

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 8/9/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University Of Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Ψυχολογία (4 έτη, 255 ECTS, Διδακτορικό)

In English:

Psychology (4 years, 255 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
 - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

1. Study programme and study programme’s design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

The PhD programme is a high quality programme, delivering strong graduates with good career prospects in academia (which is evident from the fact that many former students have ended up as postdocs or faculty members in high-ranked international universities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The Qualitative Research Methods course can be avoided by taking a Quantitative course instead. In many international psychology programmes, advanced study of both is mandatory. Students take electives in two groups (Group 1, consisting of two methodological courses and Group 2, consisting of 17 psychology courses). Former students of the programme indicate that, at least for PhD students working in some domains, these options can be quite limited. The programme committee may consider opening up (at least part of) Group 2 to courses in other disciplines, relevant for the specific research topic of the students.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that during some semesters the number of elective courses for the Ph.D. students is limited. This is due to the small number of Ph.D. students admitted to the program each year, with diverse research interests, and the fact that according to UCY regulations, a minimum of 5 students is required for a course to be offered. We believe this problem will be resolved when the new MA program is established as several of these elective courses will be taught each year, making the menu of electives for the Ph.D. program richer, meeting the student needs. One of these courses will be Qualitative Methods, which is a required course for the revised MA. Those entering the Ph.D. program from our revised MA program would already have taken this course; for the remaining students, it will be a regularly offered elective course.</p> <p>In addition, depending on the dissertation needs, students are permitted to take an elective course from another department, if the course enhances their dissertation. We acknowledge that this is not listed explicitly in the program description on our website and we will revise content to make this option explicit for our students.</p>	<p>Provided solution</p>
<p>Click or tap here to enter text. Current and former students of the programme strongly advocate for a redesign of the Comprehensive Evaluation. They indicate that in its current form, the evaluation is not only very stressful (three exams on two successive days)</p>	<p>Regarding the Comprehensive Examinations, the Departmental Council is exploring the alternate format of a systematic review in conjunction with an oral examination in lieu of the current</p>	<p>Responded</p>

<p>but also of limited relevance to the progress of the PhD work. The EEC is also in favor of designing the Comprehensive Examination in such a way as to maximally contribute to the student's PhD project. One way to do this would be to conceive it as a systematic literature review on the student's planned research topic plus an oral progress review.</p>	<p>written examination format. This procedure is already established in the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and it will be tested for the first time during summer 2025. Once we have tested this process and adjust/fine tune (if needed), we will consider it for the Ph.D. in Psychology.</p>	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment
(ESG 1.3)

The courses and doctoral seminar are well-designed to support the development of the PhD. " Allowing students to submit published papers as part of the PhD thesis encourages their academic skills. " Allowing students to write in English enhances the likelihood of international recognition for their work.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Eight years is a relatively long period of study for a PhD.	The eight years is the upper limit set by UCY. The average number of years for the PhD in Psychology is 6 years, which is consistent with the average at UCY. We acknowledge that this is a long time for a doctoral degree; however, several of our students work full time to support themselves. This is required for the livelihood and sustainability since there is not structured system by the university to support doctoral students.	Responded with their reasoning

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

It is clear that during the past five years, the Department has managed to downsize the ratio of permanent to temporary staff in the programs, which is a good thing. It seems that the reduction of elective courses across the programs has ensured that the number of courses to be organised is more or less inline with staff capacity. " Teaching staff have strong research profiles and show a great amount of commitment to the Department and its programmes. Recent hires with strong profiles further add to the strength of the Department. " The teaching staff team is cohesive and seems to collaborate well with administrative staff. " The fact that in the newly proposed Bachelor program the undergraduate thesis is mandatory further adds to the strong research orientation of the program. " The Department provides continuous opportunities for student involvement in research, which seems to pay off. Students have received Cyprus Youth Organization awards for their research.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
There is room to build further on the strength of the staff by expanding the Department with new hires.	This comment is not specific to the doctoral program and the Department but relates to the strategy of the department and the university in general.	Responded

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
(ESG 1.4)

There are well-defined and well-documented processes in all categories.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

Teaching is student-centered and students are getting regular feedback from academic staff. " Overall, the University's facilities are new and modern, meeting most of the needs of the staff and student population. " UCY has arranged for many student support services to be provided centrally. " A valuable resource is the University Mental Health Center, which operates under the Department of Psychology. It is staffed by Department graduates and doctoral level trainees in Clinical Psychology. " The Department indicates that the Mental Health Center and the University Field Research Centre have scope for sustainability, growth and expansion into specialised service units capable of generating income, which is a good thing.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Some assessments need to be rethought in the advent of generative AI.	Regarding the generative AI, we acknowledge its increasing use by students. The University has established regulations which students are required to adhere to in their use. Those are attached (Appendix I). Also, the use of oral examinations during the comprehensive examination, dissertation proposal presentation and dissertation defense safeguard the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge and synthesis of the information on their subject.	Annex 1 at the end of this response
The Department needs to model faculty workload in a more appropriate way.	We acknowledge the need for a more structured and transparent model of faculty workload, and we appreciate the Committee's observations on this matter. Regarding the Ph.D. program, the university has established a maximum number of supervisees per faculty member (n =5). However, this is not strongly enforced by the university and as a result some faculty have a large number of supervisees. Please also review the responses for the Bachelor in Psychology program on this matter.	Responded
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

The thesis is a well-specified document, at the culmination of a thorough research training.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
We note that in many institutions, bound hard copies of PhD theses are no longer required (submission is typically electronic, in pdf format).	The Department adheres to the University's regulations on the format of the doctoral dissertation. The University requires the hardcopy submission and therefore our students are required to comply with these requirements.	Responded

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
 (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

The PhD Programme offers training for researchers with a clear developmental trajectory, including courses and checkpoints along the way. It is an excellent programme. Nonetheless we gather that there are constant discussions about improvements, and we have two suggestions of our own. The first is to allow students to take more than one course from outside Psychology, so that the training for those with interdisciplinary research plans maps better to their interests. The other concerns the Comprehensive Exam, described to us by students as a “pain point”. We think this exam might be replaced for example by a written literature review plus oral progress review, which is the standard in many comparable international institutions. If our understanding is correct, this would correspond to the practice in the Department’s other (Clinical) PhD programme.

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Allow students to take more than one course from outside Psychology, so that the training for those with interdisciplinary research plans maps better to their interests	We appreciate the suggestions and this is now addressed in previous Section 1	Choose level of compliance:
The other concerns the Comprehensive Exam, described to us by students as a “pain point”. We think this exam might be replaced for example by a written literature review plus oral progress review, which is the standard in many comparable international institutions. If our understanding is correct, this would correspond to the practice in the Department’s other (Clinical) PhD programme.	As discussed in Section 1, the redesign of the comprehensive examination is under consideration.	Choose level of compliance:

C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Kostas Fanti	Professor, Chair of the Department	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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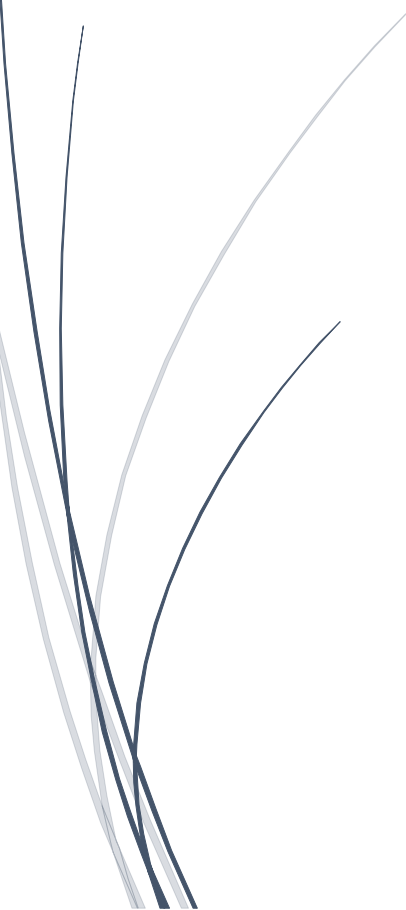
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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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University
of Cyprus

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH



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This document was approved by the Rector's Council at meeting 17/2025/RECT held on the 23rd of May, 2025 and by the Senate Council at meeting 14/2025/SENATE held on the 11th of June, 2025.



INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is advancing at unprecedented speed, driven by the rise of generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Claude, Gemini, and Mistral. These systems, trained on vast internet-scale datasets, now produce realistic, coherent text and multimedia content in response to human prompts. Their rapid integration into everyday tools has generated excitement about their potential, including their role in learning, research, and creative work.

Despite their impressive sophistication, LLMs are in essence probabilistic systems that rely on unverified data and offer no transparent reasoning and in some cases no source attribution. Their responses can be biased, inaccurate, or misleading - posing a serious challenge to academic integrity and the cultivation of independent thought. As LLMs increasingly mediate access to information, there is a growing risk that students may bypass the intellectual processes central to learning: engagement with and critical analysis of learning materials and scholarly text, evaluation and combination of different information sources, deep thinking and sustained reflection.

The University of Cyprus is committed to upholding the foundational values of education: mastery of disciplinary knowledge, understanding of the scientific method, logical reasoning, self-directed inquiry, and the ability to express complex ideas with clarity and creativity.

While LLMs may support these goals when used carefully, for example as assistants in writing, coding, brainstorming or routine work, they must not replace the human mastery of disciplinary knowledge required to achieve them.

These guidelines are intended to help students, researchers, and educators to integrate AI responsibly, ensuring it enhances, rather than undermines, human intellectual development and the mission of higher education.



A. BASIC PRINCIPLES AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

- **Commitment to Teaching, Learning and Research:** The University of Cyprus remains committed to its core mission: advancing science through academic research and imparting scientific knowledge to students through rigorous instruction. It strives to empower students and researchers with a deep understanding of scientific principles, foster creativity and critical thinking, strengthen problem-solving abilities, and instil ethical values that support the development of responsible citizens who excel in scientific and professional careers while making positive contributions to society. The University of Cyprus considers AI a powerful tool that can enhance education and research, helping students, researchers and faculty pursue their distinct objectives in alignment with the University's mission.
- **Use of AI and Compliance:** The University of Cyprus community is encouraged to use available AI tools to improve comprehension, enhance teaching, support learning and research, and increase productivity provided that their use complies with ethical principles and legal requirements, including the University of Cyprus' academic integrity policies, the [EU AI Act](#)¹ and the guidelines of the European Commission under the [European Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#)².
- **Output Responsibility:** The University of Cyprus faculty, students and researchers who use AI tools are solely responsible for confirming the accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance of the outputs they generate. This includes a duty to critically cross-check AI-generated content against original sources. This responsibility extends to AI tools or systems developed, used, distributed, or imported by the University of Cyprus, which must adhere to principles such as human agency and oversight, technical robustness, privacy and data governance, transparency, fairness, and accountability.

Since AI tools generate responses based on existing online material without any verification of their accuracy and timeliness against valid scientific information sources, users must independently assess and verify the accuracy and reliability before using, forwarding or referencing this output for any academic reason.

- **AI as a Complement, Not Substitute:** Every AI tool should be utilized with the aim of augmenting human learning and/or decision-making, serving as a supportive tool that enhances critical thinking and independent analysis rather than substituting them. It is imperative that users continue to engage deeply with the content and apply their own evaluative and critical appraisal skills, using AI as one of many resources to inform their decisions.

- **Awareness of AI Risks:** The University of Cyprus adopts the risk categorisation defined in the [EU AI Act](#)¹—unacceptable, high, limited, and minimal risk—and its guidelines reflect this classification. University members must be aware of potential issues associated with the use of AI. These include but are not limited to:
 - academic integrity risks (e.g., plagiarism, copyright and IP infringement)
 - ethical, privacy and safety concerns (e.g., biases in outputs, privacy violations including uploading another author’s original writing without their consent, lack of transparency in declaring AI use)
 - dependency risks (e.g., diminished critical thinking and de-skilling)
 - inaccuracy and misinformation risks (e.g., hallucinated AI output and deepfakes - audiovisual content altered by AI - can lead to false information which may include intentionally and unintentionally manipulated data that leads to biased output)
 - social inequalities (e.g., unequal access or improper use that may provide unfair advantages to a person or a group)

- **AI Prohibitions and Ethical Risks:** Certain AI applications pose unacceptable risks and are **strictly prohibited** at the University of Cyprus in accordance with the [EU AI Act](#)¹. These include:
 - subliminal AI manipulation, which influences behavior without user awareness
 - social scoring AI, which ranks individuals based on personal behavior or socioeconomic background
 - AI that exploits vulnerabilities, particularly those that discriminate based on age, disabilities, or socioeconomic status.

The University of Cyprus enforces strict compliance with these regulations to maintain ethical AI use.

- **Input Responsibility and Safety Considerations:** Users must exercise great caution when entering data into AI tools, avoiding the input of personal, confidential or unpublished research data, as well as copyrighted content. It is emphasised that AI tools may store, analyse, or use input data to improve their models, potentially leading to data leaks, ethical and safety concerns.

- **Verbatim Copying:** While AI tools may assist in academic work, direct submission of AI-generated content as one's own is prohibited, except where explicitly authorized. Students and researchers must substantially contribute original analysis and critical thinking, especially when using AI interactively to enhance their work. Additionally, it is noted that some AI tools might be using watermarking techniques – that is, the embedding of invisible identifiers in the generated content. These identifiers may be detected during plagiarism checks, potentially risking future plagiarism allegations and damaging the University of Cyprus' and the user's reputation. To prevent such risks, it is important to safeguard the University of Cyprus community and oneself against any future violations of academic integrity.
- **Citation Requirements:** The general use of AI tools doesn't necessitate explicit declaration unless mandated in specific contexts, such as research papers or student assignments. Depending on the task, using minimal-risk tools like spell-checkers, translators, and simple automation functions, or gathering information with AI from publicly available sources, can be employed to acquire knowledge and shape opinions. Generally, such methods should not be explicitly mentioned unless there's a clear directive to the contrary. However, transparency is essential in the use of AI tools. Such tools range from AI-powered chatbots and plagiarism detection software to any AI tool or system that generates output (e.g., text, code, images) that is either directly used or substantially influences academic work (e.g., research papers, homework assignments, essays, exams). In such cases, users must properly cite the use of AI tools to avoid plagiarism and ensure transparency.
- **Mitigation of Risks:** The University of Cyprus encourages all faculty, students and researchers to actively engage with and participate in the University's inclusive activities and training sessions on AI, offering regular updates on emerging AI risks and best practices in teaching C learning, as main mitigation actions against these risks. Furthermore, both students and staff are encouraged to take personal initiative in developing their professional and digital skills, ensuring they are well-prepared to engage effectively and safely with advanced AI tools.



B. GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

This section enumerates the general guidelines to **specific user groups** (students, teaching staff and researchers) at the University of Cyprus.

B1. COURSE INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

- **AI Usage Instructions:** Instructors must exercise critical thinking over any AI-assisted use in teaching to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability, with final responsibility for teaching and grading resting solely with the instructor.

Instructors should also provide specific guidelines for the permitted use of AI in the course syllabus or in the instructions of graded assignments or exams, in accordance with course objectives and learning outcomes, as well as academic integrity guidelines. Where AI use in graded coursework is not permissible, it should be stated in the assignment instructions.

- **Integrity of the Assessment Process:** Instructors are encouraged to adapt the assessment methods for assignments and examinations to ensure the integrity of the assessment process. For example, take-home exams and thesis assessments may be replaced or complemented, if possible, with in-class quizzes or oral examinations to mitigate AI-related risks.
- **Use of Plagiarism Detection Tools:** Instructors may use plagiarism detection tools such as those available in Blackboard and Moodle. It is noted, however, that these tools have a margin of error and should not constitute the sole source for the identification of academic misconduct.
- **AI as a Teaching Tool:** Instructors are encouraged to use AI tools to deliver personalized or group-tailored learning opportunities, acting as a personal tutor for each student or group to enhance engagement and improve learning outcomes. While AI can be a valuable tool in education, it should complement the instructor's role rather than replace it.

Instructors should remain aware of the potential limitations and inaccuracies of generative AI systems.

Certain AI tools considered to pose limited risk should be used transparently. Examples include AI-powered chatbots (e.g., virtual assistants for answering student questions), plagiarism detection tools (e.g., Turnitin, Blackboard SafeAssign), and AI-assisted feedback tools (e.g., Grammarly for writing improvement). Instructors who use these tools in ways that directly impact student assessment, or academic evaluation, must ensure transparency and inform students accordingly by specifying their use in the course syllabus.

- **Privacy Protection and Responsible Use:** Instructors must ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the [EU AI Act](#)¹ when using AI tools or systems in teaching and assessment. They must not upload student or third-party work onto AI platforms in ways that may raise significant risks for privacy, intellectual property, or data security.
- **Development of Comprehensive AI Teaching Competencies:** Instructors are urged to develop digital competencies on the use of AI in teaching, by: a) fostering general AI literacy among students (Teaching for AI), b) integrating AI tools when they assess that this can enhance pedagogy (Teaching with AI), and c) delivering specialized instructions on the use of AI technologies and the ethical considerations involved (Teaching about AI). In any case, the use of AI in teaching should be adapted to align with the unique pedagogical models, professional autonomy, and structural requirements of higher education³.



B2. STUDENT GUIDELINES

- **Academic Skill Development:** As part of their academic training, students must further develop and apply their skills in generating ideas and arguments, conducting research and analysis, designing and executing projects, applying critical thinking, writing and revising work, synthesizing information, and citing sources properly. This list is not exhaustive but reflects a broader effort to ensure that students gain the most from their academic training. In all, the use of AI must enhance but not substitute fundamental academic processes.
- **AI as a Learning Aid:** Students can use AI tools as an educational aid in order to enhance their learning. Examples of use are the following:

- **Better understanding of text, concepts and language**

AI tools, for example, can be used to obtain simple or even more detailed explanations of concepts or of elaborate text.

- **Brainstorming**

AI tools, for example, can serve as a sounding board for bouncing ideas, can provide suggestions or refine a concept. In more complex settings they can also analyse data and find trends or provide predictions for potential outcomes.

- **Checking and enhancing syntax and grammar**

Besides basic text corrections, AI tools can improve the clarity and readability of the text, the writing style and the structure of the assignment. Students are encouraged to review any text edits proposed by AI tools to pinpoint areas where they can further enhance their writing skills.

- **Transparency in Use:** While AI can support learning, certain AI tools considered to pose limited risk require transparency in their use. Examples include AI-powered chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT for brainstorming), and adaptive learning platforms (e.g., AI-driven tutoring systems). If students use these tools in ways that directly influence their academic work, their use must be disclosed and properly referenced.

For graded assignments, exams, or projects, if AI tool usage is not addressed in the general guidelines, students must consult the course instructor to determine what is permitted.

- **Plagiarism:** The use of AI generated output may be considered plagiarism if it does not reflect substantial intellectual contribution by the student. ***Plagiarism is considered a disciplinary misconduct at the University of Cyprus.*** To avoid plagiarism students must always reference the original sources and use quotation marks (e.g., “copied text”) when directly incorporating or paraphrasing AI-generated content.

In the event of plagiarism, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the [Undergraduate Studies Rules](#)⁴ (Section III, “Disciplinary Rules for Students”,) or the

[Postgraduate Studies Rules](#)⁵ (Section III, “*Disciplinary Rules for Students*”) depending on the level of study.



B3. RESEARCHER GUIDELINES

- **AI Tools in Research:** AI tools can be used effectively in conducting research. Novice researchers must learn the essentials for appropriate and ethical use of AI technology as defined by the University of Cyprus and European and international guidelines and laws as well as publishers.

Researchers should apply critical judgement when using AI tools in research due to the lack of transparency regarding the datasets used to train these tools⁴. The training datasets may include both unintentionally biased and inaccurate content, as well as data polluted with malicious intent. Even non-malicious data can reflect societal biases or outdated information, potentially compromising the reliability and ethical soundness of AI-generated outputs.

- **Research Originality:** A basic tenet of research work is the original contribution to science and any use of AI that leads to non-genuine contributions is not permitted. This prohibition falls under unacceptable risk due to the potential for AI to undermine academic integrity by producing content without genuine authorship, introducing algorithmic bias, and facilitating the submission of non-original work.
- **Responsible Use of AI in Research:** While generally considered of limited risk, the use of AI tools for research-related tasks such as literature reviews, coding, or data analysis requires researchers to be mindful of higher potential risks. Researchers must maintain transparency by documenting the AI tools used and the tasks performed with them. All researchers must comply with the “[Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research](#)” developed by the European Research Area Forum⁶.
- **Misuse of AI in Research:** Researchers are responsible for ensuring that AI is not used to create false, misleading, or unverifiable research findings. Fabrication or misrepresentation of data using AI constitutes academic misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Verification and Compliance:** Researchers should exercise due diligence in verifying accuracy and comply with the University of Cyprus’ policies, intellectual property laws, the [EU AI Act](#)¹, and GDPR, including data protection and ethical considerations.
- **Preservation of Confidentiality:** Researchers should apply care when dealing with confidential, personal, sensitive or proprietary content. Upholding confidentiality is essential to maintain trust, protect data subjects from potential harm, and adhere to ethical, research and legal standards.

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