



## Merkblatt

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## Guidelines on the Use of Text Generation Models for Seminar Papers and Theses

The Department of Computational Linguistics allows the use of automatically generated text for seminar papers and theses if the guidelines below are followed.

### Referencing automatically generated text

Undeclared use of automatically generated text is considered plagiarism. Students reference automatically generated text like any other source, marking it as a citation (using quotation marks or a block quote) if it is used directly, or marking it as a paraphrase if it was further edited.

If text generation models are merely used correctively in editing, e.g. to fix grammatical errors or improve the idiomaticity of text written by the student, no reference is needed.

If students use text generation models for contributions that cannot be linked to specific text passages, students include a section or chapter at the end of the seminar paper or thesis that describes these contributions. For example, this could include being motivated by automatically generated text to perform certain experiments or include certain sections, even if the section is then written by the student without the use of automatically generated text.

### Taking responsibility for automatically generated text

Responsible use of automatic text generation includes its verification. Students take responsibility for the quality and truthfulness of automatically generated text as if they had written the text themselves, and the same standards will be applied during review.

When describing the student's own work, even potentially true statements can be unacceptable if they have not been verified by the student (e.g. "the results of our study are statistically significant", or "we propose a novel method" – these two claims require statistical significance testing, or a study of related work, respectively).

### Appropriate use of automatic text generation

"Writing a thesis or seminar paper requires students to conduct extensive research, analyze and evaluate the information gathered, and present a well-supported argument" (ChatGPT). Students discuss with their supervisor when and to what extent it is appropriate to use automatic text generation. It should enhance the quality of a work, and is not a shortcut to avoid a deep engagement with the subject matter.

Even when properly referenced and used in moderation, students should beware that automatically generated text fulfills different functions than other citations. For example, it has little to no value as evidence for the main argument of the seminar paper or thesis, in contrast to citing scientific literature.

### Text Generation as the Object of Study

Note that these guidelines relate to the use of text generation in the writing process. If automatically generated text is the object of study, some of the rules do not apply – most importantly, a student does not need to ensure the truthfulness or take responsibility for machine-generated text that is included for illustrative purposes in a study of text generation models. However, machine-generated text will still need to be clearly marked as such.

## References

ChatGPT. OpenAI. February 2023. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>