

Carleton University
Department of Psychology
Policy on AI Use in Theses and Dissertations
October 2026

Dissertations and MA theses must represent original scholarly work, demonstrate independent/critical thinking, and show mastery of the relevant field in accordance with academic integrity standards. The central arguments, analysis, interpretation of evidence, and scholarly conclusions must reflect the intellectual contribution of the author. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be used to support aspects of the research and writing process, provided their use does not substitute for the student's own scholarly judgment/critical thinking, analysis, or intellectual contribution, and provided their use is fully disclosed. Misuse or misrepresentation of AI-generated content as original work will be treated as a breach of academic integrity and is subject to university policies.

Writing and Editing

Students may use AI tools to address basic editing typical of standard proofreading. These include spell check, grammar, and punctuation, or formatting compliance. The use of AI to write the text from scratch is prohibited. For example, students are not permitted to ask AI to generate a first draft of any of the sections of the manuscript or create content such as asking AI to generate hypotheses, structure arguments, or generate conclusions.

Data and Analyses

Please keep in mind that uploading raw data, or proprietary information into public AI tools violates privacy and data security policies unless prior consent and ethical approval has been obtained. AI may be used to help with troubleshooting data analysis code, and help with literature searches, with proper and clear acknowledgement. It is essential to review, edit, and verify the accuracy and appropriateness of any AI-assisted work.

Consultation with Supervisor

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in all circumstances, including any not described here with their thesis supervisor. Supervisors may impose additional policies for stricter limitations of AI use (for example, they might or might not allow the use of AI for re-writing of content). The extent to which work is original and independent may be verified and understanding of submitted work may be discussed during student-supervisor meetings, committee meetings, and the defence of the thesis/dissertation.

Disclosure

The routine use of spelling, grammar and formatting tools does not need to be disclosed. The use of AI tools for other purposes must be acknowledged in an AI declaration section of the dissertation or MA Thesis. For example, this section may be placed on a separate page after the Acknowledgement section. Suggested text: "This thesis is my own original work. No AI programs have been used to complete it." or "This thesis is my own original work. I have used [insert AI type and version] for [insert all types of use]. In all instances, after AI was used, I read and approved all content and take full responsibility for the contents of this thesis". If AI tools are used, it is recommended that an appendix is included that includes a log of prompts/inputs given to the AI, a summary or copy of the AI's output, and notes on how the output was used.