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Usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Theses and Written Assignments

Chair of Organization and Management – University of Zurich (UZH)

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1. Purpose and Principles

The Chair of Organization and Management recognizes that generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have become part of contemporary academic work. When used responsibly, AI can support learning, efficiency, and quality. At the same time, submitted academic work must remain a clear reflection of the student's own intellectual contribution, critical thinking, and scholarly judgement.

These guidelines pursue four core objectives:

- **Allow and encourage responsible use of AI** as a legitimate support tool.
- **Ensure transparency** about if, how, and where AI tools were used.
- **Safeguard academic integrity**, authorship, and accountability.
- **Enable fair assessment** of the student's own contribution, independent of AI assistance.

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2. Scope

These rules apply to all bachelor's and master's theses as well as written assignments supervised at the OM Chair.

Generative AI refers to tools that generate text, code, images, audio, or other content based on prompts, including but not limited to:

- **General-purpose tools**: ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google), Claude (Anthropic), Copilot (Microsoft), Apertus (Public AI)
- **Research-oriented tools**: NotebookLM, Elicit, Scite, Consensus, ResearchRabbit
- **Language and editing tools**: DeepL Write, Grammarly (AI-assisted functions)

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3. General Rule: Human Oversight and Responsibility

AI tools may be used **to support** the research and writing process, but they may not replace the student's own scholarly work.

- AI tools **cannot assume the responsibility of the main author**. The student remains the sole responsible author.
- Students must be **demonstrably familiar** with the relevant academic literature and research context of their topic. The use of AI does not replace independent literature search, reading, and scholarly engagement.
- Students must fully **understand, critically assess, and be able to explain any AI-generated content** included in their work.
- Students remain **fully responsible** for all content in their work, including accuracy, originality, interpretation, and compliance with academic standards.

- Fabricated sources, incorrect facts, biased output, or logical flaws generated by AI **are the responsibility of the student**. Students are required to critically verify AI outputs and ensure that such errors are not included in the submitted work. Their **inclusion constitutes a violation of academic integrity**.

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4. Permissible and Non-Permissible Uses of AI

4.1 Permissible uses (examples)

AI tools may be used for:

- Brainstorming research questions or perspectives
- Creating suggestions for thesis outline or structuring chapters
- Language editing and clarity improvements
- Summarizing texts (with subsequent verification)
- Coding assistance or data-cleaning support
- Transcription or translation support

4.2 Non-permissible uses (examples)

AI tools must **not** be used for:

- Generating theoretical arguments or interpretation without substantial student contribution
- Replacing independent literature review and source evaluation. Content must always be supported by independently consulted academic sources.
- Fabricating or obscuring sources, data, or empirical material
- Circumventing learning objectives or assessment requirements
- Working with confidential, sensitive, or personally identifiable information without explicit permission to upload it (e.g., interview transcripts, audio or video files)

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5. Mandatory Transparency Requirements

The OM Chair requires **structured transparency about the use of AI tools**. Each thesis or assignment that has used AI in some form must include a short, clearly labeled appendix section (after the references) named **"AI Use Commentary"** and contain the following:

5.1 Prompt Log (see example)

It must include an overview of the AI chat conversation/use:

- **AI tools used** (name, provider, version/model)
- **Tasks supported by AI** (e.g. brainstorming, outlining, language editing, coding)
- **Link** documenting the AI interaction and giving graders access to the conversation

Requirements:

- AI chats referenced in the prompt log must **not be deleted or archived in your AI tool for at least 6 months after submission**, so that graders can access them.
- Students must ensure that **all links work correctly** (e.g. avoid broken URLs caused by line breaks or hyphenation in MS Word).

Example Prompt Log:

#	**AI tool used (incl. provider, name, version, …):**	**Task supported:**	**Link to conversation:** *[Links below are exemplary only and may expire or require account access]*
1	OpenAI ChatGPT (GPT-5 Thinking)	**Brainstorming:** What are the core principles of a transformative leadership style?	https://chatgpt.com/share/69eca802-c6a0-83eb-90b8-cb833433ee2f
2	Google Gemini Advanced (Gemini 2.0 Pro, Google DeepMind)	**Exploratory overview:** How do digital collaboration platforms influence strategy-making processes?	*https://gemini.google.com/share/248cdc4e1f34*
3	NotebookLM (Google)	**Comparing arguments:** Across the uploaded papers on 'Participation in strategy-making' and 'Open Strategy', compare the role of middle managers.	*https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/2f93c9b7-3113-400a-9938-a13756ebfc02*
4	OpenAI ChatGPT (GPT-5 Deep Research)	**Literature exploration**: Identify key streams in sustainability-oriented strategy making.	https://chatgpt.com/s/t_69eca6ef7c30819191e4113d056a9f47
5	Claude (Claude 4 Opus, Anthropic)	**Review**: Critically examine my coding of qualitative interview excerpts related to strategy workshops.	https://claude.ai/share/d7169a93-4e28-488e-b162-45c839f6ba39
…	…	…	…

5.2 Reflective AI Use Commentary

Students who use AI beyond language editing are required to submit a *Reflective AI Use Commentary* describing and **reflecting on their use of AI** in their work, covering the following dimensions:

A. Purpose and tool choice *(exemplary questions:)*

- Why did you use AI for these tasks rather than alternative approaches (e.g. databases, manual analysis, Google Scholar)?
- Which AI tools did you use and why did you choose these tools (and not others)?

B. Verification and quality control *(exemplary questions:)*

- How did you check and validate AI-generated outputs?
- Which available sources did you consult to verify AI responses?
- How did you identify and handle hallucinations, inaccuracies, or weak arguments?
- What risks did AI use create, and how did you mitigate them?

C. Learning and critical reflection *(exemplary questions:)*

- What AI use worked well and what did not?

- How did AI use influence your research and writing process?
- What did you, as a student, learn about the strengths and limits of AI in academic work?

D. Student contribution *[most relevant and comprehensive part of the commentary] (exemplary questions:)*

- What did you do yourself rather than using an AI tool?
- Where does your conceptual novelty and intellectual contribution lie?
- How is the work an outcome of your own scholarship with software support (and not the other way around)?

5.3 Submission of signed guideline and Declaration of Authorship

Prior to registering the thesis, the student must sign a copy of the AI guideline and submit the signed copy to the supervisor. The version signed at the start of the thesis/assignment applies for the entire thesis project, even if the guideline is updated during the writing period.

In exceptional cases (e.g. substantial legal, institutional, or assessment-related changes), the OM Chair may introduce binding updates that also apply to ongoing theses. In such cases, students will be informed in writing, and, if required, asked to submit an updated signed copy.

The **Declaration of Authorship** remains mandatory and must be signed and submitted together as part of the final thesis. By signing this declaration, the student confirms full responsibility for the entire content of the work and for compliance with academic integrity standards. This includes responsibility for any form of misconduct (e.g. citation errors, plagiarism, fabricated or invented references), even if such issues resulted from the use of generative AI tools.

False, incomplete, or misleading disclosure of AI use constitutes a violation of academic integrity and may lead to sanctions in accordance with UZH regulations.

Declaration of Authorship [if the academic work is in English language]:

The undersigned author declares on oath that he/she has independently, without external assistance and without using other than the specified aids, prepared the present work. Thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources (including electronic sources) are invariably indicated as such. The work has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in the same or a similar form, for another examination (see Theisen, M. (2002), p. 209 f.). Zurich, dd.mm.yyyy   (Signature)

Eidesstattliche Erklärung [if the academic work is in German language]:

Der/die Verfassende erklärt an Eides statt, dass die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig, ohne fremde Hilfe und ohne Benutzung anderer als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt wurde. Die aus fremden Quellen (einschliesslich elektronischer Quellen) direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken sind ausnahmslos als solche kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit ist in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form oder auszugsweise im Rahmen einer anderen Prüfung noch nicht vorgelegt worden. (vgl. Theissen, M. (2002), S. 209 f.). Zürich, dd.mm.yyyy   (Unterschrift)

6. Citation and Referencing of AI

Students are expected to follow the latest **APA citation standards** (or other widely accepted scholarly citation standards, as agreed with the supervisor) consistently, also for citing AI-created content.

6.1 When AI must be cited explicitly in the running text

AI tools must be explicitly cited in the following cases:

1. **Direct quotation of AI output**: When AI-generated text is reproduced verbatim (including translated AI-output).
2. **Use of substantive concepts, arguments, or analytical structures that originate from AI**: When a specific idea, framework, categorization, or line of reasoning stems primarily from AI and is adopted in the thesis beyond mere language editing.
3. **When AI output itself is the object of analysis:** For example, when comparing model responses, analyzing prompts, or evaluating AI-generated content empirically or conceptually.

Examples of APA 7th edition style references to the AI tool:

APA format	Author (year). Title (date and version) [description of the model]. URL
APA bibliography entry, example	OpenAI (2026). ChatGPT (May 2026 version) [large language model]. https://chatopenai.com
APA in-text Citation, example	«Quote» (OpenAI, 2026)

Other:

- Translation of a passage using ChatGPT: "*Passage* (OpenAI, 2026, trans.)."
- Translation of a passage using DeepL: "*Passage* (DeepL SE, 2026, trans.)."

6.2 When AI does not need to be cited in the running text (but declared in the AI Use Commentary)

If AI is used as a **support tool** (e.g. brainstorming, thematic familiarization (e.g. deep research, podcast creation), selective language editing, searching for content in a document database), AI does not need to be cited sentence by sentence but acknowledged in the AI Use Commentary.

7. Assessment and Oral Defense

To ensure academic integrity and fair evaluation, the submitted academic work must clearly demonstrate the student's own reasoning, synthesis, and judgement. The chair may require an oral defense after submission of the thesis, in particular if there are doubts about the independent authorship of the work, for example in cases of suspected unauthorized use of AI or other tools. Whether a defense will take place is decided by the chair on a case-by-case basis. Students will be informed in due time. Students have no entitlement to an oral defense taking place or not taking place.

Such an oral defense may, for example, require the student to:

- Explain their own role and contribution in preparing the submitted work
- Explain key theoretical choices, arguments, and content
- Justify interpretations as well as methodological decisions, approaches, and results
- Describe how AI tools were used, evaluated, and verified

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8. Final Remark

The OM Chair explicitly supports a **reflective, critical, and transparent engagement with AI**. The goal is to ensure that theses and written assignments remain an authentic demonstration of students' scholarly competence, intellectual ownership, and responsible usage of AI.

By signing this document, the student confirms that they have read and understood these guidelines, including the requirements regarding transparency, citation, documentation, and responsible use of AI. The student further agrees to comply with these guidelines throughout the preparation of the thesis or written assignment. As set out in Section 5.3, a signed copy of this guideline must be submitted to the supervisor.

Student name

Place & date

Student signature