The use of AI by students

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The aim of this document is to propose rules on the use of AI (in particular generative AI or LLMs) by students at IfKW. The main objective behind these proposals is to set clear rules on how AI may or may not be used by students. In general, the use of AI by students in assessed work (where permitted) should follow established academic values and norms such as originality, transparency, critical thinking, the citation of all relevant sources, reflection on potential biases, and ethical duties and responsibilities.

In general terms, we make a distinction between the use of AI to produce assessed work and its use to support learning more generally.

Bearing in mind the limitations of AI, AI is allowed to be used by students to support their learning, for example to clarify concepts for themselves, to generate questions for the students to test themselves based on their revision notes, and so on.

The rest of these guidelines concern the use of AI in the production of assessed work.

Whether use of AI is permitted for assessed work

For some assessments, teachers may require the use of AI. In other cases it may be encouraged or allowed and in other cases it may be forbidden.

Therefore, in general terms, the use of AI may be allowed in assessments only with the explicit permission of the teacher. If no explicit permission is given, then the students must assume the use of AI is not allowed.

The use of AI as (comparable to) plagiarism

To include AI-generated text verbatim — or with small changes — into one's texts without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism comparable to the use of text written by others without citing the source.

In their work, students are expected to demonstrate certain skills, including the ability to develop original ideas and arguments and put these into their own words. Students fail to learn and demonstrate these skills if they simply copy the output of generative AI applications. Even if a citation is provided for each fragment of text copied from AI output, a text may still lack originality if it is mainly a recombination of AI-generated text without a substantial personal contribution by the student.

If it can be established that a student has submitted work that includes a significant amount AI-generated text without proper attribution (see below), the corresponding assessment will be evaluated with the grade 5 (failed). In this regard, the use of LLMs is not to be judged differently than the undocumented use of other sources.

This also applies to use of generative AI for research instruments, stimuli etc. that are developed as part of an assessment.

Output may also contain verbatim parts of training data; in this case, not only the output, but also the original texts may be plagiarized.

The attribution of the use of AI

The use of AI (if permitted) in assessed work, including for preliminary tasks, must be completely and appropriately documented.

Attributing AI generated content that is publicly available online can be done in a similar way to citing other online material.

If the AI output is only available to the student, then this should be cited as personal communication.

In addition, students should document:

- How the tool was used in their work (e.g., generation of stimuli, translation, summary of previous research, formulation of research questions etc),
- the prompt, and
- if required by the teacher, the original output.

To cite scientific sources is almost always preferable to the citation of AI output.

Original authors do not receive credit for their ideas if their work is used for training and if only the output of AI tools is cited. Therefore, and because scholarly texts are usually considered the more reliable source, it is almost always preferable to cite such texts instead of AI output.

The uploading of material to AI systems

Material containing personal information must not be entered into AI systems without consent and unless German or EU standards of data protection are met.

Providers of LLMs may reside in countries where rules of data protection do not follow the same standards as in Germany or the EU. In such cases, it is unethical or even unlawful to enter material containing personal or potentially identifying information (e.g., interview recordings or transcripts, personal messages) into LLMs. If the legal standards are met by a provider, personal information must not be uploaded into a system without the explicit consent of the people involved.

Strictly speaking, unpublished or published material should not be entered into AI systems without the authors and/or copyright holders' consent.

Even if material does not contain personal information, strictly speaking it should not be uploaded to AI systems unless the authors and/or copyright holders have consented. This applies, for example, to unpublished manuscripts, published manuscripts that are subject to copyright, and publications published under non-commercial Creative Commons licenses, such as CC BY-NC 4.0.

However, in many cases, it is impossible or impractical to obtain authors' consent to upload their texts. Authors of published work may not object if the purpose of the uploading was to create a summary *as long as* their work (as input) was not further used to train commercial AI systems. Commercial AI systems that use authors' work as training data without their consent are 1) profiting from authors' work without giving them compensation and 2) creating systems that may reduce professional opportunities for human authors. Therefore, if you do decide to upload authors' work to AI systems without their consent for the purpose of creating a summary, make sure you do using AI systems (e.g. locally hosted) that do not use that upload as training data.

The use of generative AI for translations, the formal improvement of texts, and other tasks

Unless the emphasis of an assessment is explicitly on good writing, the practice of using AI to stylistically improve texts or translate them is generally less problematic than its use for the generation of text.

However, students must always check the results of such improvements or translations, for example, whether the output conveys the right meaning and is formally correct. The use of AI must also be documented in such cases. Similar rules also apply to the use of AI for coding.

When using AI for literature search or similar purposes, general-purpose AI applications can be unreliable and applications specifically developed for such tasks should be preferred. The results should be cross-checked (in particular regarding whether bibliographical information is correct and whether the output covers the state of research well) with other sources (such as textbooks or literature reviews, traditional databases and search engines etc.).

The responsible use of AI

Students must take full responsibility when using the output of AI tools. Any part of an assessment (including research instruments, stimuli etc. if developed as part of an assessment) based on the output of LLMs must be checked personally by the student.

Critical thinking remains one of the most essential aspects of academic learning, and students must demonstrate that they have critically engaged with all materials and statements they encounter in their work, whatever their origin.

The output of AI systems may contain factually incorrect statements (including non-existent sources), biased or unfair assessments, or socially inappropriate speech. Outputs of LLMs must therefore never be used in students' assessment without critical evaluation. This may include checks for:

- factual correctness (of claims, summaries of texts, citations etc.),
- fairness and potential biases (for example, whether previous research is characterized fairly or whether judgments are biased with regard to the identity of certain people, political implications etc.), and
- social appropriateness (for example, whether questionnaire items on sensitive topics are appropriately phrased or whether statements in a text are discriminatory).