



Guidelines for HDR candidates – use of Artificial Intelligence tools

Overview

Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, can create content or data based on analysis of existing information. Researchers must be aware that when using open-source tools, text provided as inputs is offered without copyright or other protection. Gen AI lacks the ability to rationalise, perceive or critique and therefore can produce inaccurate or biased content.

Digital assistance tools such as ChatGPT by default keep the prompts that are entered and may do so even if you request otherwise. If the prompt entered into a digital assistance tool contains confidential information or concerns an innovation of yours, even temporary retention of the prompt by the tool may mean that the text is no longer confidential and the IP is no longer owned by you or the University. Therefore, copyrighted text, confidential information or intellectual property should not be entered into an online digital assistance tool unless that tool is operated by the University. Furthermore, any text generated by a digital assistance tool may be in breach of copyright or other protections and should be used with caution.

The guidance provided to HDR candidates regarding the use of generative AI is more nuanced and more flexible than that provided to the coursework candidates. The guidelines for HDR candidates primarily emphasise the critical, responsible, and ethical use of generative AI while fulfilling their research activities, such as writing research articles, thesis, and Confirmation of Candidature documents.

These guidelines are developed for HDR candidates in recognition of the inevitable use of generative AI in research carried out by HDR candidates. These serve as an addendum to the existing SCU [Academic Integrity Framework](#) which is focused primarily on educating students about the use of generative AI. It should also be considered in consultation with the [Research Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy](#) and the Research Integrity Guidelines and relevant research policies.

Guidelines:

1. Doctoral candidates are reminded that the purpose of a doctoral degree is to develop new knowledge and that their thesis should make an original contribution to knowledge.
2. All creative content by an individual candidate must be their **own** work, unless otherwise acknowledged. Where a HDR candidate uses generative AI software such as ChatGPT to generate research content and produce creative work, **these are NOT their own ideas**, research, and/or analysis, and hence, wherever used, this must be clearly and overtly **acknowledged**.
3. Candidates must be aware of the **Ethical, Privacy, Copyright and Intellectual Property** concerns and their associated implications arising from the use of AI tools. The underlying mechanism of these AI tools is designed so that the information or data fed into them is captured by the tool and potentially used for training future products. In other words, indirectly, your data or research, once fed into the AI tool, may be released in the public domain without your explicit knowledge. It can then be used by others before you have published it. Alternatively, it may result in a breach of ethics requirements and/or research integrity protocols, particularly for projects involving sensitive data which is confidential. Furthermore, it can result in transmission of sensitive data outside of

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Australia, even if it is restricted, as the AI services may be hosted on servers located in other countries.

4. There are strong concerns related to **bias** caused by generative AI tools. For example, use of generative AI as a brain-storming tool can result in bias based on inputs from the human user, to influence human judgement by incorporating this biased content into AI generated output.
5. For **research grant** applications, all members of the University, including HDR candidates will be guided by the [ARC and NHMRC guidelines](#).
6. As an author, it is the responsibility of the HDR candidates to ensure that, for any research **publication or creative output**:
 - All AI generated material in the preparation/generation of their research content, must be appropriately acknowledged and cited in accordance with University's research policies (mentioned above). Since the information obtained from generative AI is not published anywhere (although it may be derived from published sources), its citation can become problematic. Content sourced from AI must be properly cited.
 - The authors are **fully responsible** for academic integrity and accuracy of their publications. Note that a generative AI tool CANNOT be considered as a co-author and cannot be assumed to be responsible for content.
 - The authors must be fully aware of, and familiar with, the AI related **rules of SCU University as well as the specific journal**, or equivalent, in which they wish to publish. While some journals might allow use of text generated by AI, some others (e.g., *Science*) do not allow its use unless express approval is obtained from the publishers.
 - The authors must be aware of the **Intellectual Property (IP)** issues associated with the use of AI. For example, images generated by AI systems such as ChatGPT cannot be used unless IP issues (e.g. express permission from publishers) are obtained.
7. HDR candidates must ensure they are completely informed of details of using AI by carefully reading the comprehensive information provided by [TEQSA guidelines](#).
8. Knowingly using generative AI tools, either directly or via third party, to generate/write/ produce any work (paid or unpaid), without proper acknowledgement of the source, is tantamount to deliberate **academic and research misconduct**. All HDR candidates who fail to follow the above guidelines may become subject to the penalties outlined in the University's academic misconduct policies.
9. In order to quote the output of a digital assistance tool that has provided content, it is recommended that:
 - Authors undertake the necessary due diligence to establish the veracity of the generated material, where appropriate;
 - The material be subject to a plagiarism check, as generative AI output can be a close paraphrase of another source;
 - The material be subjected to a copyright infringement check, as generative AI may produce outputs protected by copyright law;
 - A footnote be used instead of an in-text citation, stating the tool used, the version (if available), the date on which it was used, and the exact text of the prompt;
 - Authors need to be explicit as to which material, such as specific passages of text or images, were created or modified by AI tools.

Beyond editing assistance and content assistance for text, it should be noted that the use of digital assistance tools to falsify or fabricate (in the sense of 'inventing in order to deceive') data is a breach of [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 | NHMRC](#) .



Graduate School

HDR candidates should be aware that unacknowledged use of digital assistance tools to generate or alter text that authors imply is their own may constitute a breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 | NHMRC](#) . Even when the use of digital assistance tools for content assistance is acknowledged, this may impact the degree to which the work is considered their own (with impacts on thesis examination) or trigger plagiarism concerns.

Additional resources:

- [GenAI Practice Guide Signals of and How To Assess Unacceptable Use of GenAI](#)
- [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#)
- [Academic Integrity Framework - About - ACU - Southern Cross University \(scu.edu.au\)](#)
- [NHMRC - Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) in Grant Applications and Peer Review](#)
- TEQSA - [Higher Education good practice hub: Artificial Intelligence](#)

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