

Best Practices for Copilot/LLM Prompting

Why It Matters

The quality of your AI output depends heavily on how you craft your prompts. Think of prompting as “programming with words” — clear, structured input leads to better results and a reduced number of calls.

Core Principles

1. Provide Context

- Explain the background, audience, and purpose.
- Example: *“Write a 200-word summary of this report for a non-technical audience.”*

2. Be Specific

- Include details like tone, format, and constraints.
- Example: *“Generate five social media captions under 100 characters, using a friendly tone.”*

3. Use Step-by-Step Instructions

- Break complex tasks into smaller steps.
- Example: *“First outline the key points, then draft a summary.”*

4. Iterate and Refine

- Start broad, then refine based on the AI’s response.
- Use follow-up prompts to clarify or adjust.

5. Leverage Examples

- Provide sample outputs or templates.
- Example: *“Here’s an example of the tone I want: [insert example].”*

6. Set Role or Perspective

- Assign the AI a role for better alignment.
- Example: *“Act as a cybersecurity analyst and explain the risks of weak passwords.”*

UVM-Specific Tips

- **Respect Data Policies:** Use your UVM account (look for the *Green Shield Icon* to ensure Enterprise Data Protection is enabled)
- **Verify Outputs:** Always fact-check AI responses before sharing.
- **Understand Limitations:** LLMs may hallucinate; use them as assistants, not authorities.
- **Prompt Gallery:** Save and reuse effective prompts via Copilot’s Prompt Gallery feature for consistency.

Common Pitfalls

- Vague prompts like *“Write something about AI”* → lead to generic results.
- Overloading with multiple unrelated tasks in one prompt.
- Ignoring iterative refinement.