

Guidance on the use of AI in Assessments 2022-23

Introduction

The goal of this document is to provide guidance on how we can effectively integrate or manage the use of generative AI in our assessments. Generative AI is a type of Artificial Intelligence that generates new outputs such as images, audio, or text based on learned patterns and inputs.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has recently (Jan 2023) produced a briefing paper on the threat to academic integrity posed by AI, which is available in the news section of the [QAA website](#). The briefing paper provides background on AI software tools, as well as the potential implications for academic standards and actions that providers can take. The latest QAA advice, guidance and resources for higher education professionals to adapt their teaching in light of artificial intelligence, can be found in the [Academic Integrity](#) section of the website (May 2023).

It is important to stress that a blanket ban on generative AI is not viable. Instead, we need to focus on responsible usage by staff and students and associated ethical considerations to ensure the safe and productive deployment of this technology. This requires a consideration of how to use AI in an ethical, responsible, and appropriate manner that considers fairness and transparency. This is particularly important as the text created through generative AI tools may not be text-matched through tools such as Turnitin. This is because the text created by AI tools is original.

The challenge of preserving academic integrity is not a new problem and the introduction of generative AIs will not change the fundamental challenges that face educators. To effectively prevent cheating, it is essential to address its root causes. Research shows this can be achieved by promoting a strong culture of academic integrity that emphasises the importance of honesty and integrity. Our ultimate objective is to prepare students for the dynamic and evolving job market of the future.

Context

Much of the work undertaken across the HE sector in recent weeks has shown that AI tools and their outputs vary. Essentially the quality of the response from a generative AI tool will depend on the quality and extent of the training material. Where this is limited, then the responses will tend to be bland/generic, lack critical analysis, and so on. However, the inverse is also true and where the training data is good, then the ability to answer diverse/complex questions on those topics is likely to be broadly good as well.

Advice for Staff

As such our advice to staff is to be clear with students as to what you regard as a permissible use of AI in any given assignment and outline how its inclusion or use should be acknowledged. To do this consider:

- Having open and transparent discussions with students regarding the acceptable and unacceptable use of AI in assessments. This should include explicit instructions on what constitutes appropriate use, such as the production of original work. Students should be required to acknowledge requirements through a declaration of integrity form and be informed that any unacceptable use of AI will be considered academic misconduct.
- Review how generative AI might enhance student learning through the assessment. For example, the AI could be used to analyse and summarise relevant materials, provide a draft structure or starting point, or otherwise free up time for students to focus on other critical aspects of their learning such as evaluation, synthesis, critical thinking, or reflection.
- Have a conversation with students around data privacy. One of the key ways in which many AI tools learn is through processing larger data sets. When you register with an AI tool you may be required to provide permission that any submitted data and any interactions with the AI can be used to improve future versions.

When is it appropriate for students to use AI?

There are a number of assessment situations where AI can be used, for example:

- When it is approved for use and is part of the assessment process.
- For revision of a course or other materials.
- When the use of AI in an assignment has been referenced appropriately and is allowed as part of the resources drawn upon to create an assessment.
- As a tool for refining writing.

How might you adapt assessments for students?

There are a number of steps that you can take to make assessments more robust:

- Shifting the assessment from recall of knowledge to real world application, for example the requirement to include current events, research and activities.
- Asking students to provide an annotated bibliography to demonstrate sources of evidence used.
- Citation presents a problem because AI is neither an author nor a source of information, but a writing aid. It would be more useful for staff to know how the tool was used in the writing process. Staff could provide direction or guidance on acceptable references or sources of referencing for the assessment and provide more explicit guidance on acceptable source material.
- Include the use of reflective responses that build in personal insight. AI tools are far less useful in this context.

- Request a critique of already written responses (including AI).

In addition the following types of assessment are far harder for AI tools to create in a meaningful manner:

- Reports on independent research activities.
- Creative outputs, both written and non-written.
- Adopting a particular moral or ethical stance.
- Progressive/reflective portfolio-style assignments that are built up over time.
- Interactive oral assessments.
- Programme-level or synoptic assessment.
- Analysis of images or videos.
- Video-based assessments.

Before amending any assessment, you can run it through a tool such as ChatGPT to see what kind of answer it produces and adapt or amend your assessment as necessary.

For certain types of assessment, for example those involving mathematical application or coding, the above mitigations may be less relevant.

What if the assessment is already being undertaken by students?

- Require students to "show their work" by submitting drafts or notes or using digital versioning (documents stored on a student's OneDrive can provide a record of changes made over time). Such material can provide insight into the steps students took to arrive at their final submission.
- Student declaration – the QAA suggest updating any existing student declarations that accompany submissions for assessment so students certify that it is their own work, all sources are correctly attributed and the contribution of any AI technologies is fully acknowledged. An immediate measure which the University could adopt to support academic integrity would be to update the student declaration for assessment to include the following:

I certify that that the submission is my own work, all sources are correctly attributed, and the contribution of any AI technologies is fully acknowledged.

- The QAA also suggest that you communicate the value of integrity - discussing with students how the advancement of knowledge has relied on integrity in both research and academic practice and that progress is undermined by academic misconduct. This will help them understand the values that underpin their discipline and make it clear about what constitutes academic misconduct and why it has consequences.

Procedure for Dealing with Academic Offences

The University has in place [Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences](#), for investigating allegations of academic offences and imposing penalties where such an offence is found to have been committed.

The Procedures include a non-exhaustive list of academic offences at section 2, and note that:

'where the conduct of a student does not fit any of the following definitions, the student may be found to have committed an academic offence if they have gained or attempted to gain an unfair advantage or facilitated or attempted to facilitate another student to do so.'

One of the offences listed within section 2 is:

2.7 Contract Cheating: *where a student commissions or seeks to commission (either paid or unpaid) another individual to complete academic work on their behalf.*

The use of AI falls under this definition, as a commissioning offence. For completeness, and to ensure that the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences include clear reference to the use of AI by students, the following amendment is proposed to the definition of Contract Cheating:

2.7 Contract Cheating: *where a student commissions or seeks to commission (either paid or unpaid) another individual **or artificial intelligence software tool** to complete academic work on their behalf.*

Contract Cheating is deemed to be a major academic offence (section 1.11.3(v)), and therefore the Procedure for Dealing with Major Offences should be followed (Section 5), with an initial review of the evidence, and an investigation stage. Specific provision is made for a short viva voce to be undertaken where a student is suspected of contract cheating (section 5.2.1(vii)). Following this, a decision on whether the academic offence has been committed, is made.

Academic Affairs can assist and support colleagues in managing cases where students may be in breach of the [Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences](#), as a result of the use of AI within assessment.