

Teaching and Assessing Academic Writing in Times of GenAI

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Some context

- Amsterdam University College
- Liberal Arts & Sciences program (BA / BSc)
- Joint honours degree VU / UvA
- Small-scale, intensive, residential college

Curriculum components

- **Academic Core courses**
Programming; Logic; **Academic Writing**; Community Project/Internships; etc.
- **Major courses**
that deepen your focus area and specialisation, including methods & Capstone project
- **Courses in other two majors**
- **Elective courses**
Freely chosen from any major. Can also consist of study abroad courses, or off-campus courses

FOUNDATIONS
ACADEMIC SKILLS
AND
PERSPECTIVES

DEPTH
SPECIALISATION
AND
EXPERTISE

BREADTH
NEW PERSPECTIVES
AND
EXPLORATION





Advanced Research Writing

- Mandatory course for all students
- Taken in 4th or 5th semester
- Builds on Academic Writing Skills (year 1)
- Prepares for the Capstone project (i.e. bachelor's thesis)
- 22 students per classroom, from all majors
- 6 EC, 16 weeks (P1&P2; P4&P5)
- Students write a literature-based research paper

Advanced Research Writing

Our challenge: teaching and assessing academic writing in times of GenAI

Our response:

- We permit the use of GenAI technology, but conditionally:
 - Rules & Guidelines
 - AI statement
 - A dedicated class on the opportunities and risks of using GenAI
 - Adapted assessment: from product to process
- This combination is key: use of GenAI can be OK when there are clear rules, when there is (basic) knowledge (AI literacy), and when the assessment focuses not exclusively on writing products

Course Policy on using Generative AI in Advanced Research Writing (Fall 2023)

The course Advanced Research Writing aims to teach advanced academic writing skills to the (academic) writers of the future. As teachers, we have no doubt that the writers of the future will do their writing supported by AI technology. Therefore, we also believe that today's students need to learn and practice using AI technology critically and responsibly in their writing.

Generative AI technology and the advantages, disadvantages and risks of using AI tools like ChatGPT will be topics for discussion in this course. Moreover, students are permitted to use generative AI technology in working on their writing projects for this course, provided they adhere to certain rules and guidelines, as outlined in this document and to be discussed further in class.

Rules & Guidelines

1. Students may use generative AI technology to support their writing, in ways similar to how internet search engines, grammar and spell checkers, and (online) dictionaries and thesauruses are used.
2. Students may use generative AI as a source of information and to generate content, as long as they use the tool as an assistant, not an author. Instructions on how to do this are provided further down this document.
3. If students use generative AI tools, they must provide full transparency about how they use them. Instructions on how to do this are provided further down this document.
4. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the advantages as well as disadvantages and potential risks of using generative AI. These topics will also be discussed in class.
5. Students who make use of generative AI tools in their writing assignments remain fully responsible for the texts they submit.
6. The "Regulations governing fraud and plagiarism" (AS&P, Appendix 2) apply to any assignment submitted in the course, written with the help of generative AI or not.
7. These Rules and Guidelines apply exclusively to the course Advanced Research Writing. In other contexts, such as the Capstone, students should contact their teacher or supervisor for permission and guidelines on the use of generative AI tools.

Advanced Research Writing

How do you use generative AI as an assistant, not an author?

Generative AI can perform and can even take over certain tasks for you, but you should remain in charge of the overall writing and thinking processes at all times. This means you need to use generative AI critically and responsibly. Do not take over information generated by generative AI tools unthinkingly. And do not incorporate generated output into your text immediately and without acknowledgments. In short, be smart, not lazy.

How can you offer complete transparency about your use of generative AI?

When you use generative AI technologies such as ChatGPT as a source of information, you should treat them like any other source of information you use in your academic writing. Thus, when you incorporate information presented to you by a chatbot, you must summarize, paraphrase, and/or quote it, attribute it clearly and provide a correct citation. (The technical details will be discussed more fully in class). Do note, however, that you should critically evaluate the quality and reliability of the information you have generated, just as you would with other forms and sources of information.

When you use generative AI to brainstorm ideas, to grammar-check, style-check, and/or enhance your writing, to generate content (including outlines, larger sections of text, or bibliographies), or any other uses, you should explain your approach clearly and in sufficient detail. You can do so, for instance, in an explanatory footnote or as part of your methodology section. Additionally, you are required to save and provide full access to your complete chat history for your project. If you use ChatGPT, for example, you can give access by clicking on the “share chat” button and pasting the link in your methodology section or explanatory footnote.



Advanced Research Writing

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ARW course policy
on using
Generative AI

Dedicated class on AI

- Open discussion with students on use, experiences, concerns
- Key definitions and concepts: what is GenAI and LLMs, how do they work?
- Discussion on advantages and benefits vs. disadvantages and risks
- Discussion of course policy: what is responsible use of GenAI
- Use of GenAI in relation to “Regulations governing fraud and plagiarism”
- Referencing use of GenAI in APA / MLA
- A short prompting exercise

In terms of AI Literacy:

1. What: knowledge and insight ✓
2. How: understanding and application ✗
3. Why: ethics and evaluation ✓

Assessment: From Product to Process

Assessment before:

- Research proposal (25%)
- Writing Update (25%)
- Final Version (25%)
- Defence (15%)
- Academic Competencies (10%)

Assessment after:

- Research proposal (20%)
- Writing Update (--)
- Final Version (30%)
- Defence (20%)
- Academic Competencies (30%)

Academic Competencies (30%)

Includes:

- Various homework assignments (submitted yes/no)
- Individual meeting 1
- Individual meeting 2
- Individual meeting 3
- Writing update (submitted? Overall quality?)
- General academic competencies (engagement in class, etc.)

Requires us to keep a logbook on individual students

Students must pass this assignment to pass the course – an exception to AUC's assessment policy

Grading sheet Academic Competencies in ARW

						score
Academic Competencies Assignments		Not submitted		Submitted		10
Reflection on goals				1		
Pitch transcript				1		
Peer review of Research Proposal				1		
Methodology and Impact				1		
Literature Review: Introduction & Outline				1		
Selfie at PhD defence				1		
InPrint Peer review (bonus 0.3 to final AC grade)						
Individual meeting 1		Insufficient	Sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent
Research Topic		3	6,5	8	9	10
Quality of the work in progress						
Has the student been processing a good amount of relevant literature?				1		
Is a clear and viable research angle / research question starting to take shape?				1		
Preparation & Discussion						
Has the student prepared well for the meeting?					1	
Does the student demonstrate critical and reflective competency?					1	

Comments: You wrote a strong pitch in which you demonstrated some quite concrete research ideas already. Likewise, in our conversation it became clear that you're very much on top of things. I look forward to reading more!

Individual meeting 2	Insufficient	Sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent	8,5
Introduction & Outline	3	6,5	8	9	10	
Quality of the work in progress						
Do the introduction and research question/thesis show good promise?				1		
Does the outline offer a clear overview of the paper in progress, and do the plans seem viable?			1			
Preparation & Discussion						
Has the student prepared well for the meeting?			1			
Does the student demonstrate critical and reflective competency?				1		
Writing Update	Insufficient	Sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent	9,5
	3	6,5	8	9	10	
Overall quality					1	
Submission	on time	# days late				
		1				

Comments: You are well under way and seem to be fully in control. The RQ sounds good and you sound very knowledgeable.

Comments: See Canvas

3	Individual meeting 3	Insufficient	Sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent	9,0
3	From Writing Update to Final Draft	3	6,5	8	9	10	
0	Quality of the work in progress				1		
1	• Does the student engage effectively with feedback?						
2	Preparation & Discussion				1		
3	• Has the student prepared well for the meeting?						
4	• Does the student demonstrate critical and reflective competency?				1		
5							
5							
7	Engagement in course and process	Insufficient	Sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent	8,375
3		3	6,5	8	9	10	
3	• Participation in class discussions		1				
0	• Works independently and takes responsibility for the project					1	
1	• Demonstrates progress through attention to feedback				1		
2	• Demonstrates punctuality with regard to deadlines, meetings, agreements			1			
3							
4							
5							
5							
7	Overall grade Academic Competencies						9,0

Comments: This was a pleasant conversation about your paper. It's clear that you're well on track with everything and fully in control.

Comments: While relatively quiet in class discussions, you were engaged in the course as well as in your own research project throughout the semester.

Final Paper: changing weights to reflect new realities

Criterion	Old weights	New weights
Title, abstract, keywords	10	2.5
Introduction	10	10
Analysis and Argument; Critical Engagement	15	25
Organization and coherence	15	15
Use of sources and resources	15	20
Conclusion and repositioning	15	10
Language, style and lay-out	5	2.5
Engagement with feedback	15	15
TOTAL	100	100

Reflection

- Our policy document has been very well-received by students as well as colleagues (it establishes clarity)
- GenAI can be admitted in an academic writing class, but clear rules in combination with reflection on LOs and assessment are required
- Shift from product to process works well in AUC context (small-scale, intensive), but may not be feasible everywhere
- Focus on writing process and oral skills: risk of grade inflation
- A clear GenAI policy is not the end of the conversation. Constant monitoring and evaluation are required.

Q&A



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Our questions to you

- What types of changes have you introduced to your research writing courses/assignments as a result of the introduction of GenAI tools?
 - Do you also assign more weight to the process (than you used to) and, if so, how is this reflected in your assessment structure/redesign?
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- A series of four yellow curved dashes in the bottom right corner, arranged in a diagonal line from bottom-left to top-right.