INQAAHE 2026

Harnessing GenAI for Transformative QA: Practical Integration and Impact

Forum Subtopic 3: Leveraging technology & AI to strengthen impactful QA

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Workshop Outline

- Building on INQAAHE 2025 (early AI pilot projects)
- Real world example and shared learning - integration of GenAI tools to enhance thematic analysis processes
- Format
  - Presentation – Case Study AI in Practice
  - Slido Poll
  - Round Table Discussion and Feedback

Why GenAI in QA?

- GenAI - reshaping education and all facets of life
- QA must be agile, forward-looking, and resilient
- Opportunity for QA agencies to lead change, not just respond
- Ensures QA remains relevant in a digitally transformed HE landscape
- GenAI – a new core competency in QA

*"Artificial intelligence is no longer just a frontier technology – it's a **pervasive force** shaping how we live, work and learn."*
— **World Economic Forum, 2025**

*"Subtopic 3: Leveraging technology and AI to **strengthen impactful quality assurance...**assess how technological advancements, including generative AI, can **improve QA practices**, enable data-driven decision-making, and **support agile responses** to educational innovation..."*   **- INQAAHE Forum 2026**

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Useful to recap:
What's changed since INQAAHE 2025?

❑ Most HEIs now have AI policies, with guidance for staff and students

❑ QA agencies are shifting slowly but surely, from experimentation to implementation

❑ Consensus emerging that AI supports – not substitutes – human expertise and judgement

❑ Clearer expectations at European Level – i.e. EU, ENQA – around transparency and guidance on responsible use of AI
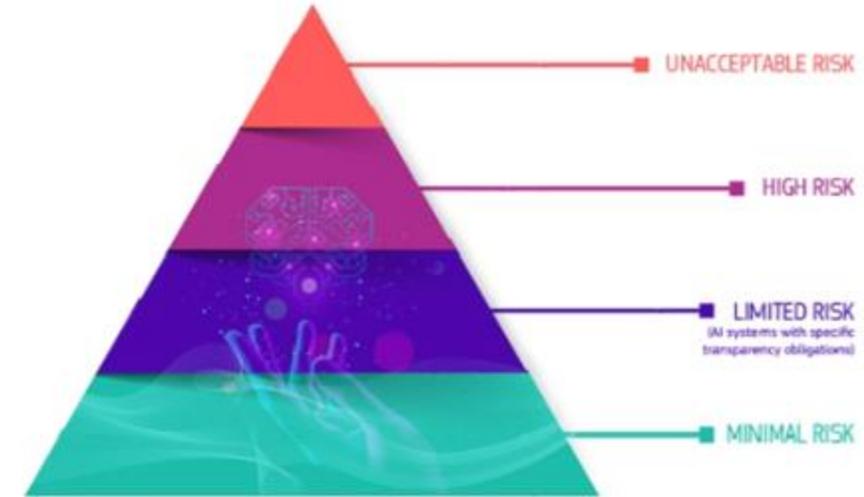
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European Context

- Europe
  - EU AI Act & Guidelines
  - Comprehensive legal framework
  - Harmonise rules on AI
  - Risk based approach
- European Association for QA in Higher Education (ENQA)
  - ENQA Guidelines for the Responsible Use of AI in External QA – Support responsible use of AI in EQA activities of QA agencies within EHEA
  - ENQA Internal Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence
  - Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews - ENQA Policy on the use of AI in ENQA Agency Reviews (p.49)

National & Strategic Context (Ireland)

❑ National and Public- Sector Policy
- AI strategy and guidelines
- Public sector principles AI: i.e. accountability, transparency, security, oversight

■ QQI Strategic commitment
- Use AI 'where appropriate' in system level (thematic) analysis
- Strengthen data-informed oversight and evidence-based QA practice
- Build organisational capability in AI
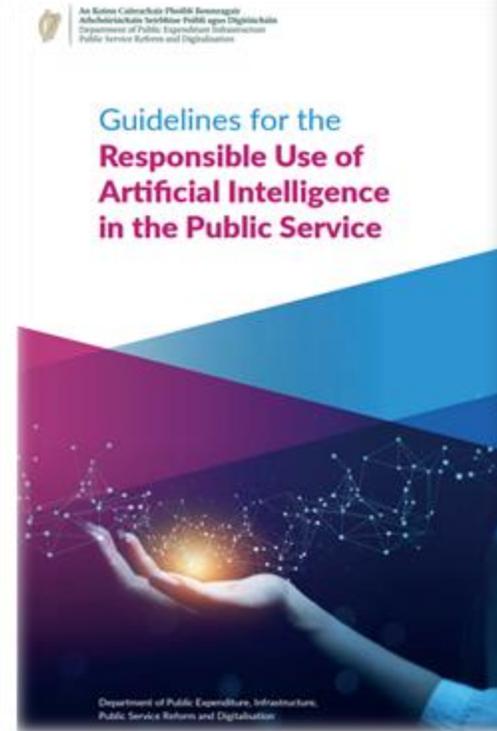
- Publications from the **Higher Education Authority (HEA)** – AI in Teaching and Learning

1. [Generative AI in Higher Education Teaching & Learning - Policy Framework. (The Higher Education Authority, Ireland)](#)

2. [Generative AI in Higher Education Teaching & Learning: Principles for Ethical AI Adoption](#)

Integration of GenAI in EQA Processes

☐ **AI Tools used:**

    ☐ **Microsoft Copilot (Licenced)**

    ☐ **MAXQDA Tailwind (Licenced**

to support the **Thematic Analysis** of 2025 Annual Quality Reports from HEIs

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QQI Internal approval process

- **Business Case**
- **New – AI specific criteria**

Annual Quality Reports(AQRs) and Synthesis Report Process

- AQRs submitted by all public and larger private HEIs
- QQI produces a sector-wide annual synthesis report
- Highlights trends, good practices, challenges; informs policy, supports enhancement
- Traditionally resource heavy and costly to produce
- GenAI - opportunity for efficiency and potentially deeper insights

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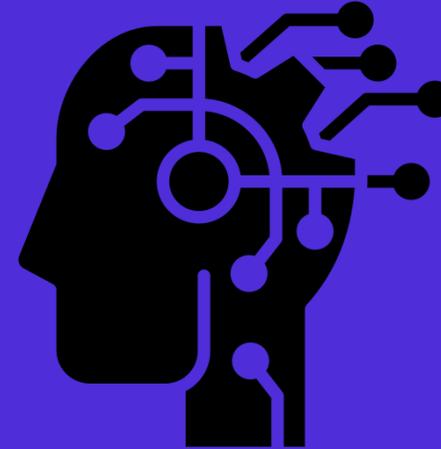Quality and
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Process Innovations with GenAI
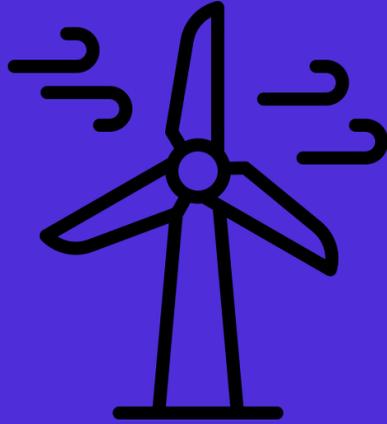
MAXQDA Tailwind (Licensed)

➢ **Coding and analysing annual quality reports**
➢ **Identifying key themes and trends**

Microsoft Copilot (Licensed)

➢ **Assist with writing and proofreading (Proof reader agent created)**

Process Overview

Input
- Annual Quality Reports from HEIs
- Uploaded to MAXQDA Tailwind

GenAI Tools
- MAXQDA Tailwind (Coding and theme extraction)
- Microsoft Copilot (Proofing, research, writing style)

Process
- Thematic analysis, cross-institutional theme identification
- Synthesis of main cross-cutting themes and topics arising
- Thematic map

Output
- Enhanced synthesis report
- Improved efficiency – shorter timeframe

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Summary

MAXQDA Tailwind

- Code and categorise qualitative data
- Identify cross cutting themes
- Extracting examples

Microsoft Copilot

- Quality Assurance Agent: refine thematic categories
- Researcher Agent: Identify institutional trends/contemporary topics in HE
- Proofreading Agent: Enhance clarity and consistency

Human Validity and Cross Checking

- All GenAI outputs were reviewed by QQI staff
- Validation of findings against original AQRs
- Ensures accuracy and reliability of thematic trends

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MAXQDA Tailwind

Setting up the project

Comparative Tables

Identifying Initial Core Topics

Chat function – can use for all or individual documents

M365 Copilot – My Agents

Copilot Agents

Researcher   Analyst   Quality Analysis As...   Writing and Proofr...

Built by Microsoft

Researcher
With Researcher, now every employee has access to...

Analyst
Perform complex data analysis over files in a varie...

Prompt Coach
Write and improve your prompts

Writing Coach
Take your writing to the next level with Writing Coach

Idea Coach
Plan and navigate the brainstorming process

Career Coach
Elevate your career with Career Coach

Learning Coach
Unlock your potential with Learning Coach

Surveys (Frontier)
Surveys agent automates survey creation, distributio...

Microsoft 365 Admin
Use AI to help you manage Microsoft 365.

Thematic Analysis Report

Insights and Lessons Learned

- Process efficiency – Time (shorter) and cost savings
- Positive impact on process (Quality Synthesis)
- Human oversight – does not replace the team
- Training, capacity building – GenAI for staff
- Rate and pace of change (enhancement GenAI tools)
- Security – managing data risks (IT support)
- Transparency in process
- Data protection/security
- Positive staff feedback

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Next Steps

- Embed GenAI into our annual synthesis report process *(Hoping to reducing timeframe for production and publication by approx. 5 months)*
- QQI policy and principles for use of GenAI – Finalised by March
- Plans for releasing licenced Microsoft Copilot for all agency staff
- Staff training to be rolled out
- Update our reviewer guidelines and briefings
- Explore GenAI tools in IQA and EQA processes with HEIs – Community of Practice idea?

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Round Table Discussions

Discussion
(15 Mins + 10 mins feedback)

Ideas Generation- Practical Applications of GenAI in QA

1) What potential applications of GenAI can be explored to further innovate QA processes in higher education?

2) What are some of the key challenges?

3) How could QA agencies and institutions work together in exploring application of GenAI in internal and external QA systems – If you can, give some practical suggestions.

Thank You!

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