

Policy for students on the use of generative artificial intelligence in summatively assessed work

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to submission-based work (such as projects, mini-projects, case studies, and dissertations) for all taught Undergraduate and Master's courses offered by the Mathematical Institute. For other submissions, the current default policy is that unauthorised use of AI is prohibited.

Broader context of this policy

The department encourages experimentation with, and the confident use of, generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) tools in your studies. Gen AI significantly extends the established tool kit such as search engines, spell-checkers, or debuggers, and opens up new opportunities in collating material, improving your writing, or generating code. However, these wide-ranging and rapidly expanding capabilities require careful consideration in relation to originality, attribution, and good academic practice.

The present document specifies the permitted use of generative AI tools in assessed work and the requirements for declaration of such use, as per the university's AI policy from July 2025¹. The consequences of unauthorized use through the University's procedure for plagiarism range from mark deductions in minor cases of bad academic practice to expulsion from the university in extreme cases.

You are bound by the university's declaration of authorship for all taught submissions, in which you pledge, among others, "that submitted work is entirely [your] own, except where otherwise indicated"².

General considerations for the use of Gen AI

Gen AI can assist, but not replace, your own critical engagement with the subject. It is therefore imperative to carefully examine any Gen AI output you build on, and be aware of the limitations

¹ <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/ai-use-in-summative-assessment>

² <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code>

and pitfalls of the tools you use. These include, but are by no means limited to: reproducing information the model was trained on, potentially leading to classical plagiarism and copyright infringement; 'hallucinations', i.e., presenting false information as fact, either through training on erroneous data or incorrect synthesis of correct data, such as made-up references; producing biased or offensive output; predictive output that does not meet the standard of novelty and/or originality expected from the research work in question; code with incorrect syntax or which gives unintended results. Ultimately, you, the student, take full responsibility for the submitted work.

It is also worth pointing out that in mathematical writing you are not assessed on the correct or creative use of English, but rather the clarity and logical structure of your exposition. If you use a Gen AI tool to assist you in your writing (e.g., to eliminate grammatical mistakes), it is essential that you scrutinise the result and edit it such that it captures precisely what you want to say.

Permissible and impermissible use

As a broad principle, if it would be inappropriate to ask someone else to do a certain part of the work for you, it will also be inadmissible to use AI for that task. In the same way as it would be inappropriate to use existing mathematical results and software without acknowledgment, you are required to acknowledge the use of Gen AI to produce code or mathematical derivations.

Examples of generally **permissible** use of AI:

- searching for literature on a specific topic, provided you verify the relevance, correctness and unbiasedness of the references, and the discussion of the sources is your own;
- soliciting feedback on written work to improve clarity or reduce length;
- generating ideas for research questions, extensions or examples;
- assistance in writing code³, including generation of new code and translation of existing code into a different programming language; or improving the efficiency of code;
- non-substantive alterations to figures that improve clarity and readability;
- formatting of lists or bibliographies;
- improving your grammar.

In all cases, Gen AI use needs to be declared as outlined above. All Gen AI output has to be checked, and any errors may have an impact on the final mark, even where properly cited.

Examples of generally **impermissible** use of AI:

- substantive original writing by Gen AI, e.g., for an introduction or conclusion section, including verbatim or closely paraphrased use of Gen AI for a literature review;
- generating sections of improved versions of your original writing beyond spelling and grammar, e.g., that bring in domain knowledge or improve a logical argument;
- any use of AI generated code without declaration;

- production of plots by Gen AI, as this may obfuscate the data generating algorithm or the data source, including alteration of data in a diagram;
- direct use of Gen AI interpretations of mathematics or data.

Always follow the departmental⁴ and the university's⁵ information security policies and the university's data protection policy⁶ when interacting with Gen AI.⁷ In particular, do not enter private or confidential data into third-party AI tools as they may be stored or passed on to a wider audience, in their original or a processed form, for instance, by being used to train the Gen AI tool. An example of such data would be internal data provided by an industrial partner or data obtained under a licensing agreement.

Declaration of AI use

The precise use of AI tools has to be declared in the same way that existing literature or available software has to be referenced adequately and should include the model and version of the tool used (e.g., GPT-4.1). This declaration has to include how the Gen AI tool was interacted with. While it is not generally expected that you give a complete list of individual prompts used, you need to make clear, for instance, whether a piece of software was constructed through an iterative process with Gen AI by building individual blocks, or fully AI generated.

Template for declaration of AI use:

In creating this work, I have used AI tools for the following tasks:

Literature search and ideation:

Spelling and grammar:

Improvements to writing:

Coding:

Plotting, formatting etc.:

Example declaration (NB: not to be seen as an endorsement for the tools mentioned):

In creating this work, I have used AI tools for the following tasks:

Literature search and ideation: eg “I used Perplexity (free version Oct 25) through the Comet browser to find literature on models for non-Newtonian fluids, and cross-checked this against Google Scholar. I asked Claude 4.0 to summarize the main contributions in those articles. I then skim-read the most promising papers to check relevance for my project and discussed those in my own words in my literature review.”

Spelling and grammar: eg “I used Grammarly within Overleaf to detect spelling and grammar errors throughout the essay.”

Improvements to writing: eg “I used ChatGPT 5 Edu to get feedback on the clarity of my explanation of the main contributions. Sentences were remodeled occasionally on a sentence-by-sentence basis, without major structural changes or without changing the meaning conveyed for the paragraph. For the final version, I asked for suggestions to reduce the length of the dissertation to the paper limit. Following the suggestions, I moved material in an appendix and tightened the discussion of the numerical output.”

Coding: eg “I used Gemini 2.5 for code diagnostics—to assist in identifying and rectifying minor structural or syntax-related errors in the implementation of the numerical scheme.”

Plotting, formatting etc: eg “I used ChatGPT 5 Edu to create a tikz template for illustrating the neural network in Figure 5.1 in latex; to bring the bibtex bibliography into a unified format; as a search engine for plotting commands in python.”

Taking text or mathematics verbatim from generative AI is strongly discouraged, as it is not reproducible, and cannot be assigned authorship or cited as a permanent source. Any such verbatim passages need to be flagged up explicitly (e.g., in quotation marks) with citation in the style of a “personal communication”.

³ except in specific coding assignments, or if explicitly not allowed to use existing code.

⁴ <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/it/it-notices-policies/information-security-policy>

⁵ <https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/guidance-policy>

⁶ <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>

⁷ <https://infosec.ox.ac.uk/use-generative-ai-services-such-as-chatgpt-safely>