

SLT briefing pack: AI and coursework integrity

Why this matters now

Know your exposure: which qualifications at your school include coursework?

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Why this matters now

Ofqual's Chief Regulator has written to exam boards highlighting serious concerns about AI-generated coursework. Generative AI tools can produce fluent text in seconds, and for students facing deadlines, the temptation is real.

The core issue is simple: a student using AI to produce coursework and passing it off as their own is cheating. When AI does the work, students don't learn. When AI-generated work receives a grade, that grade becomes meaningless. Qualifications work because they signal what a student can actually do. AI-generated coursework undermines this trust, disadvantages students who complete their own work, and sends young people into the world with qualifications that don't match their abilities.

Where students breach the rules designed to protect the integrity of assessments, sanctions are necessarily severe. In 2025, penalties included 1,125 cases when students lost a whole GCSE or A level, and nearly 2,000 cases in which marks were deducted.

Know your exposure: which qualifications at your school include coursework?

As a senior leader, it is worth taking stock of which qualifications offered at your school or college include a non-examined assessment (NEA) component. Your exams officer will be able to provide a straightforward overview of which subjects include coursework and the nature of those assessments.

Having this picture will help you target any whole-school AI guidance more effectively, ensure the right conversations are happening with relevant heads of department, and give you confidence that your school's approach to AI malpractice is proportionate and well-directed.

What we're asking you to do

We realise managing the use of AI and detecting its misuse is a challenging issue. But everyone taking these steps, and talking openly with your students, can make a difference.

Immediate actions (March 2026)

- Speak to your exams officer to identify which qualifications in your school include NEA, extended writing, or on-screen coursework components
- Brief your staff on JCQ's AI in coursework policy: AI-generated work submitted as the student's own is malpractice
- Review your policies to ensure they explicitly cover AI misuse and state consequences clearly
- Communicate with students, making clear that this is cheating with serious consequences

Ongoing actions

- Support your teachers when they raise concerns about coursework authenticity
- Follow your malpractice procedures if concerns arise

Key messages

For teachers: “You know your students. If something doesn’t sound like them, question it. We will support you.”

For students: “Using AI to generate work you submit as your own is cheating. The consequences are serious.”

For parents: “Qualifications are important for your child’s future. Don’t let them miss out on the grades they deserve. Make sure they know they need to complete their own coursework.”

Supporting your teachers

It is important that teachers have:

- clarity on what’s permitted and confidence they’ll be supported
- time to review coursework carefully and have conversations with students
- a clear process for raising concerns

If teachers suspect AI-generated content, they should have a conversation with the student, asking them to explain their thinking and describe their process. If concerns remain, they should follow your school’s malpractice procedures.

For detailed guidance on identifying AI-generated work, refer teachers to [the JCQ guidance on AI use in assessments](#).

Having conversations with students

Our shared objective is to help students understand the risks of using AI to cheat, both the formal consequences and the longer-term impact on their learning and future prospects.

Use the lesson plan to:

- make clear that AI-generated coursework submitted as a student’s own is malpractice
- explain the consequences: potential disqualification, impact on applications, permanent record
- emphasise the deeper point: the skills built through genuine effort are what employers and universities value

Resources available

- Lesson plan – framework for teachers to discuss AI risks with students
- [JCQ guidance on AI use in assessments](#) – best practice for students and teachers on AI and coursework

Contact and support

- [JCQ guidance on AI in assessments](#)
- Contact exam boards directly for exam board-specific guidance



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