

Research Summary — Generative Artificial Intelligence in Scottish Education: Learner Experiences and Attitudes

Date: October 2025

Why did we do this research?

We did this research to understand how learners may be using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in their learning and what they think about using the technology in education. Understanding learners' views helps us to fill a gap in what we know about the advantages and challenges that come with AI. This helps SQA to be better prepared for a future where AI plays a role in education.

What are we trying to find out?

- ◆ Are learners using AI to support their learning and if so, how?
- ◆ What do learners generally think about using AI in education?
- ◆ Are there differences across different types of learners (based on where they live, their access to technology, their gender, disability status or ethnicity)?
- ◆ What factors encourage learners to use AI? What factors discourage them from using AI?

How did we do the research?

We sent an online survey to learners in secondary schools, colleges and training providers across Scotland. It was advertised through social media and school coordinators. The survey went out in March 2025 and was left open for four weeks. Over 2,600 learners responded to the survey.

What did we learn?

- ◆ A quarter of learners (25%) do not use devices regularly in their school or centre.
- ◆ While 64% of learners have used AI to some extent, over a third (37%) say they have never knowingly used it.
- ◆ 79% of learners get most of their information about AI from social media.
- ◆ The most commonly used AI tool reported was ChatGPT.
- ◆ Many learners reported using AI as a replacement to conducting a web search, saying that AI provided a fuller or better answer than, for example, Google.

- ◆ While about half of learners felt AI could improve the quality of their work and save time, 62% were likely to avoid using AI so as not to be seen as cheating.
- ◆ Many learners had concerns about AI, which included its social and environmental impacts, impacts on intelligence and learning, and ethics and privacy.

What will change because of the research?

We hope this research will help to build awareness of how learners in Scotland are feeling about AI in education. This research also gives us a helpful starting point for follow-up research with learners or with other audiences, like parents and carers.

Read the full report

You can download the [full research report](#) from our website.