GUIDELINES ON THE RESTRICTED USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ASSIGNMENTS, RESEARCH PAPERS, RESEARCH TASKS AND DISSERTATIONS

University of Cape Town
Faculty of Law
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1. Introduction

These Faculty Guidelines draw on and supplement the *UCT Policy for the Prevention and Management of Academic Misconduct by Students* (2023) and the UCT Framework for Artificial Intelligence in Education: Generative and Other AI in Teaching, Learning and Assessment (2025). It provides Faculty-wide guidance on restrictions on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in assignments, research papers, research tasks and dissertations.

The framework applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate students' assignments, research papers, research tasks and dissertations (major and minor) submitted in the Faculty of Law at the University of Cape Town. It also applies to Honours-level submissions or research projects offered by the Law Faculty through other Faculties.

2. Faculty-Wide Principles

2.1 Transparency and Originality of Work

- Submissions must be the student's own intellectual work. AI use is only permitted where explicitly authorised (as described below) and must be acknowledged.

- In line with UCT's AI Framework, the use of spelling and grammar software is permissible. Any broader use of AI must follow these Faculty guidelines. If the proposed use is not explicitly covered under these guidelines, students should assume that such use is not permitted.

- Supervisors are not authorised to independently permit AI use beyond what is indicated in this guideline document.

- Where AI use is authorised, students remain fully responsible for verifying the accuracy, reliability, and originality of their work.

2.2 Marking Principles

- Marks are awarded for material that can be reasonably verified as the student's own work, demonstrating their understanding, reasoning and argumentation.

- No marks will be awarded for AI-generated content or any other content that the student cannot demonstrate is their own work.

- The presence of fabricated citations will be considered de facto evidence of AI use, and no marks will be awarded for the submission in its entirety, unless the student can prove otherwise.

2.3 Evidence of Compliant Use

- All students must declare any use of AI and must keep a record or portfolio of prompts and outputs for accountability.

- Every submission in the Faculty must include a cover page which includes a disclosure of AI use (see Appendix A for Masters and PhD dissertations and Appendix B for assignments, research tasks and research papers), stating the tool, version, and purpose of use.

- Students must retain and save process evidence, which may be requested by supervisors, Heads of Department, or Faculty committees. Suitable forms of process evidence may include:

    o Original draft(s)

    o AI prompts

    o AI outputs

    o Verification steps undertaken

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- o   Original source materials
- Students may be required to attend an oral examination to verify the extent to which the submission is their own work.

3. Guidance on Appropriate AI Use:

ASSIGNMENTS, RESEARCH PAPERS, RESEARCH TASKS (UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE)

- *Permitted with disclosure*: idea-generation prompts; search-term brainstorming; drafting reading plans; generating outlines (containing headings/subheadings only) intended as a as starting point for further research and writing; copy-editing for grammar and spelling, clarity/conciseness editing of author-written text; formatting references and figures; general language polishing.

- *Not permitted*: inserting AI-generated summaries or citations directly into dissertations, research papers/tasks or assignments; using fabricated or unverified references; the use of AI to undertake comprehensive re-writes or drafts of work/submissions; using AI to produce drafts (first or subsequent) of a submission.

- *Required*: Students must keep prompt logs. Any permitted AI-assisted text must be rewritten in the student's own voice and fact-checked against source materials. Any use of AI must be appropriately disclosed.

RESEARCH TASKS, RESEARCH PAPERS, AND DISSERTATIONS (WHERE APPLICABLE)

3.2   Conceptualisation, & Literature Review

- *Permitted with disclosure*: idea-generation prompts; search-term brainstorming; drafting reading plans; generating outlines (containing headings/subheadings) intended as a as starting point for further research and writing.

- *Not permitted*: inserting AI-generated summaries or citations directly into dissertations, research papers/tasks or assignments; using fabricated or unverified references; the use of AI to undertake comprehensive re-writes or drafts of work/submissions; using AI to produce drafts (first or subsequent) of a submission.

- *Required*: Students must keep prompt logs. Any permitted AI-assisted text must be rewritten in the student's own voice and fact-checked against source materials. Any use of AI must be appropriately disclosed.

3.3   Data Collection / Transcription

- *Permitted* (where also approved by ethics clearance and with explicit disclosure):
  - o   Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) tools for student-owned data.
  - o   Non-AI automation tools (Excel macros / VBA scripts, Form-to-database scripts, Survey exports (Qualtrics, REDCap, SurveyMonkey).
  - o   OCR (Optical Character Recognition) with AI enhancement, for example, scanning paper surveys or consent forms into digital datasets.

- *Required*: Students must keep prompt logs. Any permitted AI-assisted data collection and transcription must be appropriately disclosed.

- *Note*: Tools that are not covered in the list above should be disclosed and explicitly permitted by Departments and/or the Law Faculty Ethics Committee.

3.4   Data Analysis

- *Permitted with disclosure:*
  - o   Automation of routine coding tasks (e.g. generating descriptive statistics, or plotting graphs).
  - o   Plotting and visualisation assistance.
  - o   Exploratory summaries of data, provided the student can explain, reproduce, and validate the results.
  - o   Use of AI to propose preliminary themes in qualitative data, provided the student critically reviews, revises, and interprets these themes independently.

- *Not permitted:*

- o Outsourcing analysis or interpretation entirely to AI.

- o Submitting AI-generated analyses, interpretations, or conclusions.

- o Using AI to fabricate data, statistical results, or references.

3.5 Write-up

- *Permitted with disclosure*: copy-editing for grammar and spelling, clarity/conciseness editing of author-written text; formatting references and figures; general language polishing.

- *Not permitted*: drafting substantive sections with the use of AI.

4. Compliance and Misconduct

- Undeclared or inappropriate AI use constitutes academic or research misconduct.

- Allegations raised in relation to student submissions (assignments, research papers, research tasks, dissertation proposals, draft chapter(s) submitted to supervisors; Masters and PhD dissertations) will follow Faculty procedures, as follows:

  - Any concerns must first be raised with the student by the Course Convenor or Supervisor. This may include asking the student to provide original sources, drafts, prompts, logs etc.

  - Where there is prima facie evidence of the use of AI, the case must be reported to the Head of Department by the Course Convenor or Supervisor, providing a record of evidence gathered in the investigation phase.

  - If there is a prima facie case of the use of AI, the Head of Department must refer the case to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC).

  - The AMC will review the case and issue a finding which may include a referral to the Student Disciplinary Tribunal.

  - Student submissions will be coded as 'mark outstanding' (OS) pending finalisation through the AMC.

  - Dissertations (Masters and PhD) that were submitted (with or without supervisor approval), and where the unauthorized use of AI is suspected, will not be sent out for external examination until any investigation and academic misconduct process is completed.

- Degree awards will be deferred pending the outcome of any academic misconduct processes.

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Drafted by A/Professor Kelley Moult (Deputy Dean Postgraduate) and A/Professor Jameelah Omar (Deputy Dean Undergraduate), February 2026

(based on the Faculty of Commerce Framework for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research Dissertations)

Approved by the Law Faculty Board – [date]

COMPULSORY DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE

This declaration must appear at the front of all Faculty of Law Masters and PhD dissertations, in accordance with the Faculty of Law Guidelines on the Restricted Use of Artificial Intelligence in Assignments, Research Papers, Research Tasks and Dissertations (February 2026).

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1. **Declaration of AI Use**

   ☐   I used no generative AI tools in the preparation of this dissertation.

   ☐   I used generative AI tools, as permitted, for the following purposes (please complete all applicable fields):

   Tool(s) used (name and version: _____

   Purpose of use:

   ☐   Standard spelling and grammar checking tools (e.g. Grammarly).

   ☐   Clarity editing

   ☐   Outline generation

   ☐   Data-related tasks (ASR; non-AI automation tools; OCR with AI enhancement)

   ☐   Automation of routine coding tasks

   ☐   Plotting and visualisation assistance, drawing or formatting graphs and figures

   ☐   Generation of preliminary themes or summaries

   ☐   Other (describe)   _____

   Extent of use (brief description):

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **Student Responsibility Statement**

   I confirm that:

   - The intellectual content, analysis, and arguments in this dissertation are my own work.
   - Where generative AI tools were used, I acknowledge full responsibility for verifying accuracy, originality and correct referencing.
   - Records of AI prompts and outputs have been retained and will be provided on request to my supervisor, Head of Department or Faculty.
   - I understand that undeclared or inappropriate use of AI tools constitutes academic or research misconduct.

   Signature of Student: _____

   Date: _____

LAW FACULTY SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

This declaration must appear on all assignments, research papers, research tasks, in accordance with the Faculty of Law Guidelines on the Restricted Use of Artificial Intelligence in Assignments, Research Papers, Research Tasks and Dissertations (February 2026).

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF LAW

ONLINE SUBMISSION

TEST / EXAM / ESSAY / ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Course code

Course Name

PeopleSoft Number:

Word Count:

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION:

1. I declare that this is my own work, including intellectual content, analysis and arguments.

2. I know that plagiarism and the unauthorised use of generative AI are serious forms of academic dishonesty.

3. I have read the UCT Law Faculty Guidelines on Plagiarism, am familiar with its contents and have avoided all forms of plagiarism mentioned there.

4. I have read the UCT Law Faculty Guidelines on the Restricted Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and I understand that the same rules of academic misconduct apply to the use of AI.

5. I understand that the Faculty of Law does not permit the use of generative AI tools where the work is no longer my own. I confirm that I am not presenting any outputs or portions of outputs from generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Bard etc.) as my own work.

6. I have indicated where I have used the words of others using quotation marks and have properly acknowledged instances where I have used the ideas or words of others (including AI tools) through appropriate citation. Any use of an AI tool has been listed in the list of references.

7. I recognise that writing is an important skill in the degree that I am registered for, and I confirm that where editing services or AI tools (such as Grammarly) were used for language support purposes, the substance is my own work and that I must disclose the use of these tools.

8. I have not and shall not allow others to plagiarise my work.

Signature (or PeopleSoft number) _____   Date: _____