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MAXIMILIANS-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNCHEN

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY



## **Guidelines for students on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the Department of Sociology, LMU Munich**

(as of November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025)

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to establish guidelines for the use of AI by students at the Department of Sociology at the LMU Munich. Most importantly, it addresses the question of how AI may or may not be used by students in relation to examinations. In general, students' use of AI should follow the principles of good scientific practice as well as established academic values and norms. These include, for example, scientific transparency and traceability, critical thinking, originality, and reflection on ethical duties and responsibilities.

### **2. Critical engagement with the use of AI**

The use of AI systems must not lead to their output being adopted without critical reflection. Students are expected to be able to question and examine AI-generated output for possible errors or biases. In doing so, well-known issues—such as the generation of incorrect output such as claims, text summaries, or bibliographic references—must be evaluated. Likewise, students should critically assess the extent to which certain social groups (e.g., ethnic minorities) or publication outlets (e.g., predatory journals) are favored or disadvantaged by the chosen AI systems. Reflective engagement with AI is understood as part of scholarly practice and is an integral component of academic training.

### **3. Data protection and ethics**

As when working without AI systems, the protection of personal and sensitive data when using AI is of the highest priority. No data relating to individuals or confidential content such as interview transcripts may be entered into cloud-based AI systems, as it cannot be guaranteed that such data will not be accessed by unauthorized parties or used for the training of AI models. Before using any AI system, relevant data protection policies and terms of use must be carefully reviewed. A decision to use a system for a specific purpose may only be made if this use complies with applicable legal regulations and ethical standards for academic work.

### **4. Responsibility for use lies with teaching staff**

AI systems are used differently across department chairs. The decision as to how AI systems are used within a course—including associated assessments—lies with the person(s) responsible for the course in question. Teaching staff are therefore free in their decision, for example, to actively encourage the use of AI for certain purposes, provided this is done in compliance with the principles set out in this document. This may include teaching competencies in AI-supported text or bibliography formatting, narrowing down research questions, or analyzing and processing data. Likewise, instructors may prohibit the use of AI for specific tasks or assignments. Decisions regarding the use or prohibition of AI must always be communicated to students in a transparent

and comprehensible manner. In doing so, it should be clearly explained which aspects of AI may or may not be used in relation to the learning objectives of the respective course.

## **5. Scientific transparency and traceability**

Teaching staff may require that student submissions indicate whether they were created (in whole or in part) with the assistance of AI systems. As a general principle, the use of AI systems must be transparent and traceable in relation to the respective learning objectives and in the interest of academic transparency. If AI-supported tools are used to produce texts, analyses, or other outputs, this use must be documented insofar as it relates to the learning objectives of the respective course. Where possible, interactions with AI systems—such as chat histories or output logs—should be archived. The form and scope of documentation are determined by the respective instructors. The following lists examples from different teaching areas regarding documentation requirements.

### *Applications not requiring documentation:*

- Brief queries to AI systems, such as how a specific command works in a programming environment such as Stata or R (analogous to earlier forms of googling)
- Style and spelling checks
- Suggesting synonyms or providing explanations of terms for text production.

### *Applications requiring documentation:*

- The generation of entire sections of text or code
- Developing central theoretical concepts with the assistance of AI
- The use of AI applications in the production, preparation, and analysis of empirical data
- AI-generated summaries and paraphrases of qualitative data or literature
- The creation and testing of interview guides
- The use of AI chatbots to conduct interviews.

It is assumed that none of the above examples conflict with the learning objectives of the respective course. If, for example, the independent creation of an interview guide is a learning objective of a course, the corresponding use of AI tools—even if documented—is not permitted.

## **6. Consequences of unauthorized use of AI**

The use of AI in a manner or to an extent that is not permitted constitutes plagiarism according to the examination regulations, just as with any other unauthorized aids. If examiners suspect that plagiarism has occurred, the students concerned will be informed and given the opportunity to submit a written statement. If the allegation cannot be resolved based on this statement, the relevant assessment will be graded with 5.0 (fail) due to plagiarism. In repeated or serious cases, the examination board may decide to exclude the student from re-examination, which may result in exmatriculation.