Safe and effective AI at ATU

Copilot, ChatGPT and Claude, for heads of department

School of Business, ATU Sligo
Prompting, your inbox, your voice, and agents of your own

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1 Which tool, for which work

Pick the tool by the data first, then by the brand.

What you're working on	Use
Anything with ATU in it: your inbox, staff, departments, internal plans	Copilot, on your ATU login. Enterprise data protection applies and your chats don't train the models.
Public or made-up material: a generic slide outline, a published topic	Any of the three
Anything with a student in it: names, ID numbers, work, marks	None of them

What each is best at

Tool	Best at
Copilot	Your inbox, your ATU files, anything with ATU in it
ChatGPT	General drafting, images, slides, a second opinion
Claude	Long documents, careful writing, slides and files to download

Using ChatGPT or Claude? Switch training off first

On personal accounts, both use your chats to train their models unless you turn it off.
ChatGPT: Settings, Data controls, switch off *Improve the model for everyone*.
Claude: Settings, Privacy, switch off *Help improve Claude*.

> **No link, it's a guess.** Every tool can invent a reference that looks completely real. If it gave you a link, open it and read the page. In ChatGPT or Claude, ask it to search the web and give a link for every source.

2 Prompting

The more it knows, the better the answer. You don't need all five blocks every time.

The Golden Rule

End every prompt with: *"Before you start, ask me anything you need."* Instead of you guessing what to include, it tells you what it needs.

Block	What it means
Role	Who it acts as. "My assistant in a head of department role."
Task	What you want, in one sentence. "Draft a reply to this email."
Context	What it needs to know: who it's to, the background, any limits
Format	How it comes back. "Under 120 words." "Three bullet points."
Tone	How it sounds. "Warm but clear."

Putting it together

```
You're helping me, a head of department in the School of Business.
Draft a reply to the email below from a lecturer asking to move an exam date.
The Exams Office sets the timetable. I can't approve it, but I'll pass it on with my support.
A short email, under 120 words.
Warm but clear. No promises I can't keep.
Before you start, ask me anything you need.

[paste the email here]
```

Brackets like [this] are blanks for you to fill in. Everything else you can copy as it is.

3 Your inbox

Open the Copilot pane in the new Outlook or Outlook on the web. It sees your mail, calendar and meetings, and only what your login already lets you see. It won't send anything for you.

#	Job	Prompt
1	Catch up	Summarise last week's email. List what needs a reply, with deadlines, most urgent first. Skip newsletters.
2	Find	Find my emails about [topic] from the last [two weeks].
3	Summarise a thread	Summarise this thread. What was decided, and what's still open?
4	Draft a reply	Draft a reply to this. Ask me anything you need first.
5	Get ready	What do I need to know before [Thursday's department meeting]?
6	Flag	Flag the unread emails from [the Head of Faculty].
7	Book time	Set up 30 minutes with [colleague] next week about [topic].

Copy it across. Copilot drafts in the side pane. Copy the draft, select Reply, paste, and read it before you send. If it gives you a date, check it against the original email.

Save prompt 1 and run it every Monday. After sending it, hover over your prompt and select Save prompt.

4 Your voice guide

A short set of rules that describes how you write, built from emails you've already sent. Do it in Copilot Chat on your ATU login, because your emails are ATU content.

#	Step	What to do
1	Gather	Paste 5 to 10 emails you've sent into one Word document and save it to your OneDrive. Take out any student names or details.
2	Attach	In Copilot Chat, type / and pick the document, or use + to upload it.
3	Paste	Paste the prompt below and send it. Answer its questions.
4	Save	Type: "Remember this about how I write." Then save the guide as a Word document called My voice guide in your OneDrive, ready for your email assistant.

```
I want a voice guide for how I write emails, so you can draft in my voice from now on.

I've attached [5 to 10] emails I've sent. I've taken out any student names or details.

Also use anything you already know about me and how I write, from your memory or our earlier chats.
Where that and the emails don't match, ask me which is right.

Study how I write, not how people in my role tend to write. Look at:
- how I open and close
- sentence length
- how formal I am, and how that shifts with who I'm writing to (senior colleagues, my own staff,
external people)
- words and phrases I use often, and ones I never use
- how I ask for things, chase, say no and give bad news
- when I use bullet points

Write the guide as clear rules, under 300 words, with two or three short examples quoting my own
phrases. Where I'm inconsistent, say so rather than smoothing it over.

Before you start, ask me anything you need.
```

The same prompt works in ChatGPT or Claude for writing that has nothing to do with ATU.

5 Your email assistant

An agent is a saved assistant with a job description: you brief it once, and every chat with it starts already briefed. Built from instructions alone, it's free on your licence. It can't read your inbox: you paste an email in and copy the draft back into Outlook. Test it on one real email, and don't send.

Field	What to put
Where	Copilot Chat, Create agent, then the Configure tab. Paste there, not in the chat builder, which rewrites what you give it.
Name	My Email Assistant
Instructions	The block below, exactly as it is. Nothing to fill in: it asks you
Knowledge	Leave empty. That keeps it free
Starter prompts	The six at the end of the block

```
You are an email assistant for a head of department in the School of Business at ATU (Atlantic
Technological University).

BEFORE YOU START
At the start of every new chat, before you draft anything, ask me in one short list:
1. My name and my department.
2. Who I write to most (for example, my own lecturers, the Head of Faculty, admin colleagues,
external partners).
3. To attach my voice guide: I'll type / and pick it from my OneDrive, or paste it in. If I don't
have one, ask me three quick questions about how I like my emails to sound.
If you already know any of these from your memory or earlier in this chat, tell me what you have and
ask me to confirm, rather than asking again. Then wait for my answers.

HOW YOU WORK
- Follow my voice guide exactly, and match the formality to the person.
- Before drafting, ask me what you need: who it's to, what I want to happen, any dates or facts you
don't have. Ask in one short list, then wait.
- When I paste an email I've received, tell me in one line what it's asking before you draft.
- Never invent facts, dates, names, policies or commitments. Put anything missing in [square
brackets] and point it out.
- Keep emails under 150 words unless I ask for more.
- Give me one draft, not several, unless I ask for options.
- End every draft with one line: anything I should check before I send it.

WHAT YOU NEVER DO
- Never include student names, ID numbers, marks or feedback. If I paste any, tell me to take them
out.
- Never say I've approved or agreed to something unless I've told you I have.
- No filler or flattery unless my voice guide uses it.

STARTER PROMPTS
- Set me up: ask me what you need to know first.
- Draft a reply to this email: [paste]
- Write a polite chase-up to [who] about [what], first asked on [date].
- Help me say no to this, kindly: [paste]
- Hand this task to [colleague] with what they need to know: [notes]
- Turn these notes into a short update for the Head of Faculty: [notes]
```

6 More agents, and skills

Once you've built one agent, the next one is quicker. All four of these can be built from instructions alone, so they stay free.

Agent	What it does
Meeting minutes	Rough notes in, minutes and an action list out
Report compiler	Merges department returns into one monthly update
New staff guide	Answers a new lecturer's first-month questions
Board prep	Summarises papers you paste and lists the decisions needed

Start any agent like this

Let Copilot interview you first. Paste this into Copilot Chat, then paste what it writes into the Configure tab.

```
I want to build a Copilot agent that [does this job]. Before we write anything, interview me one question at a time about what you need: the job, who uses it, what I'll give it, what a good result looks like, and the rules it must follow. When you have enough, write the agent's name, description, instructions and four starter prompts, ready to paste into Configure.
```

Agent or skill?

The agent is the who. The skill is the how. An agent is a saved assistant with a role, rules and its own chat. A skill is a saved method for one task, which Copilot picks up in any chat when a request matches.

Build	When
A prompt	A one-off question
A saved prompt	The same question, often, and you start it
A skill	The same method every time, picked up automatically
An agent	A role you go back to, with its own rules

> **Skills are rolling out now.** They're arriving in Copilot Chat this month. In ChatGPT, custom GPTs retire on 11 December 2026 and move to plugins, where their instructions become a skill. One agent can carry several skills: use the simplest one that does the job.

7 Good to know

Slides

Copilot can make a deck, but it comes out generic and off-template. For slides, use ChatGPT or Claude with an outline that has nothing ATU-sensitive in it, then tidy the result in your own template.

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Turn this outline into a 10-slide PowerPoint for [audience]. One idea per slide, no more than four
bullets each, speaker notes under every slide. Before you start, ask me anything you need.

[paste your outline]
```

New in Copilot this month

What	What it means for you
Usage caps	Since 9 November, some features have limits Microsoft doesn't publish. The pop-up is a limit, not a fault. Its licence button sends a request to IT.
Skills	Arriving in Copilot Chat: a way to save a job you repeat, once.
A new look	A new Home screen. Notebooks are being renamed Workspaces.
Agents	Agents built from instructions alone stay free.

The checking is still yours.

It drafts, finds and summarises. You decide what leaves your outbox.