Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy
Most recent update 09 September 2025

Scope

This policy applies to all learners, programme participants, Skills and Employment (S&E) staff and sub-contracted partners within S&E including, but not limited to, teaching, learning, employment support, assessment and administrative functions. It outlines our approach to responsible integration of AI allowing users to learn about and benefit from the use of new technologies in a safe and ethical way.

Purpose

This policy provides guidelines for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools primarily within S&E's adult learning setting. It is also applicable to employment support projects where programme participants may use AI to assist in job-seeking etc. The policy aims to maintain the integrity of teaching, learning, support and assessment, while allowing appropriate use of AI tools across Skills and Employment.

AI in Learning and Assessment

S&E recognises the potential benefits AI tools offer in educational settings for enhancing staff efficiency and reducing workloads: utilising AI for repetitive or time-consuming tasks will enable staff members to focus more on direct learner support and teaching. We are committed to promoting AI as a tool for improving staff wellbeing, recognising that reducing time spent on administrative tasks can help alleviate stress and contribute to a healthier work-life balance.

We also recognise that their misuse of AI by S&E staff members, sub-contracted partners, and learners could jeopardise the authenticity of learning outcomes and the fairness of assessments. For this reason, all users of generative AI will comply with the relevant and relating laws, regulations, policies and guidelines. These include - but are not limited to - safeguarding, intellectual property, copyright, and data protection.

Guidance for S&E Staff Members and Sub-contracted partners

S&E staff members and sub-contracted partners are permitted to experiment with and make use of AI-based tools and technologies to support teaching. However, they must <u>not</u> enter any sensitive, confidential or proprietary information.

AI may be used to support marking and feedback with the following conditions:
- No full assignments are to be uploaded
- No learner names or personal identifiers are to be uploaded

- Learner work must be anonymised or summarised before input
- Only approved closed AI tools (see Definitions) may be used
- AI must not be used to make final marking decisions

As long as all these conditions are fulfilled, learner consent is not required. However, if any of the above are not in place, consent must be obtained. In this case, a Skills and Employment staff member will raise an IT support ticket to request consent and approval from the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

AI tools must be used responsibly and will not be adopted as a substitute for professional judgement. Staff members and sub-contracted partners will remain responsible and accountable for any information they enter into the AI tool, and for ensuring the quality, content and accuracy of output generated.

Staff members and sub-contracted partners can utilise AI based tools and technologies to reduce workloads by:

- generating schemes of work and lesson plans based on the curriculum and awarding body requirements where necessary
- developing presentations and handouts that reflect the needs of the learners and the course requirements
- creating business-related materials such as reports, manuals, action plans

To remain transparent, staff members and sub-contracted partners will indicate when AI has been used to support the creation of course and business materials. A full example declaration is shown at the end of this policy. At minimum staff must include the wording *"Some content and resources used in the development of this material were created with support from [AI tool name], an AI tool. All content has been reviewed and adapted by education professionals to ensure accuracy, relevance and suitability for learners."*

Staff members and sub-contracted partners will not:

- upload any information/data to AI tools that is protected by data protection legislation pertaining to the identification of individuals. Any attempt to do so will be classed as a GDPR breach and will be reported to Cheshire West and Chester Council's Data Protection Officer. Such information includes:

    o Basic identity information such as names, birthdates, addresses
    o Web related information such as IP addresses, locations, cookies
    o Health information
    o Biometric data
    o Racial or ethnic data
    o Political opinions
    o Sexual orientation
    o Gender identity
    o Any other information that relates to an identified or identifiable living person

- upload any business or sensitive information relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council or its stakeholders

- rely solely on the use of AI to assess or mark learner work, or to provide feedback to learners on any formative or summative assessments. When AI is used for marking support, its limitations must be understood. Human assessors will remain responsible for final evaluations and must ensure that learners have met assessment criteria independently

- use any AI tools that have been deemed inappropriate for use by Cheshire West and Chester Council due to risks associated with security and privacy management. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

  o ChatGPT
  o Read.ai
  o Otter.ai

These tools are restricted due to concerns about data privacy and security. Staff must not use these tools for any educational or administrative purposes unless explicit approval is granted.

If individuals wish to trial the use of a generative AI tool within their team, seek guidance from the appropriate Council personnel.

Continuing Professional Development for S&E Staff Members and Sub-contracted partners

To ensure that users feel confident and empowered to use AI effectively, S&E managers will ensure that staff members and sub-contracted partners will receive training in the following:

- Understanding generative AI, its capabilities, limitations and associated dangers, including how to check for bias, accuracy and currency. They will learn to fact-check AI- generated output and will understand their responsibility in relation to its use

- Identifying possible learner misuse of AI using automated tools and manual checks

- How to use professional judgement when checking for accuracy, relevance and appropriateness of AI generated output before its use for educational purposes. Staff will understand expectations regarding provision of context through their own professional expertise, and how to effectively integrate AI into work while maintaining critical oversight

- Using AI to promote and ensure equity in learning through the provision of personalised support and attention to learning gaps

- Ensuring that learners receive sufficient guidance on the appropriate use of AI technologies

- The correct use of AI technologies and ensuring the protection of personal and sensitive data in relation to General Data Protection Regulations and other Council and S&E policies and procedures

- The protection of learners' intellectual property rights; ensuring that original work, including homework, is not used to train AI models without appropriate consent or exemption to copyright

Guidance for Learners

Authenticity of learner work is paramount. Learners are expected to submit work that is their own, reflecting their independent knowledge, skills, and understanding. AI tools should not replace individual thought or effort in learning activities. When necessary, access to AI during assessments will be restricted to maintain integrity.

However, learners can be encouraged to make use of AI to supplement their learning where appropriate. Learners will be informed about the capabilities and limitations of AI tools, and those which are most credible and age-appropriate. They will learn to use AI tools responsibly and receive guidance on fact-checking their findings and determining reliable and unreliable information.

In addition, learners will be informed about the implications of AI misuse, and that tutors may use approved AI detection tools to identify potential malpractice.

AI misuse may include:

- The submission of AI-generated content without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying or paraphrasing large portions of AI-generated text
- Using AI tools to bypass the learning process

Such misuse will be treated as malpractice, like plagiarism, and will result in sanctions as per the S&E Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

At the start of any learning where AI may be used, learners are required to sign "Learner Agreement – Using AI responsibly" declaration.

Staff members and sub-contracted partners will provide learners with information to help them to stay safe online, including the importance of not entering personal or sensitive information into AI tools and the potential negative implications of doing so.

Learners will only be permitted to use AI tools with the agreement of their tutor and in accordance with the assessment guidance associated with their course. They will not access

unauthorised AI tools using council equipment, e.g. laptops, iPads, desktop computers, and mobile phones due to concerns regarding data and privacy management.

If learners are using AI tools for their classroom-based assignments or homework, they must be clear and transparent regarding what has been produced with the assistance of AI by including a declaration within their work. The learner declaration template is shown at the end of this policy.

Misuse of AI is likely to be deemed malpractice and may lead to sanctions including disqualification from the assessment or, in the case of an accredited course, the qualification; full details in the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Communication with Stakeholders

Regular communication will ensure that all stakeholders understand the acceptable use of AI tools and the consequences of misuse. Learners will be required sign the "Learner Agreement – Using AI responsibly" document at enrolment where AI tools may be used a part of learning.

In addition, S&E management will ensure that:

- related policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary in line with evolving AI tools and guidance from regulatory bodies

- staff members and sub-contracted partners are kept informed - via email and the S&E newsletter - of any changes to AI-related tools, policies and procedures

- regular CPD sessions for S&E staff members, management and sub-contracted partners will be arranged to ensure a consistent and informed approach to AI use when necessary

Policy Review

Given the rapid developments in AI this policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with guidance from regulatory bodies. We anticipate that the review cycle may be more frequent than 12 months due to the pace of AI evolution.

This policy incorporates the guidance and recommendations from:
JCQ AI usage in assessments,
AIM Qualifications Group Compliance Update September 2024,
AIM Qualifications Group training in May 2025.

Summary

Summary Checklist for AI Usage	
Do not input personal or sensitive data into AI tools	☐
Use AI to support, not replace, professional judgement	☐
Acknowledge AI use in all educational and business materials	☐
Ensure learners understand appropriate AI use and potential consequences	☐
Refer to institutional policies for guidance and report any misuse	☐

Definitions

For clarity the following definitions apply throughout this policy

- **Closed AI**: closed AI tools (such as Microsoft Copilot) operate within secure environments and do not retain or use input data to train AI models.
- **Open AI:** (like ChatGPT, Gemini, or other publicly accessible platforms) may store or learn from the data entered and must not be used to process learner work.
- **Malpractice**: Breaches of academic standards, including plagiarism and unauthorised use of AI tools.
- **AI Misuse:** Use of AI tools in a way that compromises academic integrity, data protection or institutional policy.
- **Sensitive Data:** Information protected under GDPR, including personal identifiers, health data, and confidential institutional information.
- **Generative AI:** Artificial Intelligence tools that produce text, images, or other content based on user input.

Example Tutor Declaration Template

Attached Evidence:	[Screenshots or records of AI-generated content and prompts]
Purpose:	[Brief explanation of how AI supported the work]
Date of Use:	[DD/MM/YYYY]
AI Tool Used:	AI Tool Used: [e.g. Grammarly, copilot etc]
Date	Signed