FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

Guidelines for the Use of AI-Based Systems and Tools in Teaching and Learning

Imprint

Freie Universität Berlin
The Executive Board
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Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-based systems and tools have grown significantly in importance and have become integral to many areas of life, including education and research. Developments in the field of AI have reached a new level in terms of content and scope, as well as accessibility and widespread use.

As part of Freie Universität Berlin's commitment to the nonnegotiable principles of good research practice and academic integrity, the university has adopted a critical approach to the use of AI-based tools in teaching and learning that also reflects on the technological implications of current developments. In line with the university's goal of providing forward-thinking higher education that prepares students to assume responsibility in a global, diverse, and digital knowledge-based society, the aim is to harness the potential of new technologies through subject-specific methodological reflection, while also addressing the risks and ethical questions these technologies raise. This document outlines key principles for the responsible use of AI in teaching and learning.

To keep pace with the dynamic developments in this field, these guidelines will be internally reviewed and adapted regularly, taking into account the current state of research as well as changes in European, federal, and state-level regulations. The following guidelines and recommendations should therefore be understood as subject to revision. The first version of this document was published in May 2023 and has now been comprehensively updated (current version dated: October 7, 2025).

General Principles for Working with AI-Based Systems and Tools

AI-based tools offer a wide range of opportunities for teaching and learning. They can help universities prepare students for the future by supporting the development of curriculum content, educational concepts, learning and assessment scenarios, working methods, and learning strategies.

At the same time, the ability to understand, critically evaluate, and use artificial intelligence responsibly is essential. Developing AI literacy is a prerequisite for making informed decisions, minimizing risks, and complying with legal requirements, while also enabling people to realize the innovative capabilities and potential of AI to the fullest.

Freie Universität Berlin is committed to ensuring that the opportunities opened up by AI are made accessible to both students and instructors in a fair, inclusive, and legally compliant manner. To this end, Freie Universität Berlin is providing its members with KI.Assist@FU, a central access point for generative AI, accompanied by training opportunities and recommendations for developing AI literacy. This initiative supports instructors in using AI tools responsibly and in acquiring the knowledge necessary for doing so. This enables instructors to ensure that they possess the necessary skills. The university recommends KI.Assist@FU for use in teaching, particularly when the use of AI is intended to be a mandatory component of a course. This central system ensures regulated, equitable, and centrally provided access to AI for all university members. However, the decision as to

whether and to what extent AI is used in teaching ultimately remains at the discretion of each individual instructor.

When using AI systems, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- **Quality of results**: AI systems can sometimes produce “hallucinations,” i.e., information that appears convincing but is actually factually incorrect or completely made up. Always review AI-generated results critically, using the academic standards appropriate to your field. Pay particular attention to accuracy, logical coherence, and the traceability of any sources and arguments.
- **Bias**: AI models are trained on large datasets that may include stereotypical, biased, or discriminatory patterns. These biases can be reflected in the content it generates and may unintentionally be reinforced or reproduced through use.
- **Good research practice:** When using AI tools, you must adhere to the principles of good research practice. In particular, any use of AI in research, teaching, or coursework must be transparent and clearly disclosed as a sign of academic integrity.
- **Sustainability and the responsible use of resources**: Developing and operating AI systems requires substantial computing power, energy, and financial resources. For this reason, AI tools should be used purposefully and efficiently, in ways that align with the university’s sustainability goals.
- **Data protection**: When using AI tools, it is essential that you comply with all applicable data protection laws. In particular, this includes the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the German Federal Data Protection Act (BDSG), and the Berlin Data Protection Act (BlnDSG). This applies both to the input of personal data into AI systems and to the subsequent use of content generated by these systems.
- **Copyright and intellectual property**: AI tools cannot be considered “authors” in the legal sense of the word. Users bear individual responsibility for their use of AI-generated content – including any errors, inaccurate references, plagiarism, or copyright violations it may contain. Uploading copyrighted materials into AI tools may constitute a copyright-relevant act and is only permissible within the limits of the valid statutory provisions.
- **Developing AI literacy (Art. 4 EU AI Act)**: In accordance with Article 4 of the European Union’s Artificial Intelligence Act, Freie Universität takes measures to ensure that all employees, instructors, and students who work with or operate KI.Assist@FU possess an appropriate level of AI literacy. To this end, Freie Universität offers training sessions that cover ethical considerations, data protection, inclusion/accessibility, and the practical use and limitations of AI in teaching. Instructors are encouraged to regularly update their AI-related knowledge and document their participation in continuing education activities.
- **Prohibited practices and high-risk systems (Art. 5 and 6, EU AI Act)**: Practices prohibited under Article 5 of the EU AI Act, as well as the use of high-risk systems defined in Article 6.2 of the EU AI Act, are strictly forbidden. In particular, pursuant to

Article 6.2 Annex III.3 of the EU AI Act, this includes AI systems related to university admissions, examinations, performance assessments, evaluations of the appropriate level of education that an individual will receive or be able to access, and the monitoring of examinations.

Using KI.Assist@FU as an Instructor

Integrating AI applications into university teaching creates opportunities to critically engage and experiment with the latest technological developments, particularly those that are relevant to specific disciplines and can inform different teaching methods. AI offers many possibilities for instructors to make their teaching more efficient, flexible, and individualized. AI-supported applications can support instructors in many stages of the teaching process – from planning and carrying out a course to reviewing and further developing it. They can also help instructors to introduce new educational ideas into their work and make knowledge more accessible to diverse groups of students by reducing barriers to learning.

The following examples illustrate how instructors can use KI.Assist@FU in their teaching, while taking into account legal, ethical, and assessment-related requirements.

- **Engaging with AI in a subject-specific and methodologically relevant manner**: Using AI as a topic of critical inquiry and exploration within teaching as part of a student-centered approach that builds future-oriented skills.
- **Conceptual and methodological planning of courses**: AI tools can support the planning and preparation of courses by providing inspiration for teaching concepts and methods, structuring courses through the creation of semester plans, or suggesting learning objectives and course descriptions. They can also enable a more personalized approach to teaching, for example, by recommending differentiated learning paths based on students' individual levels of knowledge. In addition, AI applications can help simplify or translate complex content, reducing barriers to access.
- **Creating teaching and learning materials**: Instructors can use AI tools to generate teaching and learning materials such as slides, summaries, worksheets, case studies, or quiz and assessment questions. Likewise, learning materials such as tutorials, homework assignments, or additional exercises can be automatically created and adapted to the learning context.
- **Support in providing feedback**: AI tools can assist instructors in drafting feedback, for example, by turning bullet points into complete sentences when commenting on arguments, term papers, or other student work. However, the basis for any AI-generated feedback must always be the instructor's own evaluation. For copyright reasons, student work may only be entered into AI tools with the explicit written consent of the students concerned.[1]

[1] The corresponding consent form is available at: https://www.ki.fu-berlin.de/_dokumente/Declaration-of-Consent_KI_AssistatFU_Students_EN.docx

When using AI, instructors should pay particular attention to the legal and ethical aspects detailed below, in addition to the general principles (see Section 2). More information on using AI in the context of examinations and assessments can be found in Section 5.

- **Developing AI literacy**: Instructors who use AI are expected to acquire the necessary skills to use AI systems knowledgeably and to be aware of both the opportunities and risks of AI, including the potential harm they may cause. They are therefore encouraged to regularly update their AI-related knowledge and document their participation in continuing education activities. This is especially important when students are expected to work with AI as a mandatory part of their studies.
- **Transparency and developing student skills**: The use of AI tools in courses must be clearly communicated and designed to be transparent and understandable. When students are expected to use AI as part of a course, instructors must explain how the AI tools used or permitted in this context function, as well as the risks and limitations thereof. Students should also be taught how to use AI critically and responsibly, reflecting on its use from a subject-specific and methodological perspective and implementing it in accordance with the academic standards of their field.
- **Educational responsibility**: The use of AI in teaching must always serve the intended learning objectives. AI components should be integrated into the curriculum through deliberate didactic planning and with full transparency. Their effectiveness and accuracy regarding the specific subject(s) should be reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed. Overall educational responsibility remains fully with the instructor.
- **Equal access**: When AI is to be used as a mandatory part of a course, it must be implemented in a way that ensures equitable access for all students. This means that learning objectives and required assignments must be able to be achieved in full using the university's centrally provided AI resources.
- **Data protection and copyright**: All applicable data protection and copyright laws must be observed when processing data. In particular, entering or uploading personal data or copyrighted materials into AI systems is generally prohibited. For this reason, student work may only be entered into AI tools with the explicit written consent of the students concerned.[2]
- **Permitted use**: KI.Assist@FU may only be used for university-related purposes.

Using KI.Assist@FU as a Student

Freie Universität Berlin considers the confident and informed use of artificial intelligence to be a key skill for the future. The university aims to provide students with expertise in their academic subject while also preparing them for an increasingly digital and dynamic world of work and research. Developing students' abilities to work with AI and fostering their literacy in this field is a core responsibility of educational institutions today. As such, Freie

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Universität provides its students with data protection-compliant access to AI-based applications, supplemented by accompanying materials and recommendations for developing AI literacy. These resources are designed to promote the responsible, legally compliant, and creative use of AI in higher education.

The following examples illustrate how students can use KI.Assist@FU in their studies, while taking into account legal, ethical, and assessment-related requirements. More information on using AI in the context of examinations and assessments can be found in Section 5.

- **Finding inspiration and developing topics of interest**: AI tools can support students in identifying suitable areas of interest within their field of study (for example, based on prior coursework) and clarifying them based on representative research questions.
- **Providing orientation in new subject areas**: AI tools can assist learning by providing an initial overview of a new academic or disciplinary field or by explaining and illustrating complex concepts and terms.
- **Supporting learning through dialogue-based tools**: AI tools can generate quiz questions based on general knowledge in a subject or lecture notes to track students' learning progress or help them prepare for exams. Through dialogue-based interactions, AI can also foster critical reflection (the "Socratic method") or act as a digital study buddy. Students can also use AI tools to organize their study plans by generating schedules or milestones.
- **Generating feedback**: AI can provide constructive feedback on drafts. For example, students can ask it to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a text they have written and then revise it accordingly.
- **Editing and revision**: AI tools can be used to polish a student's written work by improving spelling, grammar, and overall language use.

When using AI, students should pay particular attention to the legal and ethical aspects detailed below, in addition to the general principles (see Section 2).

- **Personal responsibility and obligation to inform**: Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations governing the use of AI in their specific degree program. If there are any uncertainties about whether or how AI use is permitted in a specific academic context, students are expected to consult with their instructors in advance.
- **Good research practice**: The principles of academic integrity, for example, transparency, traceability, and independent work, must be upheld when using AI.
- **Verification of results**: AI-generated output must always be reviewed carefully and, if necessary, corrected or adapted. Students should be aware of potential bias and the risk of discrimination in AI-generated content.
- **Responsibility for content**: Students are fully responsible for any content they generate with AI tools, including any inaccuracies, distortions, or plagiarism.
- **Data protection and copyright**: All applicable data protection and copyright laws must be observed when entering data into AI tools and systems. In particular, uploading copyrighted materials (e.g., journal articles, textbooks) or personal information (e.g.,

names, email addresses, student ID numbers, examination data) into AI systems is not permitted.

- **Permitted use**: KI.Assist@FU may only be used for university-related purposes.

Using AI-Based Tools in Examinations and Assessments (and Legal Consequences)

A) AI-Based Tools as Unauthorized Aids (Recommended for Supervised Assessments, e.g., Written Exams)

If AI-based tools are not explicitly permitted in an examination and students use them without disclosure, this constitutes misrepresentation regarding the originality of their work. Even if students explicitly disclose their use of unauthorized AI tools, this still counts as using an unauthorized aid as per Section 19.3.1 of the Framework Regulations for Degree Programs and Examinations (*Rahmenstudien- und Prüfungsordnung*, RSPO) and will be treated as an attempt to influence the result of an examination by deception with the corresponding legal consequences.

B) AI-Based Tools as Authorized Aids (Recommended for Unsupervised Assessments, e.g., Term Papers)

Whether AI-based tools may be permitted as aids in assessments is decided by the relevant examination board, which conducts a careful evaluation within the context of its responsibilities stipulated in Section 6.1.2 RSPO. To this end, the examination board should review and, if necessary, adapt the declaration of authorship and the subject-specific recommendations for academic work.

The final decision as to whether the use of AI-based tools is authorized in a specific assessment lies with the instructor responsible for the assessment, as does the decision regarding which AI-based tools may be used in this scenario. This must be communicated transparently to students. It must also be clearly communicated how the authorized AI tools may be used – for example, exclusively for language editing, for receiving feedback on one's own text, or for supporting research of secondary literature. In all cases, students must be informed about how the authorized AI tools work, their risks, and how they can be used in accordance with good research practice. Instructors who allow the use of AI in assessments must also develop methods to ensure that students' independent contributions can be distinguished from AI-generated content and assessed accordingly.

When AI is authorized as an aid, its use must be clearly marked and documented (see below). The terms of use of the respective tools may contain their own additional requirements for labeling AI-generated content.

If AI-based tools are used in an assessment (even if their use is authorized) without the proper indication, this constitutes an attempt to influence the result of an examination by deception under Section 19.3.1 RSPO.

C) Mandatory Use of AI in Assessments

The mandatory use of AI in assessments is strongly discouraged until further notice.

D) Evaluation of Assessments

Grading learning outcomes – and particularly examinations – automatically through AI is classified as “high-risk” under Article 6.2 of the EU AI Act in conjunction with Annex III) and is therefore prohibited until further notice. AI may only be used in a preparatory or supporting capacity when evaluating assessments, with its suggestions treated as a nonbinding part of the evaluation process. AI-generated output must always be critically reviewed by the examiner. The examiner must make the final assessment decision and bears full responsibility for the evaluation. For copyright reasons, student work may only be entered into AI tools with the explicit written consent of the students concerned.[3]

E) Recommendations Regarding Suspected Cases of Misconduct, Use of Unauthorized Aids, or Violations of Good Research Practice

Suspected cases of misconduct and the corresponding results of the examination must be fully documented, and a review of the case should take place without undue delay. As part of this process, a hearing is held in accordance with Section 19.6 RSPO in which the student is given an opportunity to state their case.

Anti-plagiarism software such as Identific or other AI-based detection tools for identifying AI-generated text are not considered legally admissible in examination procedures, as their results lack sufficient quality and cannot be independently verified by examiners. They therefore cannot be used as sole evidence for determining whether a text was AI-generated. Compliance with copyright law must also be ensured in this context. Further regulations regarding the handling of suspected cases of attempted deception or use of unauthorized aids fall under the responsibility of the relevant examination board in accordance with Section 6.1 and Section 19.3 RSPO.

KI.Assist@FU: Freie Universität’s Central AI System

Freie Universität Berlin provides its members with KI.Assist@FU, a central access point for generative AI designed to ensure that the use of AI in teaching and learning is equitable and complies with the appropriate regulations.

Several AI models are available as part of this centrally managed service, all hosted on European infrastructures:

- Open-weight models are provided through national AI service centers (e.g., GWDG/KISSKI) and operated on servers located in Germany.
- Proprietary models (e.g., OpenAI models) are made available via EU-based cloud services. Here, data processing takes place in compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within a secure, privacy-compliant silo model that uses encrypted storage.

[3] The corresponding consent form is available at: https://www.ki.fu-berlin.de/_dokumente/Declaration-of-Consent_KI_AssistatFU_Students_EN.docx

- In the future, Freie Universität Berlin also plans to integrate AI models hosted locally on its own servers, and provisions for this have already been built into the system architecture.

For transparency, the user interface clearly informs users of which AI model is processing their request. Information on the specific characteristics of each model can be found at: https://wikis.fu-berlin.de/x/doh3a.

KI.Assist@FU may only be used for university-related purposes.

Users log in to the system using the single sign-on function connected with their personal Freie Universität account; it is not necessary to register with any external providers. Use of the system is pseudonymized and designed to minimize data collection. Entering personal or confidential information is not permitted under the terms of use. Any input you provide will not be used to train the underlying models. For the time being, the associated costs are being covered centrally, with the service being continuously evaluated throughout its implementation. University management reserves the right to make adjustments depending on how costs develop over time. The central offices responsible for AI at Freie Universität regularly publish and update detailed information on the available AI models, the legal framework for protecting data while using these models, possible use cases, and organizational guidelines (www.ki.fu-berlin.de).

Freie Universität expressly recommends using the centrally provided service for the use of generative AI in teaching. This ensures:

- Compliance with relevant legal frameworks through verified infrastructure, commissioned data processing agreements, and a documented administrative IT procedure,
- Equal access through free use for university members across all status groups,
- Support on both a technical and educational level through accompanying training and advisory services.

Support and Resources for Improving AI Literacy at Freie Universität

A range of support services and resources for technical questions and educational matters regarding AI-based tools in higher education are continually being developed and rolled out at Freie Universität Berlin. Currently they are being offered by the E-Learning and E-Examination Unit within FUB-IT's Division of Teaching, Studying, and Research (here), the University Library (here), and the Dahlem Center for Academic Teaching, DCAT (here). Additional resources are available at the Berlin Center for Higher Education (BZHL) and the German Association for Academic Development (dghd).

For questions about generative AI or the responsible and legally compliant use of AI in teaching and learning at Freie Universität, please visit the KI@FU project website for an overview of the resources available to students and instructors: www.fu-berlin.de/ki. If you have any further questions, please contact the KI@FU team at: ki@fu-berlin.de.

Further Information

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Appendix

Suggested template to supplement the declaration of authorship in cases where the use of AI-based tools as authorized aids in unsupervised exams has been approved[4]:

1. I hereby confirm

– that the work I have submitted was produced solely by me,

– that I did not use any other resources or aids other than the ones explicitly deemed permissible beforehand and cited by me in the work,

– that I have provided the sources for any portion of my work that uses direct quotations or borrowed ideas/concepts/results/etc. from other works (including internet sources and AI-based tools),

– that I have not submitted this work to be graded as part of another assessment.

2. Furthermore, I am aware

– that I will fail the assessment if I do not submit my results by the deadline communicated to me in advance,

– that if I am caught attempting to cheat, I will fail the assessment,

– that if my attempt to cheat is particularly severe, I could potentially fail the assessment with no opportunity to retake it and not be allowed to continue my studies in this program, and

– that, if I used AI-based tools to write this term paper, I bear the responsibility for any false or biased content, erroneous references, violations against data protection or copyright law, or incidences of plagiarism generated by the AI.

[4] Supplement based on the declaration of authorship used by the Department of Philosophy and Humanities.

Further examples of subject-specific declarations of authorship can be found here:

Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy:

- https://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/studium-lehre/verwaltung/pruefungsbuero/pruefungsbuero_biologie/bsc-kombi-biologie/0_ressourcen/Vorlage-Eigenstaendigkeit.pdf

Institute for Latin American Studies:

- Term papers: https://www.lai.fu-berlin.de/studium/master/060-Wichtige_Dokumente/Ressourcen_Wichtige_Dokumente/Eigenstaendigkeitserklaerung_Hausarbeit-MA-LAS_2024.pdf
- Final theses: https://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/studium/downloads/downloads_studiengaenge/ma_interdisziplinaere_lateinamerikastudien/Eidestattl_-Erklaerung_MA-Arbeit-LAS_2024.pdf

Suggested additions/amendments to guidelines or tips for submitting academic work where the use of AI-based tools has been approved:

The following aspects may be taken into account when revising guidelines on academic work to include reference to the use of AI:

Disclosure obligation:

- Sections of a paper or other work that are based on, or directly reproduce, content generated by AI-based tools (especially text generators) must be clearly indicated and include a source. Please note that AI-generated content does not generally qualify as a citable academic source (unless it is itself the subject of analysis). Scholarly statements must always be supported by verifiable academic/scientific literature.

Transparency regarding the nature of use:

- Sections of a paper or other work that rely on AI-based tools for tasks relevant to the assignment or examination must be clearly indicated. Students should provide a footnote at the corresponding point in the text, specifying the type of AI assistance used. Examples include using AI for generating ideas, creating an outline, drafting or composing text, optimizing language, or developing and improving software code.

Documentation obligation:

- The appendix of the paper or other work must include documentation of all AI-based tools used to create it, specifying the following information:
- name of the AI tool, model or software version, date of access (if applicable), URL (if applicable), prompt used (if applicable), result (e.g., transcript or screenshots, if applicable).