Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning at the University of Jewish Studies Heidelberg (HfJS)

Preamble

Rapid advances in generative artificial intelligence are profoundly transforming academic work. The University of Jewish Studies Heidelberg (HfJS) views these technologies as valuable tools for supporting research, teaching, and scholarly practice. At the same time, their use raises complex ethical and legal questions that require a reflective and responsible approach.

Drawing on the guidance issued by Hochschulforum Digitalisierung and the outline template provided by the eTeach Network Thuringia, these guidelines are tailored to the specific requirements of the HfJS. Following their adoption by the Senate, they provide a university-wide guiding framework for the use of generative AI systems in studies, teaching, and examinations. They are intended to help uphold the standards of good academic practice when these technologies are used.

These guidelines do not establish separate examination regulations, sanctions, or staff directives. Rather, they clarify how the existing examination regulations and the HfJS rules on good academic practice apply. If questions of interpretation or conflicts arise, the applicable legally binding examination regulations take precedence. Statutory requirements remain unaffected.

These guidelines are intended for students, teaching staff, including adjunct lecturers, and other university members insofar as they are involved in studies, teaching, or examinations at the HfJS. They cover teaching and learning materials, coursework and examination work, and theses and other work submitted for academic qualifications under the relevant regulations. Research outside this context, university administration, and university communications are not covered by these guidelines.

1. Principles of AI Use and Governance

- Definition (Generative AI): "Generative AI" refers to systems that independently generate new content (text, images, code, audio, or video) in response to prompts. These systems are distinct from purely auxiliary tools (e.g., spelling and grammar checkers, conventional search engines, or software used solely for reference management), provided the latter are not used to generate text or arguments. Such auxiliary tools are not subject to the specific documentation requirements of these guidelines. The decisive factor is the function actually used, including AI features in standard software. Translations produced by generative AI and substantial revisions to wording must be documented in accordance with Section 3.

- Governance and Point of Contact: The Rector of the HfJS is responsible, in coordination with the Office of the Dean of Studies and the Examinations Office, for the strategic management of AI use and the institutional framework. The Office of the Dean of Studies serves as the first point of contact for day-to-day questions from teaching staff and students about content, technology, and pedagogy. Where necessary, it refers inquiries to the appropriate offices responsible for data protection, IT security, and examination law. The Rector decides on the institutional approval of AI systems and their permitted uses, involving these offices in the decision.

- Permissibility and Freedom of Choice: Generative AI systems may generally be used. This applies to both commercial and open AI systems, provided their use complies with applicable legal requirements and these guidelines. Students decide for themselves whether and to what extent to use AI systems, subject to the applicable examination regulations and the course requirements announced in good time. Use must comply with applicable legal requirements, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), copyright law, and the EU AI Act, as well as these guidelines.
  Where instructors exclude or specifically require AI use under the relevant examination regulations, they must base their requirements on the learning objectives, design assessments accordingly, and communicate the requirements early and transparently. Such requirements are binding on students if they are covered by the relevant examination regulations and were communicated in writing (e.g., in the syllabus) at the beginning of the course. For separately assigned theses or other work submitted for academic qualifications, the requirements must be communicated before work begins. They must specify the permitted functions, prohibited uses, requirements for students' own academic contributions and for documentation, and assessment criteria.
- Personal Responsibility and Quality Assurance: Users are responsible for checking the academic content of work created using AI and for complying with the requirements applicable to their use of AI. The university's institutional obligations, particularly regarding the selection, provision, and operation of AI systems, remain unaffected. AI-generated results must be carefully checked for factual accuracy, plausibility, the reliability and validity of sources, ethical acceptability, possible infringements of third-party rights, hallucinations, and systematic biases. They must not be incorporated without review. Particular caution is required with sources in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish, as

well as historical and religious sources, since the risk of fabricated or misattributed content and incorrect translations and transliterations is particularly high in these cases.

- Equality and Non-Discrimination: AI systems must be used in a manner that upholds the dignity and equality of all those involved. Discriminatory biases, particularly relating to gender, origin, religion, or disability, must be identified, and their uncritical dissemination must be counteracted. At the HfJS, this applies in particular to antisemitic stereotypes and distorted portrayals of Jewish history, religion, and ways of life. Where such content is studied academically, it must be critically contextualized.
- Authorship: AI systems are not authors within the meaning of copyright law and therefore cannot claim authorship or co-authorship of scholarly work. Responsibility for all content lies entirely with the human authors.
- Copyright and Rights of Use: Before entering protected content into an AI system, users must check that they have the necessary rights or permissions, for example through a license, consent, or authorization provided by law. This also applies to unpublished third-party documents. Before incorporating or publishing AI outputs, users must check whether they reproduce protected content and whether its use is permitted. Sources and quotations must be identified in accordance with the rules of good academic practice. When selecting AI systems at the institutional level, available information on training data, the provider's approach to copyright, and the terms of use must be taken into account.
- Environmental Sustainability: Generative AI systems should be used deliberately and proportionately. AI applications should be used only where they serve a subject-specific or pedagogical purpose. Where tasks can be performed just as reliably using standard non-generative software, preference is to be given to that software for reasons of sustainability.

2. Use in Teaching and Learning

The use of AI can support teaching and learning processes, particularly in the following areas:

- For students: Support with writing, translation, and generating ideas, as well as applications in the digital humanities (programming, statistics).
- For teaching staff: Assistance with course planning, structuring content, and preparing materials.

The following principles must be observed:

- Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment: When assessments are designed and graded, students must not be advantaged or disadvantaged by financial barriers to access or by their decision whether to use permitted AI tools. Grading must be based solely on the specified academic criteria. If the reflective use of AI is itself the subject of the assessment task, the competencies to be demonstrated are assessed against criteria announced in advance.

  If AI use is mandatory, the HfJS must ensure in advance that students have suitable access that is free of charge and complies with data protection requirements, together

with appropriate guidance on how to use the system. Where technical or individual barriers prevent access, an equivalent means of completing the task must be provided. If necessary, the task or examination format must be adapted within the framework of the examination regulations. The HfJS aims to provide access to licensed AI systems gradually and to use generative AI specifically to reduce barriers to participation and provide accessible learning materials. The use of assistive AI applications as part of recognized accommodations remains unaffected.

- Competency Development and AI Literacy: AI literacy, understood as the competent use of AI systems, is a key competency. The HfJS strongly encourages all university members to make use of existing training opportunities, such as the heiSKILLS programs at Heidelberg University. The university supports continuous competency development through appropriate information and training tailored to the relevant tasks and systems in use. In teaching and learning, AI systems should be integrated as partners in reflective thinking to develop competencies such as precise prompting (formulating appropriate inputs), developing criteria, and using generative AI reflectively. Core academic competencies (independent writing, critical reading, and analytical work with sources) must be acquired and demonstrated independently. AI support must not replace the independent scholarly contribution required in each case.
- Data Protection: When using generative AI systems, users must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the university's internal data protection rules. In particular, the principles of purpose limitation, data minimization, and accuracy must be observed, and appropriate safeguards must be implemented. Data requiring protection may be processed only if an appropriate legal basis exists and the data protection requirements are met. This applies in particular to personal or sensitive data relating to students, employees, and research participants; protected primary sources; student work and unpublished third-party texts; and unpublished data from research and academic qualification projects. As a general rule, such data must not be entered into publicly accessible AI systems or systems that have not been approved by the university.

  For AI services that process data outside the European Economic Area, the applicable data protection requirements for transfers to third countries, including requirements relating to appropriate safeguards, must be observed. Any reuse of input data for training or other additional purposes must be assessed separately and must not be allowed without the necessary authorization. AI outputs containing personal data must be checked for accuracy before use. Their disclosure or publication also requires the necessary legal basis and safeguards.

  Uploading student work protected by copyright, or other protected teaching and examination materials, to external AI systems requires the necessary rights or permissions and compliance with data protection requirements.
- System Settings and Information Security: Data protection and usage settings must be checked before first use and after major updates. Where available, the use of inputs for training, the input history, and the memory function must be disabled unless they are both necessary and permissible for the approved purpose. If these settings are unavailable, or if there are doubts about whether the intended use is permissible, clarification

must be sought through the Office of the Dean of Studies before entering data requiring protection. Disabling these features does not remove the need to check whether the intended use is permissible or to obtain any required approval. Login credentials and unreleased examination tasks must not be entered into external AI services. If data requiring protection are accidentally disclosed, the responsible data protection or IT office must be notified immediately; the Office of the Dean of Studies facilitates contact.

- Handling Suspected Cheating: So-called AI detectors are considered technically unreliable and must not serve as the sole basis for decisions. Where cheating is suspected, they may be used only as supporting evidence in a process of clarification based on dialogue, with priority given to a direct conversation. As a general rule, the relationship between students and teaching staff is based on mutual trust. The requirements for data protection, rights of use, and institutional approval also apply to AI detectors. Those concerned must be given an opportunity to respond; any further review and decision must follow the procedure and be handled by the bodies specified in the relevant examination regulations.
- Consequences of Violations: If impermissible AI use is found to constitute an attempt to cheat or a breach of the requirement for independent work, the sanctions set out in the relevant examination regulations apply, together with, where applicable, the HfJS rules on good academic practice (see Preamble).
- Assessment Design: As a general rule, tasks should be designed either to allow successful completion with or without AI, or to make the use of generative AI an explicit part of the assessment. Assessment tasks must allow the independence of students' work to be verified. The substantive academic contributions, in particular source evaluation, argumentation, and conclusions, must remain attributable to the students. Instructors specify which steps must be completed independently.
- Assessment: Fully automated grading of examination work is not permitted. AI may be used only to assist with grading or preparing assessment reports, provided that the specific system has been institutionally approved for this purpose and the requirements of examination law, data protection law, copyright law, and the applicable provisions of the EU AI Act are met. AI systems used to assess examination work may fall within the scope of the EU AI Act's high-risk provisions. The authorized examiner responsible for the assessment must make the final decision independently and justify it on academic grounds. They must review the work themselves and be able to reject or amend AI suggestions; merely endorsing an AI output is insufficient. Students must be informed of any such use of AI to assist with assessment; the system, purpose, and extent of use must be recorded in the examination documentation.

3. Transparency and Documentation Requirements

- Disclosure Requirement: The use of AI systems described below must be disclosed in academic work and teaching materials covered by these guidelines. Documentation is required where AI applications contribute to the content or argument, or substantially shape the wording. This includes, in particular, translations produced by generative AI and substantial revisions to wording. Pure spelling and grammar checks as defined in Section 1 are exempt.

  AI-generated images, audio, and video incorporated into a work must be labeled as AI-generated either directly alongside the content or in the accompanying caption. This applies in particular to depictions that appear deceptively realistic. For text and code, disclosure must take the form of documentation identifying the relevant parts.
- Declaration of Academic Integrity (Antiplagiatserklärung): Students must confirm in writing that they have either not used AI tools or have used them only as permitted. The declaration must take account of the exemptions from the documentation requirement.
- Documentation Format: Where documentation is required, a standardized table template must be used to record the AI tool (name, provider, model or version, and date of access where ascertainable), its purpose (e.g., information searches, structuring, or revising wording), the parts of the work concerned, and the nature of the user's own checks. The declaration of use serves solely to ensure transparency and is not a separate component of the assessment. A reflection on AI use that is explicitly required as an assessment task may be assessed against criteria announced in advance.

  A complete record of all prompts is not required. The documentation must not disclose data requiring protection. For teaching materials, it may be provided in an accompanying note.

4. Final Provisions

These guidelines take effect on the day after their publication on the HfJS website. They are subject to ongoing revision and must be evaluated at least every two years with the participation of the relevant university bodies, students, and teaching staff. If this evaluation identifies a need for amendments, the proposed amendments must be submitted to the Senate for a decision.

A review must also be conducted in response to significant legal or technical changes or substantial problems in applying these guidelines. The Office of the Dean of Studies collects feedback, coordinates the review, and publishes the current version together with the date of its adoption. The guidelines, information on how to obtain advice, and approvals for AI systems are made available in the Studies and Teaching section of the university website. A separate guidance document explains how to apply these guidelines and does not establish any additional rules on examinations or sanctions.

Future revisions should examine whether and to what extent the scope of these guidelines can be extended to research not currently covered, university administration, and university communications.