

SGR GUIDE TO GENERATIVE AI IN RESEARCH

GUIDELINES FOR HDR CANDIDATES, MINOR THESIS STUDENTS AND ALL RESEARCH SUPERVISORSⁱ

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Research within the University of Divinity is guided by codes of academic integrity, including the University's Academic Integrity Policy and the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) (the Code). The Code is framed around 8 principles:

- Honesty
- Rigour
- Transparency
- Fairness
- Respect
- Recognition
- Accountability
- Promotion of responsible research.

When these principles of academic integrity are upheld, researchers are:

- honest in representing the work they have done
- acknowledge the ways in which they have used the ideas and work of others
- work fairly with others when collaborating
- ensure research is ethical and avoids harm to others.

There has been a rapid growth and proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools in recent years. While the use of these resources does have the potential to increase efficiency within research, its use also introduces significant risks. The [Australian Council of Graduate Research](#) (ACGR) notes the following:

- 1. The use of GenAI may compromise research integrity, raising questions about authorship, data governance, and responsibility.*
- 2. The use of GenAI may compromise the validity of research, partly because the apparent plausibility of AI responses can belie the inaccuracies of AI output.*
- 3. A reliance on GenAI can impair the development of graduate attributes.*
- 4. GenAI can sustain, and even amplify, inequities and discrimination.ⁱⁱ*

In addition, the use of AI/GenAI tools may lead to breaches in academic integrity and may not meet requirement of the Code. Breaches related to confidentiality of data are one of the most significant potential breaches.

The following guidelines are intended for use by all Higher Degree by Research candidates and their supervisors, and by students undertaking the Minor Thesis and Research Methodologies units.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We use a broad conception of artificial intelligence (AI), defined as:

- machines that “use language, form abstractions and concepts, solve kinds of problems now [or once] reserved for humans, and improve themselves”ⁱⁱⁱ
- “computer programs that are capable of reproducing some aspect of human cognition”^{iv}
- “the science of making the machines do things that would require intelligence if done by men [sic]”^v

Examples include pattern recognition, reasoning and learning from experience.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) “is an AI model capable of generating text, images, code, video, and audio. Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT and Copilot produce text from large datasets in response to text prompts.”^{viiiviiiix}

USING GENAI IN RESEARCH

The Code’s principles of academic integrity apply to the use of GenAI in all aspects of research.

If you use any GenAI in your research work, you are expected to:

- apply the principles of academic integrity, as described in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and the [Australian Code](#). Any use should also comply with [Australia’s AI Ethics Principles](#).
- take responsibility for any content or outputs it helps generate
- ensure use of GenAI complies with all relevant ethical, legal and professional standards.

Be transparent and accountable

Clearly document and disclose how GenAI has been used in your research, including any limitations or potential biases. You must include which tools you have used, and a list of the prompts and refinements. (Check the [University of Divinity Style Guide](#) for instructions on how to footnote this appropriately)

Do not use GenAI as a peer review tool

Do not use GenAI to assess material for peer review, such as grants, manuscripts, HDR theses or ethics applications. This may breach confidentiality requirements and academic integrity standards.

Familiarise yourself with scholarly publishers’ policies

Publishing guidelines are changing rapidly. Regularly check the latest publisher requirements on GenAI use and disclosure.

Review for inaccuracy and bias

GenAI can reproduce biases from its training data, leading to outputs that are inaccurate, misleading or harmful. This includes structural biases like racism, discrimination and underrepresentation.

When using these tools, critically assess how you frame prompts and interpret results. Always check for bias, assess accuracy and make sure your use aligns with ethical research standards.

Seek advice from supervisors

If you are considering using GenAI for any reason, please discuss this with your supervisors. Make sure you are aware of obligations around transparency and ethical practice.

Using GenAI in HDR thesis writing

As a research candidate, you can use GenAI tools in your work. These tools are allowed in specific, clearly defined ways.

- GenAI may be used for copyediting and proofreading thesis text only. Refer to the [Institute for Professional Editors](#) guidelines for what qualifies as copyediting and proofreading support.
- You must not input confidential or sensitive information into AI tools, as this breaches the Code.
- Using GenAI to create or manipulate images is not permitted in your thesis, unless image generation is part of your approved research methodology and fully disclosed.
- Submitting AI-generated text as your own writing is a breach of the University's HDR Policy and academic integrity standards.
- Using GenAI to write or redraft text in your thesis is not permitted.
- Clearly document and disclose how GenAI has been used in your research, including any limitations or potential biases. You must include which tools you have used, and a list of the prompts and refinements. (Check the [University of Divinity Style Guide](#) for instructions on how to footnote this appropriately)

HOW TO MAKE AN AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

If you need to make an 'AI Declaration Statement', an example format is:

I acknowledge the use of [generative AI model, its version number, and any URL of service/model] on [date] for the purpose of [insert use case]. I used the following prompts: [insert prompts]. The output(s) from these prompts were used to [explanation of use]. I take responsibility for the content of all AI generated outputs used in my research.

For example:

I acknowledge the use of the multimodal large language model OpenAI GPT-4o via ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com>) on 20 January 2025 for the purpose of answering a complex query. I used the following prompt: 'across the complete works of Charles Dickens how many mentions of poverty are made and how many words into each text before such a mention is made'. The output from this prompt was used with my own analysis to show how large language models have the capacity to quickly answer very specific queries that it would otherwise take a long time for a researcher to answer. I take responsibility for the content of all AI generated outputs used in my research.

USING GENAI IN RESEARCH TRAINING COURSEWORK

Coursework units undertaken as part of a research training program include assessments that candidates complete for credit. This is the case in the University of Divinity's Doctor of Professional Practice (DPP) and Research Methodologies units.

In accordance with the University's HDR Policy and Assessment Policy, such assessments are designed with particular learning outcomes in mind. They aim to help candidates develop and demonstrate knowledge through practice, academic voice and skills in critical enquiry, evaluation, dialogue and reflection.

Assessments in this research training context are purposeful, aiming to develop candidates' capacity to generate original, quality research appropriate to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level of their award. Where unit and assessment learning outcomes address digital literacy, the

responsible and ethical use of relevant AI tools may be permitted. In each case, the assessment task instructions will specify what is and is not permitted.

If you have any questions regarding the use of AI in assessments, contact the relevant program director or academic in charge of your unit.

BREACHES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Breaches of academic integrity in research will be handled in accordance with the University's Academic Integrity Procedures.

OTHER RESOURCES

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#)

[ACGR Good Practice Guidelines for Generative Artificial Intelligence Use in Graduate Research Training](#)
Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR)

[Using GenAI for Research 10 Tips](#)
Tertiary Education Standards Agency (TEQSA)

[Australia's AI Ethics Principles](#)
Australian Government

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)
University of Divinity

[University of Divinity Style Guide](#)

ⁱ These guidelines draw on the guidelines developed by Deakin University

<https://www.deakin.edu.au/research/our-research/research-integrity/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.acgr.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ACGR-Good-Practice-Guidelines-for-Generative-Artificial-Intelligence-Use-in-Graduate-Research-Training.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ John McCarthy et al., “A Proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence” (Stanford University, 1955), in Beth Singler, *Religion and Artificial Intelligence: An Introduction*, (Routledge, 2025), 10. John McCarthy et al., “A Proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence” (Stanford University, 1955), in Beth Singler, *Religion and Artificial Intelligence: An Introduction*, (Routledge, 2025), 10.

^{iv} David Gelernter, *The Muse in the Machine: Computerizing the Poetry of Human Thought* (Free Press, 1994), 44, quoted in Noreen L. Herzfeld, *The Artifice of Intelligence: Divine and Human Relationship in a Robotic Age* (Fortress Press, 2023), 4.

^v Marvin Minsky Cited in Herzfeld, *The Artifice of Intelligence*, 4.

^{vi} Australian Academic Integrity Network (AAIN) Generative AI Working Group

<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/aain-generative-ai-guidelines.pdf>

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