

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Survey 2024

*A report on the results from SQA Accreditation's
Generative AI Survey*

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Summary

This survey was sent out to gain a better understanding of the impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) on SQA Accreditation's awarding bodies and to ascertain the best course of action.

The survey was open for responses from 24th June 2024 to 2nd August 2024, 29 individuals completed the survey in this time, all from awarding bodies.

Knowledge and use of AI

The majority of respondents indicated that they either had a beginner level of knowledge (41%) or intermediate level (52%). However this was not reflected in how often they interacted with AI; 31% never used AI in their working life, 34% rarely used it, 14% occasionally and 21% frequently. This demonstrates that people feel AI is easy to use despite not using it often. Most people who used AI reported that they used it for research (40%) and administrative tasks (30%).

Opportunities and concerns

The findings suggest that respondents feel positive about AI, but cautious; 79.3% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I can think of specific tasks or processes which would benefit from AI', yet only 51.7% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I am supportive of involving AI in my working life'. When asked about specific concerns, the highest concerns were; how to detect AI content, ethical implications, AI-related malpractice and how to keep up with developments.

Future planning

Most respondents (86%) agreed that AI may undermine the validity of assessment. The general response suggests most people are of the opinion that AI can aid educators achieve their objectives. In regard to NOS, Core Skills and Assessment Strategy over 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a review is necessary. Of the 46% of respondents who felt SQA Accreditation could offer more, they suggested that; SQA Accreditation offer published guidance and communicate with other UK regulators.

When asked about joining an AI forum hosted by SQA Accreditation 85% of respondents said yes and of those 78% said they would prefer a continual forum rather than a one-off event.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has seen rapid development. It has infiltrated every sector, including education. SQA Accreditation has monitored its development and listened to feedback from awarding bodies and providers regarding their concerns. It is important to capture these concerns through empirical research, which can then be acted upon.

This survey aimed to gather insights on current practices, concerns and future plans regarding generative AI within the context of qualifications and assessments. As a regulator, SQA Accreditation is one step removed from the learner, therefore it is important to liaise with awarding bodies to understand what guidance we can offer within the boundaries of our remit.

Respondents

The survey was open for responses from 24th June 2024 to 2nd August 2024. A period of six weeks was deemed sufficient to allow all interested parties to respond, taking into consideration that this took place during the summer holidays.

The survey was sent to a total of 71 recipients from our 37 awarding bodies. There were 29 respondents — a response rate of 40.85%. All respondents were from awarding bodies. For comparison, there were 21 responses from the last stakeholder survey in 2021, so this can be considered a good response rate.

The full survey can be found in the Appendix. The survey was created using Microsoft Forms which allows the creator to select whether a question must be answered. All questions with a (*) must be answered before moving on.

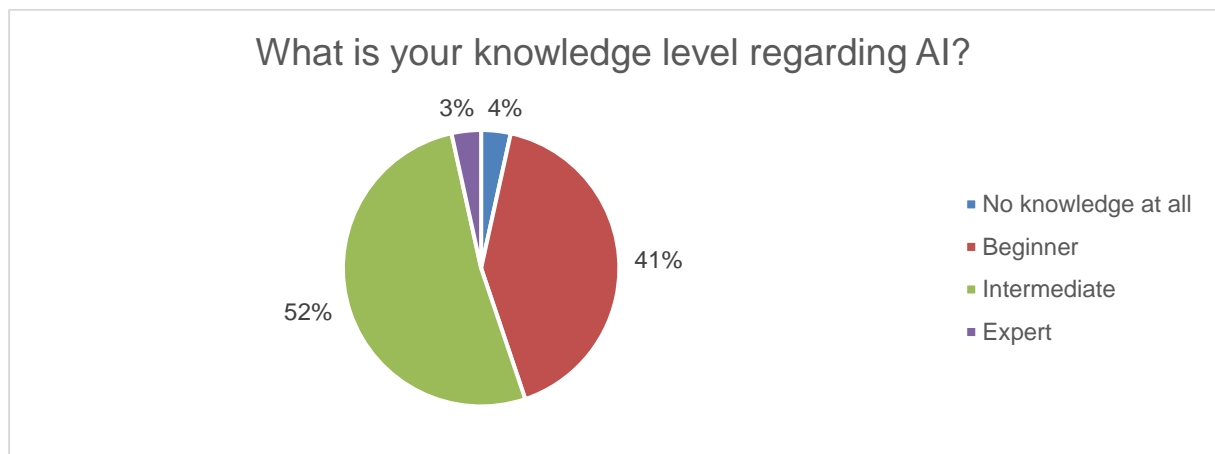
All responses have been anonymised to meet the [SQA Code of Research Practice](#). SQA Accreditation strive to ensure that research is valid and reliable, as well as ethical. This means that not only does our research abide by legal and regulatory frameworks, but it also maintains high ethical standards.

Results

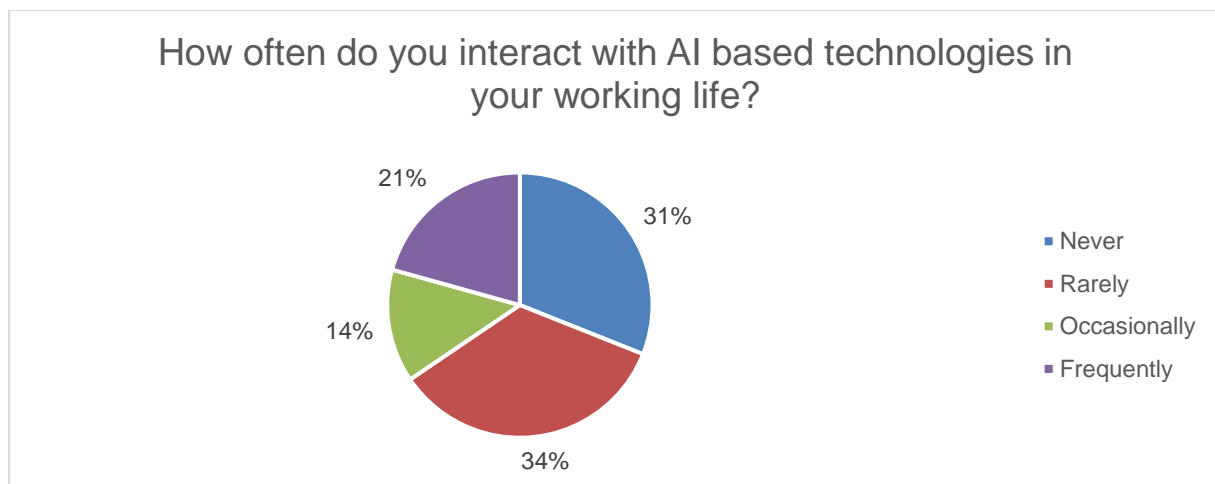
In terms of analysis, the following areas can be considered:

- Knowledge and use of AI
- Opportunities and concerns
- Future planning

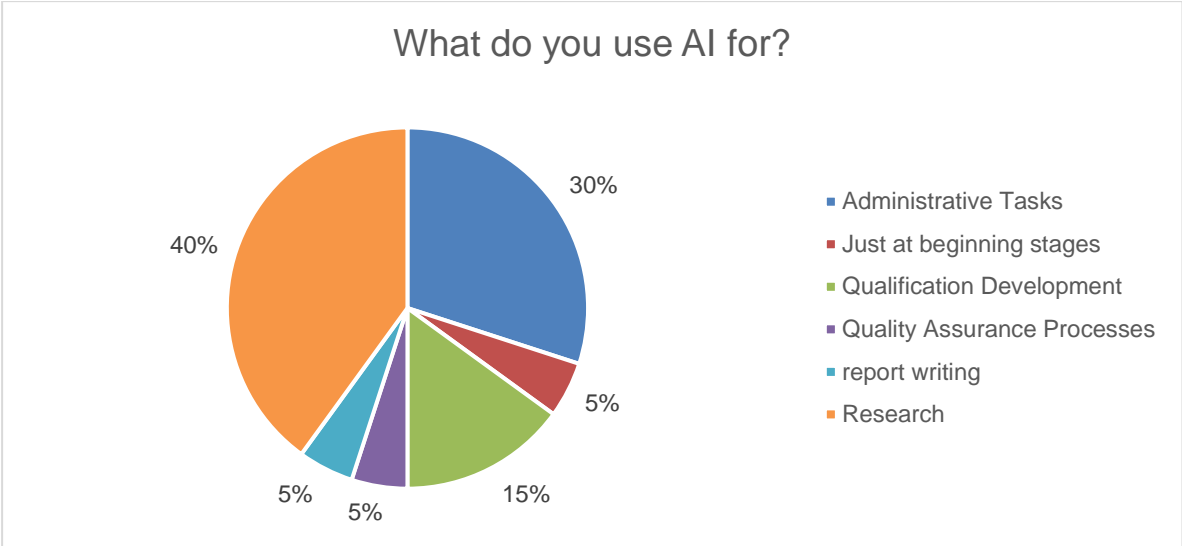
Knowledge and use of AI



As can be seen in the graph above, the majority of respondents indicated that they have a 'beginner' (41%) or 'intermediate' (52%) level of knowledge of AI. Only one respondent selected 'no knowledge at all' and one selected 'expert'. This suggests most respondents feel at least some level of confidence in using AI technologies.

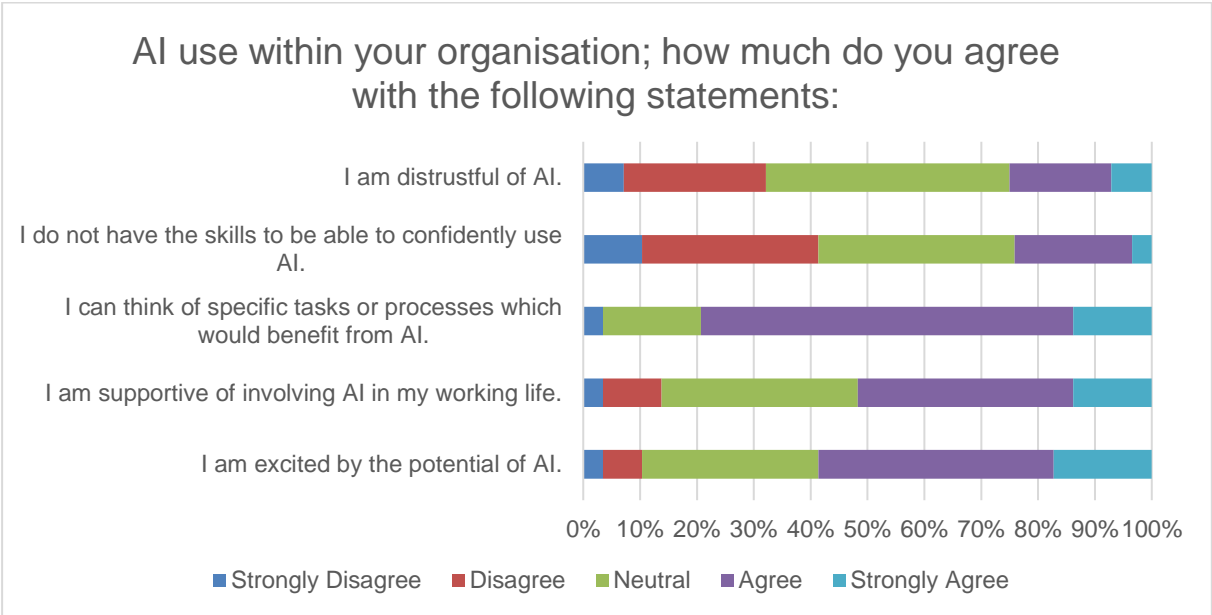


Despite most people reporting they have beginner to intermediate level of knowledge of AI, only 21% of respondents reported frequently using AI; 48% use it rarely or occasionally; and 31% never use it. These findings suggest that respondents feel confident to use AI, despite not using it often, perhaps alluding to how intuitive AI interfaces are.



Those who answered 'Never' to the previous question were not required to answer this question. Several options were provided with the above question, with the option to choose 'Other' and input their own answer. 10% of respondents chose this option, inputting 'Report writing' and 'Just at beginning stages'. The majority of respondents chose 'Research' (40%) followed closely by 'Administrative tasks' (30%), these responses cover a myriad of tasks. Interestingly, 15% of respondents stated that they use AI for qualification development. It should be noted that AI systems should be used with caution when using them for qualification development, for example consider intellectual property — that there is transparency and explainability; institutions may be required to disclose if AI has been used at any stage of the qualification development process.

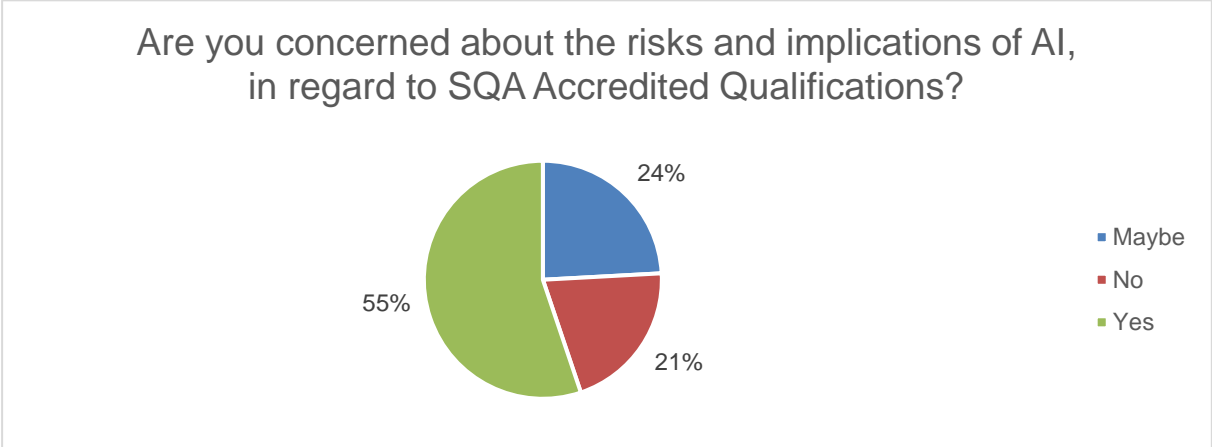
Opportunities and concerns



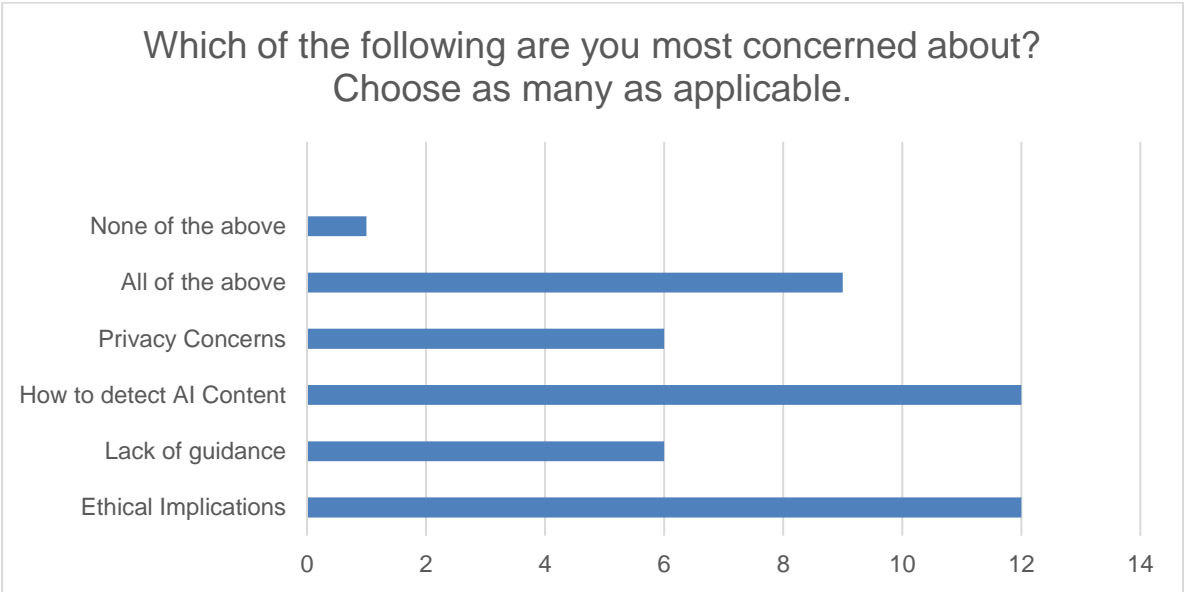
The first two statements can be grouped together as they are negative statements. Less than 30% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they did not trust AI and do not feel

confident in using AI. The majority of respondents selected neutral for these statements — 42.9% and 34.5% respectively. Interestingly, 32.2% selected disagree or strongly disagree for the statement ‘I am distrustful of AI’. Prior to this research, the prediction was that the vast majority would lack trust in AI.

79.3% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, ‘I can think of specific tasks or processes which would benefit from AI’, yet only 51.7% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I am supportive of involving AI in my working life’, implying implicit caution. These findings suggest that there are positive feelings towards AI and the opportunities it presents. 58.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ‘I am excited by the potential of AI’; only 10.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.



When questioned about whether they were concerned about the risks and implications of AI in relation to SQA accredited qualifications, 55% of respondents answered ‘Yes’, 24% answered ‘Maybe’, and 21% answered ‘No’. This demonstrates there are concerns to be addressed. The following question helps to understand what these concerns are.



Respondents were able to select as many answers as they felt appropriate for this question. There was only one selection of ‘None of the above’. Some respondents selected ‘All of the above’ as well as each individual aspect. Aside from selecting all options, ‘Ethical

implications' and 'How to detect AI content' were the biggest concerns. These limited options were provided as they had been previously mentioned in awarding body forums. The following question allowed for more broad responses: 'Please state if you have any other specific concerns about AI'. Respondents were provided with a text box to explain any further concerns. Each of the below rows represents one response.

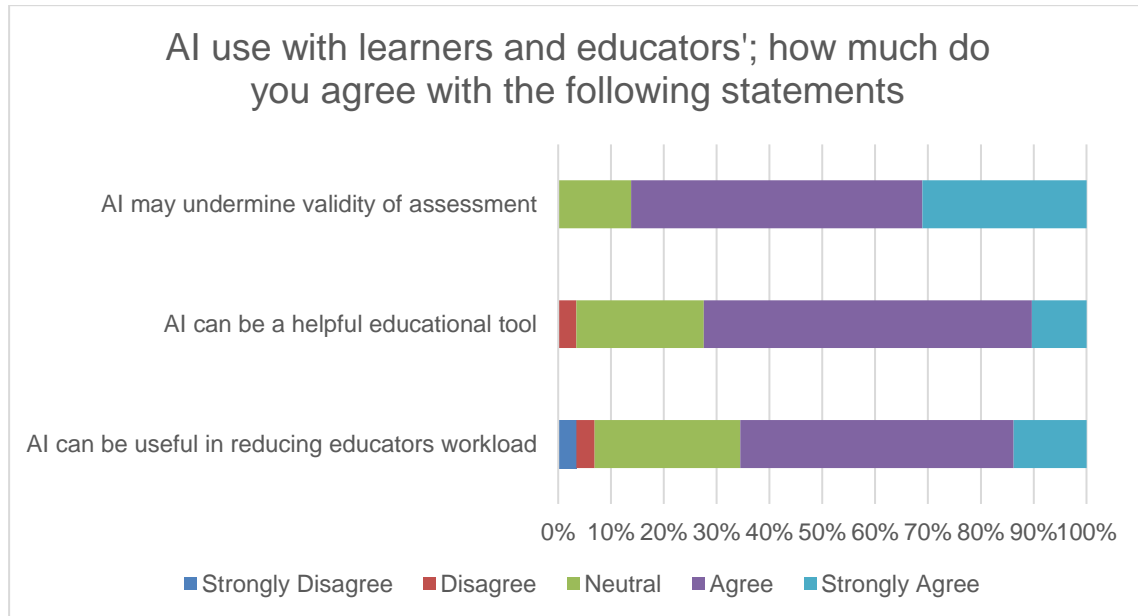
'How are we able to recognise use of AI in assessment? Is AI accurate and source checked?'
"Hype vs reality (so making sure we use it for realistic stuff), keeping 'human in the loop'."
'It is becoming more difficult to detect 'AI'-generated text, as it delves into articles, journals, blogs, and websites such as Reddit. Anti-plagiarism software is almost useless, and 'AI' detection tools from the originators of the technology seem to have been withdrawn. Human scrutiny (inappropriate or irrelevant changes in tone and language, inapposite referencing) can be indicators. This remains difficult to challenge, particularly in written work. AI tools can be used to undertake a variety of tasks, from 'assisting' in answering MCQs to generating essays, presentations, and corporate reports. You will see below that I 'strongly disagree' that AI can be used to reduce the workload of educators. If anything, it justifies additional scrutiny of learner work. In their current form, 'AI' (algorithmic) tools can invite academic dishonesty rather than disabusing learners of the notion that employing it is a good idea. True AI (ie non-narrow/algorithmic) is some way off, but tools in their current form are subject to considerable abuse.'
'Loss of jobs.'
'Misuse of data.'
'Concerns about plagiarism by candidates and AI detection software being able to keep up with advances.'
'Malpractice and fraud.'
'How do you manage the positive and negative impact of AI in organisations delivering training and assessment? How do you manage maladministration as a result of misuse? How do you keep up to date?'
'Users may not always be aware of when they are interacting with AI.'
'Impact of AI in the Arts is a grave concern. Creativity is a human necessity of self-expression and seeing how easily it can emulate photography and music, it makes you wonder how far it can go.'
'The main concern is the continual evolution of AI, and the ongoing challenges this presents in terms of 'keeping up' never mind being able to 'get ahead' with regards to control measures.'
'Intellectual Property issues if AI was to be used for qualification/assessment development; public sector not keeping up with the pace of changes; lack of clarity/guidance about what constitutes AI-related malpractice. What's deemed an acceptable vs unacceptable use of AI in assignments/assessment, ensuring the safeguarding of children/learners?'

The main themes identified in the comments are:

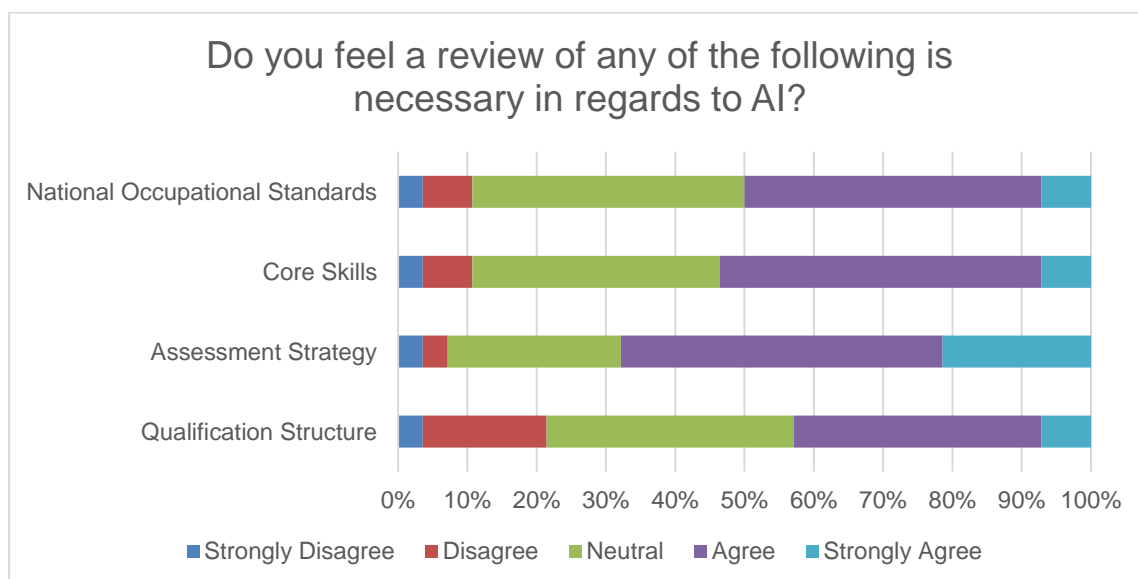
- identifying when AI has been used
- keeping up with the development of AI
- AI-related malpractice
- uncertainty as to how AI will impact the workplace

Many are concerned about not being able to predict where AI will lead and how this will affect working life. This unknown nature of the development of AI is a source of great concern.

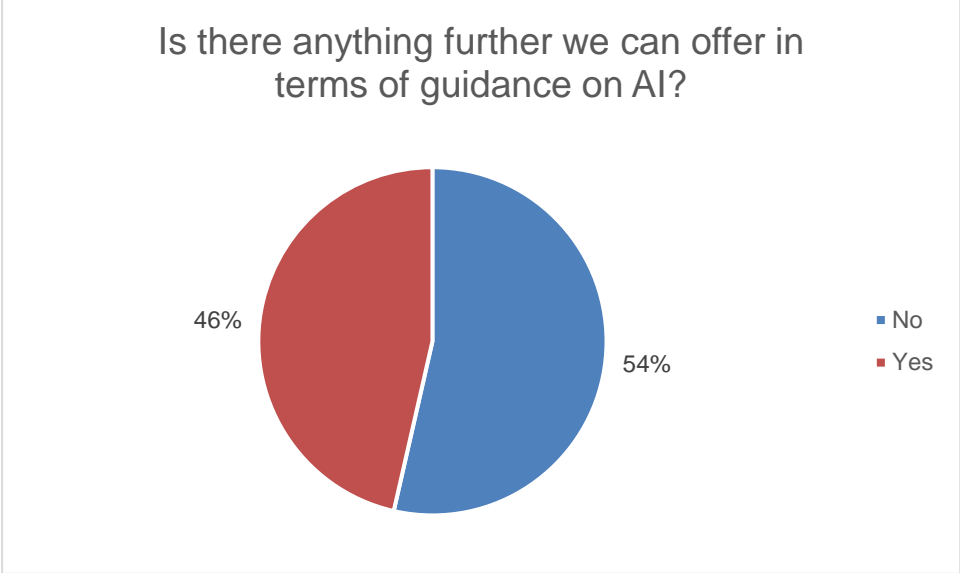
Future planning



All respondents were neutral or in agreement with the statement: 'AI may undermine validity of assessment', reflecting the responses given previously that there is concern around how to identify AI content. Only 3.4% disagreed with the statement 'AI can be a helpful educational tool'. The general response suggests most people are of the opinion that AI can aid educators in achieving their objectives. The respondent who strongly disagreed with the statement 'AI can be useful in reducing educators' workload' stated that this was due to the inherent problems with identifying AI-produced content, therefore increasing workload.



The general consensus here is that respondents would like to see a review of all aspects of qualifications in relation to AI. With regards to NOS, Core Skills and Assessment Strategy, over 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a review is necessary. For Qualification Structure, 42.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. There was consistently a large percentage of respondents who responded neutrally. Respondents may wish to avoid a review to other conflating factors, such as potentially being unable to offer particular qualifications for a period of time, or due to funding issues.



Respondents were quite evenly distributed in response to the question 'Is there anything further we can offer in terms of guidance on AI?'. It is the intention of SQA Accreditation to provide official guidance.

Following on from the above question; if yes, please let us know what further support you are looking for:

'Either lead, or be part of a cross-industry group (eg eAA, FAB...) to help all AOs navigate the ethical use of AI, promoting what the regulator will accept as fair use of AI, and what would be considered unacceptable. It would be very useful if all UK regulators worked together on this.'
'Publication of your guidelines around the use of AI for your regulated qualifications and for learners.'
'Communicate potential concerns to AOs.'
'Additional 'official' guidance is always welcome, but I do feel that SQA Accreditation are doing all they can to help in this regard. Below, I have selected 'one-off event' as an AI forum — the initial forum might trigger agenda items for future meetings, particularly as the technology evolves.'
'SQAs RP in relation to AI to ensure AO compliance.'
'Potentially a webinar which gives the opportunity to ask questions about AI and how we can use it/become more confident in using it in assessment.'
'Guidance on where and when AI can be used by AB, centres and candidates.'
'Greater clarity on expectations from the regulator.'
'Guidance for AO staff, centres and learners.'
'Ascertain legal standpoint; how to prevent use of AI in filmed exams/forging certificates.'

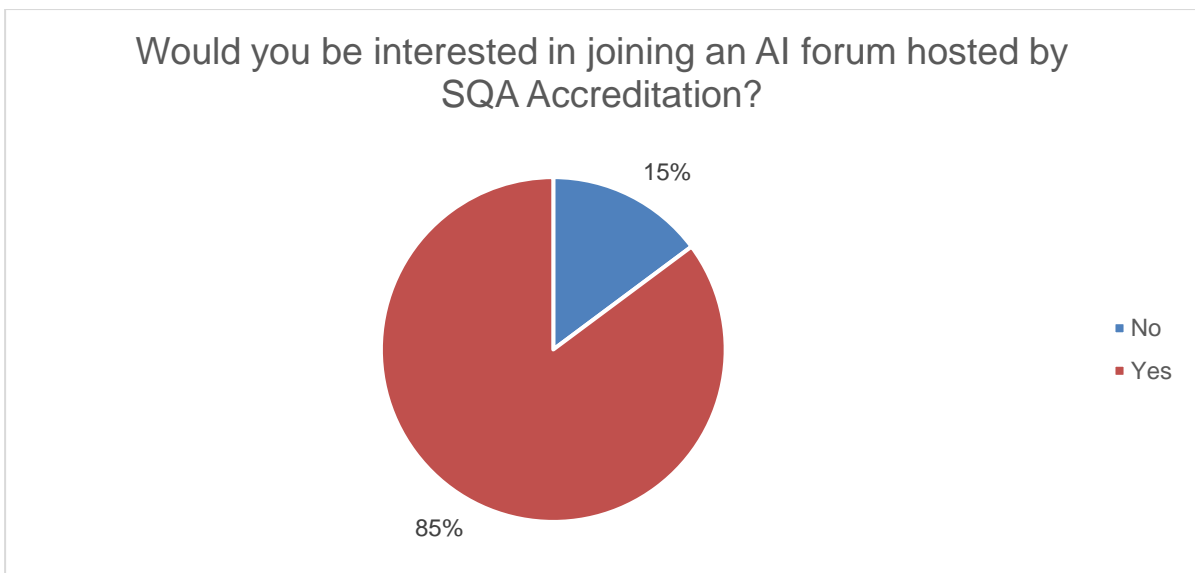
'This feels like an area where AOs and regulators need to work together, as we are in a position where we are both very much learning as things develop, so we would advocate for ongoing working groups.'

'Useful to know from SQA Accreditation what are the key priority themes that an awarding body should be focused on and balance between positive learner use and strong ethical practice by learners, centres and awarding bodies. How does guidance and advice align with Ofqual, CCEA and QW?'

The main areas raised in the above points are:

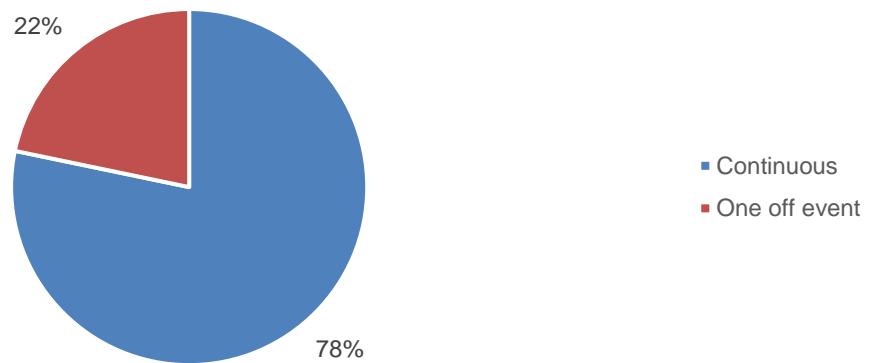
- guidance from SQA Accreditation
- communication between all UK regulators

Given the statements provided, respondents appear to recognise that AI is an area still in development; SQA Accreditation's position is still evolving.



SQA Accreditation are particularly interested in engaging their stakeholders in discussions regarding AI and how it is impacting the qualifications landscape, using this survey as an opportunity to gauge interest. As shown above, 85% of respondents said they would like to attend an AI forum.

Would you prefer that this was a one off forum or a continuous working group to discuss AI?



Of the 85% that responded positively, 78% of those would like to have continuous forums rather than a single event to discuss issues relating to AI and SQA Accreditation qualifications.