Graduate Student Al Use Decision Tree

NO: STOP. Do not use the Al

tool. The first and most critical

step is to have an open

and submitting them as your own

• Using AI when explicitly prohibited

personal data to a public AI tool

Using Al for deception

Generating core ideas, arguments, or

· Submitting Al-generated work as your own for

• In a core skill assessment without disclosure

· Submitting sensitive research, private, or

• Submitting copyright materials to public AI tools

Any use that violates academic integrity /

student code of conduct or other university

hypotheses without your own intellectual

with

your

conversation

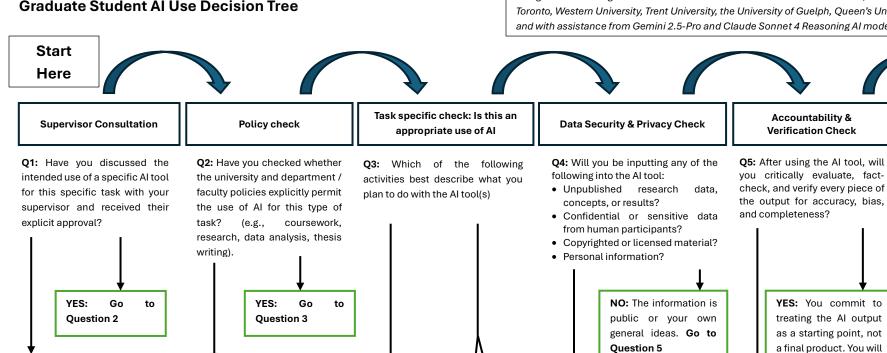
contribution

publication

policies

supervisory team.

This guide based on guidance from The Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, York University, The University of Toronto, Western University, Trent University, the University of Guelph, Queen's University, the University of Victoria, and with assistance from Gemini 2.5-Pro and Claude Sonnet 4 Reasoning AI models.



breach confidentiality agreements, violate privacy laws, and compromise your intellectual NO: STOP. Do not use the property, as the data may be Al tool. You are solely stored and used by the AI provider. responsible Check if the university provides/ for integrity and accuracy of recommends a secure, licensed Al tool for this purpose that

independently verify all

facts, citations, and

arguments. Go to

Question 6.

Q6: Are you prepared to document and cite the use of the AI tool in your work according to established academic standards (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago etc.) and any specific guidelines from your supervisor, publisher, or discipline?

Transparency Check

YES: You are ready to use the AI tool(s) responsibly.

NO: STOP. Undisclosed use of Al may be considered a breach of academic integrity.

If you have navigated the decision tree to this point, you have confirmed that your intended use of Al is:

- Approved by your supervisor.
- Permitted by the University / department.
- Appropriate for the task.
- Secure and protects your data.
- Subject to your verification and accountability.
- Will be transparently documented.

You may proceed with using the AI tool for the specified task. Remember to keep a detailed record of which tool(s) you use, how you use them (including prompts), and for what purpose. This documentation is crucial for transparency and academic integrity.

STOP: Generally inappropriate . Generating substantive sections of text, such as your literature review, analysis, or conclusion

policies.

caution, care, and verification Go to Question 4

- Paraphrasing
- Debugging or optimising code
- Translation assistance
- · Critical evaluation of sources
- · Methodology design
- · Conducting peer review
- · Generating synthetic data
- · Coding or thematic analysis of qualitative data

Proceed with caution: Use with high level of

- · Recording and transcribing interviews with
- Writing a grant or REB application
- Core argument development/ refinement
- Using Al as a search engine

NO/DON'T KNOW: STOP. Do

not use the Al tool. The first step

is to have an open conversation

with your supervisory team

about your planned AI use and

also consult senate bylaws and

- Data analysis and interpretation with verification

• Generating code for data analysis or simulations · Formatting and reference management

• Preparing for comprehensive exams or thesis defence

YES: STOP. Do not use public AI

tools. Inputting such information

guarantees privacy. If not, you

cannot use an AI tool for this task.

Generally acceptable (with disclosure) Go to

• Brainstorming ideas or refining research questions

• Summarizing literature or identifying themes as a

• Improving the clarity of your writing / seeking

starting point for exploration

· Checking grammar and style

Ouestion 4

feedback

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