

# Guidance on technological developments and programme recognition

This guidance relates to technology and programmes recognised or being considered for recognition against the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) or Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA). Appropriate use of technology to support both engineering education and programme recognition activities is welcomed.

## **Technology in engineering curriculum, delivery and assessment**

The Engineering Council is not prescriptive about delivery or assessment approaches, does not mandate use of any approach (such as use of projects or examinations), and welcomes innovation in programme delivery and assessment (so long as the requirements of the current AHEP or AAQA are met).

While AI and other technologies may present new opportunities for academic misconduct, existing guidance and policy<sup>1</sup> related to academic misconduct should already cover this - requiring work presented as student work to be the work of the student (unless criteria for an assessment permit or require an alternative approach eg use of technology to assist) and any work created by AI or another technology to be accurately referenced/attributed as such. Use of a diversity of assessment methodologies and authentic assessment may also help to mitigate risks of academic misconduct.

We would encourage the use of assistive AI technologies, such as spell checkers, grammar correctors, and punctuation tools, used as digital aids that refine and polish content authored by a human. They enhance equity of opportunity for students including clarity, correctness, and readability, but they do not contribute original ideas or structure.

We would discourage use of Generative AI to produce entire drafts or solutions from scratch based on a prompt or objective. When generative AI is used to create the first draft of a presentation or document, it assumes the role of the initial author, structuring the content, generating arguments, and selecting language, effectively writing the first version before any human refinement. Any use of Generative AI must not rely entirely on the AI and must include an element of human checking as a requirement. When setting an assessment this could usefully be tested against Generative AI to assure that the student could not complete the assessment without carrying out their own work.

In some cases, appropriate use of technology may help improve equity, diversity, inclusion and fairness, for example some technologies may assist some students who might not otherwise be

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<sup>1</sup> All awarding organisations and education providers should have guidance and policies related to academic misconduct.

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able to fully engage with education. Consideration must also be given to risks of technological barriers (these might relate to inequality of access to technology for reasons such as cost or geography, as well as potential for badly designed or implemented technology to present barriers to some individuals). It is also important that security, data protection and copyright risks associated with technology are given due consideration.

Positive embracement of opportunities presented by technological developments is encouraged alongside due consideration of risks, including risks and opportunities related to academic integrity, ethics and implications for equity, diversity, inclusion and fairness. Use of technology should enhance and not replace teaching and demonstration of learning outcomes.

It is important that engineering education supports development of knowledge and skills (including digital literacy) to enable future engineers to respond effectively to new technological developments. This should include giving due consideration to ethical, environmental and equity, diversity, inclusion and fairness impacts of use of technology in line with relevant [Codes of Conduct](#). Many of the learning outcomes within the current version of AHEP and AAQA may be contextualised to take account of technological developments and/or support development of skills in use of new technologies. Some universities may have knowledge at the forefront of technology which may usefully inform curriculum.

Threshold learning outcomes for recognised programmes as specified in the current versions of AHEP and AAQA which refer to engineering technologies, without specifying those technologies. The pace of technological change and development is fast, the technologies that are relevant to different engineering disciplines vary, and educators may have advanced knowledge of cutting-edge technologies. Hence it is not felt appropriate for Engineering Council Standards to refer to specific technologies. PEIs may refer to technologies of importance to a particular engineering discipline (or disciplines) if they contextualise the learning outcomes and/competence that are referred to in the Engineering Council Standards, but if doing so need to give due consideration to the pace of technological change.

### **Use of technology to support programme recognition activity**

There may be scope to use secure technology in line with current data protection regulations to improve efficiency in programme recognition activities (approval and accreditation). This could include:

- online document sharing (both to receive and share submission documents and evidence from awarding organisations or providers, and to mark-up panel reports)
- use of online systems to support arrangements for accreditation visits (keeping track of and communicating pre-visit questions, arrangements for travel, accommodation etc)

Although technology may be an important aid to programme recognition activity, PEIs must:

- retain peer review as central to the process
- give due consideration to potential security and copyright issues, for example if considering use of generative AI to review materials
- ensure volunteers involved in programme recognition have sufficient currency of knowledge of digital literacy and education.

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