Pearson

Navigating AI for Assessment: VQ Guidance

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Introduction

We would like to clarify the rules around the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in relation to internal assessment. This guidance is suitable for adoption by Pearson approved UK and International centres. The general guidance is suitable for Level 1 through to Level 7 and where applicable specific links have been provided to guidance for higher education programmes at Level 4 to Level 7.

It is essential that all work submitted for qualification assessments is the students' own work and that Pearson approved centres satisfy themselves of this before marking student work.

Internal Assessments

Guidance on preventing & recognising AI misuse

AI misuse is considered a form of plagiarism. The Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) has published **'AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications (JCQ)'** which defines AI misuse as "where a student inappropriately uses an AI tool such that the work submitted for assessment is not their own and/or fails to appropriately reference their use of AI".

This includes:

- "Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the student's own;"
- "Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content;"
- "Failing to reference use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information" / "Incomplete or poor referencing of AI tools;"
- "Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies."

JCQ has the following advice for centres:

- "Update the centre's malpractice/plagiarism policy to include reference to the use of AI (e.g. what it is, whether it is permitted in the centre, how it should be referenced, when it is appropriate to be used, how AI misuse will be treated as malpractice)."
- "Ensure that teachers and assessors are familiar with AI tools and AI detection tools."
- "Explain the importance of students producing work which is their own and stress to them and to their parents/carers the penalties of malpractice."

A summary of the potential indicators that centres and Standards Verifiers/External Examiners should be aware of is given below:

Potential indicator	Plagiarism	AI misuse
A default/inconsistent use of American spelling, currency, terms and other localisations*	Y	Y
A default use of language or vocabulary which might not appropriate to the qualification level*	Y	Y
A lack of direct quotations and/or use of references where these are required/expected~	Y	Y
Inclusion of references which cannot be found or verified	Y	Y
A lack of reference to events occurring after a certain date	Y	Y
Instances of incorrect/inconsistent use of first-person and third-person perspective	Y	Y
A variation in the style, quality and complexity of language evidenced	Y	Y
A lack of graphs/data tables/visual aids where these would normally be expected	Y	Y
A lack of specific local or topical knowledge	Y	Y
The inadvertent inclusion by students of warnings or provisos produced by AI	N	Y
The unusual use of several concluding statements throughout the text, or several repetitions of an overarching essay structure within a single lengthy essay	Y	Y
The inclusion of strongly stated non-sequiturs or confidently incorrect statements within otherwise cohesive content	N	Y
Overly verbose or hyperbolic language that may not be in keeping with the candidate's style	N	Y
Inconsistencies in the formatting of the text body/headers/etc	Y	Y

*Please be aware, that AI tools can be instructed to employ different languages and levels of proficiency when generating content and some AI tools can produce quotations and references. Further advice on plagiarism prevention and detection from JCQ can be found here.

Learner Declarations

Students are required to make a declaration upon submission that the work is their own. Assessors must only accept work for assessment which they consider to be the students' own. Where teachers have doubts about the authenticity of student work submitted (for example, they suspect that parts of it have been generated by AI, but this has not been acknowledged), they must investigate and take appropriate action under the centres' assessment or malpractice policy.

Where students are suspected of having committed malpractice after completion of a declaration of authentication, this must be reported to Pearson. A JCQ M1 form and supporting evidence should be sent to candidatemalpractice@pearson.com. Further guidance on malpractice investigations can be found in Pearson's Centre guidance on dealing with malpractice and plagiarism and in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.

Pearson has updated Assessment records and declarations to include AI misuse. In addition to the JCQ guidance, Pearson has also produced the BTEC Centre Guide to Plagiarism.

Guidance for Standards Verifiers/External Examiners

If you are an Assessment Associate for Pearson (Standards Verifier/External Examiner) Pearson has published a training module which is available on AssociateU.

As with other forms of malpractice, if Standards Verifiers/External Examiners suspect or identify AI misuse in samples, they have been advised to first discuss their concerns with their allocated Team Leader.

This must then be escalated to Pearson via the Pearson Support Portal, selecting Marking, Moderation and Sampling as the Issue Type and Malpractice as the Category Type.

The relevant malpractice team will check any escalated concerns and take appropriate action with the centre. Standards Verifiers/External Examiners should continue with verification and actions given where possible. Where plagiarism (including AI misuse) is found and this means that the learner's own work cannot be verified as being accurately assessed, this would lead to a 'Certification Pending' outcome for the first report and a second sample would be needed.

List of measures required to prevent AI misuse

Below is a list of measures required by students and staff to prevent any misuse (**taken from JCQ AI Guidance**). To prevent misuse, education and awareness of staff and students is likely to be key.

a) Consider restricting access to online AI tools on centre devices and networks.

b) Ensure that access to online AI tools is restricted on centre devices used for exams.

c) Set reasonable deadlines for submission of work and provide reminders.

d) Where appropriate, allocate time for sufficient portions of work to be done in class/seminars under direct supervision to allow the teacher/tutor to authenticate each student's whole work with confidence.

e) Examine intermediate stages in the production of work to ensure that work is underway in a planned and timely manner and that work submitted represents a natural continuation of earlier stages.

f) Introduce class/seminar activities that use the level of knowledge/understanding achieved during the programme thereby providing the teacher/tutor with confident that the student understands the material.

g) Consider whether it is appropriate and helpful to engage students in a short verbal discussion about their work to ascertain that they understand it and that it reflects their own independent work.

h) Do not accept, without further investigation, work which staff suspect has been taken from AI tools without proper acknowledgement or is otherwise plagiarised –

doing so encourages the spread of this practice and is likely to constitute staff malpractice which can attract sanctions.

i) Issuing tasks for centre-devised assignments which are, wherever possible, topical, current and specific, and require the creation of content which is less likely to be accessible to AI models trained using historic data.

Identifying the misuse of AI by students requires the same skills and observation techniques that teachers are probably already using to assure themselves student work is authentically their own.

Specific advice for higher education providers

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) recognises the importance of AI and its potential impact on higher education and it has published helpful resources and insight, which can be found here. In addition, 'Maintaining Quality and Standards in a ChatGPT Era' provides useful guidance. In addition, 'Reconsidering Assessment for the ChatGPT Era: QAA advice on developing sustainable assessment strategies' provides a summary table containing the strengths and weaknesses of different types of assessments.

AI use in assessment

Teachers and assessors need to ensure that if students have relied solely upon AI generated content for elements of their work, and these elements contribute to marks given under the assessment criteria, the overall mark awarded reflects this accordingly. Assessors should take a holistic review of the work when awarding marks for each marking grid. Lower marks may need to be awarded where the work does not meet all the assessment criteria to meet a particular level in the marking grid. Exemplification of this can be found in Appendix B of the **AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications (JCQ)** document. Assessment decisions must be clearly documented in the assessment records.

Where AI tools are used by teachers during the marking process, AI should not be used as the sole method of marking the learner's work.