Guidelines

on How to Handle AI

in Teaching and Learning

at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences

As off: 04.09.2025

These guidelines are intended to serve as an orientation for teaching staff at our university in dealing with the impact and potential of artificial intelligence (above all generative AI such as ChatGPT) in teaching and learning in general, and performance diagnostics and examination practices in particular. It is an important document not only due to a growing sense of unease regarding AI and its potential to produce more discriminatory outcomes in teaching, but also because of the rapid evolution of the technology itself.

Experts widely agree that an outright ban or the otherwise strict regulation of AI usage at universities is neither prudent nor enforceable (refer to the legal assessment by Salden and Leschke, 2023). Rather, teaching and assessment formats should be adjusted to allow for the responsible use of AI tools, enhancing the process of competence development as a result.

Our approach to AI at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences thus focuses less on sanctions, and more on the careful and well-informed consideration of the risks and opportunities of this emerging technology.

1. Transparent use of AI in every module

At the start of a new semester, every teacher should clarify for their module(s) which AI tools are permitted, recommended or even required for which purpose, and how students should document their use of these tools. This requirement does not restrict teachers' academic freedom.[1]

2. Individual disclosure of AI use

While using AI-generated content is generally not considered an act of plagiarism, it could potentially constitute a violation of academic integrity. When used for take-home assignments, projects, a final thesis etc., AI always counts as an 'aid', which is why students are required to clearly document and disclose which AI tools they used for which purpose, how their results were generated and processed (e.g. with a list of prompts in the annex), and where in their work these AI-derived results were used/integrated. In final theses, this disclosure can, for example, be included in the methodology section as well as in the appendices. A corresponding disclosure is also recommended for draft versions of term papers and exposés for final theses.
If the declaration of independent work does not contain sufficient information regarding the use of AI, examiners are to interpret this as meaning that, according to the student's statement, no AI tools were used. If, during the review of the work and/or other parts of the examination, it is later discovered that AI was used, this may constitute a violation of good academic practice, which could lead to examination-related consequences. Despite these extended disclosure requirements, however, it will likely become more difficult in the future to prove suspected misconduct in examination settings and above all separate a student's own work from AI-generated work to a sufficient legal standard. Automated detection tools, e.g. GPTZero and TurnItIn, do not provide sufficient evidence of misconduct.

3. Responsible use of AI

Beyond the need for reflection, transparency and clear communication (see above) of teaching contents, curricula, didactic methods and assessment diagnostics in individual modules and degree programmes, there are a number of unresolved issues with AI use in general, including ethical, budgetary, liability, copyright and data privacy considerations. The ecological footprint of AI computing should be discussed as well. Teaching staff should consider educating their students about these issues as part of the responsible use of AI tools.

4. Selection of Examination Formats

In order to continue offering unsupervised examination formats (such as term papers), these should be supplemented with presentations and/or oral examinations. This is the only way to encourage students to critically reflect on their use of AI tools and to verify whether they have truly understood the subject matter. If this is not feasible due to organizational constraints, term papers should preferably not be used as the sole form of assessment for a module.

5. Strategic discourse at HSRW

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences has established a research focus professorship in each of the faculties as well as a coordinating position in ZfQ to study and gain hands-on experience with AI in teaching contexts starting in summer semester 2025. All teachers are encouraged to connect with these professors and ZfQ and share their own thoughts and experiences.[2]
In addition, these guidelines should be discussed periodically in student committees (FSRs, AStA etc.) and among teachers (faculty councils, Lehrcafé etc.) to ensure they remain up to date, particularly given the rapid nature of progress in AI technology. We are also currently testing and discussing ways to grant access to AI tools for all members of the university, but without violating data privacy laws.

[1] A series of continuously updated text blocks is available and recommended for use to convey course-specific rules on AI to students. See the annex for specific examples.
[2] Until other quality-assured informational and instructional services are available, AI Campus, an educational platform funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), offers a free MOOC (in German) that can serve as a helpful introduction for teachers to AI's potential for higher education.

Developed by the "AI Working Group" of the Commission for Teaching, Learning and Continuing Training together with other members of the university. Contact: Naomi McLaughlan, Centre for Academic Development and Quality (ZfQ) (naomi.mclaughlan@hochschule-rhein-waal.de)
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Annex

Text blocks for communicating module-specific requirements to students: clarity, transparency and critical reflection

The following text blocks will be updated regularly and are available online under Recommendations for AI in Teaching and Learning. This resource also contains many useful links to relevant publications.

This annex is the version from 10. June 2025.

1. Clear Rules on AI Usage

Artificial Intelligence has the potential to change the ways we teach and learn at university fundamentally, opening up great opportunities yet also challenging many established practices. Until our university has decided on the most appropriate ways of dealing with the technology in our classrooms and curricula, it is up to us, each lecturer and all participants of any given course, to discuss and clarify how AI can support or impede learning, and which ground-rules we want to agree on.

2. Disclosure

Certain AI tools can help you structure your work, reformulate texts, support your search for scholarly literature, analyse, validate or visualise data, etc. As a virtual 'tutor', AI can help you prepare for exams, for instance by summarising documents, or generating learning questions. Any of these or other uses of AI, however, technically count as 'aids' in exams, assignments, or your final thesis, which is why you are required to disclose which tool you have used for which purpose, how you generated and processed the results (e.g. consider adding your prompts and macros as part of the appendix), and in which paragraphs on which page of your assignment the results have been used / integrated. If you disclose your use of AI insufficiently, your work may be considered scientific misconduct, and could lead to failing the assignment / course, and even more drastic penalties.

3. Data Privacy and Copyright

AI systems might use your prompts to draw conclusions about the work you do, which is why you should be careful whenever providing personal information. This is also why your university will normally not ask you to register a personal account with an AI tool or cover the costs for using such services. When uploading text passages or entire documents, you are required to ensure that those sources are not under copyright.

4. Selection of Examination Type

In order to be able to continue to offer unsupervised forms of examination (such as seminar papers), these should be supplemented by presentations and/or technical discussions. This is the only way to encourage students to reflect critically on the use of AI tools and to check whether students have really grasped the topic. If this is not possible due to organizational constraints, seminar papers should not be set as the sole module examination if possible.

5. Reflexivity

However easy it might seem to generate results quickly with AI, using the technology will normally require much more critical thinking from you than working classically with textbooks and officially provided course material. As soon as you decide to use AI-generated content or analyses, you also bear the full responsibility for those results to be genuine and factually correct. You must, therefore, verify all generated results, and make sure that the system has not produced any copyright infringements or plagiarism. AI-generated content may also be distorted and thus potentially discriminatory regarding gender or cultural identity. We encourage you to openly discuss such legal and ethical aspects of your AI learning experiences openly in class with fellow students and lecturers.

Supplementary tabular overview for the use of AI tools

The text blocks above should be accompanied by a tabular overview to ensure that rules are communicated as clearly as possible to students. It should be noted that the suspected use of unauthorised tools in an examination setting (with the exception of in-person exams) most likely cannot be proven to a sufficient legal standard, which can make some restrictions legally and ethically problematic.

Template: "Course XY"

Task	Purpose	Aids/Tools
Task X	Purpose A	Useful: etc.
	Purpose B	Recommended: etc.
	Purpose C	Required: etc.
Task Y	Purpose D	No AI recommended
Task Z	Purpose E	No AI permitted

Hypothetical example 1: "Programming 101"

Task	Purpose	Aids/Tools
Software development	Performance requirements	Usefull: ChatGPT-4.0, fobizz-Modelle, GoogleColab
	Outline / architecture / documentation	Recommended: GitHub Copilot
	Coding	Required: GitHub Copilot
	Testing	Recommended: appvance
Marked tasks	Exam preparation	No AI recommended
Final exam	Graded testing situation	No AI permitted

Hypothetical example 2: "Corporate Sustainability"

Task	Purpose	Aids/Tools
Take-home assignment	Finding a topic, research question, contextualising theory	Recommended: Concept Search-through Consensus.app

Task	Purpose	Aids/Tools
	Literature search	Recommended: Elicit.com and Zenodo.org
		Recommended: “Article Search”-Funktion von Consensus.app
	Text production	Required: Grammarly.com
Presentation	Initial concept and structure	Recommended: ChatGPT
	Slide design	Recommended: DALL-E for visualisation; slidesgo.com
Final exam	Graded testing situation	No AI permitted