
Generative AI in education

Recommendations for the USI student community

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1. General considerations¹

USI encourages the creative, critical and responsible use of generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) tools by members of its academic community, promoting experimentation, critical thinking and open discussions with and about these tools in teaching, research, knowledge transfer and other areas of USI's activities (to follow the activities on the subject, see: <https://www.desk.usi.ch/en/node/13584>).

Recognising that the ability to use AI tools effectively and responsibly is a fundamental skill for operating successfully in the 'digital society', **USI encourages its teaching staff and student community to learn and master these tools**, promoting a **critical thinking** approach that also considers their limitations.

For the use of Gen AI tools by the USI student community, the following general principles apply:

1. The use of Gen AI is encouraged, unless for specific activities where it is explicitly prohibited.
2. It is the responsibility of the teachers and the students to explicitly agree on the conditions of use of the Gen AI within courses and for writing dissertations, papers, etc.
3. The use of Gen AI tools for drafting texts for examination papers, final papers, dissertations, etc. must always be declared.
4. Gen AI must be used critically, competently and responsibly, paying particular attention to the trustworthiness of the answers provided, data protection, environmental sustainability aspects, and ensuring that confidential documents and sensitive data are not shared.
5. The responsibility for output produced using Gen AI tools must be assumed by an individual: those who use Gen AI assume responsibility for the resulting content, which cannot be attributed to a technical tool.

USI has **extensive expertise in Gen AI**; among its other activities, it has an **inter-faculty working group**², which offers training and consulting services and can be contacted for contributions, suggestions, questions and requests regarding the use of Gen AI.

2. Directions for an informed use of Gen AI by the student community

2.1. Using generative AI for study and review activities

In general, USI encourages creative and informed use of Gen AI tools by students for their study activities, recommending that this be done in accordance with the instructions of their teachers.

In the appendix, there are some examples of possible prompts that can be used in study and exam preparation activities, for example, to review course content independently or through activities specifically created by the teacher (using Wooflash or other similar tools – see Example 1), or to obtain explanations or clarifications on concepts covered in class, either independently or through teacher-guided activities (Example 2).

¹ This document expands and replaces previous communications ("ChatGPT & generative artificial intelligence @ USI", dated June 2023; and "Artificial intelligence tools and platforms", dated January 2023). This document is to be considered a working document and is subject to continuous updates.

² <https://www.desk.usi.ch/en/node/13584>

2.2. Using generative AI for writing assignments, dissertations, final papers, etc.

In general, when writing exam papers, final papers, theses, etc., students are required to strictly follow their teachers' instructions regarding the use of Gen AI tools.

As a general rule, the use of Gen AI tools for the complete drafting of exam papers, dissertations, final papers, etc. is not permitted, but may be allowed for certain specific activities (e.g. checking the accuracy of a text in a specific language, etc.).

If in doubt (e.g., 'I am not sure if I can use ChatGPT for this activity'; 'I do not know how to correctly declare how I used ChatGPT', etc.), it is essential to consult with your teachers.

Please note that the use of Gen AI tools for writing exam papers, final papers, dissertations, etc., where permitted, must always be declared ("I used it / how I used it").

It is also recommended that you always carefully and critically check the answers you obtain from Gen AI tools, as they may be inaccurate and factually incorrect (so-called "hallucinations").

It should always be remembered that these tools are not search engines such as Google or similar, even though they are gradually integrating information obtained from the web into their responses. The responses provided by Gen AI combine information on which they have been trained in a probability-based manner and, in doing so, may create new false or incorrect information.

When using Gen AI tools, therefore, students are expected to behave in a competent and responsible manner. It is their responsibility to follow the instructions received from their teachers: unauthorised use of Gen AI tools is considered academic fraud and, as such, is subject to the penalties provided for in the respective study regulations.

3. Appendices

3.1. Appendix 1 - Examples ³

Example 1

Social Psychology Course

Aim: To review the main theories of social psychology such as social identity theory, conformity, cognitive dissonance.

Possible prompts for Gen AI:

- *"Generate a quiz with multiple choice questions on Henri Tajfel's social identity theory and the concept of stereotypes, including detailed explanations for the answers."*
- *"Create a set of flashcards to review the concepts of conformity, obedience and cognitive dissonance. Each flashcard should include the definition of the concept and a practical example."*
- *"Provide a reflective exercise on the phenomena of conformism in social groups, with questions to analyse one's personal experience of these concepts."*

Please note: examples generated by Gen AI must be reviewed by the student and carefully checked and compared with other course materials, as they may be significantly different from those proposed by the teacher.

Example of autonomous use:

- The student uses Gen AI-generated flashcards to memorise definitions and examples of key social psychology concepts.
- Subsequently, the multiple-choice quiz allows the student to test his or her understanding, receiving immediate feedback on correct and incorrect answers.

Example 2

Philosophy Course:

Aim: To clarify the key concepts of philosophical theories such as empiricism, rationalism and existentialism.

Prompt for Gen AI:

- *"Explain the difference between empiricism and rationalism in a simple way, citing examples of key thinkers such as Locke and Descartes".*
- *"Provide a detailed explanation of the concept of existence according to Jean-Paul Sartre".*
- *"Explain contemporary criticisms of Hume's theory of knowledge, and provide some counter-arguments."*

Please note: examples generated by Gen AI must be reviewed by the student and carefully checked and compared with other course materials, as they may be significantly different from those proposed by the teacher.

³ All examples provided in this document are purely illustrative and do not refer to actual events or specific situations that have occurred in any course.

Example of autonomous use:

- Following a lesson on empiricism and rationalism, the student uses Gen AI to clarify the differences between these two philosophical schools of thought. They can ask for further details or practical examples to better understand the thinking of philosophers such as Locke and Descartes.

Example of a teacher-led activity:

- The teacher asks the students to use the Gen AI to explore the theory of existentialism, asking the class to rephrase the Gen AI answers and discuss them in groups. This encourages critical discussion and investigation.
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3.2. Appendix 2 - Benchmarking with other Swiss universities

These guidelines are also based on a benchmark analysis made on the recommendations published by other Swiss universities and polytechnics. The following table shows the reference links (updated 11.06.2025).

University	Description	Link
ETH Zurich	The ETHZ takes a proactive approach to the use of generative AI in the educational context, promoting responsible use among students and teachers.	https://ethz.ch/en/the-eth-zurich/education/ai-in-education.html
University of Zurich	The University of Zurich publishes its seven guiding principles with respect to artificial intelligence in research and teaching, with a recommendation with respect to Generative AI.	https://www.uzh.ch/en/explore/basics/ai.html https://www.uzh.ch/en/explore/basics/ai/recommendations.html
EPFL	EPFL encourages the use of generative AI across their range of activities in an informed, responsible and transparent manner. It introduces the key principle: always remember to remain critical when using these tools.	https://www.epfl.ch/about/vice-presidencies/vice-presidency-for-academic-affairs-vpa/tips-for-the-use-of-generative-ai-in-research-and-education/
University of Geneva	The University of Geneva recognises and encourages the use of Generative AI, remembering that it is the responsibility of all members of the university community to make informed, critical and responsible use of these tools.	https://www.unige.ch/en/university/politique-generale/use-generative-artificial-intelligence-unige/ https://www.unige.ch/en/university/politique-generale/statement-ai/
University of Basel	Guidelines on the use of Generative AI in teaching and research.	https://www.unibas.ch/en/Studies/Learning-and-Teaching/AI-in-learning-and-teaching.html
University of Freiburg	Guidelines for introducing Generative AI in the context of research and teaching.	https://www.unifr.ch/uni/fr/assets/public/files/portrait/encdrement_ia_generative_enseignement_fr.pdf https://www.unifr.ch/it/fr/assets/public/documents/MaterielsLogiciels/AlternativesOutilsDetection_Final.pdf
University of Lucerne	The University of Lucerne defines what is prohibited and what is permitted.	https://www.unilu.ch/fileadmin/fakultaeten/wf/institute/hrm/dok/St

[udium/ENG_Merkblatt_KI_2023
1019_EV.pdf](#)

University of Bern

The University of Bern encourages the use of Generative AI on the basis of three main principles: transparency, comprehensibility and reproducibility.

https://www.unibe.ch/unibe/portal/content/e1133/e1396721/e1539599/e1539602/Guidelines_ResearchonandwithAI2024_ger.pdf

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