

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in MPH Culminating Project (630) Courses

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidance regarding the appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the development of Master of Public Health (MPH) culminating projects. This policy provides guidance for responsible, ethical, and transparent use of AI by MPH students in their final project.

2. Guiding Principles and Expectations

AI use in the MPH must align with:

1. **Academic Integrity** standards at UB and in the School of Public Health and Health Professions
2. **Transparency** in authorship and intellectual contribution
3. **Ethical principles** of public health practice as described by the American Public Health Association (APHA)
4. **Data protection** complying with all relevant ethical standards, including those related to research with human subjects, data privacy, confidentiality, and protection of sensitive information
5. **Accountability:** Students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, ethical integrity and scholarly quality of their work, regardless of whether AI tools are used.

AI tools may be used to support aspects of the research and writing process **only as permitted by the student's program and culminating project faculty.**

AI tools should not replace independent critical thinking, data analysis, interpretation, or scholarly judgment.

The use of AI must comply with all relevant ethical standards, including those related to research with human subjects, data privacy, and confidentiality.

3. MPH Culminating Project AI Guidance for Use and Non-Use

Generally Permissible AI Use in MPH Culminating Project

Unless otherwise allowed or restricted by a course instructor, MPH students may use AI tools for:

Academic Learning Support

- Developing study guides or practice questions or serving as a study partner to test comprehension
- Troubleshooting / debugging statistical code that the student has already written

Writing and Communication

- Improving spelling, grammar, clarity, and word choice, and proofreading
- Organizing content or assisting with routine formatting tasks
- Generating and checking reference citations, both in text and for the reference pages

Research and Analysis Support

- Generating and refining keyword lists for literature searches
- Checking coding errors, modifying code or statistical commands
- Suggesting survey items or rephrasing question wording

AI may support the process, but any analysis, interpretation, and conclusions must reflect the student's own understanding and judgment.

Students must critically evaluate AI outputs for accuracy, bias, and appropriateness, recognizing that AI tools may generate incorrect or misleading information.

Students are responsible for understanding of using AI, what constitutes violations of AI policies, and potential consequences of violations for prohibited use.

Students can refer to the UB Learns Academic Integrity course completed as part of the foundational MPH coursework, [UB's academic integrity policy](#), their course syllabus, and course instructor. Any questions a student has around the use of AI should be addressed with the instructor prior to an assignment's due date. Students should clearly acknowledge how AI has been used in a statement in their final culminating project.

Generally Non-Permissible AI Use in MPH Culminating Project

Students may not:

- Submit AI-generated text as their own original work
- Generate substantive portions of AI text for submission in the project
- Use AI to generate literature reviews or summaries that replace reading the original sources
- Use AI to fabricate any content, including but not limited to data, citations, research findings, or references
- Use AI to generate complete assignments when original work is required
- Upload confidential, proprietary, unpublished works, study-related data collected from human subjects, or protected health information (PHI) into AI systems
- Use AI where explicitly prohibited

Any misuse may be considered a violation of UB academic integrity policies.

4. Transparency and Disclosure

Transparency is required when AI tools contribute to an assignment. Students must:

- Disclose AI use through appropriately formatted citations and references in written material, and/or in a brief statement within the assignment (e.g., "AI was used to assist with grammar, editing, organizing content and formatting"), whichever is appropriate for the assignment
- Be prepared to explain how AI was used and how the final work reflects their own intellectual contribution. For example, students may be required to submit original Word documents (previous drafts of written culminating project) with track changes enabled.

5. Culminating Project Faculty Discretion

The faculty / instructor has a central role in overseeing AI use and may:

- Provide guidance to students about proper use of AI for the culminating projects and address student questions that arise
- Further restrict or expand AI use for specific activities
- Require documentation or disclosure of AI-assisted activities
- Design assessment components that limit or prohibit AI use

Students are responsible for adhering to course-specific policies.

6. Compliance and Review

Public health professionals must demonstrate:

- Ethical judgement
- Critical evaluation of information
- Awareness of bias and misinformation

Failure to adhere to program-specific guidance on AI use may be treated as a violation of academic integrity policies. This policy will be reviewed periodically to reflect evolving technologies, professional accreditation standards, and university guidance.