Zürcher Hochschule
für Angewandte Wissenschaften

President's Office

Academic Affairs Unit

Use of generative AI systems as part of assessments

1. Principles

- [The general academic regulations for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes](#) (in German)
- [The general academic regulations for professional graduate degree programmes](#) (in German)
- [The general academic regulations for diploma and certificate of advanced studies programmes at the ZHAW](#)
- [Regulations on Digital Examinations at the ZHAW](#)
- [Regulations on the Use of the ZHAW IT Infrastructure](#)
- [Information sheet on how to avoid plagiarism](#)
- [Dishonest conduct check list](#)

2. Introduction

Generative systems based on artificial intelligence (AI) are part of the new study and professional realities of teaching staff, students and continuing education participants. The available systems, which offer an ever better level of performance, can support and enhance teaching, learning, administrative and research processes in a meaningful and efficient manner. The interaction between humans and machines presents a wide range of opportunities to increasingly focus on creative, problem-solving activities and to further boost the performance and innovative capacity of universities. However, the existence of generative AI systems also poses numerous challenges, such as ethical risks, bias, misinformation ("hallucinations") and a lack of protection for personal data and intellectual property. One of the questions that also arises is which requirements have to be in place to allow for fair, valid and reliable assessments to be conducted that reliably check and evaluate the independent work performed by students and continuing education participants. As an academic institution, the university is (jointly) responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules of good academic practice (academic integrity).

3. Object and purpose

These guidelines, including the [Annex on the obligation to declare the use of generative AI for graded assignments](#) (hereinafter referred to as the "Annex") explain the use of generative AI systems for summative (assessment-related) assessments and are aimed at ZHAW employees. In particular, they are intended to provide directors of studies and lecturers (also referred to together as the "individuals responsible") with guidance on questions raised in connection with generative AI systems and assessments and to ensure that the issue is handled in as uniform a manner as possible throughout the university. However, due to the dynamic nature (and development) of the available systems and the fact that no general routine has yet been established for the handling of such AI systems in the context of assessments, generally valid, unambiguous or conclusive answers to the questions raised are still lacking.

These guidelines are based on the premise of the current reality in the area of university assessments and on the knowledge available and experience gathered at the time of their creation or revision. They therefore do no replace the need for the university to implement a

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reflection and transformation process in the longer term with respect to the teaching and examination practices into which generative AI systems will have to be integrated.

4. Scope

These guidelines apply to all assessments completed as part of academic programmes and continuing education courses at the ZHAW, including assessments carried out as part of admission processes. They do not apply to cooperative study programmes with other universities.

5. Generative AI systems

Generative AI systems are interactive digital tools whose technologies are based on machine learning. They generate content in a variety of media formats (output, e.g. texts, images, audio or video) on the basis of existing data or further process input data and prompts. The generated output cannot be reproduced or can only be reproduced to a limited extent due to the system-immanent properties of AI.

6. Use of generative AI systems as part of assessments

When using AI systems as part of assessments, students and continuing education participants are responsible for both the content generated and observing the relevant copyright provisions as well as for ensuring the academic integrity of their assessment.

The tools allowed to be used as part of an assessment are determined by the individuals responsible for the assessment and communicated to the students and continuing education participants in good time via an appropriate channel. The use of non-permitted tools is considered dishonest conduct and may result in (disciplinary) measures being taken.

6.1 Use of generative AI systems in examinations

Examinations are assessments that are completed over a relatively short period of time, generally no longer than four hours, and which generally take place under invigilation.

Unless specific generative AI systems are explicitly stated as permitted tools, they are not allowed to be used in an examination. Dishonest conduct is to be avoided to the greatest extent possible through suitable examination invigilation as well as, where appropriate, through the use of lockdown software or digital examination invigilation for written digital examinations (see in this regard the Regulations on Digital Examinations at the ZHAW).

6.2 Use of generative AI systems in graded assignments

Graded assignments are a type of assessment which, unlike examinations, are completed over a longer period of time that generally exceeds four hours. They mostly have an individual character in terms of the solutions provided and are not supervised.

The use of generative AI systems for graded assignments reflects a natural and expected approach towards digital tools by students and continuing education participants and is an expression of their digital competence and modern working methods. However, to ensure that their personal contribution can be assessed, and in the interests of academic integrity, the use of generative AI systems must be made as transparent as possible. The share or extent of the contribution made by generative AI systems to the creative output generated by students and continuing education participants in compiling their graded assignments must be recognisable to third parties. In principle, there is therefore an obligation to declare all generative AI systems

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that influence a graded assignment in terms of its content. The Annex governs the aforementioned declaration obligation in detail. The provisions contained therein are subsidiary[1] in nature.

7. Declaration of own work

A declaration of own work is part of most graded assignments and can also be used in examinations. It confirms that all cited sources and other aids used have been correctly noted and that the assessment was completed solely with the permitted aids. The principle-based and technology-neutral design of the declaration of own work ensures that the use of generative AI systems is also covered. Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to amend the declaration of own work to include the permitted AI systems in individual cases on a subject-specific basis and in consultation with Legal Services.

8. Data protection and the availability of generative AI systems

In instances in which the use of specific generative AI systems as aids is required as part of an assessment, the ZHAW is required to ensure that students and continuing education participants can use them in a manner that complies with the relevant data protection regulations. Exceptions here include AI systems that may be seen as an integral working tool as part of a subject-specific training programme or which have a very high level of availability. If the use of a specific AI system is required in the context of an examination, the system must have a very high level of availability (continuity).

Personal data and other data requiring heightened protection as well as data that is subject to contractual or legal confidentiality must not be processed using generative AI systems unless these systems have been reviewed and approved[2] by the ZHAW with respect to their data protection compliance. When using generative AI systems during teaching and for assessments, students and continuing education participants must be made aware of this accordingly.

9. Evaluation of assessments with generative AI systems

If teaching staff use generative AI systems to evaluate assessments, they must ensure compliance with both data protection regulations and copyright requirements. For example, it is only permitted to process creative work of students and continuing education participants using an AI system if the system does not reuse the input data as training data or utilise it in any other way. AI systems may also only be used as an aid for the evaluation of open-ended task formats. In addition, the use of software to recognise AI-generated texts for the purpose of assessments is prohibited. The same evaluation framework must always be applied within a study group, irrespective of whether individual students have used AI systems or not.

10. Validity

The guidelines come into effect on 1 April 2023.

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[1] The provisions specified in the Annex thus serve as an "alternative" if no others have been specified.
[2] The ZHAW Self-Service portal contains information on the approved systems as well as on the IT Compliancy Check (Cloud & App Due Diligence)

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11. Document information

The original German version of the policy can be found here:
[Z-RL-Verwendung generativer KI-Systeme bei Leistungsnachweisen](#)

11.1 Document metadata

Subject*	Content
Issued by	Academic Affairs Unit
Decided by	Head of the Academic Affairs Unit
Subject classification	2.05.00 Academic Programmes, Studies / 5.04.00 CE Implementation
Publication type	Public

11.2 Issued by

Version	Decision	Decided by	Validity	Description of change
1.0.0	21 March 2023	Head of the Academic Affairs Unit	1 April 2023	Original version
1.0.1	-	-	-	Link to the original German added
2.0.0	28/11/2023	Head of the Academic Affairs Unit	01/12/2023	Annex on the obligation to declare the use of generative AI for graded assignments (new) Section 3: Mention of the Annex Addition to section 6.2 (principle of subsidiarity) Addition to section 6.2, FN 3 (new reference to APA citation guidelines) Addition of reference to the use of software to recognise AI-generated texts (section 9) Replacement of the term "students" with "students and continuing education participants"
3.0.0	26/02/2025	Head of the Academic Affairs Unit	01/03/2025	Linguistic adjustments (up-to-date wording) in sections 1, 5, 6.2, 8 and 9 Section 6.2.: Addition of subsidiarity principle Section 6.2: Deletion of the detailed declaration obligation and reference to its clarification in the Annex. Section 8: Addition of tools in the Self-Service portal