

Verification Checklist for AI-Assisted Legal Research

Use this checklist before relying on, submitting, sharing, or building from AI-assisted legal research. AI output is not authority. It is a starting point that must be verified.

1. Authority Exists

Check each cited case, statute, regulation, rule, agency document, or secondary source.

- ☐ Can I find the authority in a reliable legal research source?
- ☐ Does the case name match the citation?
- ☐ Does the reporter citation lead to the cited case?
- ☐ Does the statute, rule, or regulation exist in the cited form?
- ☐ Is the source real, or does it appear to be fabricated?

2. Authority Says What the AI Claims

Do not stop once you confirm that a case exists.

- ☐ Does the authority actually support the proposition?
- ☐ Is the quoted language accurate?
- ☐ Is the parenthetical accurate?
- ☐ Is the holding broader or narrower than the AI suggests?
- ☐ Did the AI omit key limitations, exceptions, or facts?
- ☐ Is the cited passage majority reasoning, dicta, concurrence, dissent, syllabus, headnote, or summary?

3. Authority Is Current

Check whether the law remains valid.

- ☐ Has the case been overruled, abrogated, questioned, distinguished, or superseded?
- ☐ Has the statute or regulation been amended?
- ☐ Are there effective-date issues?
- ☐ Is the AI relying on proposed, repealed, expired, or outdated law?
- ☐ Is there newer authority that changes the analysis?

4. Authority Is the Right Kind of Authority

Check the source hierarchy.

- ☐ Is the authority binding or persuasive?
- ☐ Is it from the correct jurisdiction?
- ☐ Is it from the correct court level?
- ☐ Is it interpreting the same statute, rule, doctrine, or claim?
- ☐ Is a secondary source being treated as if it were primary law?
- ☐ Is a general web source being used for a legal proposition?

5. Jurisdiction and Procedure Are Correct

AI tools often blur jurisdictional and procedural boundaries.

- ☐ What jurisdiction governs?
- ☐ Is the rule federal, state, local, agency-specific, or court-specific?
- ☐ Is the procedural posture the same?
- ☐ Is the standard different at pleading, summary judgment, trial, appeal, or post-judgment stages?
- ☐ Is the answer mixing standards from different jurisdictions?

6. Facts Are Supported

Check factual statements against the record or assignment materials.

- ☐ Did the AI add facts that were not provided?
- ☐ Did it assume dates, motives, relationships, procedural history, or missing context?
- ☐ Did it make the client's position stronger or weaker by adding unsupported facts?
- ☐ Are all factual statements traceable to a reliable source?

7. Contrary Authority and Gaps

A useful answer may still be incomplete.

- ☐ What authority cuts the other way?
- ☐ Are there exceptions or unresolved questions?
- ☐ Did the AI omit a required element or defense?
- ☐ Are there jurisdiction-specific variations?
- ☐ What would a lawyer, judge, opposing counsel, or supervising attorney ask next?

8. Final Professional Judgment

Before using the output, decide what role it can safely play.

- ☐ Can this be used only for brainstorming?
- ☐ Can it guide further research?
- ☐ Can any portion be used in a draft after revision?
- ☐ Has every legal proposition been verified?
- ☐ What still needs lawyer judgment?
- ☐ What should be disclosed about the AI use?

BOTTOM LINE

Do not verify AI output by asking another AI tool if it is right. Verify legal claims against reliable legal authority, source text, and professional judgment.