

Instructor's Guide: Creating Guardrails for AI-Augmented Assignments

This guide provides a structured framework for instructors within the Technical College System of Georgia to integrate AI into their curriculum while ensuring that critical thinking and core technical skills remain the primary focus of student learning.

1. The "Traffic Light" Policy Framework

Clarity is the first guardrail. For every assignment, assign a "status" so students know exactly where the boundaries lie:

- **RED (AI-Restricted):** No AI tools allowed. Used for proctored exams, foundational skill assessments, and personal reflections.
- **YELLOW (AI-Assisted):** AI can be used for brainstorming, outlining, or explaining complex technical jargon. Students must generate the final prose and analysis.
- **GREEN (AI-Integrated):** AI is used as a core tool for data analysis, drafting, or coding. Evaluation focuses on the student's ability to prompt, refine, and verify the AI's output.

2. Implementing the "Process over Product" Workflow

When instructors grade only the final submission, AI usage is hidden. To ensure learning, grade the *process*:

Step A: The AI Work Plan

Before starting, have students submit a brief note stating which AI tool they will use and for what specific purpose (e.g., "I will use Gemini to help me structure a troubleshooting guide for an HVAC unit").

Step B: The Verification Log

Require a "Fact-Check Appendix." For every technical claim or statistic, the AI provides, the student must cite a reputable source (textbook, industry manual, or official TCSG resource) that confirms the information is accurate.

Step C: The "Prompt History" Submission

Ask students to submit a screenshot or a link to their conversation with the AI. This allows you to see if the student is thinking critically or simply asking the AI to "do the work."

3. Assignment Design: "AI-Resistant" Components

Incorporate elements that current AI models cannot replicate effectively:

Component	Why it works
Local Context	Ask how a concept applies to their specific Georgia county or technical college campus.
Personal Reflection	Ask students to connect the assignment to a specific lab experience or a personal career goal.
Video/Oral Defense	A 2-minute video summary of their findings ensures they actually understand the material they "wrote."

4. The "Socratic Tutor" Prompting Guide

Encourage students to use "The Tutor Prompt" to ensure they are learning, not just copying:

"I am a student at [College Name] studying [Subject]. Please do not give me the answer. Instead, ask me leading questions to help me solve this problem myself, or explain the core logic behind [Concept] so I can apply it to my assignment."

5. Responding to Potential Misuse

If an assignment looks like "pure AI," treat it as a teaching moment. Ask the student to explain the logic behind a specific sentence or source. If they cannot explain it, the guardrails need to be tightened for the next submission.