

AI: Guidelines for students

This document is intended to supplement and not replace the document *LINEE GUIDA: Utilizzo dell'intelligenza artificiale (IA) alla Libera Università di Bolzano / LEITFADEN: Einsatz von Künstlicher Intelligenz (KI) an der Freien Universität Bozen* approved on 31.01.2025 and modified on 19.09.2025.

1 Introduction

1.1. Statement of intent

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), including Large Language Models (LLMs), represents a rapidly evolving set of technologies that offer significant possibilities for academic writing, teaching, and research. These systems can assist learners and academic and administrative staff in developing ideas, revising drafts, analysing text, and gaining insight into patterns of thought or expression. At the same time, GenAI introduces substantial risks relating to academic integrity, bias, privacy, accuracy, and data protection. The Centre for Academic Writing aims to support the ethical, transparent, and educationally meaningful use of GenAI by students and staff.

This document establishes expectations for responsible practice, recognising that AI tools are probabilistic systems that may produce inaccurate or fabricated content, may embed biases in their outputs, and must always be approached critically. Users of GenAI remain fully responsible for the work produced with its assistance and must be aware of the limitations of these tools. Transparency and clear communication about AI use are essential to preserve academic integrity and allow students, staff, and researchers to navigate GenAI confidently and responsibly.

1.2. Academic integrity

The use of GenAI tools falls within the broader framework of academic integrity. Any action that undermines the authenticity of academic work, obscures authorship, or misrepresents one's intellectual contribution may constitute a breach of integrity. Clear communication about permitted uses of GenAI is essential, and users must avoid forms of AI-supported work that diminish genuine intellectual engagement. This policy supports the Academic Writing Centre's commitment to fostering honest, rigorous, and reflective academic writing practices.

2 General expectations and principles

The overall approach set out in this document is based on key aspects found in the general unibz guidelines for AI, as follows:

- AI must be used responsibly
- the user of AI is always considered responsible for content created using AI
- content created using AI must always be subjected to prior assessment in order to verify – among other things – its appropriateness, accuracy, ethics and the absence of discrimination
- academic staff have the freedom to regulate the use of generative of generative AI in their courses
- personal or confidential data should never be entered into AI tools

There is a distinction between **instrumental** and **generative** uses of AI.

- **Instrumental uses:** when AI tools are used to modify but not expand existing content, offering a support function without having a decisive influence on the creation of the final content. Examples include spell checking, translation and text summaries.
- **Generative uses:** any uses of AI which go beyond those just described, including but not limited to generation of entire texts or paragraphs, generation of code, and the creation of full data analyses.

2.1. Understanding limitations, hallucinations, and bias

Because GenAI tools work probabilistically, outputs may be plausible yet entirely fabricated. Hallucination is a common feature of large language models, and it is essential to interrogate these outputs and understand where reasoning may fail. Users must therefore verify facts, check sources independently, and approach AI outputs with a critical and evaluative mindset. It is also important to recognise that AI models reflect the biases of their training data. Users must be mindful of how AI may reproduce or amplify cultural, linguistic, or social distortions.

2.2. Data protection, privacy, and confidentiality

Explicit caution is required regarding data privacy. Publicly accessible GenAI tools must not be used to process confidential, unpublished, sensitive, or internal data. Uploading such materials may constitute a breach of information security, intellectual property protection, or institutional data rules. Confidential institutional data, including student records, research data, or internal communications, must not be entered into publicly available AI systems. Only institution-approved tools may be used for materials requiring confidentiality.

2.3 Academic integrity and honest learning

GenAI must not compromise student learning or weaken academic honesty. Some assignments may prohibit AI use entirely, while others may allow it under limited conditions. Students are responsible for understanding what is expected in each course. AI should never replace genuine intellectual engagement, original analysis, or the development of disciplinary skills. Research integrity principles reinforce the need for transparency, rigour, and accountability when AI tools are used.

2.4. Reproducibility and transparency of process

Cloud-hosted GenAI tools are continually updated and may yield different results under seemingly identical conditions. For academic work in which reproducibility matters, users should document prompts, versions, and outputs, and should be prepared to make these available where appropriate.

2.5 Environmental considerations

The substantial energy demands associated with model training and the environmental cost of using large-scale AI systems must be taken into account. Users are encouraged to consider whether the use of smaller or locally run models may be more suitable for routine tasks.

3 Use of AI

Academic staff at unibz can decide if, when, and how AI tools may be used by students in coursework and examinations. They can permit, restrict or recommend the use of AI tools in different situations. They should communicate their expectations to students in advance.

3.1 Generative uses of AI

Students are not permitted to present AI-generated content as their own, original work. When allowed, and in accordance with the general guidelines on the use of AI issued by unibz (Linee Guida/Leitfaden 5.1, 5.2, 5.3), any generative uses of AI made by students in assessed coursework and examinations must be clearly acknowledged within the final product submitted for assessment, and sufficient details on exactly how AI was used should be provided. This includes the AI tool(s) used, the specific prompts used, and how the generated content was incorporated into the final product. When generative uses of AI are employed, academic staff must always be able to assess an individual student's performance in order to be able to determine a grade.

3.2 Instrumental uses of AI

It is at the discretion of the individual member of academic staff whether and which instrumental uses of AI are allowed and whether they need to be acknowledged or not in the final product. Given the importance of languages and language competences at unibz, it is to be expected that academic staff may wish to place particular restrictions on the use of automatic translation tools.

In the case of both instrumental and generative uses, students must always assume full responsibility for the content of any product submitted for assessment and/or during a course. This responsibility includes the obligation to examine carefully all content in order to assure it does not contain content that is discriminatory, prejudiced or contrary to the law.

The following table gives some basic guidelines about how AI tools may be used.

| Use | Permitted? | Acknowledgement needed? |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Basic proofreading (spelling and grammar) | Yes, but check final version. | Not normally but check with professor. |
| Reducing the length of a text to meet a word limit | Yes, but check final version. | Check with professor. |
| Initial idea generation and research | Yes. | No. |
| Automatic translation of a text or parts of it | Sometimes. | Yes. |
| Generation of content to be submitted | No, unless explicitly specified. | Yes. |

4 Declaring the Use of GenAI

Where required, users must include a clear statement describing how GenAI was used. A declaration should include the name and version of the tool, the date of use, and the nature of the assistance. The Centre for Academic Writing encourages students to adopt these practices in all academic contexts in which GenAI played a meaningful role.

5 Violations and Review

Misuse of GenAI, including the failure to disclose generative use, the uploading of confidential data into unauthorised tools, the fabrication of references, or the misrepresentation of AI-generated work as one's own, may constitute academic misconduct and will be referred to the appropriate university authority.