

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools Usage Policy in Ph.D. Research

1. Purpose

This policy lays down comprehensive guidelines for the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools by Ph.D. research scholars at all stages of research — including proposal writing, data analysis, thesis preparation, and publication — while safeguarding originality, intellectual honesty, and compliance with the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2022, and subsequent amendments.

2. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all Ph.D. scholars, research supervisors, Research Advisory Committees (RAC) and examiners involved in the evaluation of synopsis, thesis, dissertations, research papers, and any other academic output submitted in partial or full fulfilment of the Ph.D. programme.

3. Definitions

1. "AI Tool" means any software, application, or platform that uses machine learning, natural language processing, or generative algorithms to produce, summarize, translate, analyse, or otherwise process text, data, images, or code (e.g., large language models, AI writing assistants, AI-based statistical or coding tools).
2. "AI-Generated Content" means any text, data interpretation, code, or material produced substantially by an AI tool with minimal or no original intellectual input from the scholar.
3. "Similarity Index" means the percentage of matched/copied text identified by an approved plagiarism-detection software, excluding properly quoted material, references, and bibliography.
4. "AI-Content Index" means the percentage of a document flagged as AI-generated by an approved AI-detection tool.

4. Permissible Use of AI Tools

A research scholar may use AI-based tools for the following purposes, subject to disclosure and independent verification:

- Language editing, grammar correction, and improvement of readability.
- Brainstorming research ideas and preparing preliminary outlines.
- Literature search assistance and keyword identification.
- Summarization of published literature, subject to verification against the original sources.

- Data visualization, programming assistance, and code debugging.
- Formatting of references and citations.
- Translation of text, where appropriate, with meaning verified by the scholar.

5. Prohibited Use of AI Tools

The following uses of AI tools are strictly prohibited and shall constitute a violation of this policy:

- Generating the thesis, dissertation, synopsis, research paper, or any substantial part thereof without proper disclosure.
- Fabricating, manipulating, or falsifying research data, results, images, graphs, or references.
- Generating fictitious citations, references, or experimental findings ("AI hallucinations") without verification.
- Submitting AI-generated work as the scholar's original intellectual contribution.
- Using AI in a manner that compromises research ethics, participant confidentiality, or intellectual property rights.
- Using AI tools to bypass or manipulate similarity-detection or AI-detection software.

6. Disclosure Requirement

The research scholar shall disclose the use of AI tools in the thesis, synopsis, dissertation, research paper, or any other academic submission, wherever applicable. The disclosure shall include:

- Name and version of the AI tool(s) used.
- Purpose and stage of use (e.g., editing, literature summarization, coding).
- Extent and nature of assistance provided.
- A confirmation that the scholar has verified the accuracy, originality, and authenticity of all AI-assisted content.

7. Similarity Index and AI-Content Thresholds

To operationalize academic integrity requirements, the following quantitative thresholds shall apply to every synopsis, thesis, and research paper prior to submission or examination. Reports must be generated using University-approved software and attached with the submission.

Parameter	Acceptable Threshold	Action if Exceeded
Overall Similarity Index (Plagiarism, e.g., Turnitin / Urkund / Drillbit, excluding quotes, references & bibliography)	Up to 10%	Thesis/paper returned for revision; re-submission and re-check required
AI-Generated Content Index (AI-detection score, e.g., Turnitin AI)	Up to 20%	Content beyond limit must be rewritten/paraphrased and independently verified by the scholar
Combined instances of undisclosed AI use + high similarity	Not permitted	Treated as academic misconduct under the applicable Ordinance/UGC Regulations

Note: These thresholds are ceiling limits, not targets. Scholars must make every effort to minimize both similarity and AI-content scores. Quoted material that is properly cited, standard terminology, references, and bibliography are excluded from the similarity calculation as per UGC norms.

8. Responsibility of the Research Scholar

The research scholar shall remain solely responsible for:

- The originality and authenticity of the research work.
- The accuracy of facts, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions.
- Compliance with research ethics, this policy, and applicable plagiarism regulations.
- Proper citation of all sources used in the research.
- Ensuring that similarity and AI-content indices remain within the limits prescribed in Section 7.

AI tools shall not be considered authors or co-authors of any academic work, and shall not be credited as such in any submission or publication.

9. Responsibility of the Research Supervisor

The Research Supervisor shall:

- Guide scholars on the ethical and permissible use of AI tools.
- Ensure that AI-assisted content is properly disclosed in every submission.
- Verify that the thesis represents the scholar's independent intellectual contribution.
- Review similarity and AI-content reports before forwarding the thesis/synopsis for further evaluation.

10. Role of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

The RAC shall:

- Verify similarity and AI-content reports at each milestone (registration, pre-submission seminar, synopsis, and final thesis submission).
- Constitute a review in cases where thresholds prescribed in Section 7 are exceeded.
- Recommend appropriate corrective or disciplinary action in consultation with the University's Academic Integrity Panel.

11. AI Use and Plagiarism

The use of AI tools shall not exempt the scholar from compliance with the University's plagiarism policy and the UGC Regulations on Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism. Undisclosed AI-generated content, fabricated references, exceeding the thresholds prescribed under Section 7, or any other AI-assisted academic misconduct shall be treated as academic misconduct and dealt with under the applicable University Ordinance and the said UGC Regulations, including penalties ranging from revision and resubmission to withholding of degree, as warranted by the severity of the violation.

12. Verification and Compliance Mechanism

- Every synopsis, thesis, and research paper shall be accompanied by a similarity report and an AI-content report from University-approved software.
- The Supervisor and RAC shall certify compliance with Sections 6 and 7 at the time of forwarding the document.
- The Examination Section shall verify the presence of a valid AI Usage Declaration (Section 13) before processing the thesis for evaluation.
- This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the University to remain aligned with evolving UGC guidelines and technological developments.

13. AI Usage Declaration

Every Ph.D. scholar shall submit an AI Usage Declaration, duly signed by the scholar and countersigned by the Research Supervisor, along with the thesis/synopsis, as applicable.