

Policy on the use of Generative AI in Candidacy Exams, Theses, and Dissertations

This is a general policy on the use of generative AI in graduate examinations, theses, doctoral scholarly projects, and dissertations. It applies to graduate students in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

As the culminating examinations in subject proficiency or work of academic writing and research produced by a student in fulfillment of the requirements of a doctoral or master's degree, a candidacy exam, thesis, or dissertation is expected to be the student's original work. A student may not submit a candidacy examination (written exam, research proposal or presentation), thesis, dissertation or a Ph.D. defense presentation that contains written content, images, tables, references, or data generated by AI tools, unless:

- such content is approved by the student's mentoring committee;
- generative AI use is an approved accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- student's thesis or dissertation includes research on generative AI with examples clearly identified as examples and cited appropriately;
- student's thesis or dissertation utilizes generative AI tools commonly used in the student's research field.

If approved by the student's mentoring committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be communicated by the mentoring committee chair to the Director of Graduate Studies and disclosed in a statement within the thesis or dissertation.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to university disciplinary procedures for academic misconduct, which can include termination of their degree program and expulsion from the university.

Suggestions for Appropriate use of AI for third-party editorial assistance

- Correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar,
- Correcting formatting of margins, headings, and citations according to the style manual specified by the student (e.g., APA, Turabian, MLA),
- Making writing style suggestions, such as shortening long sentences, without changing the meaning of the text.

The student is responsible for checking that the formatting revisions suggested by generative AI are correct and comply with their published style manual and the Graduate School's formatting requirements.

Note that this policy does not apply to predictive AI used to analyze data, predict follow-up experiments or analysis, etc.