Managing the learner's use of AI in assessment

A practical fact sheet for trainers and assessors.

Context

Artificial intelligence, including generative AI tools such as chatbots, image generators, and paraphrasing systems, has become progressively easier for learners to access. In assessment, this creates both opportunities and risks. AI can support planning, drafting, summarising and practice. However, it can also be used in ways that reduce the quality of evidence, mask gaps in understanding, and weaken confidence in assessment decisions.

For assessors, the key issue is not whether AI exists, but whether assessment decisions continue to reflect the learner's demonstrated competence. This is crucial in Vocational Education and Training (VET) because assessments require sound, defensible judgements based on verifiable evidence that clearly supports a learner's claim to competency. This is especially important in mining and automotive settings, where many tasks rely on practical performance, safety-critical decisions, and adherence to correct workplace procedures. Put simply, a polished AI-generated response to written questions is no match for the observed application of knowledge on the job.

Setting clear expectations for AI use

Clear expectations reduce confusion and help learners use AI responsibly. Before the assessment begins, trainers should explain the scope of permitted AI use (for example, not allowed, allowed only for limited support, allowed with full disclosure, or required for a specific learning purpose).

Expectations should be written in plain language and included in assessment instructions, learner briefings, and marking/assessment guides. Learners should know what counts as acceptable support, what crosses the line, and what evidence they must produce unassisted.

This is particularly important when working with mixed cohorts, including apprentices, existing workers, school-based learners, and culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Clear rules help protect both fairness and integrity.

Requiring transparency and disclosure

If AI use is permitted, learners should be asked to nominate how and when it was used. Transparency supports better judgment and reduces the chance that AI assistance is mistaken for fully independent work.

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A simple disclosure requirement can ask learners to record:

- the AI tool used
- the prompts or instructions they gave the tool
- which part of the work was supported by AI
- what they changed, checked or added themselves, and
- how they verified that the final content was accurate and appropriate.

This does not make poor evidence acceptable. It does, however, help trainers understand the learner's process and make a more informed decision about the weight to place on the submitted evidence.

Designing assessments that verify authentic learning

AI detection can only go so far, and with the rapid pace of change and the increasing sophistication of the models, the strongest response to AI-related risk is better assessment design. Assessment should require learners to show what they know and can do in ways that are hard to outsource and easy to verify.

Useful methods include:

- drafts and staged submissions that show the learner's development over time
- brief reflections that explain decisions, trade-offs and lessons learned
- targeted questioning during or after the task
- direct observation of practical performance
- workplace demonstrations, simulations or scenario-based tasks
- verification conversations where the learner explains how they completed the work
- collection of evidence across more than one occasion to demonstrate consistency.

In mining, this could mean pairing a written hazard analysis with a practical walk-through, questioning learners about critical controls, and observing the completion of relevant checks. In automotive, it could mean combining written service documentation with a live inspection, explaining fault-finding decisions, and accurately completing a job card under workshop conditions.

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Protecting the integrity of the assessment process

Assessment integrity is protected when decisions are based on the learner's demonstrated competence, not on the quality of an AI tool. The evidence needs to show original understanding, workplace judgement and practical performance.

To protect integrity, trainers and assessors should:

- match assessment methods to the training product and the real work context
- balance theory evidence with practical application
- use enough evidence to make a sound judgement
- confirm that the evidence belongs to the learner being assessed
- record how authenticity was checked when AI risk is relevant
- avoid making competency decisions on written work alone where practical performance is required.

However, there is a place for AI in the learning journey. Rather than banning it, learners should be encouraged to aim for 'AI-enhanced' or 'AI-assisted' submissions, rather than 'AI-created' submissions, with the emphasis on AI as a support tool rather than the lead. This means less 'cut and paste' and more focus on augmenting learners' existing knowledge and skills.

Protecting the integrity of the assessment process

Learners need guidance, not just warnings. Ethical and responsible AI use can be supported by modelling its use as a support tool, without letting it replace human judgement.

Good practice includes:

- showing learners how to use AI for revision, brainstorming, checking terminology, or content organisation
- teaching learners to verify outputs against training materials, site procedures, manufacturer information and workplace requirements
- explaining privacy, confidentiality and data security risks before learners enter the workplace or personal information into external tools
- showing learners how bias, inaccuracy and fabricated content can appear in AI outputs
- requiring disclosure where AI use is allowed
- reinforcing that AI can support learning but should not stand in place of competence.

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Responsible use is most effective when linked to professional practice. Therefore, trainers and assessors should seek opportunities to demonstrate effective AI use in action, linked to common mining and automotive tasks.

Common challenges in mining and automotive contexts

Context	Challenge for authenticity
Mining safety training	Learners may submit strong written answers about hazards or critical controls but still struggle to identify risks, follow isolations or apply permit steps correctly in the field.
Mining workplace assessment	Remote work, shift pressure and dispersed sites can make it harder to observe performance directly, increasing the risk of over-reliance on paperwork or third-party sign-off.
Automotive workshop training	AI-assisted answers can make knowledge checks appear strong even when the learner cannot perform the inspection sequence, explain fault symptoms, or complete job documentation accurately.

Things trainers can do to improve authenticity in assessment

- Use direct observation wherever practical, especially for safety-critical or technical tasks.
- Combine written evidence with questioning, demonstration and workplace performance.
- Use staged assessment tasks so you can see how learning develops over time.
- Contextualise tasks to real equipment, real procedures and realistic problems from mining and automotive settings. Vague or generic tasks are much easier for AI to handle.
- Require learners to disclose permitted AI use clearly and consistently.
- Keep records of how authenticity was checked, especially where AI use was declared or suspected.
- Use short verification conversations after submission to confirm understanding.
- Avoid relying on narrow written tasks as the main basis for competency decisions.
- Teach ethical use of AI as part of learner preparation, rather than addressing it only as misconduct after the fact.
- Review assessment tools regularly to make sure they still support authentic outcomes.

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Key message

Managing learners' use of AI in assessment is not about banning technology by default. It is about protecting the integrity of assessment decisions and ensuring learners can demonstrate their own knowledge, skills and judgement. In mining and automotive environments, where competence must be demonstrated in practice, authentic assessment depends on clear expectations, transparent disclosure, robust assessment design and direct verification of performance.

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