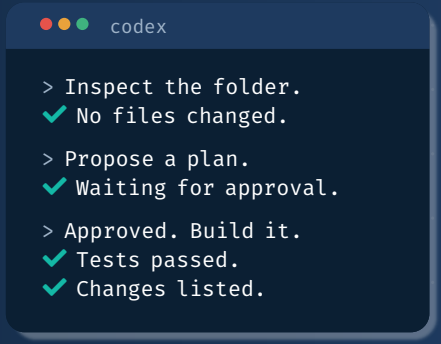
FACULTY WORKSHOP • 30 MINUTES

Codex in Academia

Teaching, research and administrative work with a coding agent



Dr. Usman Khalid
Associate Professor in Economics, UAE University

Think of one task you repeat every week.

Type it in the chat. Near the end, you will turn it into a short brief for Codex.

By the end, you will have one task ready to try

Understand

What Codex does, where it runs, and when another tool fits better.

Apply

Uses in teaching, research and routine administration.

Control

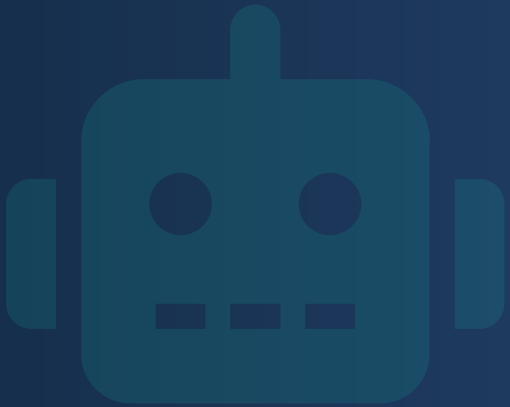
Keep data, permissions and final decisions with you.

1. What Codex is
2. Where it helps
3. Working safely
4. Practice

01

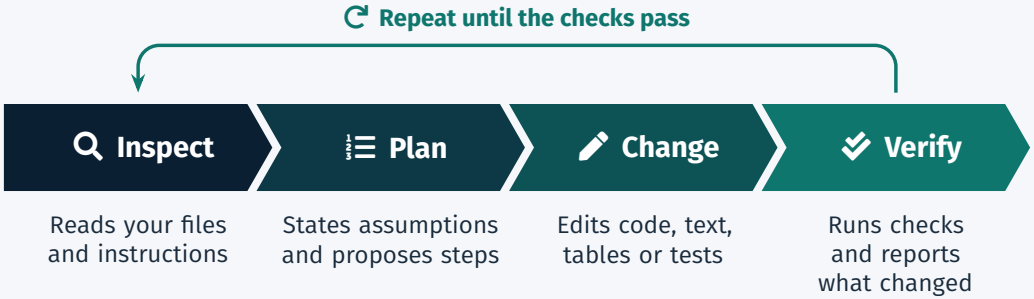
What Codex is

An agent that works with your files



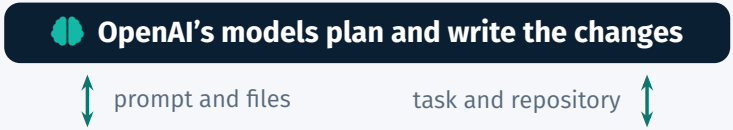
WHAT CODEX IS

Codex works in four steps you can check



→ **Show the work, check the work, and own the decision.**

Local or cloud, Codex relies on OpenAI's models



Source: OpenAI Help Center, *Using Codex with your ChatGPT plan*; ChatGPT Learn, *Codex Cloud*. Checked 9 Nov 2026.

WHAT CODEX IS

Use Codex for code and data, and Work for documents

Chat	Ask questions, search, brainstorm or get quick help.
Work	Research a topic, analyze information, or create a document, spreadsheet, presentation or report.
Codex	Write or debug code, run tests and commands, review changes, or work with a repository.

→ **Choose Codex when the result is code, data or a tested project.**

Source: OpenAI Help Center, *ChatGPT Work and Codex*. Checked 9 Nov 2026.

WHAT CODEX IS

Good tasks have a finish line you can check

Files

Code, data, a template, a rubric or a folder.

Routine

Steps you can explain and repeat.

Output

A script, table, figure, report or prototype.

Check

Tests, totals, a list of changes, or your own review.

→ If you cannot say how you will check the result, the task is not ready.

Your account decides the data terms

Edu or business workspace

- No training on your inputs or outputs, by default.
- Admins can allow local and cloud use separately.

Personal plan

- On Plus and Pro, chats may be used to improve models unless you opt out.
- Every plan includes Codex. Free and Go have no cloud tasks.

→ Use the account your university approves, and check its data controls.

Source: OpenAI Help Center, *Using Codex with your ChatGPT plan*. Checked 9 Nov 2026.

02

Where it helps

Teaching, research and administration



WHERE IT HELPS

In teaching, use Codex to make practice tasks

Exercise kits

A starter folder, a small dataset, and tests that catch common errors.

Debugging tasks

A broken script. Students explain the problem before they fix it.

Feedback checks

The same checks on every anonymized submission. You decide the grade.

→ Ask what evidence a student should produce to show understanding.

WHERE IT HELPS

Brief Codex like a teaching assistant

prompt

Context I teach an introductory data-analysis course.
Task Build a short Python exercise from this CSV, with group means and one clear figure.
Output A README, a solution, three tests and a rubric with four criteria.
Limits Beginner level. Use only pandas and matplotlib. Do not change the raw data.
Checks Run the tests, confirm the figure is created, and list any assumptions.

Then you review it

1 Run the solution

2 Try a wrong answer

3 Check the rubric

WHERE IT HELPS

Codex helps make research code reproducible

Before estimation

- Map the folders and main scripts
- Read the codebook
- Record package versions
- Plan the sample and variables

After estimation

- Test the key data steps
- Rebuild every table and figure
- Run the planned robustness checks
- Log each change and why

→ A result is ready when design, data, code and interpretation agree.

WHERE IT HELPS

Give Codex the research design, not only a command

Weak request

```
Run a regression
on these data.
```

Strong request

prompt

First inspect the panel structure and the codebook. Propose the estimation sample and the fixed effects for this question. Wait for my approval before you change any file. Then write a script that produces the table, run the checks, and report assumptions and warnings.

→ **Codex writes the code. You own the question, design and interpretation.**

WHERE IT HELPS

In administration, start with routine reports

Reports

Turn a monthly spreadsheet task into a documented script.

You get a script and a summary.

Data checks

Find duplicates, missing fields and totals that do not add up.

You get a list of exceptions.

Prototypes

Build a draft form, tracker or dashboard from a clear specification.

You get a working draft.

→ Use the minimum data, and keep prototypes apart from official records.

WHERE IT HELPS

Watch Codex inspect, plan, wait, build and check

1. **Inspect the files without changing them**
   Read only. Nothing is edited.
2. **Propose a plan for one table and one figure**
   Codex states its assumptions.
3. **Wait for approval**
   Nothing changes until you agree.
4. **Create the script, a README and tests**
   All inside the project folder.
5. **Run the checks and report**
   Assumptions, missing values and changed files.

03

Working safely

Scope, permissions and review



WORKING SAFELY

A useful request has six parts

1 Context
Course or project

2 Goal
The result you want

3 Scope
Files it may change

4 Limits
Tools and privacy

5 Checks
Tests and totals

6 Handoff
A list of changes

Save standing rules in `AGENTS.md`. Codex reads it before any work.

WORKING SAFELY

Codex drafts the routine work, and people decide

Fine to delegate

- File lists and summaries
- Formatting and small scripts
- Tests and error checks
- Draft documentation
- Prototypes of routine work

Needs your review

- Grades and hiring decisions
- Claims about evidence
- Official records and messages
- Personal or confidential data
- Changes that are hard to undo

→ Codex proposes. People approve anything with consequences.

WORKING SAFELY

Check data, permissions and evidence first

Data

Is this data allowed here? Remove names and IDs, and use a sample when you can.

Permissions

What can it read, change, run or reach? Grant only what the task needs.

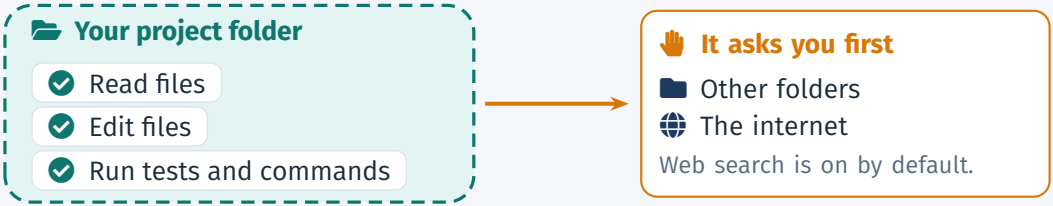
Evidence

Which test, comparison or review will decide if the result is acceptable?

→ If you cannot explain what changed and why it is safe, do not accept it.

WORKING SAFELY

By default, Codex stays inside your project folder



Files and web pages can hide instructions. Treat web results as untrusted.

Source: ChatGPT Learn, *Agent approvals & security*, *Permissions* and *Sandbox*. Checked 9 Nov 2026.

04

Practice

Try it on your own task



PRACTICE

Turn your weekly task into a four-line brief



Write, then share one brief in the chat.

brief.txt

Context I am preparing _____ for _____.

Scope Read _____. Do not change _____.

Output Produce _____ as a _____.

Check Run _____ and report _____ before I approve any change.

Pick one task

- Exercise or feedback
- Data cleaning
- Report or spreadsheet

PRACTICE

Ask five questions before you accept the output

Five questions

1. Did it use the intended files?
2. Did it follow the limits?
3. Did the checks actually run?
4. Can I explain the main changes?
5. Would I sign my name to it?

Keep a short record

- The brief you gave
- The changed files
- Commands, tests and warnings
- Your decision and open doubts

→ Work in a Git folder or on a copy, so you can undo any change.

PRACTICE

Start small, and make the checks repeatable



Day 1
Pick one low-risk task

Day 2
Write the brief and the limits

Day 3
Run it, then inspect and test

Day 4
Write down what worked

Day 5
Share the pattern, not the data

Departments can collect approved briefs and checks as shared templates.

Codex can make careful work more repeatable.

The judgment stays with you.

What will you try first?

Bring one task, its limits and its check. That is enough to start.

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APPENDIX

Product facts come from OpenAI's own pages

Checked on 9 November 2026. Names, plans and limits change often.

1 OpenAI Help Center. *Using Codex with your ChatGPT plan*. help.openai.com/en/articles/11369540
2 OpenAI Help Center. *ChatGPT Work and Codex*. help.openai.com/en/articles/20001275
3 ChatGPT Learn. *Agent approvals & security*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/agent-approvals-security
4 ChatGPT Learn. *Permissions*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/permission-modes
5 ChatGPT Learn. *Sandbox*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/sandboxing
6 ChatGPT Learn. *Custom instructions with AGENTS.md*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/agent-configuration/agents-md
7 ChatGPT Learn. *Codex Cloud*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/cloud
8 ChatGPT Learn. *Codex CLI*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/cli
9 ChatGPT Learn. *Web search*. learn.chatgpt.com/docs/web-search
10 OpenAI Help Center. *Understanding ChatGPT and Codex usage limits*. help.openai.com/en/articles/20001625

APPENDIX

An AGENTS.md file keeps standing rules in one place

AGENTS.md

```
# Rules for this project

- Never edit data/raw. Save outputs in output/.
- After a change, run: python run_all.py
- Ask before you install or go online.
- Log every change in CHANGELOG.md.
- Never invent variables, results or citations.
```

How to start

Use `/init` in Codex to create a first version. Then edit it in plain words.

Source: ChatGPT Learn, *Custom instructions with AGENTS.md*; OpenAI Help Center, *Using Codex with your ChatGPT plan*. Checked 9 Nov 2026.