Department of Anthropology

Statement on AI use in milestone academic writing (honors thesis, MA thesis, preliminary exam statements, dissertation proposals (DRPs), dissertation)

Brown's Academic Code asserts that "Academic achievement is ordinarily evaluated on the basis of work that a student produces independently." Accordingly, your work in milestone academic **writing** (i.e., honors theses, MA theses, preliminary exam statements, dissertation proposals [DRPs], PhD dissertations) should be entirely your own. All uses of GenAI tools for original writing – including organizing and brainstorming ideas, summarizing and/or synthesizing scholarly literature, generating new writing, revising or reviewing writing, and other forms of proofreading (except for the most minimal forms of checking of spelling and grammar) – are strictly prohibited.

Brown's Department of Anthropology strives to train students in a variety of humanistic and social scientific skills for which use of Generative AI is deleterious. These skills include reading comprehension, the critical evaluation and synthesis of literature, the generation of original ideas, the articulation of those ideas in one's own words, and the sharpening of those ideas through critical review and presentation. Our practice demands rigorous ethical standards, including the protection of the confidentiality of research participants and field data, which may be severely compromised through the use of commercial AI models.

It is the responsibility of the student to consult with their committee and either the DGS or DUS if they wish to request authorization of limited and qualified use of approved GenAI tools for the following **research** tasks: 1) identifying sources and 2) carrying out repetitive research tasks, such as the transcription of handwritten notes and data entry, provided that these practices follow Brown IRB guidelines and protect the confidentiality and integrity of research subjects. (Please note that most LLMs and vision models do not adequately protect sensitive information). Any such proposed use must be discussed and authorized in writing (email is fine), first by the thesis or dissertation committee, and then by the DUS or DGS. If such limited, proposed use is approved, you must also explicitly disclose it in the text of any work for which you employed it – including any future publications that draw from this initial work.

Failure to follow these standards is considered a violation of the Academic Code and will be treated as such.

The faculty have produced this policy in order to be clear about where we stand, while also inviting your questions and conversations about Generative AI usage. Given the pace and impact of GenAI development, faculty will regularly review this policy. Questions about it should be directed to the DUS, DGS and/or Department Chair.

Approved November 10, 2026