



Department of Physiology and Biophysics AI Policy

Use of Generative AI in Dissertations, Theses and Scholarly Projects

Dissertations, theses, and other culminating scholarly projects must reflect the student's original intellectual work, including the development of ideas, analysis, interpretation, and written expression. Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools may be used in a limited and controlled manner as described below; however, such tools must not replace the student's independent thinking, scholarly judgment, or authorship.

Non-Substantive Use (Permitted without prior approval)

Use of GenAI that does not alter meaning, reasoning, or intellectual contribution. These include grammar correction, minor stylistic edits, formatting, and transcription. Use of AI-based literature curation tools is permitted provided that students perform synthesis and written literature reviews without GenAI assistance. Only clearly non-substantive functions are allowed. When in doubt, treat use as substantive

Substantive Use (Restricted; requires approval)

Any use of GenAI that influences or contributes to intellectual content, including generating arguments, literature synthesis, writing sections, coding for analysis, or data interpretation.

Prohibited Uses of GenAI

- Submitting GenAI-generated text, figures, tables, code, or other materials as original work without proper authorization and disclosure;
- Using GenAI to generate or substantially contribute to core scholarly components, including research questions, hypotheses, literature reviews, analytical arguments, or interpretations of data, without prior approval;
- Fabricating, manipulating, or altering research data or results using GenAI tools;
- Using GenAI systems to generate citations or references without verification of their accuracy and existence in the scholarly record;
- Uploading or entering confidential, proprietary, unpublished, or sensitive research data—including human subjects data—into publicly accessible GenAI systems or tools that do not meet institutional data security requirements.

Violations will be treated as academic misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including degree revocation. Students should review the UB Academic Integrity Policy: <https://catalogs.buffalo.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=863#academic-integrity>



Advisor/Mentor Responsibilities

The dissertation or thesis advisor, in consultation with the student's thesis/dissertation advisory committee, is responsible for establishing expectations regarding the permissible use of generative GenAI for each student's project, consistent with this policy and applicable program standards. Students must consult with their advisor prior to using GenAI tools for any purpose beyond basic editorial support.

Advisors may:

- Prohibit the use of GenAI entirely for a given project;
- Permit limited uses of GenAI aligned with this policy; or
- Approve specific, clearly defined uses of GenAI, provided such uses are documented and disclosed.

All approvals must be communicated clearly to the student and documented in writing. In cases of ambiguity, the default expectation is that GenAI-generated substantive content is not permitted.

Student Responsibility

The use of generative GenAI does not diminish the student's responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of their scholarly work. Students remain fully accountable for all content submitted, including any material developed with the assistance of GenAI tools. Students are responsible for complying with both program-level requirements and advisor-specific guidance. In the event of conflicting guidance, the more restrictive standard will apply.

Students are required to obtain approval for any substantive GenAI use related to the generation of their dissertation, thesis or scholarly project report. Permission should be obtained in writing prior to use of the tool. Students should maintain a written record of tool use, including identification of the tool, as well as prompts and outputs. When the student submits their thesis, dissertation or scholarly project report to their advisory committee, it must be accompanied by a one-page attestation documenting GenAI use and should be signed by both the student and the major advisor/mentor.

The attestation should include a clear and accurate disclosure of any use of generative GenAI tools in the preparation of the dissertation, thesis, or scholarly project.

The disclosure must:

- Identify the GenAI tool(s) used;
- Describe the specific purpose(s) for which the tool was used;



- Clarify the extent of use, including whether the tool contributed to editing, organization, coding, or other functions; and
- Affirm that all intellectual content, analysis, and conclusions are the student's own.

In cases where GenAI use extends beyond basic editorial assistance and has been approved by the advisor or committee, students may be required to provide additional documentation beyond the attestation, such as summaries of interactions, prompts, or draft outputs, upon request.

Program Director / Graduate Affairs Committee Responsibility

This policy establishes baseline standards governing the acceptable use of generative GenAI in dissertations, theses, and scholarly projects. These standards define the minimum expectations for permissible use, prohibited activities, and disclosure requirements. Although the major advisor serves as the primary authority in approving any substantive use of generative GenAI, the academic program (e.g., Program Director or Graduate Affairs Committee) will maintain formal records of all such approvals. This oversight ensures that permissions are applied consistently and fairly across students, helping to prevent disparities in access to or use of GenAI tools within the program