why AI usage is restricted (e.g., to help them build foundational skills in writing or thinking without automated help) and encourage them to recognize the importance of solving problems on their own. By cultivating buy-in and understanding, students are less likely to seek illicit help.

Restricted-use online courses benefit from a structured approach: clear rules, intentionally crafted assignments, and robust follow-ups. With these in place, even without live monitoring, students are more likely to do their own work and think twice about using AI inappropriately.

4. **AI-Resilient Assessment Strategies for Asynchronous Delivery**: Designing AI-resilient assessments means creating tasks that still require substantial human thought and originality, even if a student has access to AI. In a fully online class, instructors can adapt many of the authentic assessment techniques from the main guidance to the asynchronous format. Below are concrete strategies with examples:
    a. <u>Recorded Oral Explanations</u>: Instead of a live presentation or Q&A, ask students to upload a short video (e.g. 3–5 minutes) explaining their submitted work and answering a couple of instructor-provided questions. For example, after an essay, a student might summarize their argument and respond to a prompt like "How did you apply a course theory or concept in your paper?". These recordings let the instructor hear the student's reasoning

in their own voice and make it difficult for someone who used AI blindly to fake understanding.

    i. Why it works: Even generative AI cannot yet impersonate a student's spontaneous verbal explanation with full fidelity. Oral explanations reveal conceptual grasp and deter students from submitting work they don't comprehend.

b. Version History and Draft Checkpoints: Build "process submissions" into major assignments. For instance, in an online writing project the instructor might require an outline in week 2, a draft in week 4, and the final paper in week 6. Or have students submit a project proposal, interim progress report, and final product. Encourage (or require) the use of tools that save version history (like a shared Google Doc). The instructor can even ask students to turn in an export of their revision history or a screenshot of the document's edit timeline as part of the assignment.

    i. Why it works: Iterative drafting makes plagiarism or last-minute AI generation harder, because the student must produce intermediate thinking. It also helps the instructor give formative feedback along the way. Sudden leaps in quality or style between drafts and final can alert the instructor to possible AI involvement, prompting a conversation or additional oral check.

c. Timed, Randomized Quizzes for Key Knowledge: When the instructor needs to assess foundational knowledge or ensure individual mastery of certain objectives, timed quizzes in Canvas are useful. Use question banks to randomize questions and even answer orders, so each student's quiz is unique. Keep these quizzes low stakes but focused on core concepts. For example, a weekly 10-minute quiz on textbook readings, with 5 questions drawn from a pool. In the instructions, explicitly state that use of AI or outside help is not allowed on these checks (this falls under the course's AI Restricted or Mixed policy for that task). The instructor might also require an honor statement at the start of the quiz.

    i. *Why it works*: Even if such quizzes are open book, the combination of time pressure and randomization means students must know the material, not just ask an AI. The results of these quizzes can be compared with a student's performance on AI-optional assignments: if a student aces essays but fails basic quizzes, it's a flag to investigate further. Moreover, these frequent checks keep students engaged and accountable on the content in an asynchronous class.

d. Personalized & Contextualized Assignments: Design at least some prompts that leverage personal experience, reflection, or up-to-the-minute context. For instance, instead of a generic essay question, the instructor might ask: "Apply [a theory or concept] to a challenge you've faced at work or in your personal life, and draw connections to at least one course reading." Or for a business strategy class, "Using this week's concepts, analyze a current event (within the last 2 months) and propose a solution." Because these tasks require details unique to the student's life or recent events, they are difficult for AI to answer well without the student providing significant input. Even if a

student tries using AI, they'll have to supply the personal specifics, which mitigates the advantage and tends to expose superficial answers.
    i. *Why it works*: AI text is often generic. When students must incorporate specific personal or local details, the authenticity of their responses increases, and it's easier for the instructor to detect if something feels off-topic or impersonal. Additionally, students often find these assignments more engaging, as they connect course content to their own context.

e. Reflective Journals and Self-Assessments: Have students maintain a regular reflection journal or periodic self-assessment throughout the course. For example, after each module or major assignment, the student writes a short entry about what they learned, which strategies they used, what they found challenging, and whether they used any tools (including AI) to assist. The instructor can keep these private (between each student and the instructor) to encourage honesty. If AI use is allowed, this is where they could openly discuss how it helped or didn't help; if AI is not allowed, it serves as a space for them to reinforce doing the work themselves.
    i. *Why it works*: Reflection makes students more aware of their own learning process and study habits. It's hard to delegate a personal learning reflection to ChatGPT without it ringing hollow or generic. These entries also give the instructor insight into whether students truly understand the material (and whether they are relying on AI in problematic ways). As a bonus, reflective practice bolsters metacognition, helping students become more self-sufficient learners.

f. Asynchronous Discussions with Accountability: Online discussions are a staple of asynchronous courses. To keep them genuine, set expectations that posts and replies should be in the student's own voice (unless the instructor explicitly allows AI for, say, idea generation). Consider requiring a mix of media: for example, a written post and a 1-minute audio or video comment to a peer, explaining their feedback or perspective. A student's spoken explanations or even their tone can often reveal whether they truly grappled with the topic.
    i. *Why it works*: Combining text and voice discourages fully AI-generated participation: a student might use AI to draft a written post, but they will then have to internalize it to discuss it out loud. Additionally, hearing each other can build community and trust. If AI is disallowed in discussions, make sure to state that clearly and remind students that the purpose is to learn from each other, which only works if everyone shares authentic thoughts.

Each of these strategies can be mixed and matched. The overarching idea is to create a course environment where using AI unethically is more trouble than it's worth. By requiring students to show their thinking in multiple ways and at multiple points in time, we preserve academic honesty and ensure assessments measure real skills and knowledge, not just prompt engineering.

5. **Communicating AI Expectations to Online Students**: Clear communication is critical in an asynchronous class. Students should never be unsure about whether they can use AI on an assignment. Here are strategies for setting and conveying AI expectations:
    a. Put the Policy Everywhere: Don't hide the AI policy in the syllabus fine print. Surface it in multiple locations on the Canvas course and materials. Additionally, for every major assignment or quiz, state the AI allowance (Allowed/Mixed/Restricted) in the instructions.
    b. Use Consistent Terminology: MSU Denver's guidance provides common terms for AI use levels (Allowed, Mixed, Restricted) and expectations like "disclosure statement" etc. Use this shared language so that students encounter a consistent message across courses. For instance, if the syllabus says, "AI use is allowed with disclosure," an assignment shouldn't call it something different like "AI-assisted draft" without explanation. Consistency prevents confusion and sends a unified signal about MSU Denver's academic standards.
    c. Explicit Instructions per Task: Especially under a Mixed model, never assume students will infer whether AI is okay; tell them for each activity. A best practice is to add a line in bold at the top or bottom of assignment descriptions such as: "AI Tools Permitted: Yes, you may use AI on this assignment (with citation in your notes)" or "AI Tools Permitted: No, do not use ChatGPT or other AI on this assignment." Maybe create a simple icon system (e.g. a green checkmark for AI-allowed tasks and a red stop sign for AI-prohibited tasks) to visually cue students.
    d. Syllabus Spectrum Language: MSU Denver's Generative AI Taskforce (GAIT) Generative AI Syllabus Language and Considerations document provides sample wording for different AI policies. The instructor can adopt those short or detailed statements in the syllabus to set the tone. For example, an Allowed-use syllabus might say, "Students may use generative AI in any assignment in this course, as long as its use is cited/explained". A Restricted-use syllabus might state, "Students should not use generative AI tools for any coursework unless an assignment explicitly calls for it. Unapproved use will be treated as academic dishonesty."
    e. Explain the "Why" to Students: Students are more likely to respect the AI rules if they understand the reasoning. Take a moment in a welcome video or a syllabus note to explain. For instance, "I want you to practice using AI as a brainstorming partner on some projects, because that's how it's done in industry (Allowed use). But on our exams and personal reflections, I need to see your individual understanding with no outside assistance (Restricted use on those tasks)." Or "This course focuses on developing your own writing voice, so we'll do most work without AI help, this way, you can confidently say the work is yours." By articulating the pedagogical rationale, the value of authentic learning is underscored.
    f. Set Up an Acknowledgment or Quiz: To ensure students have read and understood the AI policy, the instructor can create a short quiz or pledge in the first week. For example, a quiz question might be: "According to the syllabus, can you use Microsoft Copilot to help on the final project?". If they

answer incorrectly, direct them to review the policy and retry. Alternatively, have them sign an academic integrity pledge that includes AI use clauses.

g. Maintain an Open Dialogue: Invite questions and remind students that if they're ever unsure about using a tool, they should ask the instructor for clarification. In an asynchronous class, the instructor might not get those questions unless explicitly encouraged; thus, consider having a "Course Questions" discussion board or an anonymous form for students to submit concerns about things like AI use. Promptly address any queries (e.g., "A student asked if using Grammarly is considered AI. In our class, it's allowed for proofreading but remember that higher-level content generation is not."). This ongoing communication can preempt misunderstandings and catch issues early.
h. Reiterate Integrity and Consequences: Throughout the semester, tie the course AI policy back to academic integrity. For instance, when a big assignment is coming up, post an announcement reminding, "As a heads-up, using any unapproved AI on this project would violate the academic integrity policy and our class rules. I trust you to do your own work as it's the best way to learn!". Be sure students know the consequences (e.g., receiving a zero, being reported for misconduct) in case they violate the policy. Knowing that the instructor is vigilant can deter would-be cheaters and emphasize trust and the educational reasons: it's about learning, not just punishment.

By communicating clearly, consistently, and frequently, the instructor creates a shared understanding with online students about AI. In the absence of face-to-face reminders, the Canvas course itself becomes the voice of the policy – so let that voice be prominent and unequivocal.

6. **Upholding Core Principles in the Online Environment**: As we integrate these addendum strategies, remember that they all serve our core teaching principles: Academic Integrity, Transparency, and Authentic Assessment. Like any learning modality, in an online asynchronous setting, upholding these principles is crucial.
    a. Academic Integrity: All the approaches above aim to cultivate a culture where students value honesty and submit work that is truly their own. By designing assessments that are difficult to game and by clearly defining unauthorized AI use as misconduct, faculty protect the integrity of their online classrooms. This not only preserves fairness but also ensures students acquire the knowledge and skills the assignments are meant to develop. We want our online learners to emerge with genuine competence, not just well-crafted AI outputs.
    b. Transparency: In the online world, transparency of expectations is half the battle. Students can't read our body language or impromptu reminders, so we must explicitly lay out what is allowed, what isn't, and why. This addendum's recommendations are about being transparent and unambiguous. When students know exactly where the lines are drawn, they are empowered to make good decisions and cannot claim confusion as an excuse for misconduct. Transparency builds trust: students can see that the instructor has a fair plan for AI use and isn't changing rules on a whim.

c. Authentic Assessment: The move to authentic, AI-resilient tasks is a pedagogical win-win. We're not just preventing cheating; we're giving students meaningful work that simulates real-life applications and requires personal input. In an asynchronous course, authentic assessments (like projects tied to a student's experience, or collaborative case studies, or iterative research proposals) keep students engaged and make cheating with AI less attractive or fruitful. These tasks encourage higher order thinking and creativity, qualities that a copied AI answer simply can't demonstrate.

In conclusion, asynchronous online courses can successfully incorporate MSU Denver's generative AI guidelines by intentionally addressing the lack of live interaction with smart design and clear communication. Faculty should feel empowered to experiment with these strategies and share what works in their disciplines. As generative AI evolves, maintaining academic integrity will be an ongoing challenge, but also an opportunity to innovate how and what we assess.

By staying committed to transparency and authenticity, and by using tools like AI thoughtfully within a pedagogical framework, we can create online learning environments that uphold the highest standards of honesty while preparing students for an AI-enhanced world.