

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Note for UCLouvain students

Prof. Jean-François van Drooghenbroeck, Vice-Rector for Student Affairs

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This note updates the 2023 note. It is based on the following documents:

- Note à destination des étudiants à propos de l'utilisation des intelligences artificielles génératives ("Note for students on the use of generative artificial intelligence"). Available at <https://www.uclouvain.be/fr/uss/lutter-contre-le-plagiat>, 2023.
- Utilisation Responsable de l'Intelligence Artificielle Générative ("Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence"). Yves Deville et al., 4 July 2024. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12279/1079>.
- Strategic Plan Generative Artificial Intelligence for UCLouvain. Yves Deville, 6 May 2025. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12279/1124>.
- Lignes directrices pour une utilisation responsable de l'intelligence artificielle générative "Guidelines for the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence". Faculty of Law, 10 January 2024.
- Utilisation des IA génératives autorisée en vue de la réalisation de travaux écrits dans le cadre d'un programme d'études de la FSM ("Use of generative AI authorised for the preparation of written work as part of an FSM study programme").
- Guidelines for the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence at EPL.
- Utilisation des Intelligences Artificielles Génératives, Note à l'attention des étudiantes et étudiants de l'UCLouvain (Document de travail) ("Generative Artificial Intelligence, Note for UCLouvain students, Working document"). Yves Deville, 27 October 2025.
- Information available at <https://www.uclouvain.be/fr/ia>.

Introduction

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools can produce text, code or figures from datasets used to train them and in response to prompts. Although outputs generated by AI or other similar tools are often linguistically correct, their content is not always satisfactory, including the results of calculations. Moreover, responses to the same request may differ from one attempt to another, and responses, including bibliographic references, may be entirely fabricated. These tools are therefore not wholly reliable in every context, and students must be aware of this.

With regard to the responsible use of these AI tools (such as Piccolo, Copilot, ChatGPT or Claude; tools integrated into a search function or office suite, such as Bard or Copilot 365; code-generation tools such as GitHub Copilot; or vibe-coding tools), UCLouvain adopts, until further notice, the guidelines set out below. These apply by default: specific rules or guidelines for a course unit, project or practical exercise may take precedence.

Core principles

There are three core principles from which the guidance described in this document follows:

1. **Principle of responsibility.** Students are responsible for the content and form of all work they submit, including after any modification by AI. They can never disclaim this responsibility.

2. **Principle of authenticity.** Work submitted by students must reflect their personal involvement and allow the evaluation of knowledge and skills they have genuinely acquired. Artificial intelligence must never be used to mislead the assessor about the student's level of mastery of the course learning outcomes.
3. **Principle of transparency.** For every piece of work submitted, students must be able to explain whether they used AI and how it was used.

Prohibited uses

- **Failure to follow instructions specific to the work.** Any use incompatible with the instructions for an assignment, the description of the relevant course unit, or faculty guidelines is prohibited.
- **Failure to comply with the principle of authenticity.** Any excessive use of an AI tool that prevents the examiner from verifying the student's command of the required knowledge and skills, or of the ideas they express, is prohibited.
- **Unreferenced verbatim reproduction.** Any verbatim reproduction of content generated by an AI tool without a full citation of the source is prohibited (see below). Academic work requires sources to be verifiable.

Examples of permitted uses

Various uses are permitted: some need not be referenced, while others must be. Where the use of an AI tool must be referenced, students are encouraged to explain in an appendix to their work, report, etc., how the AI was used.

Examples of uses for which there is no need to state that an AI tool was used

- **Use similar to that of a language assistant.** Students may use language-assistance functions without mentioning them, whether provided by dedicated tools such as Grammarly, Antidote or DeepL, or by general-purpose tools such as ChatGPT. If the original text was written by the student, an AI tool may be used to correct spelling, grammar and syntax, find synonyms, and so on. A tool such as DeepL may be used to produce a first draft (which is subsequently revised) of a translation, for example of a text the student wrote in another language, provided that the tool does not add content of which the student is not the author.
- **Use similar to that of a search engine or for brainstorming ideas.** Students may use AI tools without citing them for exploratory purposes: to find their bearings on a topic, identify lines of enquiry or locate potentially relevant sources (which will be facilitated by the integration of search tools into content-generating AI). This form of information gathering is similar to using a search engine (Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, Qwant, etc.). It is permitted provided that the student checks the comments and references found, consults the identified sources and analyses them. Although the use of the tool need not be stated in this case, students must of course correctly reference the sources they consult through it. More generally, every cited source must have been verified. It is therefore unacceptable to copy information supplied by the AI tool into either the text or, for example, a bibliography. Doing so is also risky because these tools often fabricate sources. Nor is it acceptable to rely solely on sources identified using an AI tool. Where an assignment requires a literature search, students must still conduct a proper documentary search using the relevant databases and library catalogues.
- **Assistance with code documentation,** for example method specifications, unless explicitly prohibited.

Examples of uses for which the AI tool used must be stated

- **Quotations.** When a student reproduces verbatim content generated by an AI tool (not only text, but also a graphic produced by an image generator), the tool must be referenced, for example in a dedicated section or footnote, and distinguished from bibliographic references. AI-generated content that is accompanied by a source reference must remain ancillary to the work as a whole, just as quoted passages must remain proportionate to the length of an academic assignment.
- **Source code.** Any code fragment used and submitted in an assignment that contains a substantial portion of code (for example, a method or the implementation of an algorithm) must be preceded by a comment stating that the fragment was generated by AI. This is the same rule as would apply if the code had been copied and pasted from another source under a compatible licence.
- **Translations.** When a student reproduces a machine-translated text from a source written in another language, they must cite the source used (in its original language) in accordance with the citation guide and must also state: “translated into [language, for example French] using [AI tool, for example ChatGPT (used on 20 November 2023)]”, unless they have substantially revised the proposed translation (in which case the tool is used merely as a language assistant and the situation falls under section III.A above).

Consequences of failure to comply with these guidelines

If the use of an AI tool is clearly excessive, it may be treated as an irregularity under Section 7, Articles 107 et seq. of the Academic Regulations and Procedures (RGEE, <https://www.uclouvain.be/fr/rgee>), with all the resulting consequences, as provided for in Articles 111 et seq. of the RGEE.

Moreover, an evaluation may comprise several components, including an oral presentation enabling the lecturer (1) to ensure that all students have mastered oral communication (a soft skill promoted by UCLouvain) and (2), where appropriate, to verify compliance with the principle of authenticity (and therefore mastery of the subject) for all students.

Available tools

Two generative AI tools are currently available to UCLouvain students free of charge and in compliance with the GDPR.

- Piccolo is the recommended institutional tool. It is based on Mistral models (France). Conversations are encrypted and stored within UCLouvain’s infrastructure to ensure confidentiality. This tool was introduced in 2025-26.
- Microsoft Copilot. This refers to the version of Copilot Web available through a UCLouvain account.

Other tools, such as ChatGPT, are not institutional tools. Their use is not prohibited, but students should be guided by the following considerations.

- Such tools generally require the creation of an account and therefore the submission of personal data.
- With most free tools, conversations and submitted documents are used to train models. Confidentiality is therefore not guaranteed.
- If you wish to upload or include documents to which you do not hold the rights (a book or course syllabus), this may be restricted by copyright rules.
- You must not ask AI to process information containing personal data without the explicit permission of the people concerned and without complying with GDPR rules.