

Generative AI Policy for Junior Independent Work and Senior Theses*

Department of Economics

Revised 8/25/2026

The Department of Economics permits the use of generative AI (GenAI) tools in junior independent work and senior theses only as described in this policy.

1. Core Principles

- **Encouraged use:** Proficiency with GenAI is a valuable skill; therefore, its responsible use is encouraged.
- **Sole authorship:** While GenAI is a useful tool, you remain the sole author of your work and are responsible for all errors, including flawed data analysis, incorrect references, and coding mistakes.
- **Independent command:** While AI can help with brainstorming ideas, searching for related work, writing, interpretation, and technical tasks, you must demonstrate a thorough, independent command of your data, code, and methods. Your paper should sound like you wrote it and reflect your understanding of the research.
- **Academic integrity:** Since GenAI can produce incorrect or fabricated sources, data, analyses and/or results, you must carefully verify everything that you submit. Additionally, you must disclose the use of generative AI tools, and you must fully understand and be able to explain any portion of your work that was influenced by these tools (e.g. data analysis, methods, and interpretations).

2. Appropriate Uses

The following are permitted:

- **Conceptual support:** developing research questions, hypotheses, mechanisms, and modeling ideas
- **Writing support:** editing for clarity, formatting (e.g., LaTeX, tables, citations), and generating alternative phrasing.
- **Coding:** Debugging, explaining error messages, and implementing standard empirical methods; provided you rigorously test and understand your code.
- **Literature review:** Suggesting search terms or candidate papers, and summarizing student-provided notes. However, Gen AI summaries must never replace actual reading of original academic texts.

3. Prohibited Uses

The following uses constitute academic misconduct:

- **Fabrication and falsification:** including fabricated sources, quotations, datasets, or Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs); manipulating evidence (e.g., reporting robustness checks that

were never actually run).

- **Blind reliance:** Citing or summarizing material you have not personally read; submitting AI-generated analysis or interpretations that you cannot independently explain; submitting AI-generated work “as-is” without modification or review.

4. Data Privacy and Confidentiality

Students are responsible for complying with all data-use agreements, confidentiality agreements, Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, and University policies associated with the data they use.

- **Follow applicable restrictions:** If a data-use agreement, IRB protocol, sponsor requirement, or other governing policy prohibits the use of GenAI tools, then GenAI may not be used with those data.
- **Use approved environments when required:** Some data-use agreements, IRB protocols, sponsor requirements, or University policies permit the use of AI tools only within approved environments. In such cases, students must use University-approved AI tools and platforms.

5. Student Responsibilities and Best Practices

- By submitting a JIW or thesis, you affirm your ability to explain and defend all claims, methods, and conclusions in your work.
- You must be able to fully reproduce your empirical results from your code, and you are responsible for understanding and validating any gen AI code.
- You are responsible for verifying the accuracy of any information included in your JIW or senior thesis.
- Treat AI-generated results (i.e. citations, code, etc.) as a starting point. Read all articles cited, review and test all code, verify results, justify modeling choices, assess the sensitivity of findings to alternative specifications, and retain your code and output that document your research process.

6. AI Use Certification and Verification Appendix (Required)

While you do not need to submit prompt logs, please keep a record in case this is requested. Along with your thesis or JIW, you must submit a gen AI Statement of Use and a Verification Matrix.

Part A: Statement of Use

Please include the following signed statement:

"I certify that I used generative AI tools in the preparation of this Prospectus/JP/Thesis Draft/Thesis [or: I did not use generative AI tools]. I affirm that I independently verified all substantive claims, citations, empirical results, and code. I understand that I am fully responsible for all content, and that I may be required during the oral defense to explain and justify in detail any aspect of this paper, including components that were aided by generative AI tools."

Part B: Verification Matrix

Please complete and include the following matrix with all JIW and senior theses.

Research Phase	AI Tool(s) Used	Brief Description of Assistance	Method of Independent Verification
Topic & Literature	<i>(e.g., Copilot)</i>	<i>(e.g., Suggested keywords and candidate papers for my literature review)</i>	<i>(e.g., I personally located, read, and evaluated the original papers; did not rely on AI summaries)</i>
Data & Coding	<i>(e.g., Claude)</i>	<i>(e.g., Debugged Python loops for data cleaning; helped write the fixed-effects regression code)</i>	<i>(e.g., I ran the code on a small subset of the data to manually verify the output; checked standard econometrics documentation to ensure syntax was correct)</i>
Writing & Formatting	<i>(e.g., ChatGPT)</i>	<i>(e.g., Edited introduction for clarity; generated LaTeX code for summary statistics tables)</i>	<i>(e.g., Reviewed all edited text to ensure my original meaning was preserved; verified LaTeX tables against my actual data outputs)</i>

**The Department of Economics' Executive Steering Committee certifies the use of generative AI tools in the preparation of this Policy. We understand and are fully responsible for all content, including components that were aided by generative AI tools.*