

Use of AI tools within submission of evidence for Individual and Organisational Certification

With the growing use of AI tools and platforms to generate text and content within documents, the question has inevitably arisen “Is it okay to use AI tools to generate responses in order to complete individual Participant Forms or other CL forms to apply for individual or other certification schemes within Carbon Literacy?”.

The answer is no.

We regard applications materially based on AI generated content as fraudulent, as the application, its formulation and completion of the evidence submitted, forms the basis of our assessment of an applicant's Carbon Literacy. We are assessing the Carbon Literacy of the applicant, not that of the AI system used to create the responses.

If, using our own IT tools or otherwise, we detect the use of AI to generate an application, it will be rejected without the opportunity for resubmission now or in the future, and the reason for rejection will be reported back to the submitting organisation. The decision of The Carbon Literacy Trust on this is final.

Currently, submissions that have used AI are usually relatively easy to spot manually. However, as AI systems become increasingly sophisticated, this is becoming harder and thus we are now adopting our own AI tools, in order to detect the use of AI in the creation of application content.

In reality, the use of AI affects a very small number of applications. As most Participant Details and Evidence forms are completed with the trainer actively involved either in person in the room, or via Zoom online, the risk of AI use really only affects applications where the evidence/submission form is completed by the learner alone, after training delivery has been completed.

The latter is a practice we actively discourage, as at the action stage of CL training, the trainer has an enormously valuable role in supporting and coaching each learner, helping them recognise their own agency and thus committing to high quality actions, and “post event actions” tend to result in a much lower evidence completion rate and ultimately a much lower pass rate. However, in some cases, when training is remotely delivered, evidence is completed alone. In these cases, it does present the risk of the use of AI being used to provide content for the application.

In order to make this policy clear to all organisations and learners it is :

1. Covered in the Trainers section of the Project website www.carbonliteracy.com
2. Publicised via our normal Pioneers Network for trainers and consultants, together with some advice for trainers on how to deal with the situation when they suspect evidence given to them for submission may have been AI generated.
3. Made clear in a statement on the Participant Form itself.

Advice for trainers and consultants who suspect the use of AI in submission of evidence

It's a bit awkward as the trainer if you think you've caught someone in effect cheating.

Pragmatically – here are a couple of suggestions for you:

If you are suspicious, it might be effective to contact the learner and state

"Reading your application, it has some aspects which read as if it had been generated using AI. The Carbon Literacy Project uses software tools to detect the use of AI to protect the integrity of Carbon Literacy certification, and looking at the wording of your application I am worried that it may trigger these tools. If that's the case, it will be rejected without right of appeal. If you would like to revise any aspects of your application prior to me submitting it on your behalf, please return it by [date]. If I don't hear otherwise, I'll submit the current application on your behalf, as is, on [date]"

In this way, you are doing everything you can to maintain integrity (and send a message to your learner groups that use of AI in this way is quasi-cheating and unacceptable) but making no accusations. And whilst demonstrating your experience as a consultant, you are leaving the responsibility for action entirely with the learner...

Alternatively, you may wish to just duck, submit the learners evidence, and leave it up to the Project to accept or reject it - your call!