Pearson Edexcel A Level Geography NEA Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance

This guidance outlines how AI tools may and may not be used within Pearson Edexcel A Level Geography Independent Investigations (NEA). It supports teachers, centres, and candidates in ensuring all submitted work is authentic and compliant with JCQ and Pearson requirements.

"All work submitted for qualification assessments must be the students' own." (**JCQ).**

AI can automate tasks, predict outcomes, and identify patterns. Centres, examination officers, teachers, and candidates should understand what constitutes acceptable AI use in NEA submissions. Before authenticating and submitting work, teachers must make sure that any use of AI is both permissible and properly acknowledged.

Key principles:

- All submitted work must be the candidate's own.
- AI may support research, understanding, and planning—but cannot generate assessed NEA content.
- When AI has been used as a source of information, it must be acknowledged in the investigation.
- Centres must follow malpractice procedures if misuse is suspected.

Independent Investigation Authentication

Updated NEA authentication sheets now reference AI use explicitly. Candidates and teachers must confirm:

- The work submitted is the candidate's own.
- AI use has been properly recorded and referenced.

Updated forms are available on the Pearson website under Forms and Administration.

Further Support and Official Guidance

- JCQ AI Guidance
- Latest JCQ AI Guidance (2025)

Acceptable Use of AI

AI tools *may* be used to:

- Research and develop an understanding of geographical knowledge, location, theory, and comparative context.
- Suggest geographical sources and datasets for consideration.
- Research appropriate sampling techniques (both spatial and temporal).
- Research and develop understanding of the ethical considerations of field research methods.
- Explore fieldwork method guidance for different environments.
- Research data presentation and analysis tools.
- Suggest or generate data presentation formats (e.g., chart types) similar to those offered by Excel/Google Sheets.
- Support spelling, punctuation, and grammar(SPaG) checking.

Misuse of AI (Not Permitted)

AI tools may **not** be used to:

- Generate investigation titles, focus questions, hypotheses, or sub-questions.
- Identify links between the investigation and specification content.
- Design or plan methodologies.
- Write or re-word any NEA section.
- Provide specific feedback that shapes assessed content (beyond SPaG).
- Generate analysis, interpretation, conclusions, or evaluation of student findings

Indicators of Possible AI Misuse

Potential signs include (but are not limited to):

Language Indicators	Content Indicators
Generic, non-specific phrasing inconsistent with A Level expectations.	Lack of up-to-date or location-specific detail.
Overly formal, verbose, or stylistically inconsistent language.	Incorrect or invented findings, conclusions, or evaluative statements.
Inclusion of disclaimers or speculative phrasing typical of AI tools.	Content that is generic and not aligned to the chosen topic, fieldwork, or location.

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Referencing AI Use

Students must acknowledge and clearly show their use of AI. This allows teachers and assessors to review how AI has been used and whether that use was appropriate. Failure to acknowledge AI use is considered malpractice.

If AI tools provide sources, candidates must verify them independently. Unverifiable citations must not be used. Where AI tools have been used as a source of information, a student's acknowledgement must show the name of the AI source and the date it was generated.

For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (https://openai.com/ blog/chatgpt/), 25/01/2024.

The student must retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes, in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how it has been used.

Marking and Assessment: Teacher Guidance

Before the authentication form is signed:

- **Investigate suspected AI misuse** internally (in line with centre malpractice policy) before authentication

After the authentication form is signed:

1. **Mark the NEA in full**, applying the mark scheme to students' own work.
2. **Do not deduct marks** for suspected AI misuse.
3. **Record any concerns** on the mark sheet (per section and overall).
4. **Report malpractice** to Pearson if suspected after authentication.

Teachers are responsible for all marks they award. AI tools may be used by teachers *only as support*, not as sole markers. A human assessor must always:

- Review all work in full.
- Make the final judgement.
- Ensure students are not rewarded where AI has replaced independent work.

Malpractice Procedures

AI misuse constitutes malpractice. Centres must:

- Investigate concerns raised internally before authentication.
- Mark work as normal while recording concerns.
- Report suspected malpractice to Pearson after authentication.

Refer to Pearson guidance*:* Malpractice: Candidates (pearson.com).

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