



AI in Educational Psychology : Principles for Use

Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a term used to describe the ways in which computers aim to simulate behaviour that requires intelligence. In its most recent iteration (generative AI), AI can produce content from a human request (a question, or a prompt) based on extrapolation from large quantities of internet-based data.

As a trade union and professional body, the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) is mindful of the impact AI will have within the educational psychology (EP) profession and beyond. We are committed to ensuring that AEP members are supported to use these tools safely and effectively, and to enabling the best outcomes for children and young people. We recognise the value of the human, relational and analytical aspects of EP work, and it is important that AI does not replace any part of this work.

In our role as a trade union, we want to ensure that the adoption of AI tools does not negatively affect jobs or workplace conditions, and that AI is used only to enhance the experience and quality of EP work and the well-being of members.

The AEP is committed to minimising its environmental impact, reducing its carbon footprint, and noting the significant negative environmental impact of AI use (see: [What direct risks does AI pose to the climate and environment?](#) - Grantham Research Institute on climate change and the environment).

Definition

In this paper, we will use the definition of AI adopted by the Trade Union Congress in their 2024 paper '[Artificial Intelligence Bill](#)', detailed below:

1. An “artificial intelligence system” means a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Different artificial intelligence systems vary in their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment.
2. Such systems will have functions that include, but are not limited to -
 - a. prediction,
 - b. planning,
 - c. classification,
 - d. pattern recognition,
 - e. organisation,
 - f. perception,



- g. the recognition of speech, sound, or image,
 - h. the generation of text, sound, or image,
 - i. language translation,
 - j. communication,
 - k. learning,
 - l. representation, and
 - m. problem-solving.
3. A system does not cease to be an artificial intelligence system solely because of human involvement in the system.

We will refer to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) [Standards of Proficiency \(SoP\)](#) for practitioner psychologists throughout this document. The HCPC are the regulator for practising EPs in the United Kingdom. Please note that these are subject to change and the version referred to in this document is correct as of March 2026.

Principles for the Responsible Use of AI in EP Practice

We believe that the EP profession should take a careful, ethical approach to the use of AI within our practice. All EPs have a duty to adhere to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency (SoP), and these should always be considered carefully.

Core Principles:

- AI is a support tool, not a decision-making tool
- AI should be used only to enhance and contribute to quality of work
- AI is not a substitute for professional expertise and does not remove any accountability
- No AI content should be directly shared, and all output should be thoroughly checked
- Responsibility for safe, ethical, and lawful practice remains with the member /professional
- All AI tools must be used in compliance with employer, course provider (if you are a trainee EP), and HCPC (regulator) policies.

Accountability and Judgment

HCPC SoP 4 requires all EPs to ‘practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement’. Therefore, it is imperative that AI should only support and not ‘replace’ any professional decisions or judgement.

- To meet HCPC requirements in relation to ‘*practicing as an autonomous professional*’ EPs should not use generative AI to carry out cognitive work including formulating and hypothesising or to make any value-based decisions.
- EPs should remain fully accountable for all assessments, formulations, reports, and recommendations.



- When countersigning work (such as work completed by a Trainee or Assistant EP), the registered professional is responsible for ensuring this work is compliant with HCPC standards, including any use of AI.
- AI-generated content must always be critically evaluated by a qualified professional before its intended use.
- AI outputs must never be presented as a professional opinion.

Best Use

HCPC SoP number 11 states that practitioner psychologists must ‘assure the quality of their practice’. EPs must be particularly mindful of the risks and potential impacts of inaccurate output, even in use of AI for basic administrative support. Please see [research from the Lovelace Institute on inaccuracies in AI transcription](#).

- AI should only be used where it enhances the quality, safety, or accessibility of work, and not to replace ‘normal’ working practices (e.g. to improve efficiency, support reflective practice, improve accessibility or reduce administrative tasks).
- AI should not replace individual assessment.
- AI tools should not be a reason to increase EP caseload expectations or reduce time or need for professional reflection.
- AI tools risk providing inaccurate output, even when conducting administrative tasks (e.g. note-taking or proof-reading) and must be checked for accuracy.
- Safeguarding and risk decisions must only be considered by the EP.
- Recommendations affecting vulnerable children, families, or settings should be assessed carefully by the EP.

Confidentiality and Safety

HCPC SoP 6. States that practitioner psychologists must ‘understand the importance of and maintain confidentiality’

- AI use must always comply with confidentiality and UK GDPR obligations.
- Identifiable data must not be entered into any AI systems not approved by employers.
- Members must always follow their employer or university policies.
- All outputs must be checked for accuracy.

Competence

The HCPC says registrants must only use AI tools they understand how to properly use (and their associated risks) to practise safely. This includes considerations of bias and limitations of tools and reinforces the need to check and critique any outputs before using them to contribute to work.

Transparency

- Members should be clear about when and how AI is used in work.



- Transparency should be maintained and tools must be used in compliance with employer and university guidelines.
- Any supervising professional should be made aware by the supervisee when AI has contributed to any piece of work.

Equality and Diversity

HCPC SoP 5 states that practitioner psychologists need to ‘recognise the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner’. There has been some evidence to suggest that some AI models may produce biased outputs. See, as an example: [Racism and AI: “Bias from the past leads to bias in the future” | OHCHR](#)

It is essential that any AI outputs are reviewed for bias and that any AI generated content is reviewed to minimise the possibility of bias (e.g. cultural, gender, socioeconomic bias).

Professionals are responsible for ensuring that this has been reviewed and for always maintaining inclusive practice.

Useful checklist: AI tools

- Why am I using this tool?
- Is this AI tool approved by my employer or course provider?
- Am I inputting any personal or identifiable data e.g. the name of a child or parent?
- Can I ensure I am able to evaluate any output before using or sharing it?
- Would I be comfortable explaining the use of AI to employer, course provider or regulator?
- Does this use of AI tools enhance my work?