

Guideline on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Written Work at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Innsbruck

Valid from October 1, 2026

Preamble

This guideline applies to **all written texts produced** as part of the study programmes and courses offered by our faculty: doctoral theses, diploma theses, Master's theses, Bachelor's theses, research proposals, take-home exams, essays, handouts, etc. It also applies to images, graphics and tables by analogy. This guideline is intended to contribute to the development of a faculty culture regarding the use of AI. It is also to be consulted in cases of suspected breaches of the rules of academic integrity.

Lecturers may replace this guideline with **their own regulations**, subject to the applicable framework conditions, in particular: a) when AI is the subject of a course; b) when a specific use of AI forms part of an assignment; c) when a specific use of AI is necessary to achieve specific learning outcomes or research objectives. **Such deviating regulations must be documented in an appropriate manner** (course catalogue, dissertation agreement, etc.).

Should individual provisions conflict with higher-ranking legislation or more recent case law, the remaining parts of this guideline shall remain unaffected. In particular, the policy on [Artificial intelligence and the university](#) applies to any work with AI at the University of Innsbruck.

This guideline is to be evaluated regularly and adapted to new developments.

General considerations

The skills acquired and practised in our study programmes include the development of innovative research questions, targeted literature research, confident use of written and spoken language, recognition of academic paradigms, patterns of argumentation and false claims, as well as the ability to present convincing arguments. Anyone who delegates such tasks to AI applications becomes dependent on them and will not be equipped to form critical judgements. **This, however, is contradictory to our faculty's educational objectives.**

AI applications can be supportive, **but they cannot and must not replace independent intellectual effort.** Chatbots are not reliable sources for academic work. For fact-finding and literature research, academically curated databases (library catalogues, Index theologicus, etc.), encyclopaedias, specialist literature, source editions, etc. are indispensable since their content and methodological standards are transparent and verifiable.

The legal provisions on **plagiarism**, which stipulate that the work of others must not be passed off as one's own, also apply to the appropriation of AI-generated content ([see Section 2a of the HS-QSG](#)).

When using AI, attention must also be paid to the challenges involved in handling **personal data** (storage and further processing) and in managing the **Earth's resources** (energy consumption).

§ 1: Personal Responsibility

When using AI, students bear **sole responsibility** for the linguistic and substantive quality of their work. Our University's [guideline 'Safeguarding good scientific practice'](#) must always be adhered to in its current form.

§ 2: Generation of texts by AI

The use of AI-generated texts in written assignments is prohibited. This also applies if these texts are very short and/or are edited independently.

However, it is permissible to document and critically comment on AI-generated texts if these texts are the subject of research. AI-assisted translation and proofreading are also permitted in accordance with Sections 3–5.

§ 3: Translations by AI

Where AI is used to translate quotations or original texts from one language into another, **its use must be acknowledged**. Quotations must always be provided in the original as well (for example, in footnotes). Original texts must be made available to lecturers in the source language upon request; lecturers may specify which source languages are permitted. All translations must be checked independently and revised where necessary. References should be included in the work in the following manner, for example:

“I wrote this paper in French, had it translated into English by [name of tool] and revised the English translation independently.” – “I had this and all other Spanish source texts translated into English by [name of tool] and revised them independently.”

§ 4: Grammatical and stylistic correction using AI

If AI is used to improve **the grammar, expression and vocabulary** of self-written texts, the AI’s suggestions must not be adopted wholesale, but must be checked and edited individually. The original text written by the student must be retained and made available to the lecturer on request. **The use of AI must be acknowledged**. This should be done in the preface or in footnotes, for example:

“To check and improve the grammar, phrasing and vocabulary, I used [name of the tool] for this piece of work; I have checked all the suggested changes individually.”

§ 5: Spelling correction using AI

If AI is used to correct the **orthography** of self-written texts, **its use does not need to be acknowledged**; however, even in this case, the AI’s suggestions must not be accepted wholesale, but must be checked and edited individually.

A command of orthography is one of the fundamental skills required for academic work.

§ 6: Use of AI in empirical research

Working with AI applications in the context of empirical research constitutes a special case, for example for visualising data or examining datasets for anomalies. **Individual agreements** must be drawn up and documented (e.g. in the dissertation agreement) regarding the use of AI in empirical research projects.

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This English version of the guidelines is based on a translation by [DeepL.com](https://www.deepl.com), which was subsequently edited by Liborius Lumma. Only the German version is legally binding.