REGENT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

# Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Your Dissertation Guide

> As outlined in this document, AI tools may support your dissertation work, but they may never replace your own scholarship. You are the author of, and are accountable for, every word, table, fact, and figure submitted under your name.

***"Get wisdom; develop good judgment."***
— Proverbs 4:7 (NIV)

## Guiding Principles

*Six principles shape every decision about AI use in your dissertation.*

1. **Scholarship** - The research questions, design, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions must be your own intellectual work.
2. **Candidate Authorship** - You are the author of every sentence submitted under your name. AI is never listed as an author and never carries responsibility for the work.
3. **Accountability** - You are fully responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and ethics of everything in your dissertation, including content an AI tool helped shape.
4. **Transparency** - Your chair, committee, and readers must be able to see when and how AI contributed. Disclose any AI use beyond basic spelling and grammar checking. Undisclosed use is an academic integrity concern.
5. **Chair Partnership** - Your Dissertation Chair is your first point of contact. When you are unsure whether a use is appropriate, ask before you act, not after.
6. **Faith and Ethics** – Integrity in scholarship is a matter of good judgment. Using AI responsibly reflects the same discernment expected of Christian educators.



## Generally Acceptable Uses

*These uses carry low risk to the integrity of your work. You may use them without prior approval, but you must still verify the output and keep a record of your use.*

- **Brainstorming and Planning** - Generating ideas for organizing a chapter, naming themes you will then evaluate yourself, or building a writing schedule.
- **Language and Clarity Support** - Checking grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence clarity in text you wrote. You must accept or reject each suggestion yourself, and the ideas and arguments must remain yours.
- **Search Orientation** - Using AI to suggest keywords, search terms, or related concepts to begin a literature search. You must then locate, read, and cite the original sources yourself.
- **Accessibility Support** - Using text-to-speech, dictation, or similar assistive technology tools. Candidates who need accommodations should work with the Office of Disability Services, and these tools are not treated as misuse.
- **Study and Comprehension Aids** - Asking an AI tool to explain a method, concept, or term so that you can learn it. Explanations are a starting point, and you must confirm them against scholarly sources.

Created with AI assistance and reviewed, edited, and approved by the SOE AI Committee.

## Uses Requiring Chair Approval and Disclosure

*These uses can affect the validity of your methods, findings, or claims and carry moderate risks to the integrity of your work. Obtain written approval from your Dissertation Chair before you begin and describe the use in your methods chapter.*

- **Literature Synthesis Support** - Using AI to summarize or compare sources you have already located and read. You must confirm every summary against the original source.
- **Qualitative Data Analysis** - Using AI with transcription, initial coding, or theme identification. Your analytic decisions, codebook, and interpretations must remain your own, and the use must be described as part of your methodology.
- **Quantitative Analysis and Code** - Using AI to help write or debug statistical code or scripts. You must understand every line you run and be able to explain and reproduce each result.
- **Instrument and Protocol Development** - Using AI to draft survey items, interview questions, or recruitment materials. These materials require your expert review and, where applicable, IRB approval.
- **Translation** - Using AI to translate participant data or source material. Accuracy must be checked by a human reader.
- **Substantive Editing** - Using AI to restructure, condense, or rewrite passages beyond grammar and clarity. Because this can alter your voice and meaning, your analysis and approval is required even when you edit the result afterward. Your writing must be your own.
- **Visuals and Figures** - Using AI to generate or format figures, tables, or diagrams that present your data. Every value shown must be traceable to your verified data and follow APA 7.0 formatting.

## Prohibited Uses

*The following uses are not permitted, and approval from a chair or committee member cannot authorize them. These uses carry a high risk to the integrity of your work.*

- **Generated Text Submitted as Your Own** - Submitting AI-generated paragraphs, sections, or chapters of a dissertation, in whole or in part, as your own original work when the AI's contribution goes beyond editing or refining your writing.
- **Generated Analysis or Findings** - Allowing AI to decide what your data mean, produce your results, or draw your conclusions.
- **Fabricated or Unverified Sources** - Citing any reference you have not located and read yourself. AI tools can invent authors, titles, quotations, and statistics that look real.
- **Fabricated or Altered Data** - Creating, simulating, or modifying data, participant responses, or quotations and presenting them as real.
- **Uploading Protected Information** - Entering identifiable participant data, confidential records, or unpublished work belonging to others into tools that retain, share, or train on what they receive.
- **Concealing AI Use** - Hiding, disguising, or misreporting your use of AI, including using tools designed to make AI-generated text appear human-written.
- **Bypassing Required Scholarly Work** - Using AI to avoid the reading, reasoning, and writing the dissertation process is designed to develop, such as the literature review, theoretical framework, and discussion of findings.

## Consequences of Misuse

Use that violates this guidance is handled under the university's academic integrity policies, Honor Code, and Student Handbook. Outcomes can range from required revisions to postponed dissertation defenses. If you realize you have made a mistake, tell your chair promptly.

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