Recommendations for the Approach to AI Applications such as ChatGPT

General Information
AI-based language models (e.g., ChatGPT) use machine learning and artificial intelligence to generate texts. They do this by calculating the probability of words used in order to, for example, give human-like answers to questions.

Be Careful
It is a violation of the General Data Protection Regulation to enter any confidential or personal data (e.g., from interviews). Moreover, ChatGPT makes no reference to a transparent data privacy system, which means that third parties might have access to data. When it comes to personal data, a good universal rule is this: If you use AI-based applications or digital services in general, check their approach to data protection thoroughly every time to make sure that their policy fully corresponds to the European and national provisions!

Be Transparent
A generative language model such as ChatGPT cannot be an author under currently applicable legislation. However, it has to be clearly disclosed which text passages were created with the help of ChatGPT. AI applications such as ChatGPT are considered as writing aids by the St. Pölten UAS! Within the framework of exams and other performances required for completing a course, the unauthorised use of such aids constitutes a fraudulent acquisition of achievements (see § 61 and § 62 of the current Examination Regulations).
The use of such aids in writing final theses is generally considered a pretence of own scientific performance (see the St. Pölten UAS' Guidelines for Scientific Work). Any exceptions to this rule are to be negotiated with the thesis supervisor beforehand and put down in writing. Additionally, the declaration of honour in the thesis is to make explicit reference to any use of such aids.

Review Critically
AI applications including ChatGPT are language models and not (yet) expert systems. They frequently produce made-up or plagiarised results. Just like with literature study and results from Internet search engines, it is imperative to carry out correct scientific research and critically examine any sources used.

Be Aware
- The use of ChatGPT and similar tools requires an account and, therefore, the disclosure of personal data including a telephone number. It needs to be clarified whether it is necessary to create an account for the acquisition of competencies in a course.

- Applications such as ChatGPT need great amounts of energy[1]. Furthermore, the working conditions of the people supplying the model with data are questionable[2]. Greater awareness in approaching such AI applications is definitely called for.
- Many of the resulting texts reproduce or consolidate certain societal norms and viewpoints (in other words: bias). Results should, therefore, be discussed together in class.

Enhance Scientific Literacy

As mentioned above, AI applications such as ChatGPT are language models and not (yet) expert systems. As results are sometimes copied from other sources or made up altogether, it is particularly important to carry out a sound scientific study including verification of sources in dealing with these applications. Only persons who have previously acquired knowledge and competencies can make adequate use of these systems and assess their results correctly. This means that the acquisition of competencies needs to be ensured despite the existence of applications such as ChatGPT.

For Students: Don't Use It to Be Lazy

Higher education is designed to enable the acquisition of research-based knowledge, professional and practical competencies, an awareness of social responsibility, and the ability to reflect. While the use of ChatGPT can, e.g., support the brainstorming of ideas, these applications also tend to hold out the promise of making student life easier. This, in turn, might mean that the above-mentioned goals of higher education are not achieved and that the acquisition of actual competencies is carelessly skipped. Students are thus at risk of not living up the qualification profile outlined in the curriculum after graduation.

For Teachers: Review and Reflect on Competency Goals

In order to prevent students from being tempted to use ChatGPT to make life easier for themselves and from failing to acquire the necessary competencies, lecturers need to consider competency goals and adequate examination formats. They should reflect on which learning outcomes can be attained within the framework of a course, and which methods may lead to these outcomes despite and/or with the aid of AI applications. The performance needs to be assessed in such a way that students' own achievements become visible. Examination methods and assignments have to be adapted accordingly, one example being a more or less elaborate interview accompanying the submission of a programming task, project, text, case study, research report, reflection, etc.

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[1] Landwehr, Tobias (2023). Der Energiehunger von KIs. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Online: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wissen/chat-gpt-energieverbrauch-ki-1.5780744?reduced=true [05/2023]
[2] Wolfangel, Eva (2023). Ausgebeutet, um die KI zu zähmen. In: Zeit Online. Online: https://www.zeit.de/digital/2023-01/chatgpt-ki-training-arbeitsbedingungen-kenia?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F [05/2023]