



# Developing Program-Level Guidelines for Acceptable Use of AI in Key Graduate Education Milestones

*Guide for Graduate Programs*

## Purpose

This guide supports graduate programs in developing discipline-appropriate policies governing student use of generative AI in key milestones such as qualifying/comprehensive exams and theses/dissertations. It is intentionally non-prescriptive and designed to help programs develop shared expectations aligned with their learning outcomes. This guide does not address course-level policies, which are expected to vary by instructor and assignment.

The resulting policies should clarify expectations for AI use, grounded in the principle that generative AI tools should be used conscientiously and in ways that uphold the highest standards of research integrity, intellectual rigor, and ethical responsibility.

## Institutional References (MSU)

Programs should ensure alignment with current Michigan State University (MSU) policies and guidance. At minimum, consult and reference:

- MSU Generative AI Guidelines (Provost/University guidance): <https://ai.msu.edu/guidelines>
- MSU Institutional Data Policy: <https://tech.msu.edu/about/guidelines-policies/msu-institutional-data-policy/>
- Academic Integrity: <https://ombud.msu.edu/resources-self-help/academic-integrity>
- Generative AI ADR FAQ: <https://ossa.msu.edu/academic-integrity-resources-faculty>

Where conflicts arise, university policy supersedes program-level guidance.

## Process for Developing Program-Level Guidance

### Step 1: Revisit Program Learning Outcomes in an AI Context

**Reexamine existing outcomes:**

- Which outcomes remain essential regardless of AI?
- Which outcomes require reinterpretation in an AI-enabled environment?
- What must students demonstrate independently?

### **Consider AI-related competencies:**

How are employer expectations for AI use evolving in this field? Programs are encouraged to consider whether to add explicit AI-related learning outcomes or to integrate AI-skills into existing student learning outcomes. Examples of potential AI skills to consider include:

- Responsible and effective use of AI in research and professional contexts
- Prompt design and interaction with AI systems
- Critical evaluation and verification of AI outputs
- Understanding ethical, legal, and societal implications of AI

## **Step 2: Map Milestones to Learning Outcomes and Define AI Boundaries**

Programs should anchor AI-use expectations in how milestones assess learning outcomes and articulate high-level boundaries for acceptable AI use.

### **2a. Identify Key Milestones (common examples)**

- Comprehensive / Qualifying Exams (written and oral components)
- Thesis / Dissertation Proposal
- Thesis / Dissertation (final written document)
- Thesis / Dissertation Defense (oral examination including preparation of presentation)

For oral milestones, distinguish between prepared materials (slides, visuals, notes) and the live oral component (presentation and questioning).

### **2b. Map Outcomes to Milestones**

For each milestone:

- Which learning outcomes are being assessed?
- Which elements require independent intellectual work?
- What evidence demonstrates student competence?

### **2c. Define Acceptable and Unacceptable AI Use (High-Level)**

Using this mapping, establish principle-based expectations for each milestone:

- Where AI may appropriately support student work
- Where AI use would undermine valid assessment
- Whether expectations should differ across stages (for example, early versus final milestones)

At this stage, guidance should remain general and conceptual, focusing on boundaries rather than specific cases.

### **2d. Apply Key Lenses to Guide Deliberation**

Programs should use the following lenses to ensure expectations are comprehensive, internally consistent, and aligned with institutional and disciplinary norms. These lenses are not separate

steps; they are dimensions to consider while defining acceptable and unacceptable AI use for each milestone.

### **Levels of AI Use**

Programs may find it useful to distinguish among different levels of AI involvement:

- Assistive use: Supporting tasks (for example, grammar editing, formatting, citation checking)
- Augmentative use: Supporting thinking or workflow (for example, brainstorming, outlining, suggesting structure)
- Substantive use: Contributing directly to intellectual content (for example, drafting text, generating analysis, interpreting results)

Programs should consider:

- Whether these distinctions are meaningful in their discipline
- Which levels of use are appropriate for each milestone
- Where the boundary lies between acceptable support and unacceptable substitution of student work
- Programs may wish to reference some published frameworks and tools. We provide some links in the appendix.

### **Transparency and Attribution**

Programs should clarify expectations for how acceptable AI use is disclosed.

Questions to address:

- When is disclosure of AI use required (for example, dissertations, proposals, exams)?
- What level of detail is appropriate (general statement versus specific documentation)?
- Should expectations differ across milestones or levels of AI use?
- Will these products be used in other settings such as publications, books, or journals which may have their own AI guidelines and disclosure requirements?

Possible approaches include:

- Disclosure statements in theses or dissertations
- Documentation or logging of AI use in research workflows
- Advisor- or committee-level expectations for reporting AI use
- Use of some published frameworks and tools. We provide some links in the appendix.

### **Data, Privacy, and Ethical Considerations**

Programs should ensure expectations align with institutional policy and disciplinary standards (e.g., professional societies).

Key areas to consider:

- Data privacy and confidentiality

- Intellectual property and ownership of inputs and outputs including sponsor restrictions
- Human subjects research and IRB/ethical review requirements, including disclosing the use of AI in IRB applications
- Use of institutionally approved tools versus external platforms
- Broader ethical concerns, including bias, accountability, training data ethically acquired and original sources compensated, and appropriate reliance on AI systems
- Environmental concerns surrounding AI use

### **Alignment with Academic Integrity Frameworks**

Programs should clarify how AI use intersects with existing definitions of academic integrity.

Discussion points:

- When does AI use constitute misrepresentation of authorship or originality?
- How should undisclosed AI use be treated at different milestone stages?
- How do existing definitions of plagiarism, fabrication, or misconduct apply in an AI context?

Programs should aim for consistency with institutional policy while articulating discipline-specific expectations.

### **Using the Lenses**

Programs should use these lenses collectively to test and refine expectations. For example:

- A use of AI that seems acceptable from a transparency perspective may raise concerns when examined through academic integrity or data privacy lenses.
- Expectations around disclosure may vary depending on the level of AI use involved.

**Outcome of Step 2:** A coherent, milestone-specific framework describing what kinds of AI use are generally permitted, restricted, or prohibited, grounded in learning outcomes and disciplinary norms.

### **Step 3: Develop Discipline-Specific Milestone Examples**

Programs should translate Step 2 expectations into concrete, practice-oriented examples that illustrate how the guidelines apply in real situations.

Examples should:

- Reflect specific milestones and tasks
- Show how high-level boundaries operate in practice
- Demonstrate how key lenses (for example, levels of AI use, transparency, ethics, and academic integrity) apply in context
- Make implicit expectations explicit for students and faculty

### **Types of Examples to Develop**

- Appropriate use scenarios
- Inappropriate use scenarios

- Borderline or ambiguous cases

Prompts for discussion include:

- What does appropriate AI use look like in a dissertation in this field?
- What would inappropriate use look like in a qualifying exam?
- How should expectations evolve from proposal to final dissertation?
- How do expectations differ across levels of AI use?
- What constitutes adequate versus inadequate disclosure?

**Outcome of Step 3:** A set of concrete examples and scenarios that clarify expectations, reduce ambiguity, and support consistent interpretation across students and committees.

#### **Step 4: Translate Expectations into Program-Level Guidance and Tools**

Programs should translate expectations from Steps 2-3 into clear, usable, and consistently applied guidance for students, faculty, and committees.

The goal of this step is not only to document decisions, but to ensure they can be understood, implemented, and applied consistently across contexts.

Guidance should:

- Clearly reflect milestone-specific expectations
- Translate high-level boundaries into actionable direction
- Incorporate examples where helpful (from Step 3)
- Clarify expectations for disclosure, ethics, and academic integrity
- Be accessible and interpretable by both students and faculty

Possible formats include:

- Written milestone-specific guidelines
- Expectations for dissertation committees
- Templates for AI-use disclosure
- Student-facing guidance documents or handbooks

Programs may also include:

- Short example scenarios drawn from Step 3
- Standardized language around levels of AI use
- References to institutional policies

Implementation considerations:

- Promote consistency across committees and advisors
- Encourage early advisor-student alignment on expectations
- Provide guidance that reduces ambiguity in borderline cases

**Outcome of Step 4:** Program-level materials that make expectations clear, actionable, and consistently applied.

### **Step 5: Engage Faculty and Students in Ongoing Dialogue**

Programs should support ongoing discussion and shared understanding.

- Include students where appropriate
- Encourage advisor-student conversations about AI use
- Share evolving disciplinary norms

### **Step 6: Review and Revise Regularly**

Programs should revisit guidelines periodically to ensure continued relevance.

Suggested practices:

- Conduct at least annual review
- Reevaluate alignment with learning outcomes and milestones
- Monitor disciplinary trends

Based on an earlier version of these guidelines and feedback from a working group, MSU's ChatGPT instance was used to incorporate those key points into an updated draft before a final editing pass was performed by Eric Torng.

## Appendix A: Sample Program Outputs (Illustrative Models)

### A.1 How to Use This Appendix

These examples illustrate possible ways programs might articulate expectations. Programs should adapt language, scope, and level of detail to their discipline. These examples should be read alongside program- and university-level policies.

This appendix is organized by milestone. For each milestone, the learning outcomes assessed are stated once, followed by 3 illustrative model policies (strict, moderate, AI-integrated) applied to that same milestone. Reading across the 3 models for a single milestone shows how much the same assessment can accommodate different program philosophies. These models represent a range of approaches rather than prescriptions. Programs may adopt hybrid approaches aligned with their discipline, learning outcomes, and assessment priorities.

### A.2 Key Concepts and Definitions

- Generative AI (GenAI): Tools that generate text, code, images, or other media from prompts.
- Assistive use: Editing, formatting, translation, or accessibility support that does not contribute new intellectual content.
- Augmentative use: Brainstorming, outlining, or workflow support that may influence thinking but does not replace it.
- Substantive use: Drafting text, generating analyses, interpretations, or figures that contribute directly to scholarly content.
- Disclosure / Transparency: Clear statement of when, how, and where AI was used.
- Verification: Independent checking of AI outputs (facts, citations, analyses) against authoritative sources.
- Authorship responsibility: Students remain fully responsible for all content, including any content generated with any level of AI support.

### A.3 Disclosure and Citation Practices (Implementation Guidance)

#### A.3.1 Written Milestones (proposals, theses, manuscripts)

- Include an AI Use Statement: preface or acknowledgments (theses/dissertations), methods or appendix (if AI influenced analysis or data processing), or footnotes for localized uses (for example, paragraph-level editing).
- Possible elements to report: tool name and version (if available), date(s) of use, purpose, scope, and verification approach.
- Follow publisher and funder requirements where applicable.

#### A.3.2 Oral Milestones (proposals, defenses)

- For presentation materials (slides/figures), include a brief disclosure slide or footnote indicating AI-assisted elements.

- For oral performance, no real-time AI use unless explicitly permitted; students should be able to explain all AI-assisted materials.

### A.3.3 Code, Data, and Analysis

- Document AI-assisted code generation or data processing in a methods section or repository README.
- Provide prompts or summaries of interactions where material to reproducibility, as appropriate to the discipline.

### A.3.4 Creative Work (exhibitions, performances, portfolios, creative theses)

- Include a disclosure in the artist statement, program notes, or thesis preface, identifying tools used and which elements of the work they affected.
- Where AI functions as a medium or method rather than a support tool, document the models used and the student's process in enough detail for a committee to understand how the work was made.
- Advise students that professional venues (festivals, awards bodies, publishers, unions) increasingly set their own AI disclosure and eligibility rules, and that decisions made during the degree may affect eligibility later.

### A.3.5 Existing Frameworks and Tools

- We provide three frameworks/tools that programs may find useful when developing their models.
- The GAIDeT taxonomy names roughly 40 research and publishing tasks a person might delegate to AI. Suchikova, Y., Tsybuliak, N., Teixeira da Silva, J. A., & Nazarovets, S. (2026). GAIDeT (Generative AI Delegation Taxonomy): A taxonomy for humans to delegate tasks to generative artificial intelligence in scientific research and publishing. *Accountability in Research*, 33(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2025.2544331>
- The AID Framework is a disclosure format with 14 headings and a statement structure. Weaver, K. D. (2024). The Artificial Intelligence Disclosure (AID) Framework: An introduction. *College & Research Libraries News*, 85(10), 407–411. Statement builder: <https://aidframework.org>. The framework is released under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license, so programs may adapt it with attribution.
- A third is the Enago AI Disclosure Statement Generator (<https://www.enago.com/ai-disclosure-statement-generator>) which offers a form-based alternative organized around tool, task category, and manuscript section.

### A.3.6 Monitoring and Enforcement Challenges

- Monitoring and enforcement of any model will be challenging. For example, a program may decide to allow "clarity editing," but AI can do a lot of rewriting when given a prompt to clarify. At this time, we suggest developing your expectations without focusing on how to monitor or enforce these policies. Students want clear expectations for what is and is not acceptable use of AI.

## A.4 The Three Models at a Glance

The three models below are illustrative endpoints and midpoints along a spectrum, not recommended options to choose among. Most programs will land between them or will mix approaches across milestones. What distinguishes them is not how much AI they permit in total, but where each one locates the line that student work cannot cross.

**Strict Limits.** The organizing question is what the student can demonstrate unaided. AI use is confined to tasks that do not touch intellectual content: proofreading, formatting, accessibility support. The model assumes that assessment validity depends on the absence of AI from the reasoning, writing, and analysis being assessed. Programs adopting this model take on the burden of defining “unaided” precisely enough that students and committees interpret it the same way, which is harder than it looks once ordinary tools include AI features by default.

**Moderate.** The organizing question is whether the student’s own thinking drove the work. AI may support thinking and workflow, including brainstorming, organizing, and code assistance, but the student must verify outputs and remain able to justify every claim independently. This model asks more of disclosure than the strict model does, because permitted uses are broad enough that a reader cannot infer from the finished product what was delegated. Its main cost is interpretive: most genuinely difficult cases fall inside this model’s range rather than outside it.

**AI-Integrated.** The organizing question is whether the student can critically evaluate what AI produced. AI fluency is itself treated as a learning outcome, so broad delegation is permitted, and the assessment shifts toward the student’s judgment about AI outputs. The line here is drawn at understanding and disclosure rather than at task type. Programs adopting this model take on the burden of assessing evaluative judgment directly, since the finished artifact no longer serves as evidence of independent capability on its own.

**A note on the models and learning outcomes.** In each milestone below, the learning outcomes assessed are stated once and shared across all 3 models, because what a milestone assesses is a property of the milestone rather than of a program’s AI philosophy. The exception is the AI-integrated model, which by design adds an AI-specific outcome. Those additions are marked within each milestone.

## A.5 Milestone Expectations Across the Three Models

### A.5.1 Comprehensive / Qualifying Examinations

#### **Learning Outcomes Assessed (shared across models)**

- Mastery of core knowledge
- Independent reasoning
- Synthesis under constraints
- Real-time problem solving

#### Strict Limits

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- None, except approved accessibility accommodations granted by the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD). Use of built-in functions like Microsoft Word's spell check are permissible, but no additional tools such as Grammarly are allowed.

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Any use of AI for answering, outlining, drafting, or preparation that substitutes for understanding
- Any real-time AI use

##### **How to Cite AI Use**

Not applicable unless accommodations are used; if so, document per university policy.

##### **Notes**

Assessment is intended to demonstrate unaided performance.

#### Applications and Examples

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- **Appropriate:** Using approved accessibility tools consistent with accommodations.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI to produce or outline exam responses, or consulting AI tools during the exam.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI to build study materials or practice questions before the exam. This model prohibits preparation “that substitutes for understanding,” which does not by itself say whether AI-generated study material qualifies. Programs should state whether preparatory use is restricted, and if so, which preparation tasks.

#### Moderate

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- AI for preparation (practice, review)

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Any AI use during the exam

- Generating responses or outlines

### How to Cite AI Use

Not required for preparation; no use allowed in submission.

### Notes

Oral components prohibit real-time AI.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI to generate practice questions or review concepts prior to the exam.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI to generate answers during the exam or to rely on AI-generated outlines while testing.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Memorizing AI-generated answers or relying heavily on AI-generated study materials. This may be acceptable in preparation but raises concerns about depth of understanding.

### *AI-integrated*

#### Additional learning outcome (this model only)

Ability to evaluate AI outputs.

### Permitted AI Use

- Structured AI use (for example, critique tasks)

### Non-Permitted AI Use

- Undisclosed use
- Submission without evaluation

### How to Cite AI Use

Required disclosure of AI involvement.

### Notes

Exams may explicitly incorporate AI.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI to produce a response and then critically evaluating it, or comparing AI outputs against the student's independent reasoning.
- **Inappropriate:** Submitting AI output without critique or failing to disclose AI use.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Minimal evaluation of AI outputs. Because this model makes evaluation the assessed skill, programs should state what counts as adequate critique, including whether identifying errors is sufficient or whether the student must also demonstrate the correct reasoning independently.

### A.6.2 Dissertation Proposal (Written + Oral)

#### **Learning Outcomes Assessed (shared across models)**

- Formulation of research questions and hypotheses
- Independent research design
- Literature synthesis
- Justification of methods
- Communication (oral component)

#### Strict Limits

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- Grammar and clarity editing only
- Formatting support for presentation materials

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Generating research questions, literature reviews, structure, or substantive text
- Generating slide content or visuals

##### **How to Cite AI Use**

Disclose editing assistance in acknowledgments or appendix.

##### **Notes**

Oral defense must reflect independent understanding.

#### Applications and Examples

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI to correct grammar or improve sentence clarity; using formatting tools for slide layout.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI for idea generation, formulating research questions and hypotheses, or research design, or generating proposal sections, slides, or figures.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI to reformat or reorder an outline the student has already produced is different from using AI to generate or restructure the argument itself. This model permits the former only, but the difference may not be obvious to students without an example.

#### Moderate

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- Brainstorming, outlining, editing
- Limited literature exploration with verification
- Slide drafting with validation

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Generating full proposal text

- Substituting for synthesis or argumentation

### How to Cite AI Use

AI Use Statement in proposal or appendix; slide acknowledgment if applicable.

### Notes

Oral defense must demonstrate independent reasoning. Students are responsible for everything produced and must be able to answer any questions about content from the document or the presentation.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI for idea generation and feasibility assessment when exploring research directions, and for research design suggestions once a direction is set, with validation; refining slides with validation.
- **Inappropriate:** Submitting AI-generated proposal sections, or using AI in place of literature review writing or novelty and gap evaluation.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI to formulate a first version of research questions or hypotheses and then substantially revising them, versus adopting AI-generated research questions largely as given. Acceptability depends on the degree of transformation and disclosure.

### *AI-integrated*

#### Additional learning outcome (this model only)

Critical evaluation of AI outputs and responsible integration of AI tools.

### Permitted AI Use

- Brainstorming, drafting, outlining, slide generation with documentation

### Non-Permitted AI Use

- Use without verification or understanding

### How to Cite AI Use

AI Use Statement and slide disclosures.

### Notes

Students must explain AI-assisted content.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI across idea generation, research design, and writing tasks, including drafting sections or generating slides, with full disclosure and revision.
- **Inappropriate:** Including AI-generated content without understanding it or failing to document AI use.

- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Heavy reliance on AI for idea generation and research question formulation specifically, as distinct from AI use in later methodology or writing tasks. Programs should clarify whether broad permissions apply equally to how the research question itself was generated, or only to tasks downstream of it.

### A.6.3 Dissertation (Final Written Document)

#### **Learning Outcomes Assessed (shared across models)**

- Original contribution to knowledge
- Data analysis
- Interpretation and conclusions
- Scholarly writing
- Authorship responsibility

#### Strict Limits

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- Editing for grammar and style
- Formatting

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Drafting sections
- Interpreting results
- Generating literature reviews or figures

##### **How to Cite AI Use**

Include AI Use Statement in acknowledgments or appendix.

##### **Notes**

All content must be attributable to the student.

#### Applications and Examples

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI for proofreading and editing to improve readability.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI for text generation of dissertation sections, data analysis, or visualization of figures.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI to summarize individual source articles for the student's own reference is different from using AI to write the literature review itself, but the prohibition on "generating literature reviews" does not say whether summarizing sources the student will synthesize independently counts as that. Programs should clarify where this line falls.

#### Moderate

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- Editing, outlining, code support
- Limited drafting with disclosure and verification

### Non-Permitted AI Use

- Generating core arguments or interpretations without validation

### How to Cite AI Use

AI Use Statement including tool, scope, purpose, and verification.

### Notes

Methods section may document AI-assisted analysis.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI for proofreading, editing, and reformatting, or for code generation and optimization, provided outputs are verified.
- **Inappropriate:** Presenting AI-assisted formulation of conclusions as unaided interpretation, or relying on AI for data analysis without independent validation.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI to identify and organize literature sources is more clearly permitted here than using AI to write the literature review text itself, even with verification and integration. Programs should clarify which of these 2 tasks “summarize sources for a literature review” is meant to cover.

### *AI-integrated*

### Additional learning outcome (this model only)

Responsible AI integration and ability to evaluate AI outputs.

### Permitted AI Use

- Broad use including drafting, coding, and analysis support

### Non-Permitted AI Use

- Failure to disclose
- Inability to justify outputs

### How to Cite AI Use

Full AI Use Statement covering tool, tasks delegated, scope, and verification.

### Notes

Transparency and validation required.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI across writing, data analysis, and code tasks, including drafting and data analysis support, with full documentation and verification.

- **Inappropriate:** Including AI-generated content without independent validation, or disclosing tool use in general terms without specifying which tasks were delegated.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI extensively for writing the literature review itself, as opposed to searching and organizing sources, raises the Levels of AI Use question from Section 2d directly: at what point does adopting AI-generated literature review text mean the section is no longer primarily the student's own synthesis, regardless of disclosure.

#### A.6.4 Dissertation Defense (Oral)

##### **Learning Outcomes Assessed (shared across models)**

- Communication of research
- Depth of understanding
- Ability to defend work

#### Strict Limits

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- Formatting assistance for slides only

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- AI-generated slide content or visuals
- Any AI use during presentation or Q&A

##### **How to Cite AI Use**

Optional acknowledgment if formatting tools were used.

##### **Notes**

Student must independently explain all materials.

#### Applications and Examples

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- **Appropriate:** Using presentation software tools for formatting.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI for visualization of figures or generation of slide content, or using AI at any point during the defense.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI to refine wording of slides or speaking points. Reformatting is permitted here, but rewording moves toward proofreading and editing, which this model permits in written work and does not address for presentations. Programs should state whether the written and oral standards are meant to match.

#### Moderate

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- AI-assisted slide development with verification
- Preparation support (mock questions)

## Non-Permitted AI Use

- Real-time AI use

## How to Cite AI Use

Disclosure slide or note.

## Notes

Student must explain all content.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI for reformatting and refining slide structure, or generating mock questions for defense practice.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI during Q&A or including unverified AI-generated content in presentation materials.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI-generated visuals that present the student's own data. Because a figure can encode interpretive choices, programs should clarify whether AI-generated visuals require the same validation and disclosure as AI-assisted analysis.

### *AI-integrated*

## Additional learning outcome (this model only)

Critical engagement with AI tools.

## Permitted AI Use

- AI-assisted preparation
- AI-generated slides with disclosure

## Non-Permitted AI Use

- Real-time AI use

## How to Cite AI Use

Disclosure slide.

## Notes

Student must critique AI-assisted elements.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI to prepare and refine presentation materials with disclosure.
- **Inappropriate:** Using AI during the defense or being unable to explain AI-assisted content.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Heavy reliance on AI-generated visuals or phrasing. Note that all 3 models prohibit real-time AI use during the defense, which makes the live oral component the one place where the models converge completely. Programs should

consider whether that convergence is intended, and if so, say why, since it is the clearest statement in this appendix about what students must be able to do unaided.

### A.6.5 Terminal Creative Work (thesis, exhibition, performance, portfolio)

#### **Learning Outcomes Assessed (shared across models)**

- Original creative contribution
- Development of an individual artistic voice or practice
- Technical craft in the medium
- Critical reflection on the work and its context
- Authorship responsibility

**Note on downstream use.** *Creative work is often intended for exhibition, performance, or publication after the degree, and several industry bodies have adopted AI disclosure or eligibility rules that may govern the same work later. Programs should advise students that disclosure decisions made during the degree can affect eligibility in professional venues.*

**Note on scope.** *This section covers several output types together (creative thesis, exhibition, performance, portfolio) because the analysis is largely the same across them. Programs should adapt the language to their own medium and culminating format.*

#### Strict Limits

##### **Permitted AI Use**

- Administrative and logistical support only (scheduling, formatting of artist statements, captioning for accessibility)

##### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Any generative contribution to the creative artifact, including text, image, audio, or design elements
- AI-generated variations, extensions, or completions of the student's own material

##### **How to Cite AI Use**

Statement in the artist statement or thesis preface confirming the work contains no generative AI content.

##### **Notes**

The work is understood to demonstrate the student's own voice and craft.

#### Applications and Examples

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI to caption images for accessibility, or to format a bibliography in a critical introduction.
- **Inappropriate:** Generating passages, images, motifs, or audio incorporated into the work, including material the student later revises heavily.

- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI-assisted features now embedded in standard production software (generative fill, stem separation, autocomplete in a manuscript editor). Programs should state whether the prohibition targets tools or contributions, since a tools-based rule is increasingly hard to satisfy.

### Moderate

#### **Permitted AI Use**

- Research and contextual support around the work (background reading, historical context, technical troubleshooting)
- AI-assisted revision of critical or reflective writing, with disclosure

#### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Generative contribution to the creative artifact itself without disclosure and committee awareness

#### **How to Cite AI Use**

Disclosure in the artist statement identifying tool, the element affected, and the student's role in shaping it.

#### **Notes**

The critical or reflective component and the creative artifact may warrant different rules.

### Applications and Examples

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- **Appropriate:** Using AI to research a historical period informing the work, or to troubleshoot a technical problem in production software.
- **Inappropriate:** Presenting AI-generated elements as the student's own compositional or formal decisions.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using AI during idea generation, where influence is real but leaves no trace in the artifact. Programs should decide whether disclosure obligations attach to generative contributions only, or also to influences on the student's thinking that cannot be identified in the finished work.

### AI-integrated

#### **Additional learning outcome (this model only)**

Critical and technical engagement with AI as a medium or collaborator.

#### **Permitted AI Use**

- Broad use, including as a compositional element, subject, or method, with documentation

#### **Non-Permitted AI Use**

- Undisclosed use
- Inability to articulate the artistic rationale for AI's role in the work

## How to Cite AI Use

Documentation of tools, models, and the student's process, sufficient for a committee to understand how the work was made. Programs may define their own headings for this documentation.

## Notes

Where AI is used as medium, the student should be able to discuss provenance and the ethics of the models used.

### *Applications and Examples*

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- **Appropriate:** Using generative models as an explicit method or subject, documented and defended as an artistic choice.
- **Inappropriate:** Undisclosed generative content, or inability to explain why AI was used rather than another approach.
- **Borderline / clarification needed:** Using models trained on unlicensed work by living practitioners in the student's own field. This raises questions distinct from disclosure, since the concern is the provenance of the training data rather than the transparency of the student's process. Programs should decide whether they take a position on model provenance or leave it to individual advisors.