AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Version History

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
Original	November 2023	Quality Assurance	
2	November 2023	Sarah Edmundson	Design Change
3	March 2024	Ian Taylor	Review, proofreading and revision

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Introduction

AI is a relatively new concept, and as such its use is rapidly evolving. While our current position is outlined in the policy content below, the use of AI will evolve with our understanding of the technology and concept, and with due consideration to industry and regulatory developments. Any changes will be data and regulator driven. We acknowledge the potential time and cost efficiencies offered using such technologies, but this cannot be to the detriment of standards or the erosion of rigour in quality, compliance, and assessment practices.

Currently none of our qualifications require learners to produce work using any AI products. Direct use of AI, without reference, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the submission of someone else's work, either willingly or unwittingly, as your own.

Focus Awards will view the use of AI in learner work and/or in assessment procedures as a form of malpractice.

Centres must take all reasonable steps to identify the risk of the occurrence of plagiarism. Whilst this is nothing new to Centres, and strategies should already be in place to minimise the risk, the use or misuse of AI is a new factor for Centres to consider.

Guidance below will help support Centres to reduce their risk of malpractice through AI misuse:

- Students should be made aware that if they submit work in which they have misused artificial intelligence (AI) they have committed malpractice.

- We recommend including this in any student handbooks and plagiarism policies. It may also be useful as part of any assignment brief.

- Students and Centre staff must be made aware of the risks to the Centre of using AI in their work.

- Centres must ensure students' work is demonstrably their own. We recommend students' work is authenticated through a signed declaration; the signature may be 'wet' or electronic.

- Centre staff must identify where AI responses are generated in the learner work. Any AI generated work should not be marked and the learner must be sanctioned in line with the Centre's plagiarism policy.

- Tutors and assessors must only accept work which they consider, and are confident that, is the student's own work.

- Where Centre staff have doubts about the authenticity of student work submitted (for example, if they suspect plagiarism and the use of AI), they must investigate and take appropriate action in line with their plagiarism policy.

- Learners are permitted to use AI for research purposes and quote from or reference the sources appropriately in that work, but the work (including reasoning and conclusions drawn) must always be their own.

- Centres are expected to explain to students at the start and early stages of courses what AI is, how it links to plagiarism, how it will be monitored, and the potential sanctions associated with using AI in their work.

- Centres could provide an instruction manual for students as part of the learner handbook, to explain and clarify the use and misuse of AI and other issues with plagiarism.

- Centres should train assessors in the identification of plagiarism and the use of AI in learner work.

- Internal quality assurance measures must be robust enough to ensure Centres' internal quality assurance procedures identify the use of AI in learners work, which could, for example, require learners to use a reference page and in text referencing to identify sources of research.

- Centres could set an early assignment assessment or test as a standard measure to gauge the standard of the learner work. This could support future identification of plagiarism and the use of AI.

Tips to Identify AI Misuse in Learner Work

Tutors should look for unusual or complete phrases that a student would not normally employ. For example, submitted work might include:

- Grammar and syntax of a standard far higher than that demonstrated previously
- Inconsistent styles, tone, or tense changes, which may be a sign of AI-derived materials
- Overuse of information
- Irrelevant information
- Americanisation of words and terms

If any such 'tell-tale' signals appear, tutors/assessors should investigate. They could:

- Ask follow-up questions of the learners
- Create innovative assignments (check with Focus Awards' EQA for any changes to assignment tasks)

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our support team:

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