

GUIDELINES ON THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN RESEARCH – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

Version 1.5, December 2025

Background and purpose of the Guidelines

The University of Basel is fully committed to the principle of responsible research. The rapid and widespread development of generative AI-based tools has pervaded all domains, from our daily life to the research field. Its great potentials as well as significant risks highlighted in many recent (inter-)national policies and institutional recommendations¹ have prompted the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Basel to provide researchers with guidelines and contact points.

As declared in the [Guidelines «Citing AI Tools» How to use tools based on artificial intelligence](#) published by the Vice Presidency for Education in the Spring 2024, “The University of Basel does not have a general prohibition on the use of AI-supported tools. Students should learn how to handle these tools sensibly and responsibly.” By the same token, researchers should not be prevented from benefiting from the many opportunities and great potentials provided by generative AI. Instead, they should be informed of the risks AI entails, such as biases, the “black box” problem, unreliable information, intellectual property and data protection issues. In sum, researchers should be aware that an insufficiently informed and reflected use of AI could have a devastating impact on human research participants, on the quality of their research, on the integrity of scientific practices of their institution, and ultimately on the societal trust in science.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to outline the research ethics principles for a responsible use of AI tools in research, and to formulate practical recommendations to assist researchers in employing trustworthy AI tools. The Guidelines are being reviewed regularly by the Vice Rectorate for Research.

These recommendations adhere by and large to the [Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research](#) (EU, version April 2025).

Recommendations for Researchers

The following recommendations for researchers are anchored in the four basic principles of Scientific Integrity published by the Swiss Academies for Arts and Sciences, the [Code of conduct for scientific integrity](#) (2021): Reliability, honesty, respect and accountability.

1. Remain accountable

- Researchers are accountable for the integrity of the content generated by or with the support of AI tools.
- Researchers maintain a critical approach to using the output produced by generative AI and are in a position to identify and eliminate the tools’ limitations, such as bias, hallucinations and inaccuracies.

¹ See in particular [The Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#) (Council of Europe, 2024) and [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#) (UNESCO, 2021).

- AI systems are neither authors nor co-authors. Authorship implies agency and responsibility, so it lies with human researchers only².
- 2. Use generative AI transparently**
- In order to be transparent, researchers detail in the information sheet for participants when, where and for what purpose the generative AI tools have been used in their research processes.
 - Researchers are aware that AI tools tend to produce different outputs from the same input, which is contrary to the scientific aim of reproducibility. They disclose clearly the limitations of generative AI tools used.
- 3. Pay particular attention to privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property rights, as well as data protection laws and regulations. Comply with the applicable legislation when sharing sensitive or classified information with AI tools.**
- Researchers remain mindful that generated or uploaded input data of various formats such as text, raw data, prompts, images, etc. could be used for other purposes, such as the training of AI models. Therefore, it is essential that researchers protect unpublished or sensitive data and work (such as their own or others' unpublished work) by taking care not to upload it into an external AI system. Researchers furthermore comply with the institutional regulations on data classification (see the [Data and information classification system of the University of Basel](#)) and work with approved IT tools.
 - Researchers pay attention to the potential for plagiarism (text, code, images, etc.) when using outputs from generative AI. Researchers respect others' authorship and cite their work where appropriate (see the [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Integrity Regulations](#) of the University of Basel, as well as the [Code of conduct for scientific integrity](#)).
 - Researchers privilege local AI clouds deployed on trusted servers of their home institution for third parties' personal data, instead of external AI generative systems.
 - Exceptions may apply if the participants have given their informed consent and data protection regulations are followed.
 - Researchers understand the technical, ethical and security implications regarding privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property rights.
- 4. Remain up-to-date on evolution of generative AI tools in research and their environmental impact**
- Generative AI tools are evolving quickly, and new ways to use them are regularly discovered. Researchers stay informed and up-to-date on the best practices (see [training offers at the University of Basel](#)).
 - Researchers are informed about the environmental impact of generative AI tools. They evaluate and choose the most environmentally sound tools and techniques (consult the [Research & Infrastructure Support](#) RISE).
- 5. Refrain from using generative AI tools substantially in sensitive activities that could impact other researchers or organisations (for example peer review, evaluation of research proposals, etc.)**
- Avoiding the use of generative AI tools eliminates the potential risks of unfair treatment or assessment that may arise from these tools' limitations (such as hallucinations and bias).

² See the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly work in Medical Journals](#) published by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE, 2025, II 4, p.3).

- Moreover, this will safeguard the original unpublished work of fellow researchers from potential exposure or inclusion in an AI model (see SNSF Recommendations [Towards a responsible use of AI in research](#)).

6. Be aware of scientific integrity issues

Researchers using generative AI tools are aware of the potential scientific integrity issues (e.g. plagiarism). It is recommended to contact the [Research Compliance Office](#) for further information or advice.

Points of contact and Information

[AI Initiative Contact](#)

[Research Compliance Office](#)

[Data Protection Office](#) DPO

[IT-Services](#)

[Research Ethics Committee Office](#) KFE

[Research and Infrastructure Support](#) RISE

Research Networks

[Research Data Management Network](#) RDM

[Responsible Digital Society](#) [Research Network](#) RDS

[Research Network Sustainable Future](#)

References

[Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity](#) (Swiss academies a+, 2021)

[Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#) (Council of Europe, 2024)

[Guidelines «Citing AI Tools» How to use tools based on artificial intelligence](#) (UNIBAS, 2025)

[Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research](#) (EU, 2025)

[Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#) (UNESCO, 2021)