



Mishkah Policies on the Use of AI tools in Research, Assignments, and Final Exams

1. AI Tools in Research: Strategies, Ethics, and Policies

Section I. AI is a Powerful Tool

Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides powerful tools for research. AI tools can enhance information gathering, expedite the search for primary and secondary sources, and help students make connections between ideas in ways that may not have readily occurred to them.

AI has dangers too. AI tools draw from many sources without genuine understanding. Those tools can “hallucinate” false facts and false connections and make patently false claims. For students of Islamic Studies, AI tools may present certain ideas as Islamic teachings when those ideas are contrary to Islam. Therefore, AI tools must be used with the utmost caution.

AI tools and their outputs are not primary, secondary, or even tertiary sources. You cannot quote an AI tool or its output as a source. AI tools are merely a means to generate information and ideas very quickly, as well to efficiently organize information in coherent ways for structuring sections of composition.

AI tools can be used more effectively when the student is already informed on their topic and has very specific questions relating to sub-topics and details that come under the broader research project, as opposed to asking for output on the general topic itself. It is also advantageous to ask the same question many times and with different wordings to get varied results and to help identify possible contradictions, inaccuracies and “hallucinations”.

Section II. Ethics of Using AI

The information and compositions produced by an AI tool are based on the work, opinions, and language use of countless human beings, but the tool’s output is not the work of any one

person or team of people working together. Also, no matter how effective your use of prompts may be, the outputs of the AI are not your own work. Those outputs are merely generated material that you are given to work with. It is not yours until and unless you extensively verify every piece of information you receive, critique it based on your own direct engagement with the original human-authored sources, and develop it through your own considerable efforts.

It is not sufficient to rephrase AI output in your own words. You need to do the following:

[1] Verify each piece of information, each data point, and each claim made. You do this by directly consulting the primary and secondary sources from their original human authors. You must read those sources critically and verify what they say. If you use the information from those sources, you must quote and cite those sources and their authors directly.

[2] If the AI tool brings ideas together or composes a coherent train of thought, you must not merely re-write the passages in your own words, but you must critically engage with the thoughts and ideas the AI tool has suggested. You must exercise your judgement and determine your own stance on the sequences of thoughts, claims, value judgements, and ideas presented by the AI output. What your own words must express are not a paraphrase of the AI output, but rather the conclusions that you have personally arrived at, even though the AI tool may have helped you to get there.

Section III. Policies for Using AI in Essays and Research Papers

[1] Passages, compositions, and sequences of ideas taken from the output of AI tools do not become your own work

[2] Copying any AI generated text, or paraphrasing that AI output in your own words, or even summarizing the AI output's content, general ideas and broader concepts is dishonest and, since its ultimate source is the work of others, it is akin to theft. It will be treated the same as conventional plagiarism.

[3] AI output is not a source and cannot be quoted as a source. The student must go back to the original sources for all information, ideas and claims taken from the output of AI tools. Failure to do so will be treated the same as conventional plagiarism.

[4] Disclosure: **At the end of each research paper and essay, students must disclose all the AI tools they have used** (apart from spelling and grammar checkers) and describe how they have used them.

[4.1] If the students fully disclose their use of AI tools and have used the tools correctly (as described in Section II) and have not plagiarized from the output of the tools (as described

in Section III.2 and III.3) then the student will be clear from any repercussions for their use of those AI tools and their work will be graded accordingly.

[4.2] Disclosure will not protect the students if they misused AI tools (as described in section II) or plagiarized from the output of the AI tools (as described in section III. 2 and III.3).

[4.3] If the students have used the tools correctly (as described in section II) and have not plagiarized from the output of the tools (as described in section III.2 and III.3), but nevertheless fail to fully disclose their use of AI tools in their disclosure statement, they will be blameworthy and their failure at full disclosure will be treated the same as conventional plagiarism.

Section IV. Standard Text of Disclaimer

Mishkah University will provide a standard disclaimer text that should be placed at the end of each research paper, term paper, and essay, which gives the student a choice of two options to check off as follows:

I attest that I did not use any AI tools other than a spelling or grammar checker on this paper. I understand that if it is revealed that I used AI in any other capacity, this will be counted as plagiarism, and I will face the full consequences of plagiarism per Mishkah University policy.

I attest that I used AI tools in preparing my paper in accordance with Mishkah University's policies for using AI tools. I understand that if it is revealed that I used AI in a way that violates Mishkah University's policies for using AI in research, this will be counted as plagiarism, and I will face the full consequences of plagiarism per Mishkah University policy.

The AI tools I have used are as follows: _____

This will ensure that there is no ambiguity for the student, and no ambiguity for the instructor as to which students have used AI tools and which students have not.

2. AI Tools on Assessments (Quizzes, Test, and Examinations)

Section 1. Status of AI Tool Use on Examinations

Quizzes, tests, and examinations are intended to assess the student's knowledge and proficiency in the concepts and skillsets that the coursework is intended to develop in the student. For this reason, notes, books, course slides, video lectures, calculators, and other resources that might impair such an assessment are forbidden to the test-taker unless specifically allowed by the instructor. If any such tools and resources are permitted to the test-taker by the instructor, this is because use of the tool or resource is considered an aspect of the skillset that the student is being tested on.

Consequently, any unauthorized use of such tools or resources is considered cheating on the part of the test-taker.

The problem is more acute for the use of AI tools. Unlike books and notes, and even calculators, which the student must take time to consult, interpret how to use, and apply to the test answer, AI tools provide near-instantaneous and complete answers for test questions. This makes AI tools a greater obstacle to the test providing an accurate assessment of the student's aptitudes and skills.

Section 2. Policy for Using AI on Assessments (Quizzes, Tests, and Examinations)

Unless expressly permitted by the instructor for a particular assessment, **Mishkah University considers the use of AI tools for quizzes, tests and exams to be a deliberate act of cheating.** It exposes the student to the University's policy regarding academic misconduct, which includes a range of consequences, such as: failure in course, written reduction of marks, suspension or termination of studies, and withdrawal of a degree or qualification already awarded. The student will, consequently, lose any financial privileges granted to him such as discounts, scholarships, etc. The misconduct will also be added to his academic records.

Section 3: Standard Text of Disclaimer

Each text will include, as part of its electronic format, a disclaimer which must be checked off by the student, as follows:

I attest that I did not use any AI tools in completing this examination. I understand that if it is revealed that I used AI in completing any part of this examination, it will constitute cheating, and I will face the full consequences of cheating on an examination per Mishkah University policy.

If the instructor allows the use of AI, or of certain AI tools, for a particular assessment for some reason, **it is mandatory that the instructor provides in place of the above text a statement explaining that AI tools are permitted on the quiz, test, or exam, including a description of the permitted tools and the limits of their use.** This provides Mishkah University with a clear, documented record that AI use is permitted on that assessment.

There are good reasons why an instructor might allow this. AI is a ubiquitous part of the contemporary intellectual space, and students can be expected to develop critical thinking skills in using and critiquing AI output, and at times an instructor might find it valuable to assess the students' abilities to do so in an examination setting.