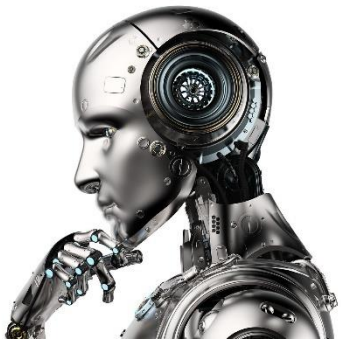
Artificial Intelligence – an EduQual guide



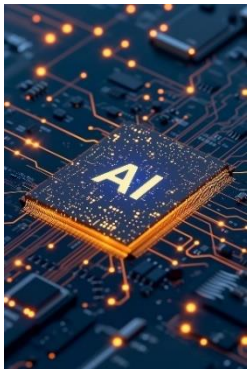
Guidance on ChatGPT and other LLMs

At the time of writing (4 December 2024), EduQual continues to monitor a small number of Centres that have submitted Learner evidence that has been identified as having been generated artificially; for example, by ChatGPT or other Large Language Model (LLM).

EduQual's position has been, and remains, that using generative AI to create written work (including reports or PowerPoint slides) is a form of academic dishonesty and is equivalent to plagiarism.

Centres (and their Learners) will be aware that LLMs such as ChatGPT are receiving increasing coverage in the media. Schools, further education institutions, universities, and awarding bodies in the UK have some concerns about the application of LLM technology, and the potential that technology holds to be misused / applied dishonestly.

EduQual response to identification of generative AI in Learner evidence



EduQual treats identified uses of generative AI text in the same way as identified plagiarism – i.e. as academic dishonesty / cheating.

Where generative AI applications have been used to create any form of evidence in support of Learner certification claims (which may include written assignments, reports, presentations, and even video output), **EduQual will block the certification claim**. Where multiple instances are identified, EduQual will feed back to the Centre with an action plan. EduQual reserves the right to implement a **Level 3 Sanction** on the Centre concerned until the issue is resolved.

Centres must advise their Learners that the use of generative AI (such as LLMs, including ChatGPT and its equivalents) to respond to / create evidence for assessment requirements is a form of academic dishonesty and will be treated as such by EduQual.

Centre tutors, assessors, and IQAs are advised to remain vigilant and to ensure that their Learners are aware of EduQual's stance on this issue.

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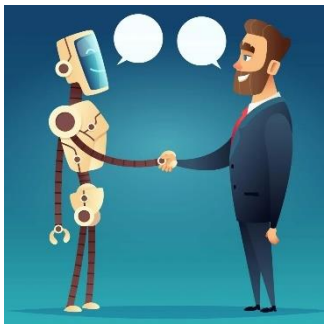
Why does EduQual treat generative AI content as a form of cheating?



Simply put, because using such technology does not represent a Learner's own, original work. Such output devalues Qualifications and courses and risks their integrity and validity. Its propagation may risk the reputation of awarding bodies (such as EduQual) as well as training providers (e.g. EduQual-approved Centres) and poses an ongoing risk across the entire education sector (including schools and universities).[1]

It is worth bearing in mind that Learners are more likely to resort to using AI for the same reasons that they might resort to plagiarism: time pressures, language barriers, or lack of understanding of their subject area (i.e. they have not studied or worked adequately to convincingly generate the evidence required to meet the Learning Outcomes and associated Assessment Criteria of their course or Qualification).

Definitions: types of Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models

The term **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is now well-known. Referred to widely in global news (especially where its development may or may not impact upon business organisations), it is often imprecisely defined. The term 'AI' itself is used extensively in corporate marketing and has become something of a 'buzz' term.

When news articles mention Artificial Intelligence, they are almost always discussing the applications and consequences of **Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI)**, sometimes called 'weak AI'. ANI can simulate human behaviours according to a limited range of parameters, but it cannot truly replicate human behaviour or emulate human consciousness.[2]

A *Large Language Model* (LLM) is a form of ANI, sometimes referred to as **generative AI**. This is usually what people are talking about when they mention, for example, ChatGPT.

ANI LLMs such as ChatGPT use learning algorithms that can create written work to a specified brief. In academic terms and from EduQual's point of view of course, this only matters where a Learner uses such an application to cheat, which represents a form of academic dishonesty.

While any LLM can have legitimate uses as a tool, its potential misuse to facilitate academic cheating has already been identified. **As a result, EduQual's QA Team (as well as EduQual-appointed External Examiners and External Quality Assurers) are alert to its use.**

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1 See for example https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz04emrxp4xo

2 Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), a form of intelligence that has yet to be realised in any meaningful way, would (hypothetically) be capable of replicating human behaviours and be 'conscious' or sentient.

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What happens if EduQual identifies artificially generated text in a Learner's work?

The work will not be certificated.[3] If this presents an ongoing problem where a Centre continually submits inauthentic Learner work for external review by EduQual, then sanctions may be imposed on the Centre until the situation is resolved. In other words, EduQual will treat work produced artificially as it would any form of academic dishonesty, and in the same way as (for example) plagiarism.

[3] Instances of this have been recorded by EduQual and Centres concerned have been notified accordingly.

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