Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Technologies in Graduate Research

In response to the growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic research, the committee has established guidelines for graduate program directors to navigate the use of AI tools in graduate capstone projects, theses, and dissertations. All through this document, AI tools refer to technologies used in the development and conduct of research (e.g., forming hypotheses, data analysis, data visualization) and in the production of text (e.g., editing, correcting grammatical errors) in a graduate research project.

Operating from UAB's guidelines on the use of AI and guided by the principles of permissibility, disclosure, and guidance, these guidelines aim to ensure responsible AI use in the research and writing of those projects while maintaining academic integrity. Graduate program directors may use these guidelines to create discipline-specific policies for the use of AI tools in their programs' capstone projects, theses, and dissertations.

Permissibility

- Each graduate program at UAB may establish and maintain guidelines on the permissible use of AI in both research and writing of graduate capstone projects, theses, and dissertations.
- These guidelines will adhere to UAB's overarching guidelines and core principles about the use of AI.
- These guidelines will follow the disciplinary knowledge and expectations of graduates in their respective discipline.
- Graduate programs are responsible for emphasizing equity among graduate students in their programs in terms of access to, awareness of the risks and benefits, and the ability to use AI tools in their capstone projects, thesis, and dissertation research and writing.
- Graduate programs will define responsibilities for both committee members and students regarding AI use in capstone projects, theses, and dissertations.
- Capstone projects, thesis, and dissertation committees should guide students on the risks and benefits of using AI, including potential impacts on future publishing and career success.
- Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to UAB and program-specific guidelines on permissible AI use.

Disclosure

- AI use must be disclosed by the graduate student and approved by the capstone/thesis/dissertation committee and program director.
- The disclosure will include the various ways AI tools have been used in conducting the research and/or writing the capstone project, thesis, or dissertation.
- The Graduate School will include the AI use disclosure as part of the official thesis/dissertation format guidelines. This requirement will ensure consistency and compliance across all graduate programs at UAB.

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- This process will help protect both the student and UAB against future challenges to the degree validity.

Example of AI Use Disclosure Statement
(to be modified by academic programs depending on their respective disciplinary practices and expectations)

Artificial Intelligence (hereafter AI) tools have been utilized in this thesis/dissertation. (List specific tools used) have been used to (describe specific uses, e.g., create data visualization, conduct statistical analysis). (List specific tools used) have been used to assist with the writing of this thesis/dissertation. All AI-generated content was reviewed and validated for relevance, appropriateness, and accuracy before incorporation into the final manuscript to maintain scholarly integrity of this research.

Guidance

For Graduate Students

- Graduate programs will provide guidance to graduate students on the responsible and ethical use of AI tools to protect students from future academic and professional risks.
- Graduate programs will educate students about the potential long-term implications of AI use in their academic work, such as loss of degree, retraction of publications, or inability to publish the work.

For Faculty

- Graduate programs will provide training resources for faculty on the responsible use of AI tools in their respective fields.
- Graduate programs will implement training programs for faculty on the limitations and biases of current AI detection tools.
- If AI detection tools are approved by UAB, graduate programs will encourage the use of AI detection tools[1] responsibly without risking the student's ownership of their research and intellectual property, and without defaulting to reporting academic integrity cases.
- Graduate faculty will work closely with their mentees to verify the authenticity and originality of their research and writing.

Note about AI Detection Tools

- As of the writing of these guidelines, UAB does not authorize the use of any AI detection tools. Therefore, graduate thesis and dissertation manuscripts should not be uploaded to any of those tools.
- If that situation changes in the future, graduate capstone project, thesis, and dissertation chairs are advised to not use these tools to assess entire documents like manuscripts, capstone projects, theses and dissertations, which could lead to ownership and privacy concerns.

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