

School of Economics and Finance

Guidance for UG Students on Large Language Models

1. What are LLMs?

“Large language models (LLMs) are designed to predict probable language outputs in response to specific prompts, such as predicting the most likely word following a sequence of words or generating sentences or paragraphs as plausible responses to a given textual prompt... Examples include the [ChatGPT API](#) and [web interface](#), [GitHub Copilot](#), and [Microsoft Copilot](#) in the Microsoft 365 software suite.” ([Jungherr, 2023](#)).

2. What can LLMs do?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Reading, transforming, manipulating text	Answering analytical questions with long, complex chains of reasoning
Improving writing or coding	Answering factual questions
Summarizing ideas	Summarizing papers and books (especially recently published works)
Answering analytical questions with short causal chains	
Solving simple models (undergraduate level)	

3. Can I use LLMs for my coursework?

SEF does not ban the use of LLMs, but your module organiser has the right to specify the ways you can and cannot use LLMs during assessments.

If you are not given any specific instructions from your module organiser, you may use LLMs in assessments where ordinary Internet searches are allowed.

If you use LLMs, you must:

- **Appropriately reference** the origin of any LLM-generated text or ideas incorporated into your work, following the same referencing conventions as other sources. Your module organiser may provide an example citation.
For help on citing generative AI, check the list of resources provided by QM Libraries: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/academic-skills/referencing-hub/referencing-guides-and-resources/>
- **Save your original prompts and the machine-generated output** (for example, using screenshots). Your module organiser may require you to include this documentation in an

Appendix that you submit along with your work. SEF may also request you to submit this documentation for verification purposes.

Any use or attempted use of LLMs on assessed work that violates the principles in this section will be treated as an assessment offence, specifically categorized as "use of a ghost-writing service" (refer to Appendix 1.)

4. How can I use LLMs effectively?

a. Tips on writing effective prompts ([Cowen and Tabarrok, 2023](#))

- Use specific keywords and provide as much detail as you can (e.g. rather than ask "What is Marxism?", ask about a specific Marxist doctrine).
- To generate output that is suitable for academic purposes, ask LLMs to provide intelligent, detailed, or scholarly responses.
- Ask LLMs to "compare and contrast". This tip works even if the primary aim is not to compare and contrast.
- Ask LLMs to make lists (e.g. "list all the factors that..." or "what factors contributed to...") These lists should be used as a starting point rather than a definitive answer.
- Instead of asking only one question, keep asking sequential questions on a particular topic to get more out of the LLM. (The prompt "please say more" sometimes helps).
- Ask the same prompt in different ways to obtain different perspectives.

b. Use LLMs as a coding assistant

- [This blog](#) contains tips on how to effectively use AI for coding, with specific examples.

Remember that LLMs can provide a useful starting point but you should not treat the output as the ultimate truth! Always fact-check the output with reliable sources.

5. References

- Cowen, Tyler and Tabarrok, Alexander T., How to Learn and Teach Economics with Large Language Models, Including GPT (March 17, 2023). GMU Working Paper in Economics No. 23-18, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4391863>
- Jungherr, A. (2023). Using ChatGPT and Other Large Language Model (LLM) Applications for Academic Paper Assignments. <https://fis.uni-bamberg.de/bitstream/uniba/58950/1/fisba58950.pdf>

Appendix 1: QMUL academic regulations and misconduct policy

[QMUL Academic Regulations](#)

[QMUL Academic Misconduct Policy](#)