UNIVERSITÄT HOHENHEIM

PRESSE UND ÖFFENTLICHKEITSARBEIT

Telefon: +49(0)711 459-22001/22003
Fax: +49(0)711 459-23289
E-Mail: presse@uni-hohenheim.de
Internet: http://www.uni-hohenheim.de

04.10.2023

PRESSEMITTEILUNG

ChatGPT and Generative AI:
University of Hohenheim Enables Use of AI Tools in Studies

It's allowed, but there are rules: Starting in the winter semester, lecturers can allow their students to use AI tools such as ChatGPT in papers or their final thesis. Details are regulated in the new guidelines

PRESSEFOTOS unter www.uni-hohenheim.de

Term papers, Bachelor's theses, or Master's theses: Starting in the upcoming winter semester 23/24, students at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart will be able to use artificial intelligence software tools such as ChatGPT for exam papers. The first principle: Use is voluntary, students must note where they have used it, and they are responsible for legal regulations such as copyright. As always, lecturers have a responsibility to ensure that their exams are meaningful and legally compliant. The University of Hohenheim defined further details in its own guidelines on dealing with AI in examinations. This makes the University of Hohenheim one of a small group of pioneering universities. The recommendations in detail:
https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/en/use-of-generative-ai-in-exams

There is still a great deal of uncertainty at a large number of German universities when it comes to the topic of AI tools in studies. According to research conducted by the edtech company Scribbr among the 100 largest universities in Germany, 64% of the universities have unclear guidelines on the use of ChatGPT. 10% of the universities have a blanket prohibition against use. It is generally allowed at 9% of universities and partially allowed at 17% (as of 4 Sept 2023, source: https://www.scribbr.de/ki-tools-nutzen/chatgpt-universitaere-richtlinien/).

At the University of Hohenheim, professors in various working groups had already recommended the use of ChatGPT in March. During the summer weeks, the University Senate now defined a recommendation paper specifically for term papers and final papers such as Bachelor's or Master's theses.

These are exams that are written and unproctored and therefore have a high potential for cheating.

Examinations must remain meaningful and fulfill legal requirements

For lecturers, the Senate paper recommends the following rules for AI use in unsupervised written examination papers:

- Students should note the use of generative AI systems in an extended self-declaration and document each step of the work.
- Students are responsible for the accuracy of all statements, citations, and references in their text and for ensuring that these meet academic standards. This means that all content generated by the AI must be reviewed by the students.
- The text prepared and examined in this way is accepted as a written examination, although it is not possible to assess the examinee's academic writing ability.
- Copyright and usage rights must be observed. Only your own texts and data or those that have been explicitly released for this purpose may be fed into AI systems.
- The use of generative AI systems in these exams remains voluntary. Students should be aware that European data protection standards may not be guaranteed by providers outside the EU.

Lecturers still have the duty to design examinations in such a way that they test the learning objectives in a meaningful way that fulfills legal requirements:

- Module supervisors are responsible for ensuring that learning content is examined in a valid way and that examinations are not open to legal objections. It might be necessary for unsupervised written examinations to be replaced or supplemented by other forms of examination.

Students should view AI as a tool

"Term papers and theses have not become obsolete, even in the age of ChatGPT," said Prof. Dr. Korinna Huber, Vice President for Academic Affairs. "However, there are also competencies that can no longer be easily tested in this way, such as scientific writing skills. To further ensure the validity of such unsupervised written examinations, it is recommended that lecturers supplement written work with, for example, an oral colloquium, that they administer supervised written examinations, or that they rely on multiple choice examinations."

At the same time, she sees the decision to allow AI tools as aids in exams as an important building block for university teaching that looks to the future. "We don't need to fundamentally change our teaching through the use of AI, but rather – as we have in the past – we need to place a special emphasis on teaching students early on the importance of scientific work, critical thinking, and writing."

From a legal point of view, the University of Hohenheim relies on the voluntary nature of its recommendations. This is not only true for students, who may choose not to use AI tools. "The Senate paper is a strong recommendation that the University has developed and unanimously adopted through its academic self-governance. In this respect, it should lead to a high degree of commitment. Freedom of teaching also means that lecturers can prohibit the use of AI tools in exams, however," stated Prof. Dr. Huber.

At the same time, she said, the University of Hohenheim recognizes the enormous potential of generative AI systems. It is therefore the university's aspiration to teach students to use this

technology competently and responsibly, she said.

"Digitalization and artificial intelligence are specializations of the University of Hohenheim. This applies to all disciplines from business administration and economics to nutrition, food sciences, biology, and agricultural sciences. Our goal is to prepare students to actively shape the digital transformation of our society."

Text: Klebs