

Statement on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Doctoral Research and Academic Work

As artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, Copilot) become more integrated into academic work, doctoral students in social work must engage with these technologies in ways that uphold academic integrity, professional ethics, and the values of the social work profession. The ethical use of AI in scholarship demands transparency, accountability, and adherence to the principles of honesty, respect for persons, and social responsibility.

I. Guiding Ethical Principles

Ethical AI use should align with the following frameworks:

- **NASW Code of Ethics (2021):** Calls for integrity in professional and scholarly work, including transparency, accountability, and respect for intellectual property.
- **Belmont Report (1979):** Emphasizes respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, which apply to all forms of human-centered research.
- **CSWE EPAS (2022):** Emphasizes ethical conduct in research and professional judgment informed by critical and evidence-based thinking.
- **SAGE AI Guidelines for Authors (n.d.):** Requires disclosure of AI usage, prohibits listing AI tools as authors, and emphasizes that human authors retain full accountability for the work.
- **ACS Publications AI Policy (n.d.):** Prohibits AI use in creating, altering, or interpreting data and analysis, and requires full transparency in cases where AI was used for writing assistance or image generation.

II. Responsible AI Use in Coursework and Dissertation Research

1. Transparency and Disclosure

- Students must disclose all uses of AI tools in their research, data analysis, or writing. This includes AI-assisted coding, summarizing literature, translating content, or editing.
- Use in dissertation or thesis work must be acknowledged explicitly in the methods or acknowledgments section.

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2. Academic Integrity and Prohibited Use

- AI tools must **not** be used to fabricate, alter, or interpret research data (ACS Publications, n.d.).
- Students must not use AI to write entire assignments or dissertations, as this misrepresents authorship and undermines doctoral-level scholarship.
- All AI contributions must be clearly marked and cited, and AI tools must not be credited as co-authors (SAGE Publishing, n.d.).

3. Human Subjects Research

- Any use of AI tools for human subjects research (e.g., chatbots for interviews, automated survey platforms) must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.
- AI must not interfere with the ethical principles of consent, privacy, or relational integrity central to social work research.

III. Authorship, Writing, and Scholarly Responsibility

4. Student Accountability

- Students are fully responsible for all submitted work, regardless of AI assistance. Faculty will evaluate both the product and the intellectual process that produced it.
- AI may support tasks like outlining, formatting, or grammar checks, but cannot replace critical thinking, synthesis, or original analysis.

5. Citation of AI Tools

- All use of generative AI must be cited. Example:

OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

- Disclosure should also appear in a footnote, appendix, or methodology section when used in academic assignments or research.

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6. Faculty Consultation and Institutional Policies

- Students are expected to discuss appropriate AI use with advisors and instructors.
- Institutional policies and publisher guidelines should be reviewed regularly, as standards evolve.

Conclusion

Doctoral students in social work are expected to engage with AI ethically and thoughtfully, in ways that align with both academic integrity and the profession's commitment to justice, transparency, and human dignity. As AI technologies evolve, so must our ethical frameworks for using them in teaching, learning, and research.

References

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National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/>

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