OCUL
Ontario Council of University Libraries

OCUL Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference

Background

In 2024 OCUL launched the Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AIML) Program, meant to explore and build capacity with artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in the academic library space and in relation to the OCUL Scholars Portal digital research infrastructure. While the program is scheduled to end in 2027, AI will continue to have a significant impact on academic libraries and will require ongoing engagement. OCUL's strategic plan for 2025-2029 includes the following strategy: "With a focus on ethical principles and responsible use, develop, implement and evaluate AI and machine learning solutions for library services."

Purpose

The initial purpose for the Advisory Committee is to advise and provide feedback on the AIML Program and its projects and to develop a longer-term plan for advisory and engagement with AI at the OCUL level.

Part of this planning would entail considering the need for an OCUL standing committee on AI, and assessing the long-term sustainability of current AI initiatives, including technical, legal and financial dimensions.

The Advisory Committee will provide guidance for current and future capacity building across OCUL member institutions related to AI, by serving in an advisory capacity for the AIML Program Manager and the AIML Program Leadership Team. This work could also include:

- Identifying and prioritizing opportunities for collaboration
- Surfacing ethical dimensions of AI deployment, including privacy, copyright, algorithmic transparency, equity, accessibility and environmental impact

Authority

The committee is advisory to the AIML Program Leadership Team and OCUL Executive Committee. The committee reports and makes recommendations to the OCUL Executive Committee where appropriate in accordance with the purpose listed above.

Membership

The committee consists of 8-10 people drawn from a variety of positions across the OCUL membership, including:

- Representatives from the OCUL Director or Associate University Librarian level (2-4)
- Representatives from OCUL-IR, OCUL-SPOD and/or OCUL-SP governance groups (1-2)
- Representatives from OCUL-CFSC or Collaborative Futures Subcommittees (1-2)
- Nominated library staff to ensure representation in other areas of library work (1-2)

Ex officio members:

- Scholars Portal Director or designate
- OCUL Executive Director or designate
- Members of the AIML Program Leadership Team (while the program is ongoing)

Additional Scholars Portal or OCUL staff may be invited to attend committee meetings.

Appointment Process

Membership shall be determined by the OCUL Executive Committee following a call for nominations. The Advisory Committee will comprise members with expertise drawn from a broad range of OCUL member libraries.

Term

The committee is expected to be short-term and to sunset by May 31, 2027. However, if the committee need persists beyond this time, a renewal or a call for new members is required.

Chair

The Chair is appointed from the committee membership and will be responsible for working with the OCUL office to schedule meetings and maintain SPOTDocs content. The Chair will also provide written or in-person updates to the OCUL Executive Committee, Council, and other governance groups as required.

Meetings

The committee will meet monthly for 1 hour, via video conference. Between meetings, committee members may undertake specific work tasks related to the duties and purpose of the group. Meeting agendas will be set by the Chair working in consultation with the committee and the AIML Program Team as needed.

Reporting

The committee provides regular updates to the OCUL Executive Committee and to the Council upon request.

Resources and Budget

The committee has access to the usual OCUL resources including SPOTDocs, Zoom, and staff support for scheduling and note-taking.

Deliverables

- Recommendation on future AI-related governance at OCUL
- Feedback on AIML Program/projects to the program leadership team as needed

Approved by: OCUL Executive Committee

Approved on: August 18, 2025