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Notification No: 34/Research/MLCU

**Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Doctoral Thesis Writing:
A Provisional Policy**

In terms of Section 22, sub section (2) of the Martin Luther Christian University Act 2005, read with Statute 6.3.1 of the Martin Luther Christian University Statutes and Rules 2016, and as recommended and approved by the Board of Governors meetings held on September 25, 2023, the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Doctoral Thesis Writing: A Provisional Policy is hereby notified:

The use of AI tools has dramatically increased since the latter part of 2022, with the advent of open-access sites such as ChatGPT. As these tools are apparently rapidly increasing in accuracy and sophistication, academic institutions have begun to engage with this phenomenon, as there are clear implications for conventional teaching-learning and research and administrative operations. As the field is developing rapidly and clearcut trends are as of now difficult to predict, a provisional policy is suggested.

Apart from AI tools, editing and writing enhancement programs such as Grammarly and Quillbot have grown in popularity over the last few years. They offer tools that are more advanced than spellcheck, grammar and syntax correction and thesauri that are embedded in document writing tools such as Microsoft Word.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of AI tools for PhD scholars, so as to indicate the types of writing support that may be considered legitimate.

A. **Definitions and explanations**
1. Writing enhancement: generally, for improvement of spelling, grammar, punctuation but also for:
   a. Improvement of sentence construction (syntax), paragraph arrangement, thread lines, fluency, and writing style
   b. Editing and proofreading
   c. Paraphrasing
   d. Self-check for plagiarism
   e. Citation writing and arrangement

2. Generative support for students and faculty: assistance to make content materials from the writing drafts and data such as:
    a. Abstract or summary
    b. Tabulations, analysis and depiction of data
    c. Tools: questionnaires, topic guides, consent forms
3. Creative content: from ideas, concepts, or research questions. These would include:
    a. Essays to be submitted at the time of application
    b. Research proposals
    c. Graphics created from data not collected by the scholar

B. Approval of use
1. The use of tools for **writing enhancement** is fully permitted and the scholar need not acknowledge their use.
2. **Generative support** tools are permitted but the scholar or faculty member must provide a brief signed statement indicating the broad areas of use of AI tools, which must be co-signed by the supervisor or head of department, as having granted approval.
3. The use of AI tools for **creative content** is not permitted.

C. Stage of use of AI tools
1. Tools for writing enhancement may be used at any time
2. Generative support tools may be used after the proposal is approved.
3. Writing enhancement and generative support tools must be used for the pre-submission draft and for the final draft.

D. Implementation
1. Guidelines from this policy will be included in the PhD Regulations.
2. A session on AI tools will be included in the PhD course work
3. All PhD students will be encouraged/expected to use basic or premium AI tools.
4. The PhD thesis will contain a section in the Methods chapter on the AI tools used in the thesis.
5. The application form for ethics approval will include a section on planned AI tool use.
6. A review of the implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be conducted after one year or earlier

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