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An update on artificial intelligence

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We want to provide an update for all colleagues on our approach to generative artificial intelligence (AI) and guidance on how we use it.

Published guidance for centres: In September 2023, we responded to concerns from educators by clarifying our expectations on using AI in assessments. You can find this guidance on our website.

External engagement: Throughout 2023, the External AI Working Group actively engaged with educators, both Scottish and UK Governments, Education Scotland and the Joint Council for Qualifications. This work will continue.

Initial stance accepted: Our initial position on AI in assessments received broad acceptance from SQA centres. However, there was understanding that this stance could evolve based on further evidence.

At a recent meeting of Executive Management Team there was a broad discussion on generative AI and emerging technologies, which explored a

range of issues both immediate and long-term, and covered both external and internal priorities for SQA.

The External AI and Emergent Technology working group is being formalised with a refreshed membership. It will continue to work on external engagement, guidance for centres and begin to look at the opportunities that AI and emerging technologies can offer to the assessment and qualifications space. Theodore Pengelley will be chairing this group.
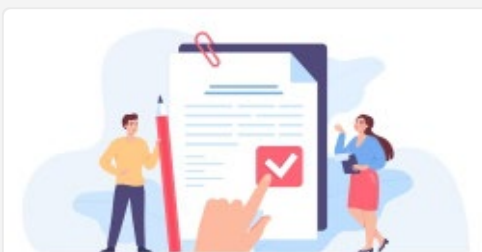
In addition, a new group is now being formed to focus on addressing the potential risks, issues, and opportunities that generative AI and emerging technologies present through their uses as tools for SQA colleagues and appointees across all business functions. This group will be chaired by Steve Borley.

Initially, SQA will adopt the UK Government's Guidance for Civil Servants on the use of generative AI.

One of the main points covered in this guidance is the importance of never putting sensitive information or personal data into AI tools:

- With appropriate care and consideration generative AI can be helpful and assist with your work. However, you should be cautious and circumspect in your approach, noting the guidance provided.
- You should never input information that is classified, sensitive or reveals the intent of the organisation (that may not be in the public domain) into any of these tools. You should have regard to the principles of GDPR.
- Output from generative AI is susceptible to bias and misinformation — they need to be checked and cited appropriately.

Also, colleagues should keep in mind that Large Language Model (LLM) outputs are also not necessarily confidential, so LLMs should not be used to generate sensitive material such as confidential assessment content.

Guidance for Civil Servants on the use of generative AI.

With this interim measure in place, the new group will be stood up and tasked with developing our own organisational policy and approach.

This group will also submit a business proposal focused on exploring the innovation opportunities offered by generative AI and emerging technologies. Part of this will be identifying which specific tools we can adopt as an organisation.

Future AI and emerging technology initiatives will be coordinated by the Digital Services Development and Support team within Digital Assessment Services.

For any questions about generative AI and emerging technologies at SQA, please contact ai@sqa.org.uk.

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