

Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of qualifications

Situational Analysis Report

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Executive Summary

The Council of Europe's survey of 138 institutions shows that AI use in qualification recognition is limited and support-oriented, with strong human oversight and significant barriers. Most institutions prioritise AI for fraud detection, document verification, and translation; few pursue predictive analytics or automated comparability. Key blockers include data privacy and security concerns, unclear legal frameworks, limited technical expertise, funding constraints, and weak data readiness (quality, structure, governance). Risk assessments and ethical policies are inconsistent even among AI adopters, and transparency practices rely largely on human-in-the-loop rather than explainable systems.

The findings align with the Council's 2025 - 2027 Programme on AI and Recognition, which emphasises rights-based integration, multidisciplinary guidance, and capacity building. To move institutions from awareness to safe operational use without eroding human judgement, the Programme should prioritise

- Established guidelines in accordance with Lisbon standards
- HUDERIA-anchored risk evaluation, and model/data documentation
- Pilots in fraud detection and verification under strict monitoring, with shared pattern libraries and secure translation pipelines
- Role-based training and hands-on labs for evaluators, data stewards, and leaders
- Data readiness uplift and standardised templates, audit trails, and appeal routes

Success should be measured with predefined metrics throughput, accuracy, false positives/negatives, appeal reversals, and fairness indicators and disseminated via cross-centre best-practice briefs to ensure safe-to-scale adoption across ENIC-NARIC and HEIs.

Introduction and context

AI integration in qualification recognition offers both significant opportunities and challenges. Growing applicant numbers and diverse educational backgrounds demand efficient, accurate, and fair evaluations, requiring continuous adaptation of practices.

The Council of Europe launched the AI and Recognition Programme as part of the Council of Europe's education program and constitutes a direct follow-up to the EHEA Tirana Communiqué, approved in March 2025.

AI can support, not replace, professional judgement, helping streamline routine tasks, fight fraud, and improve consistency and accuracy in decisions.

However, these technologies raise concerns around ethics, transparency, data protection, bias, and AI literacy. To address these, a Working Group was formed to develop guidelines and a White Paper for responsible AI integration aligned with Council values.

To map current and future AI use in qualification recognition, identifying best practices and opportunities in this evolving area, the Council developed a survey.

Scope: The survey targeted ENIC-NARIC centres, higher education institutions (HEIs), national authorities, and related stakeholders across Europe and beyond.

Definitions:

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 may influence physical or virtual environments.

Use cases include document verification, data extraction or fraud detection.

Methodology & Limitations

The survey was designed and drafted by the working group and split into four main areas. The initial section, Respondent & Institutional Profile, outlined the respondent's background by detailing the type of institution, country of origin, primary professional role, and the level of education evaluated. Section two examined the current applications of AI, identifying the specific areas in which it is utilised, its primary role within the evaluation process, the types of AI and models employed, and its function in decision making, as well as levels of trust in AI-generated outputs. Additionally, this section assessed whether the adoption of AI tools has influenced the organization's Human Resource strategy. Section 3 looked at Planned Adoption & Barriers, whether the institution was planning AI implementation in the next 12-24 months, the main barriers to expansion and the levels of training on AI, digital and data literacy. Section 4 focused on Data, Ethics & Governance and asked respondents to evaluate their data readiness in terms of data structure, quality, security, privacy, and governance policies. This section also addressed ethical guidelines and concerns, transparency, human responsibility, and bias, as well as potential future applications.

The survey was disseminated online by the Council of Europe to CDEDU members and observers, who were requested to forward it to appropriate contacts involved in the recognition of qualifications. Additionally, it was sent to the heads of ENIC-NARIC centres through CIMEA. The survey remained open for a limited duration of two weeks in November, with some additional late responses received in December.

Instrument: A structured questionnaire consisting of 36 questions, including both closed and open-ended formats. The survey featured multiple-choice items as well as free-text response sections. For analysis, responses to 31 of these questions were utilised, as they contained relevant data.

Number of responses: 156 initial responses, majority from HEIs and ENIC-NARIC centers. 138 responses evaluated.

Cleaning:

- Country names were standardised
- responses from institutions that do not evaluate qualifications (country school inspectorates that assess only primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) were excluded, as they fall outside the scope of qualification recognition, so the analysis was done based on the answers provided by 138 participants

Respondent types:

- Higher education institutions
- ENIC-NARIC centres
- National recognition authorities
- Public bodies involved in credential evaluation

Analysis: Closed-ended responses were quantitatively aggregated, while open-ended comments underwent qualitative review. Aggregated survey data was visualised using Power BI to facilitate comprehensive analysis of emerging trends and patterns within the responses.

Challenges:

- Uneven representation across countries - The sample is dominated by Italy and Romania responses, so aggregate results may not reflect Europe or the world. Country-specific policies and infrastructure can significantly affect adoption and concern patterns. Where relevant, we cross-referenced the data by institution type to provide more nuanced insights before drawing policy recommendations.
- Several fields (e.g., planned implementations) are free text, which may result in over-counting due to simple string matching. For example, phrases such as “No, but...” or instances where “yes” is used contextually in a different clause can generate false positives. Wherever feasible, we have conducted manual cleaning or grouping.
- The survey experienced issues with routing and branching configuration. Several essential fields were not marked as required, meaning they went unanswered, and insufficient branching logic led to unintended responses for questions that should have been skipped. For example, respondents who do not use AI were instructed to proceed to question 14 but continued to answer questions. For analysis of these questions we filtered only on institutions that reported Yes to AI usage.

The survey followed ethical guidelines to protect the rights and privacy of the respondents. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, who were informed of the purpose of the survey and the voluntary nature of their participation. Respondent data was securely stored and accessed only by research team for analysis purposes.

Survey Results

Section 1 Respondent and Institutional Profile

Type of Institution

The majority of the 138 participants are from Higher Education Institutions (89). The second biggest group is made up of ENIC-NARIC Centres (33). National authorities with competence on recognition, such as specialised professional bodies and licencing authorities make up the smallest group (16).

Type of Institution	Count
Higher education institutions	89
ENIC-NARIC	33
National authorities with competence on recognition	16

Table 1 - Type of Institution

Count of Institution Type by Institution Type

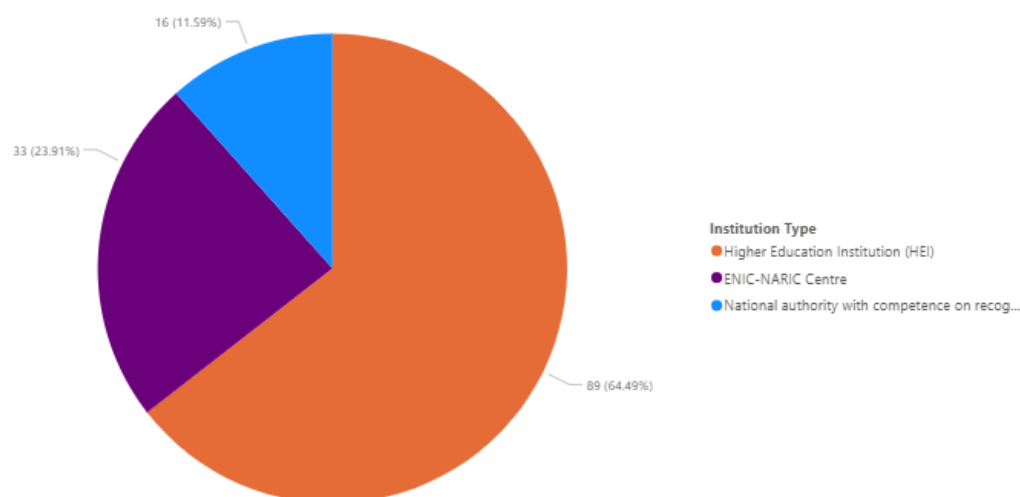


Figure 1 All - count of institution Types

Institution Country

The largest contributors to the survey are Romania and Italy, 33 respondents each. France follows closely with 20 respondents, while Portugal contributed 13 and Finland contributed 7. Ukraine and Moldova have 3 and 2 respondents respectively, and the Netherlands also had 2. The remaining countries had a single respondent each: Andorra, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

Country	Count
Italy	33
Romania	33
France	20
Portugal	13
Finland	7
Ukraine	3
Moldova, Republic of	2
Andorra	1
Belgium, Flanders	1
Canada	1
Croatia	1
Cyprus	1
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
Estonia	1
Georgia	1
Germany	1
Greece	1
Hungary	1
Iceland	1
Ireland	1
Israel	1
Latvia	1
Liechtenstein	1
Malta	1
Monaco	1
Netherlands	1
Norway	1
Poland	1
Serbia	1
Slovenia	1
Spain	1

Sweden	1
The Netherlands	1
Total	138

Table 2 - Institution Country

Primary role within the qualification recognition department

The profile of respondents shows a significant concentration of individuals coming from the decision and coordination area. The largest group includes 52 respondents who hold a leading and management position (Department Head/Director, Head of admission office, Head of educational management, Head of Quality assessment support office, Head of the Educational Offer Office, vice rector, prorector, dean of faculty). This distribution indicates that the data collected reflects the view of those who make administrative and academic decisions at systemic level.

Credential evaluators are the second largest category with 29 respondents, ensuring a substantial contribution to the survey from the specialists directly involved in the evaluation of qualifications.

The remaining participants come from various complementary roles: IT - 5 (IT/Technical Lead, AI trainer and lecturer) secretarial and administration staff, persons in charge with student admission, teachers. Although these categories are not directly involved in the recognition of qualifications, they play an important supportive role in integrating the emerging technologies.

Role	Count
Department Head/Director, Head of admission office, Head of educational management, Head of Quality assessment support office, Head of the Educational Offer Office	52
Credential evaluator	29
National authorities with competence on recognition	16
IT/Technical Lead	5
Vice-rector	3
University (Chief) Secretary	2
Vice-President	1
AI trainer and lecturer	1
Administrative Officer	1
Admission Office	1
Education Designer	1
International student support	1
Officer	1
Professor	1
Admissions Manager	1
Technical Analyst	1
technical evaluator	1
technical-administrative staff	1
University Registrar	1

Table 3 - Role of Respondent

Levels of education primarily assessed

The results indicate that most institutions mainly assess higher education qualifications. The degree's most frequently mentioned are Bachelor's – 110 times, and Master's, mentioned 107 times, which means that the two are often evaluated together. PhD evaluation was reported 60 times while general secondary/vocational secondary education with access to higher education 52 times and it was usually mentioned alongside bachelor's and master's degrees. The lowest reporting was registered for short cycle 42 times.

What levels of education do you primarily assess? (Select all that apply)

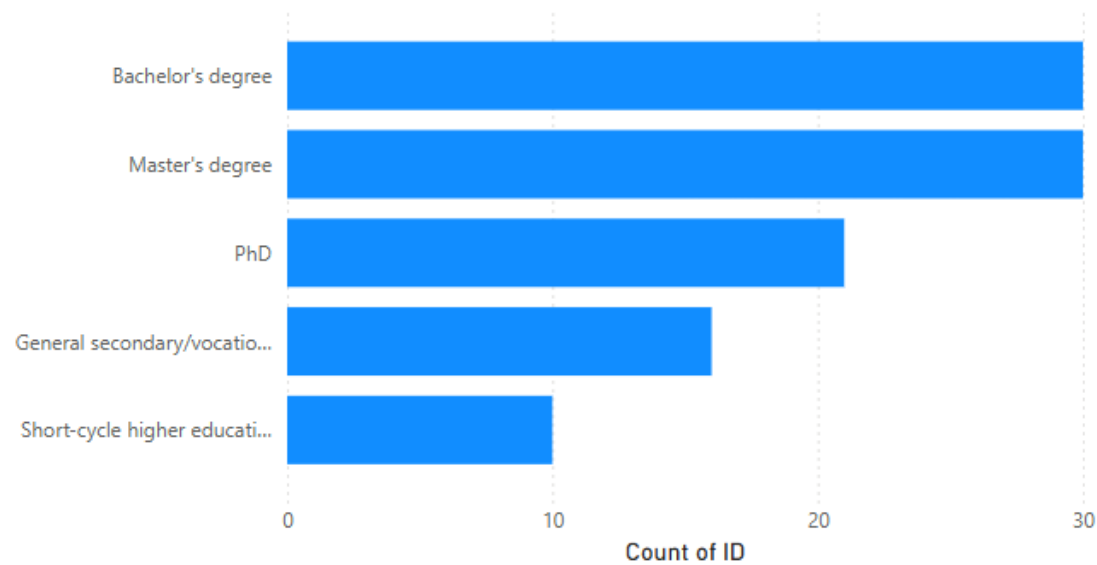


Figure 2 - All - count of levels of education assessed

Section 2 Current State of AI Adoption

Maturity Mapping

The Gartner AI Maturity model provides a structured framework for understanding how organisations progress in their adoption and integration of artificial intelligence technologies. By categorising development into distinct stages, the model enables stakeholders to assess current capabilities, identify gaps, and plan targeted strategies for advancement. Its application can support benchmarking, guide investment decisions, and inform policy development, helping institutions unlock the transformative potential of AI while mitigating associated risks.

Applying this model to this situational analysis enables the working group to systematically map existing AI applications, identify targeted actions for supporting institutions through the model's levels, and update or re-evaluate these mappings in the future to demonstrate progress.

This mapping indicates that AI adoption remains at an early stage across EU recognition systems.

The Gartner AI Maturity Model includes five levels:

- Awareness - Initial exploration of AI concepts, AI is understood but not operational
- Active - Piloting AI tools in low-risk supportive functions
- Operational - AI integrated into business processes
- Systemic - AI embedded across the organisation
- Transformational - AI drives innovation and strategic advantage

Mapping of the survey results against these levels.

- **Level 1 (Awareness):** 73% (No AI use in recognition)
- **Level 2 (Active):** 15% (Pilots/experiments)
- **Level 3 (Operational):** 10% (Decision-support, not automation)
- **Level 4 (Systemic):** 2% (multi-area use, strong governance)
- **Level 5 (Transformational):** 0%

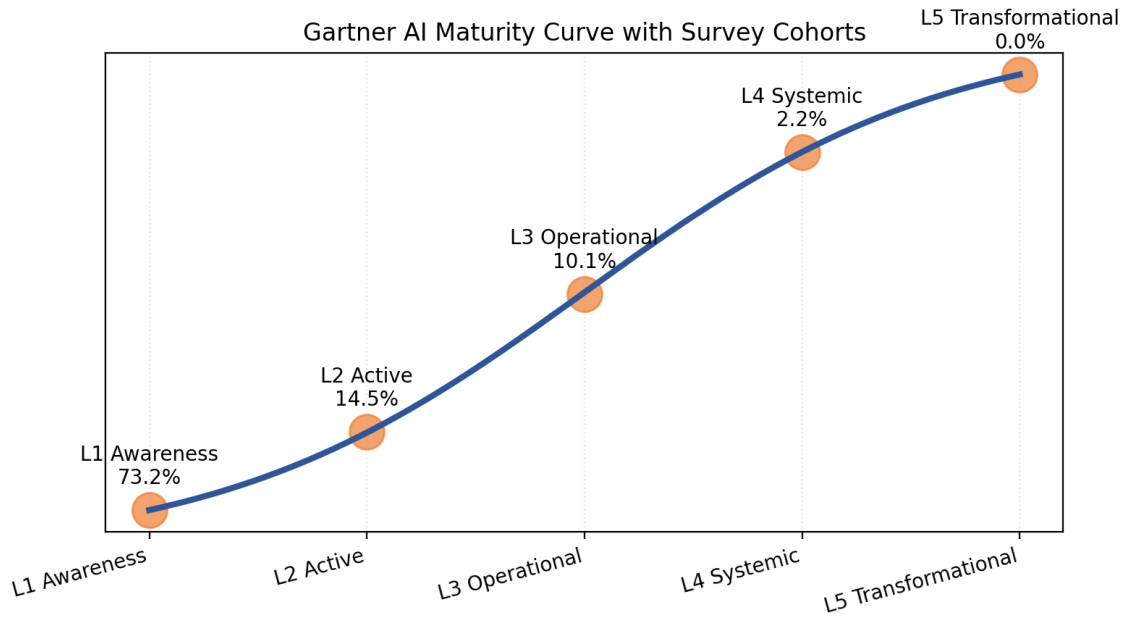


Figure 3 - Survey mapping on Gartner AI Maturity Curve

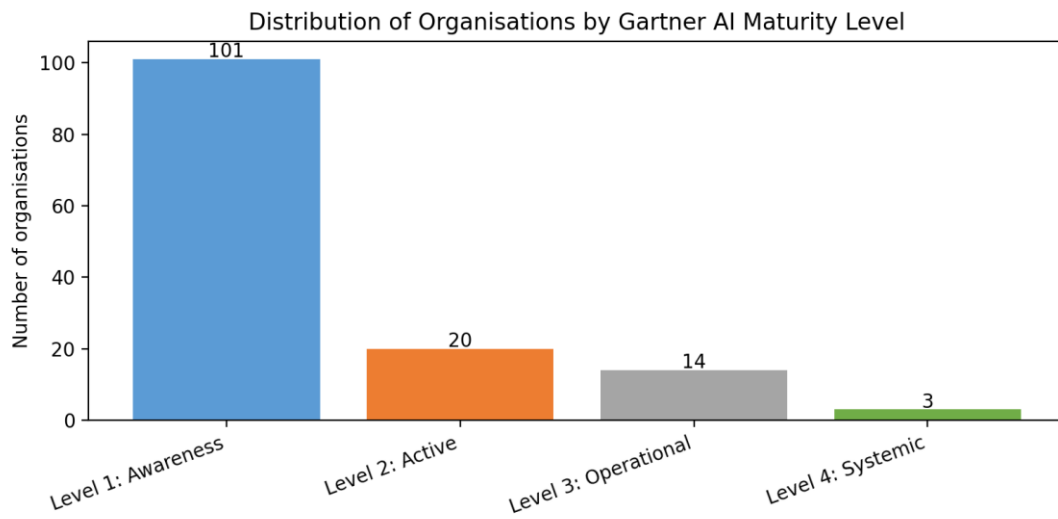


Figure 4 - All - Count of Institution on Gartner AI Maturity Level

Current use of AI in the in the evaluation of qualifications

The answers reveal that AI usage in evaluating qualifications is limited at present. 101 participants indicated they do not use AI at all, which may suggest a cautious approach or an early stage in digitalization.

A relatively small number of participants, 20, indicated they are experimenting with AI, which shows an emerging interest in exploring the potential of this technology without systematically integrating it in qualification evaluation.

Only 17 participants reported using AI in the evaluation process.

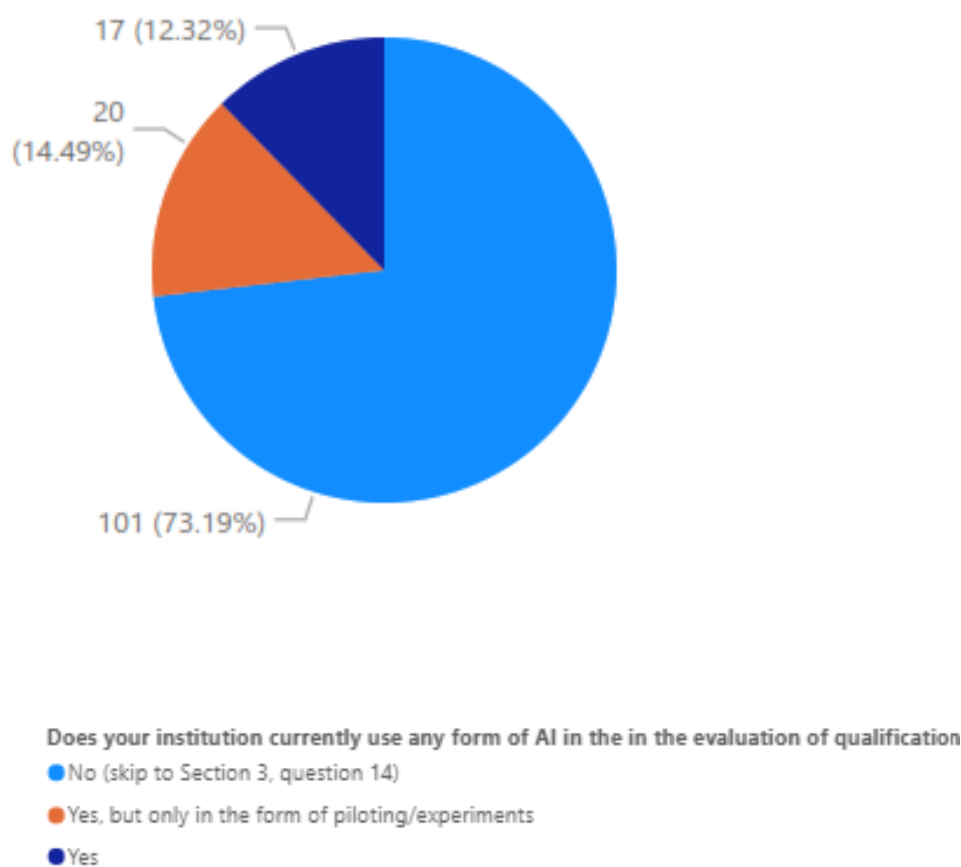


Figure 5 - All - Use of AI

Note: all further questions in this section *Current AI Usage* are filtered by respondents that chose Yes or Yes, but only in the form of piloting/experiments

Areas of AI current usage

The data show that the use of AI is mainly centred more on support for operational and administrative activities rather than on decision-making in qualification recognition. The most frequently selected item was automated translation, 25, reflecting the constant need for fast processing of multilingual documents.

A second group of 16 consists of applications that assist with verification and validation of information, Credential Evaluation Assistance (e.g. suggesting equivalencies/comparability), 15, Checking the status/accreditation of an educational institution/higher education institution, 15, Document Verification (e.g. fraud detection), 15, Data extraction from documents, 14, Checking accreditation of an educational program, 13. Applications for interacting with users, such as chatbot or virtual assistant was selected 10 times. AI used for detailed analysis of document content was selected 9 times.

Adoption of AI for Case Assignment/Workflow Management is very limited, only 2 responses, which suggests that most institutional activities are still managed through traditional or manual processes.

More advanced and strategic uses, such as *Predictive Analytics (e.g., identifying potential challenges in verification)* are almost absent, with only 1 answer, confirming the low level of AI adoption in qualification recognition.

There are isolated mentions regarding the use of AI for *Text editing, text improvement, 1, Information search/ text adjustments/ transcription of Cyrillic letters/ draft replies for standard queries, 1, Creating a database of evaluated qualifications in our institution, 1, In communication with applicants, HEI and employers, 1, Coding 1*. Their reduced frequency indicates personal initiatives or experimenting rather than institutional practices.

AI application in these areas suggests it is mainly perceived as an aiding tool to increase efficiency and reduce administrative tasks, rather than process automation or as a substitute for human judgement.

In which areas is AI currently used?

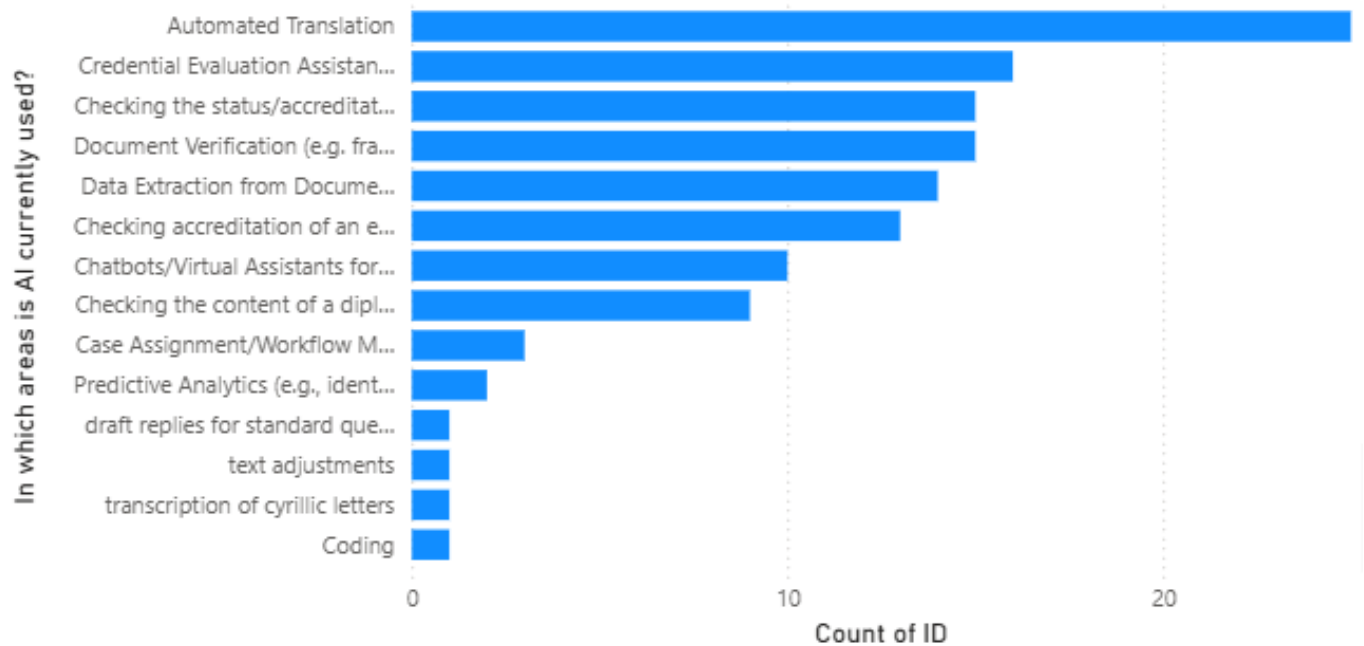


Figure 6 - AI Yes - areas AI is currently used

In which areas is AI currently used?	Count
Automated Translation	25
Credential Evaluation Assistance (e.g. suggesting equivalencies/comparability)	16
Checking the status/accreditation of an educational institution/higher education institution	15
Document Verification (e.g. fraud detection)	15
Data Extraction from Documents	14
Checking accreditation of an educational program	13
Chatbots/Virtual Assistants for Enquiries	10
Checking the content of a diploma/certificate (template, document security elements, name/surname of the issuing authority official, etc.)	9
Case Assignment/Workflow Management	3
Predictive Analytics (e.g., identifying potential challenges in verification)	2
Draft replies for standard queries	1
Text adjustments	1
Transcription of cyrillic letters	1
Coding	1
Creating a database of evaluated qualifications in our institution	1
In communication with applicants, HEI and employers	1
Information search	1
Text editing, text improvement	1

Table 4 - AI Yes - Areas AI is currently used

Main purposes AI is applied in evaluation processes

The answers to this question align with previous findings, that AI is used primarily to increase efficiency of administrative processes. The most frequently selected item was *Speeding up administrative processing*, 30.

The second group is made up of items regarding the quality of the evaluation process. *Improving accuracy*, selected 19 times, and *Improving consistency*, selected 18 times, point AI is perceived as an aiding instrument for standardising and reducing errors, without replacing human expertise.

Another relevant use is *Detecting fake documents*, selected 15 times, showing interest of institutions to use AI in ensuring the data submitted by applicants is reliable.

Reducing costs was chosen by 5 participants, which may indicate that obstacles to using AI are not financial, but of an operational and qualitative nature.

AI for specific purposes such as *To double check any doubt* and *Searching information sources (including difficult to access in languages we do not understand)*, each selected once is rare and again, may indicate individual or experimental usage.

What are the main purposes for which AI is applied in your evaluation process? (Select all that apply)

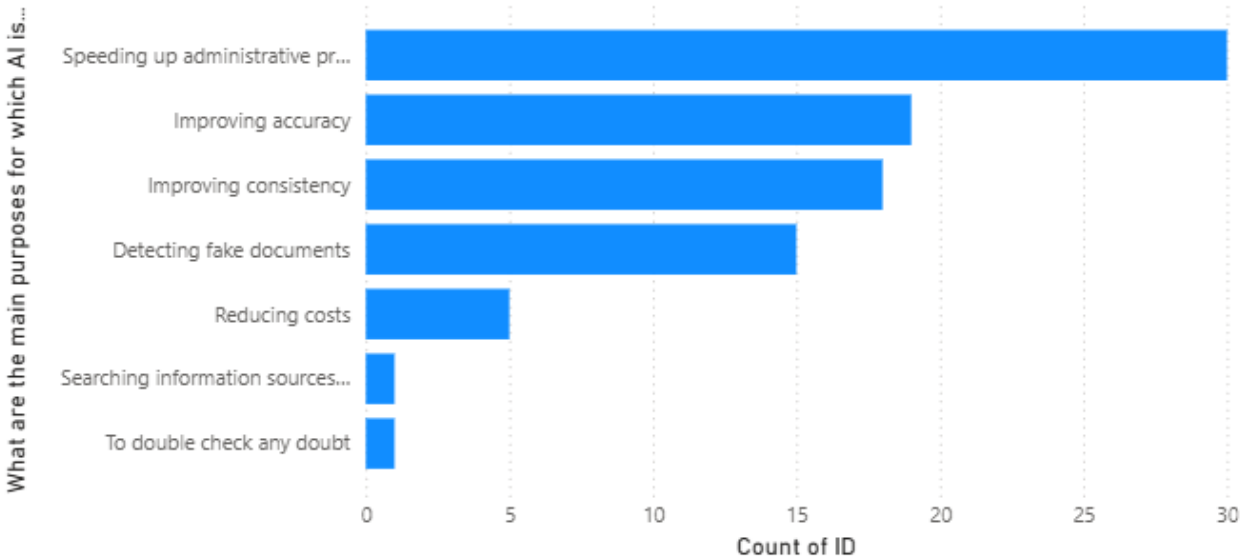


Figure 7 - AI Yes - main use of AI in evaluation process

What are the main purposes for which AI is applied in your evaluation process? (Select all that apply)	Count
Speeding up administrative processing	30
Improving accuracy	19
Improving consistency	18
Detecting fake documents	15
Reducing costs	5
Searching information sources (including difficult to access in languages we do not understand)	1
To double check any doubt	1

Table 5 - AI Yes - Main purpose of AI

Tools in use

Most of the respondents indicated their institutions make use of generative AI, 27 revealed a preference for tools able to aid in activities such as text editing, translations, summaries or extracting information.

Predictive AI was chosen by 7 respondents, indicating that tools for prognosis or advanced analysis in qualification analysis is limited, probably due to the complexity of their implementation or data volume necessary to function properly.

2 participants reported using both types of AI, which confirms that AI integration is at an early stage.

Which AI tools does your organisation use?

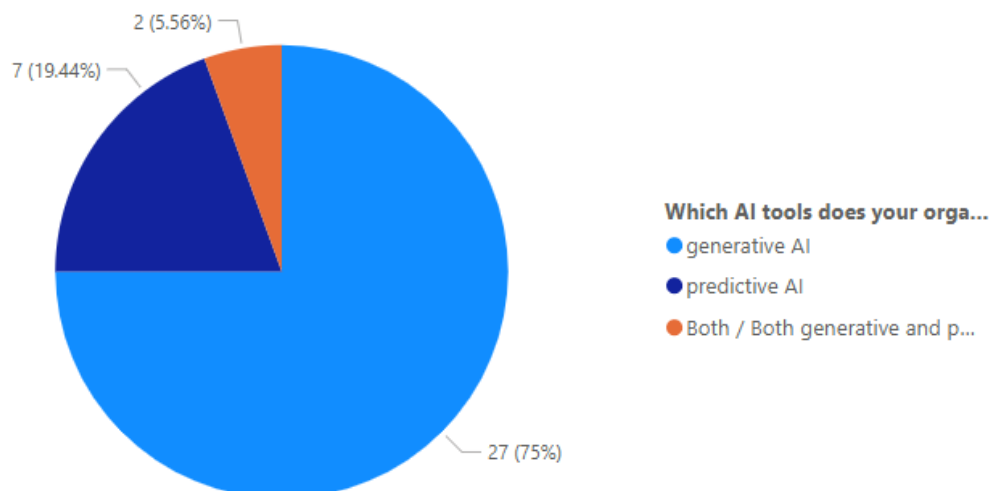


Figure 8 - AI Yes - AI tool in use

AI Models Deployed

Most respondents deploy AI models through *external services*. 24 indicated their institutions choose applications already available on the market because they are easy to access and implement, do not demand advanced technical resources and are easy to maintain.

11 respondents mentioned using *local servers*, which allows for a higher degree of control over data and infrastructure, but also requires greater technical and financial resources.

Your organisation deploys AI models, training and inference data by Your organisation deploys AI models, training and inference data

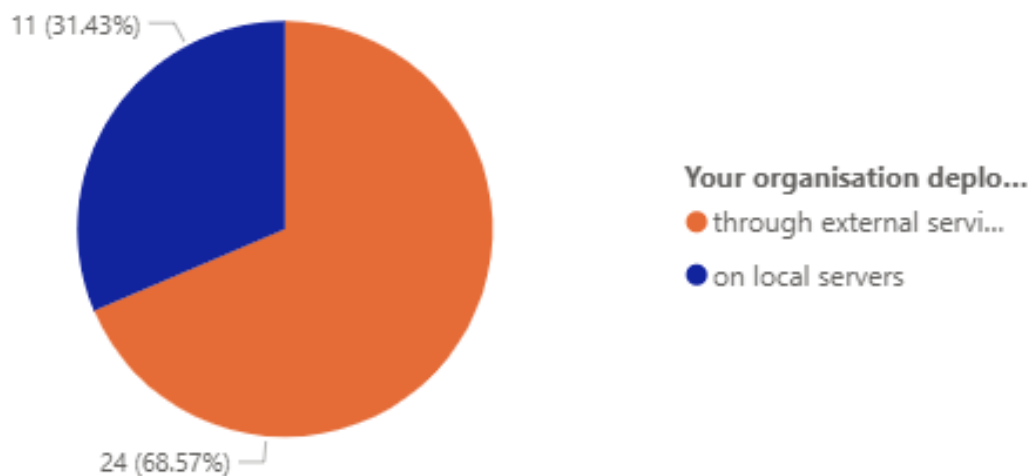


Figure 9 - AI Yes - AI Model deployment

AI Outputs Use in Decision Making Process

The data confirms previous findings that qualification recognition is primarily the responsibility of human evaluators. Almost all respondents, 34 of 37 using AI, reported that AI plays a supportive role in the decision-making process, without replacing experts' judgement. One respondent indicated using AI exclusively for administrative processing, while another confirmed AI is seen as an aiding tool.

How are AI outputs used in decision-making? (If both are used, please specify under Other)

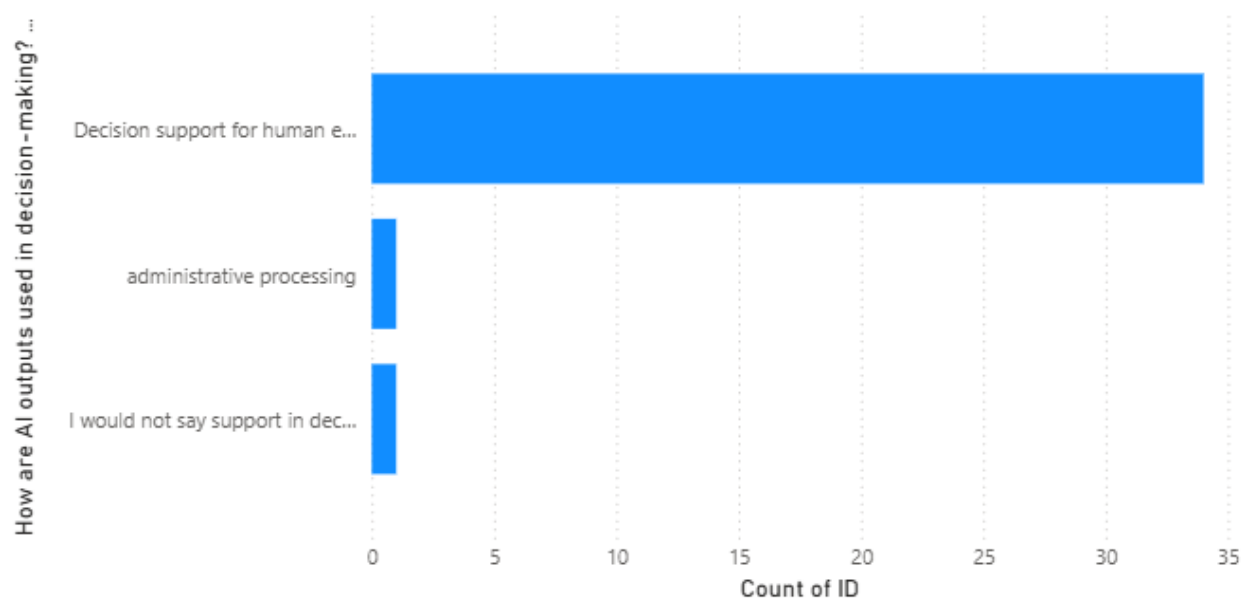


Figure 10 - AI Yes - AI Outputs used in decision-making

Trust in results of AI in use in institutions

Institutions are cautious in using AI, most participants, 25, reported AI is used exclusively as a supplementary resource, indicating that AI outputs are not decisive but only guide in the evaluation process.

6 participants reported a balanced level of trust, 50%/50%, indicating that AI outputs are considered comparable to human evaluation. The final 6 respondents expressed more trust in AI results, suggesting higher acceptance of AI's usefulness.

This data further evidences the use of AI for supplementary application, rather than for assessing qualifications directly.

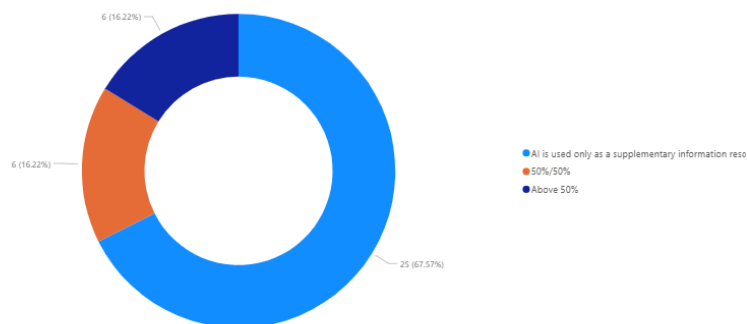


Figure 11 - AI Yes - Trust in AI Outputs

Regions/countries where educational documents most often used with AI in the process of credential evaluation

The results show AI is mainly used to assess qualifications from non-European countries, helping evaluate documents that are harder to review due to language barriers or limited access to official sources.

A participant mentioned explicitly that AI is not used for comparability decisions, but only as support in the generation of useful materials, and in organising the available material. Another reported using AI to efficiently locate specific information across many official resources, while one participant noted that their institution is involved in pilot project for which they selected countries who display standardized documents.

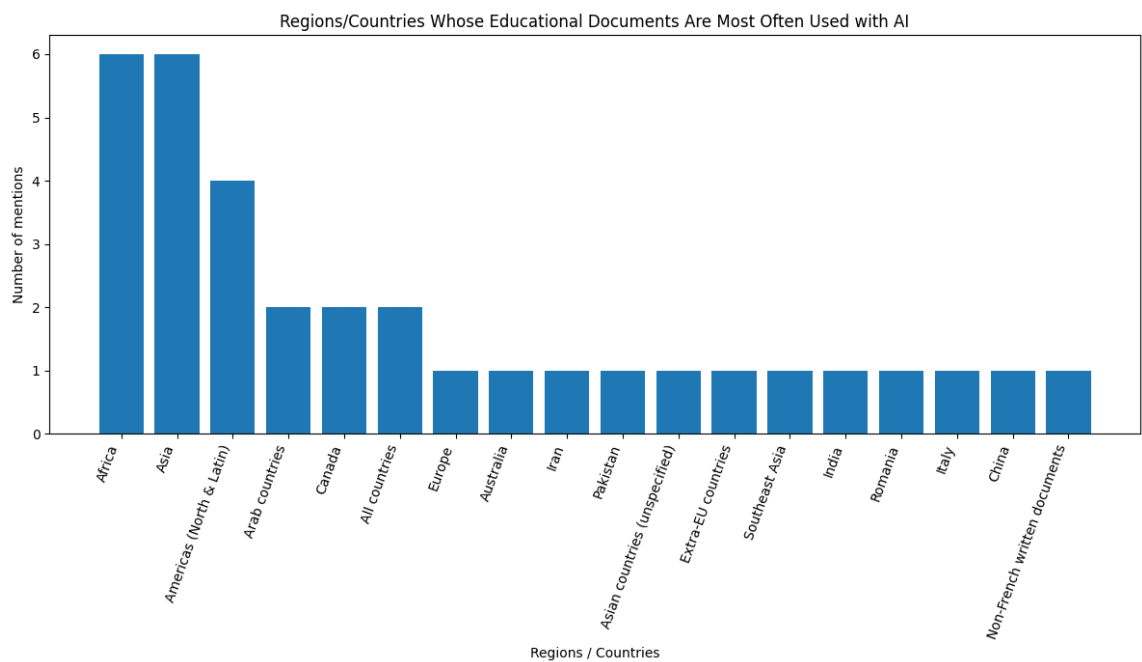


Figure 12 - AI Yes - Regional Documents where AI used

Types of Credential Authentication Utilising AI Tools

With 18 responses, AI is mostly used to authenticate *Diplomas or Certificates - transcript of records*. *Diploma supplements* are reported by 17 respondents to be verified as well with the aid of AI. Other documents are sporadically mentioned, one respondent indicated secondary school grade reports, while another mentioned using AI for any document provided by the applicant. Another clearly stated not using AI for authenticity only to research the legal framework.

For what kind of credentials authentication do you use AI tools? (Select all that apply)

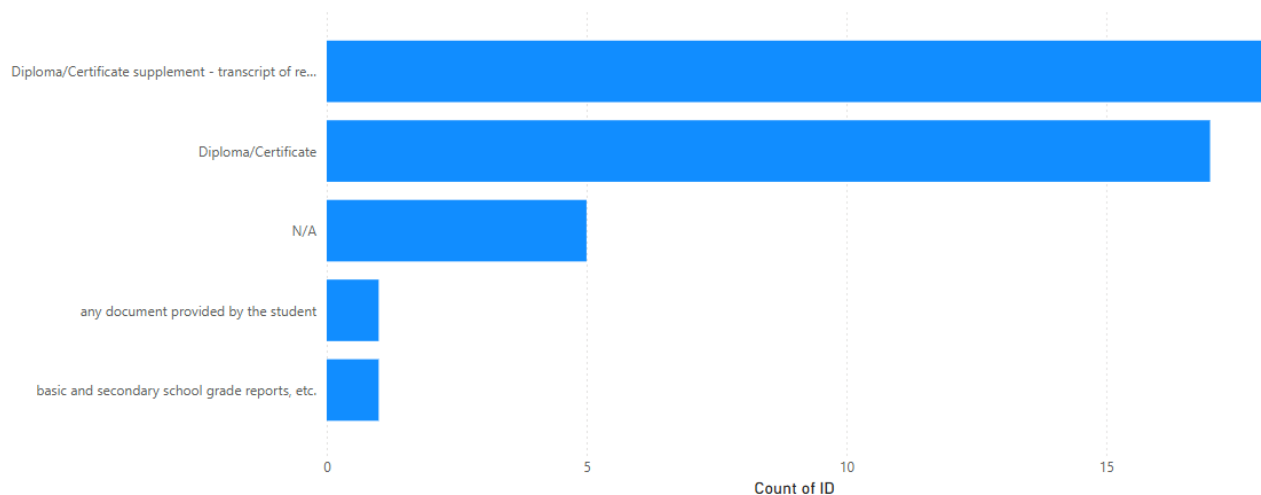


Figure 13 - AI Yes - for what kind of credential authentication do you use AI

What kind of credentials authentication do you use AI tools?	Count
Diploma/Certificate	18
Diploma/Certificate supplement - transcript of records	17
We still do not use it for that purpose / none / not in use for credential authentication	5
Secondary school grade reports, etc	1
or any document provided by the student	1

Table 6 - AI Yes - Kind of credentials authentication do you use AI tools

Effect of AI tools on Human Resources Strategy

Most respondents, 19, reported that the introduction of AI tools had no significant impact on the human resources strategy, while one respondent indicated a partial impact due to a small project.

Two respondents confirmed their Human Resources Strategy has been affected. An example of AI impact on human resources was provided by one participant, CIMEA. In this case, AI is not perceived as a substitute of human expertise but integrated in a human-in-the-loop and quality-by-design setting. This approach gradually redefined the professional profiles in the qualification

recognition area, shifting the focus to strengthening staff abilities through acquiring new competencies, particularly in AI literacy, data awareness and the ability to critically supervise automated outputs, establishment of dedicated structures to support change management, responsible innovation and informed AI adoption.

Overall, AI is tested experimentally with limited or no impact on the roles of the personnel involved in qualification recognition.

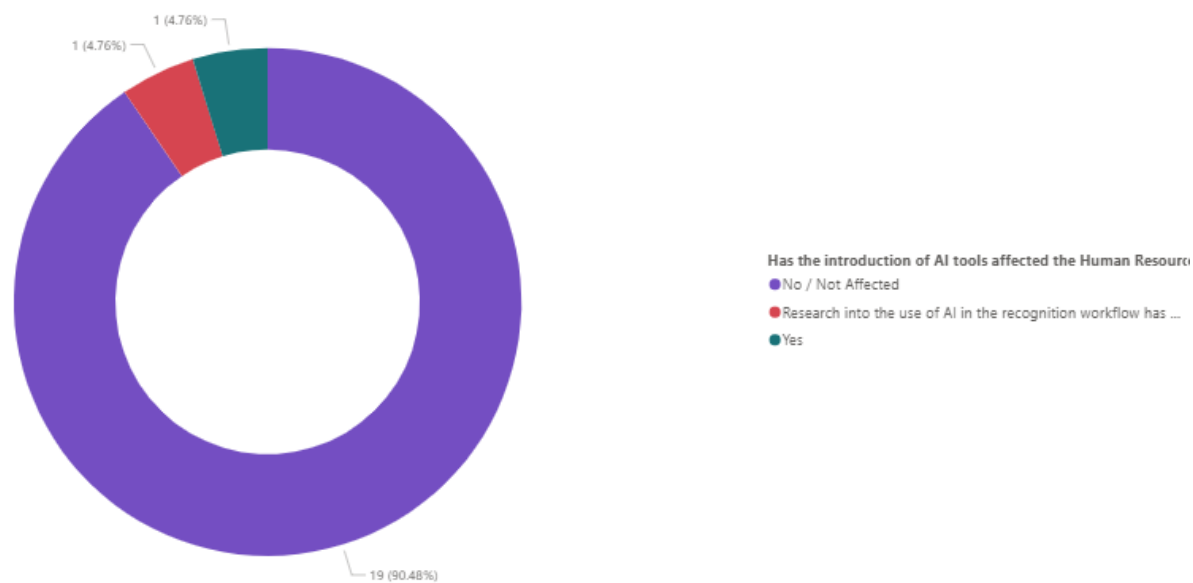


Figure 14 - AI - Effect on Human Resource Strategy

Section 3 Planned adoption and Barriers

Planned implementation of New AI Tools in Qualifications Recognition Processes in the next 12-24 months

58 participants *Don't Know* about their institutions' intention to implement AI tools within the next 12-24 months which could indicate a limited awareness of future institutional initiatives. 11 of the 58 participants who selected the *Don't know* hold a decision-making position. This may indicate AI adoption has either not yet been discussed at a strategic level or that there is a lack of strategic clarity on this topic.

At the same time, 40 respondents confirmed their institutions plan to implement AI in the period indicated, which points to moving gradually from an Awareness (Level 1) to Active (Level 2) use of AI stage.

A further 38 participants reported no intention to implement AI soon. Their position may reflect their concern regarding lack of transparency, potential bias and security of data as it results from the responses to a later survey question addressing this issue.

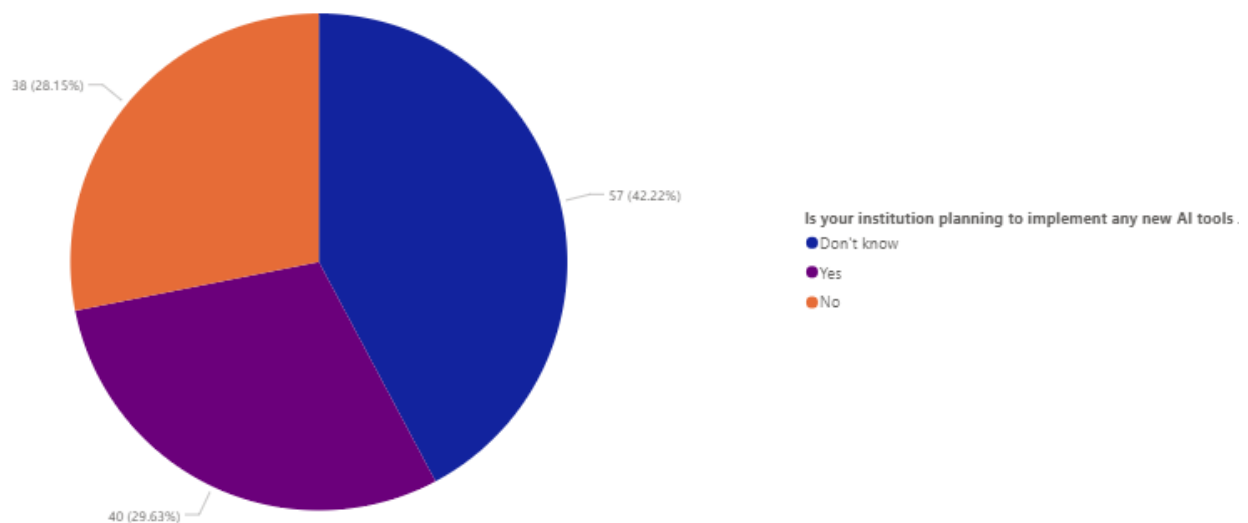


Figure 15 - All - Plan to implement new AI tools

Key Barriers to AI Adoption or Expansion in Organisations

All participants were asked this question, meaning that those both with and without AI in place were reviewed collectively.

The most frequently mentioned obstacles to the adoption of AI are *Concerns about Data Privacy Security*, with 67 respondents. This confirms the high level of sensitivity of the documents involved in the recognition process and it may be a reason why institutions remain cautious towards AI solutions which are perceived as insufficiently transparent or secure.

The second largest group concerns obstacles related to *Lack of Clear Legal Framework/Guidelines* and *Lack of Technical Expertise*, each cited 59 times, showing that many institutions, beyond lacking guidance, may also lack internal competencies necessary to evaluate, implement and use AI responsibly.

Another important factor is the *Lack of Funding*, reported 49 times. Adopting AI requires investment, maintenance costs, staff training and the adaptation of internal procedures, which can be particularly challenging for institutions with limited budgets.

Unsure of Potential Benefits was chosen by 35 participants suggesting, in the absence of clear proof of added value, many intuitions choose to postpone adopting AI.

Issues regarding Data Quality/Accessibility was nominated by 32 participants. The data introduced influence directly AI outputs which limits the efficient use of AI tools.

Resistance to change in organization, although selected less by 22 participants, indicates how people/human resources and institutional culture can influence directly the success or failure of implementing AI.

17 participants did not select any item, while 5 indicated they do not know or that they are not informed, suggesting an uneven level of information and a limited awareness of the potential use of AI in qualification recognition.

6 participants provided qualitative answers indicating that, beyond the general obstacles identified above, there are contextual and sector-specific actors that limit the use of AI in some institutions such as:

- reduced workload which does not justify investing in AI,
- the decision-makers of the institution to not understand the complexity of the qualification evaluation process, which leads to a sporadic and unstructured use of AI,
- personal juridical responsibility requires human judgement to be maintained, while AI is used only as an aiding tool and its outputs must be validated by human experts,
- lack of time and resources
- strict legal framework globally harmonized in various fields requires human oversight.

If your organisation is currently not using AI or planning to expand it, what are the main barriers?(Select all that apply)

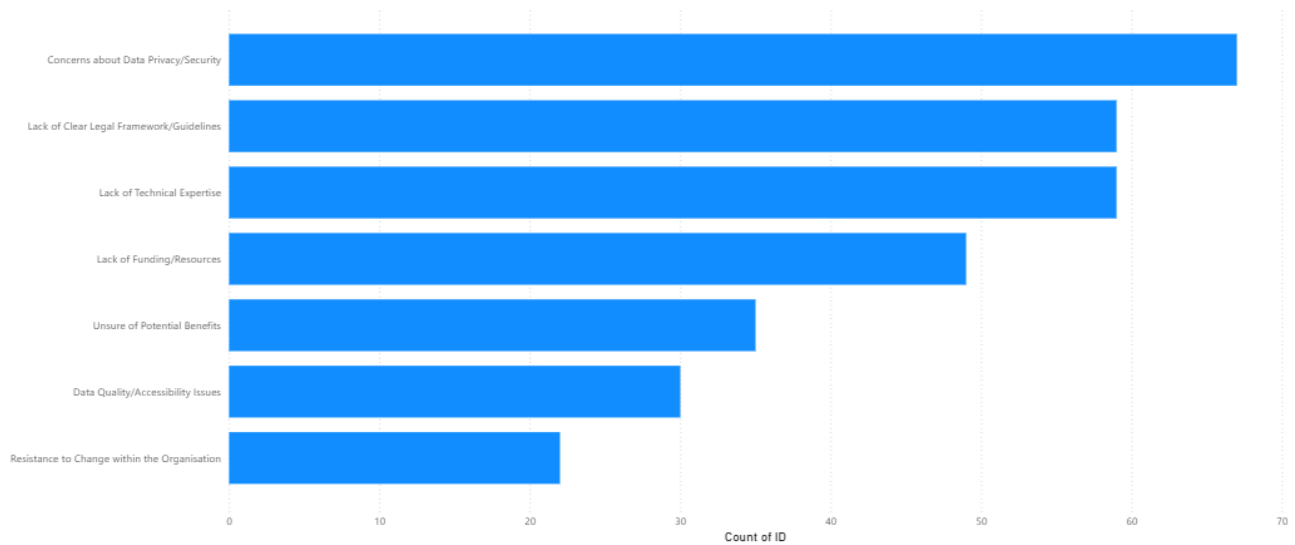


Figure 16 - All - Main barriers

Aswell as reviewing wholistically we also filtered on institutes that **do not have AI in place** and **do not have plans in the next 12-24 months**. From these finding in the figure below we can see barriers and concerns very much reflect the group as a whole.

If your organisation is currently not using AI or planning to expand it, what are the main barriers?(Select all that apply)

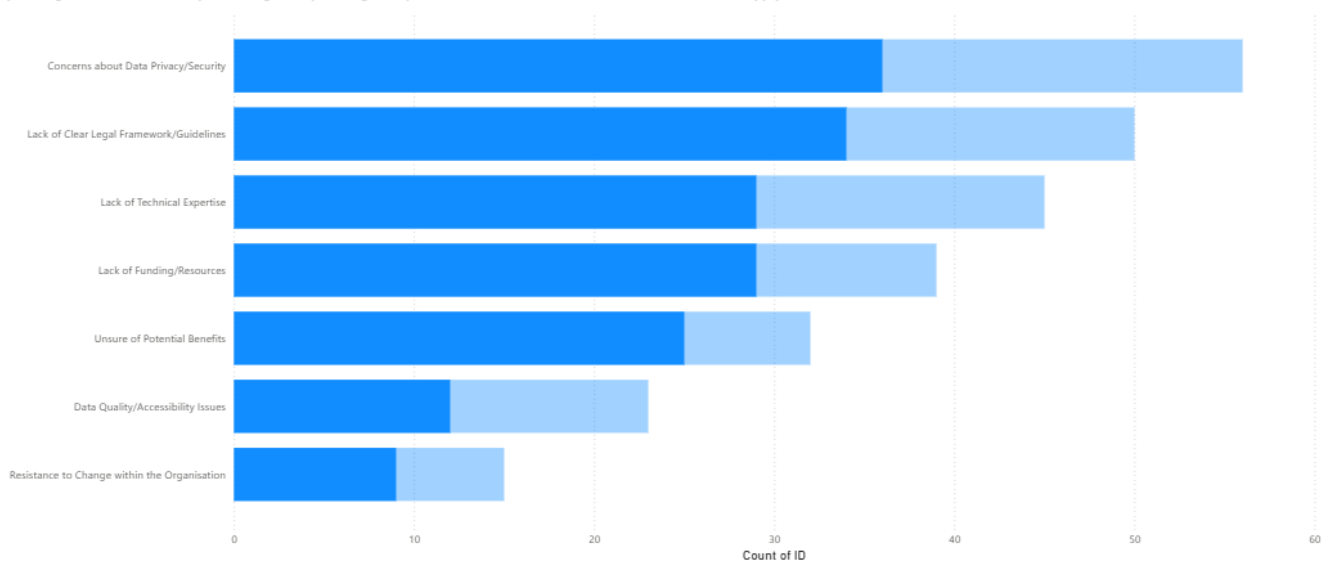


Figure 17 - No AI - No AI planned barriers

We also looked at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) versus ENIC-NARIC centres that **do not have AI in place** and **do not have plans in the next 12-24 months**.

The significant difference is the Lack of Clear Legal Framework/Guidelines trumps barriers in HEI’s but is a much lower concern in the ENIC-NARIC centres. This finding suggests that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are particularly concerned about the absence of clear legal frameworks or guidelines when it comes to implementing AI, which acts as a major barrier to adoption. In contrast, ENIC-NARIC centres seem less affected by this issue, perhaps due to their existing processes, regulatory environment, or greater familiarity with navigating complex legal contexts. The difference points to an opportunity for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

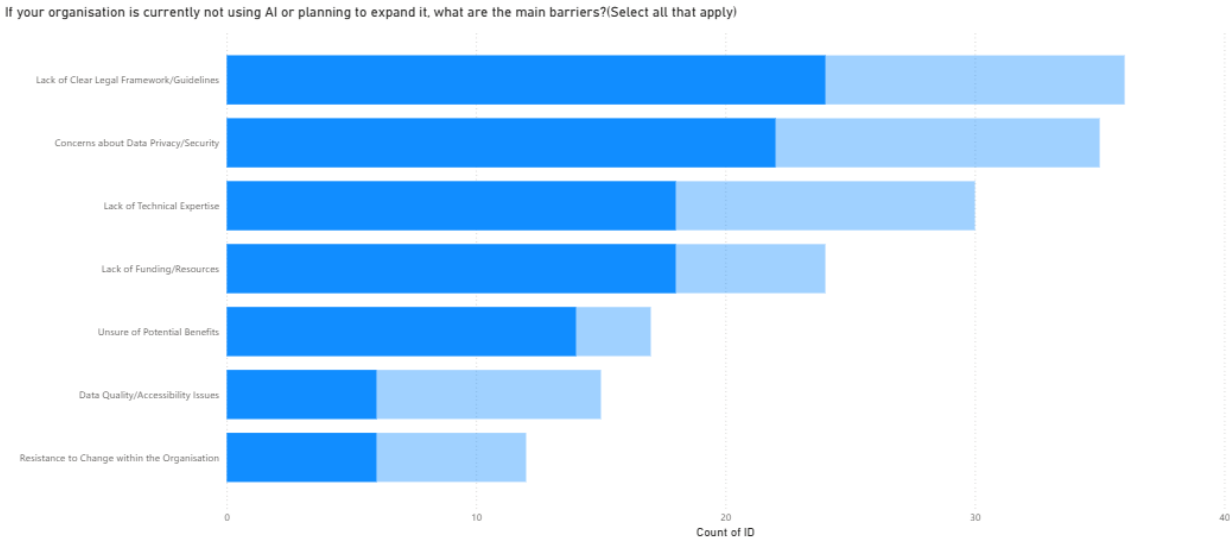


Figure 18 - Higher Education barriers to AI adoption

If your organisation is currently not using AI or planning to expand it, what are the main barriers?(Select all that apply)

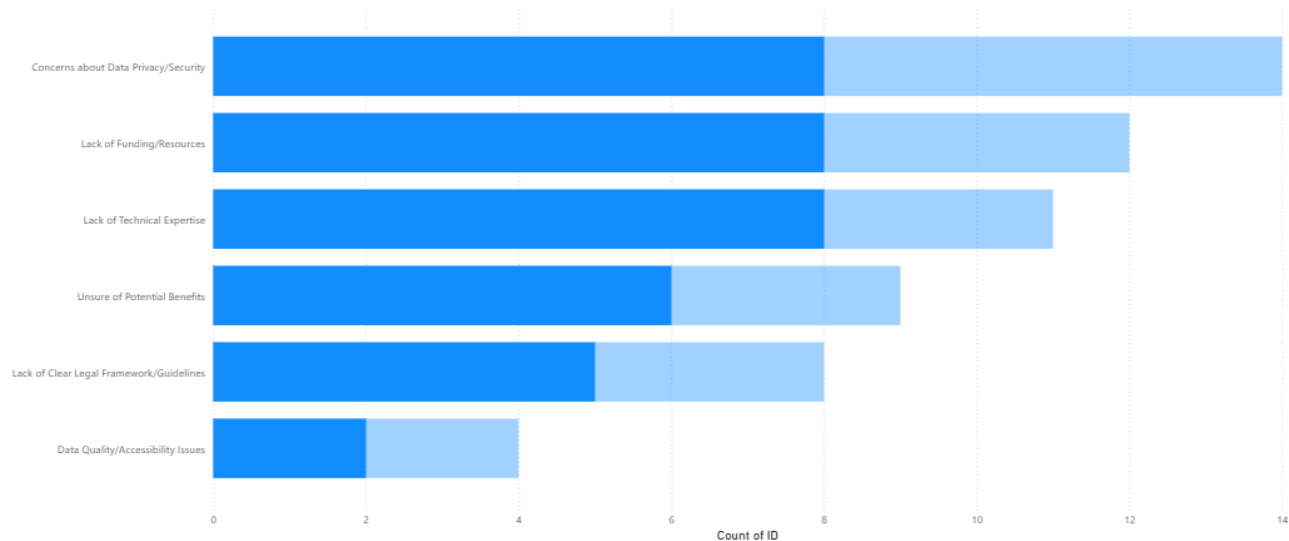


Figure 19 - ENIC-NARIC barriers to AI adoption

We then looked at institutions that **have AI in place** but have **no plans to expand** in the next 12-24 months we see that *Lack of Technical Expertise* and *Concerns on Data Privacy / Security* come out on top. This indicates that, despite early adoption, these institutions lack the internal skills or external support needed to scale their AI initiatives to a more impactful level. Additionally, ongoing worries about data privacy and security compliance likely make decision-makers hesitant to progress further.

These barriers are preventing institutions from realising the full benefits of AI, leaving them stuck in a trial stage rather than integrating AI into core operations or adopting it systemically across the organisation.

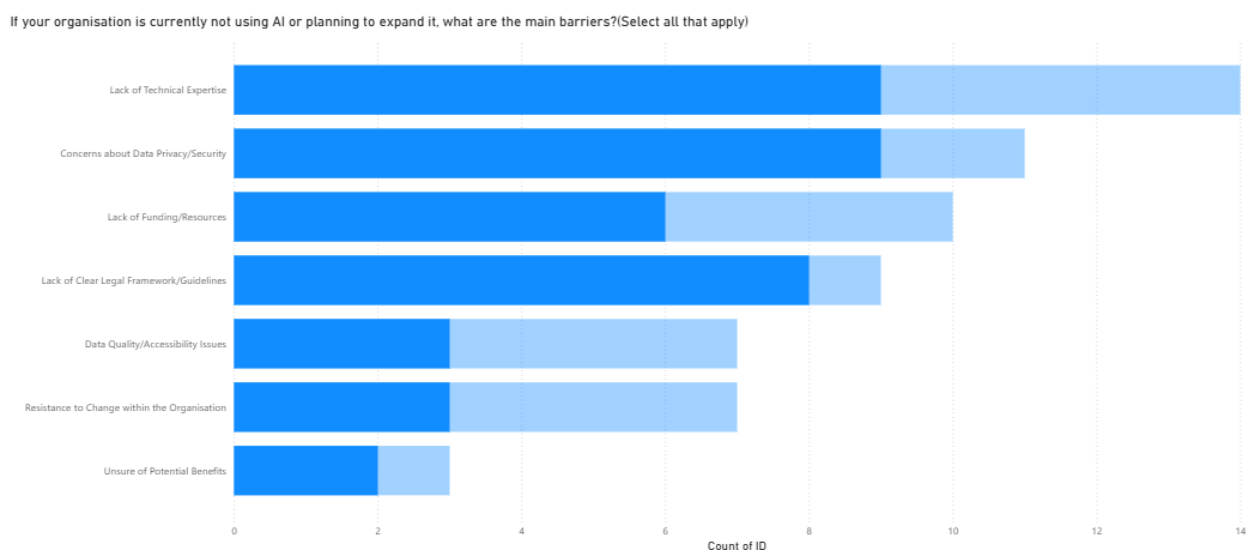


Figure 20 - AI Yes - barriers to expansion

The working group may use this information to help address these concerns, through Key Deliverable **2 Development of Guidelines and Tools** looking at opportunities and risks in credential recognition and developing a code of practice tailored to AI-enhanced credential evaluation and **3 Creation of a self-learning online module for credential evaluators & Workshops and seminars on integrating AI in recognition workflows** with targeted upskilling, clearer guidance, and robust data security measure may be key to helping institutions advance beyond the pilot phases.

Training on AI literacy, digital literacy or data literacy

There is an almost even split between participants who have received AI training and those who have not. With 68 individuals reporting that their organisation provided them with AI literacy training, this indicates raised awareness of the importance of personnel having digital competencies and taking concrete action to strengthen their skills in working with emerging technologies.

This result could also reflect that certain organisations are more proactive or better resourced, enabling them to prioritise AI literacy. It might indicate that these institutions recognise AI as a strategic priority, perhaps due to external pressures, regulatory expectations, or internal champions driving digital transformation. Additionally, it could suggest that staff in these organisations have greater access to professional development opportunities, which may lead to higher engagement, innovation, and readiness for future changes.

On the other hand, 57 participants reported not being offered such training, which may suggest the institutions are either cautious, or not aware of the potential of AI, or have no intention to adopt it. Alternatively, the absence of AI literacy training might also be due to other factors, such as a lack of leadership support, insufficient funding, or competing priorities within the organisation. It may reflect uncertainty about the relevance of AI to their specific context, or concerns about the risks and ethical implications of adopting new technologies.

Finally, it is possible that some institutions are waiting for clearer legal frameworks or sector-wide best practices before investing in AI training, especially in environments where regulatory compliance is a significant concern.

This represents an opportunity for the working group to support institutes with **Key Deliverable 3** *Creation of a self-learning online module for credential evaluators & Workshops and seminars on integrating AI in recognition workflows* planned for 2026.

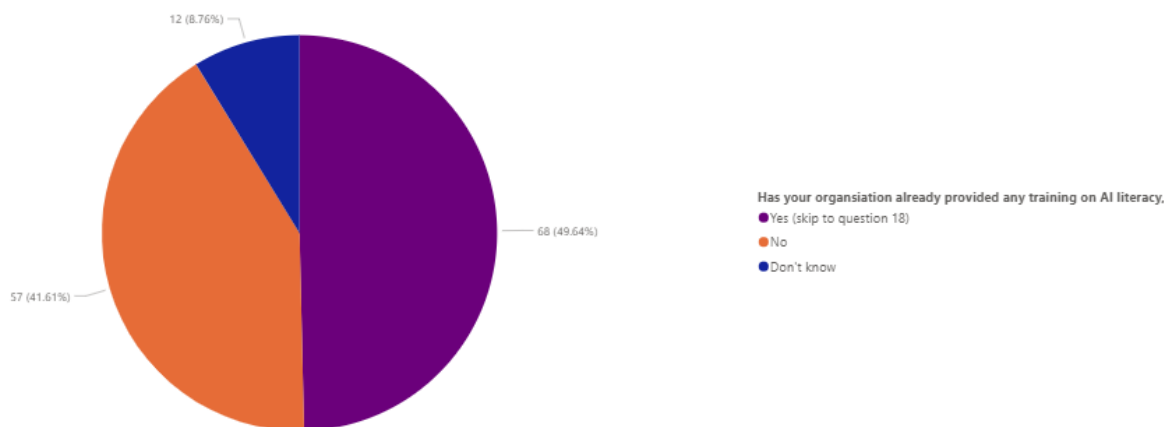


Figure 10 - All - Training on AI literacy

The importance of critical and responsible understanding of AI use

Most participants consider it important to ensure human oversight and human-centred approaches, indicating that people are aware of the risks associated with the uncritical use of AI, which can lead to losing transparency, biased decisions and diminishing of human responsibility.

One participant denied its importance, which may reflect the isolated perception that AI can be used without a formal critical understanding, maybe in limited or strictly controlled contexts.

If not, do you consider it important to ensure a critical and responsible understanding of AI use (e.g. maintaining human oversight, ensuring human-centred approaches)?

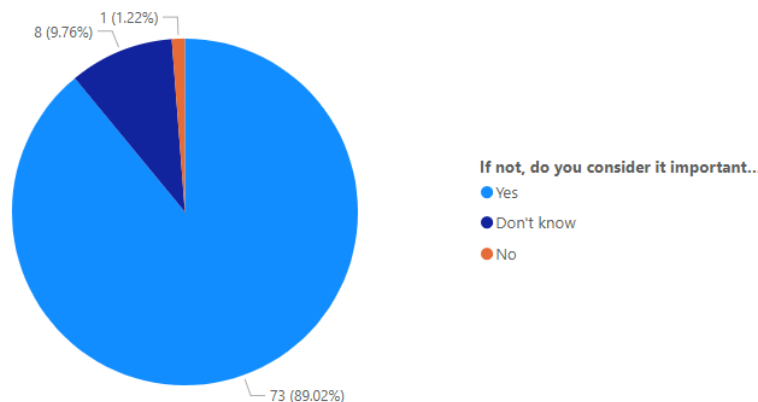


Figure 11 - All - Importance of critical and responsible understanding of AI use

Organisational level targeted training

Regarding the question who should be trained, most participants, 93, indicated all levels. This suggests an awareness that responsible use of AI is an institutional responsibility. It also suggests that AI has implications that extend beyond the technical and operational areas, affecting administrative processes and institutional policies.

A relatively small number indicated certain categories, administrative staff, 12, credential evaluators, 10, and policy/leadership, 4, which reflects specific needs, but do not contradict the dominant perception of a training all levels.

At which organisational level(s) should such training be targeted?

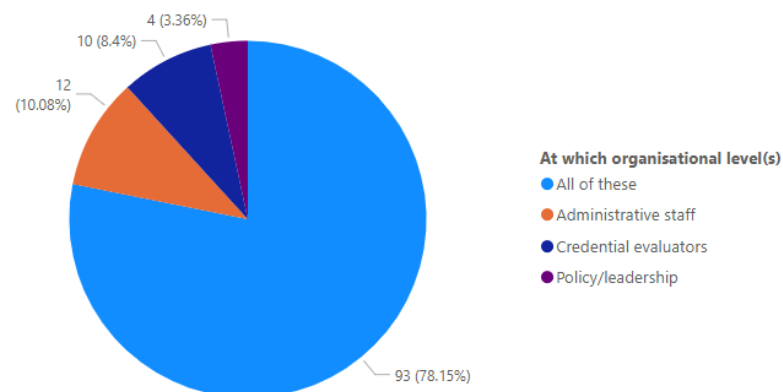


Figure 23 - All level of training to be targeted

Section 4 Data, Ethics and Governance

Data Quality in Institutions for Training AI Models

The highest category selected was the neutral category, *Neither Agree nor Disagree* selected 44 times, showing either limited knowledge on how data is collected, managed and used, or lack of internal evaluations of data quality and accessibility for AI.

A significant number of respondents disagree their institutions have sufficient quality data to train AI models, 28 selected *Strongly disagree*, 34 *Disagree*. This indicates that for most institutions data is a major obstacle in implementing AI.

18 participants reported their institutions are prepared to train AI with the data they have, while 9 reported strong agreement. Their readiness may be the result of having mature data infrastructure, standardised processes, or previous experience in using data for advanced or automatised analyses.

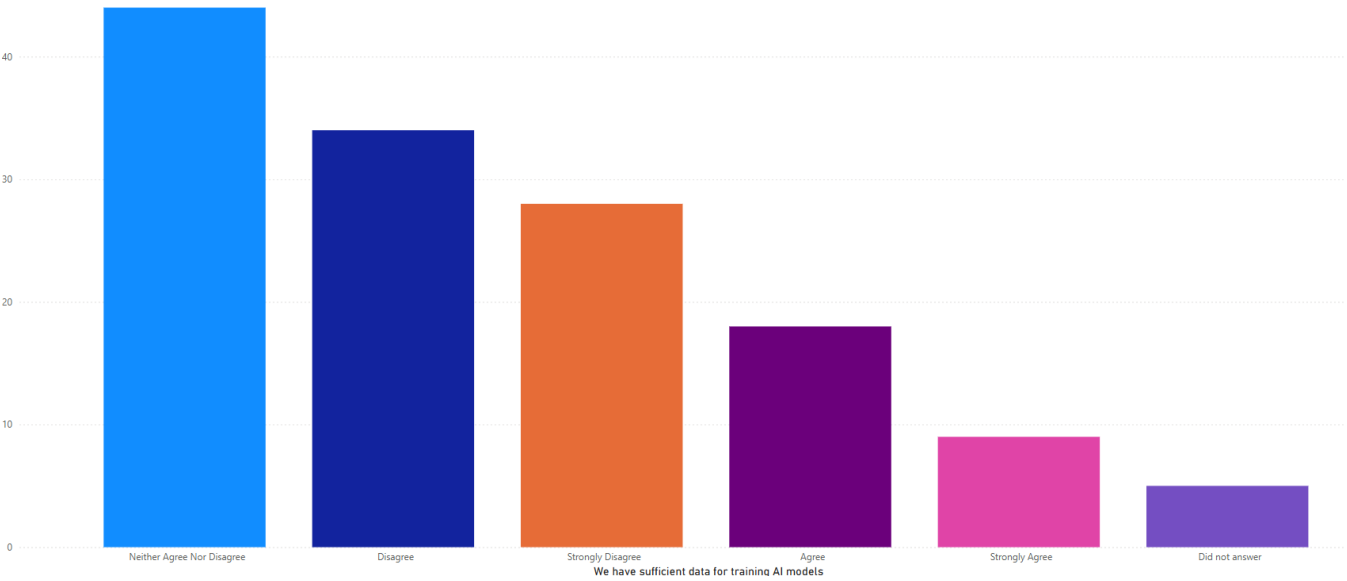


Figure 12 - All - Sufficient data for training AI Models

Data Structure for AI Analysis

Again, the highest answer picked was the neutral category with 47 respondents, indicating respondents either have a raised level of uncertainty or lack of information on how data is structured in their institution.

Strongly disagree was chosen by 32 participants, while 38 chose *Disagree*. Their total shows that most institutions do not have organised data compatible with technical requirements of AI models. This result aligns with previous findings on data quality and availability for training AI.

Few participants selected "Agree" or "Strongly Agree," with 11 choosing "Agree" and only 2 selecting "Strongly Agree." This minority suggests some institutions systematically managed and prepared for advanced use, but they are the exception, not the norm.

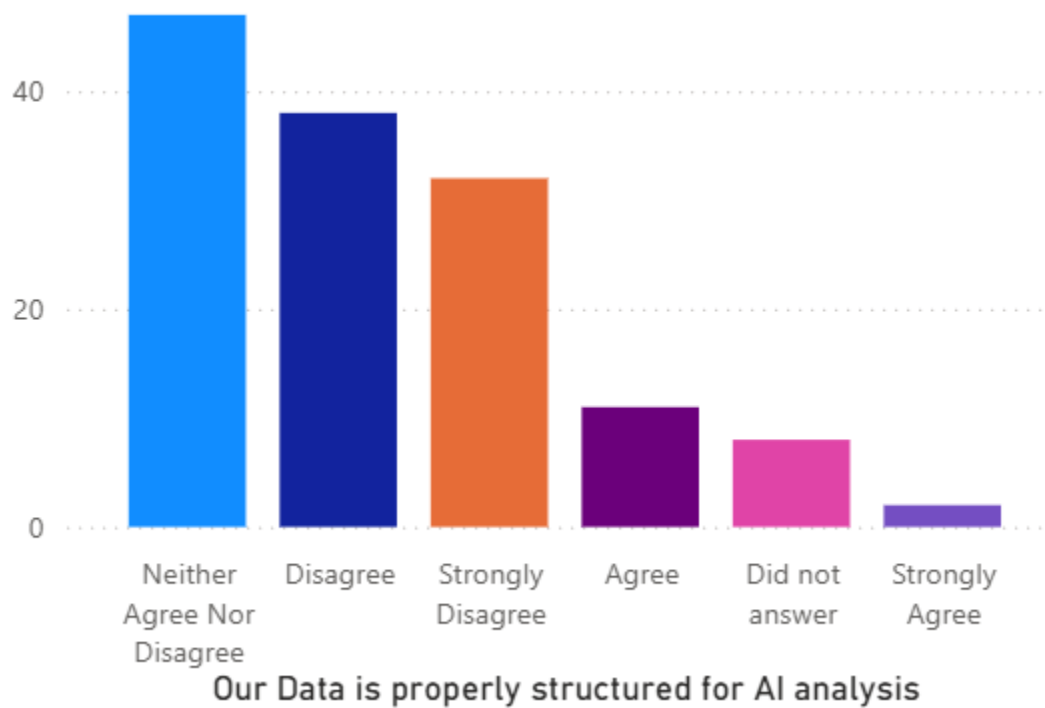


Figure 25 - All - Data is properly structured

Clear Data Governance Policies are in place

Most answers in this category fall under disagree or neutral responses, this potentially shows data governance is reduced and aligns with the previous answers on the quality of data.

A significant number of the participating institutions lack well defined policies for managing and governing data, with 28 respondents strongly disagreeing and 27 disagreeing. Limited awareness of existing policies or unclear internal communication is reflected by the 43 respondents who neither agree nor disagree.

There are 33 institutions with clear data governance policies in place.

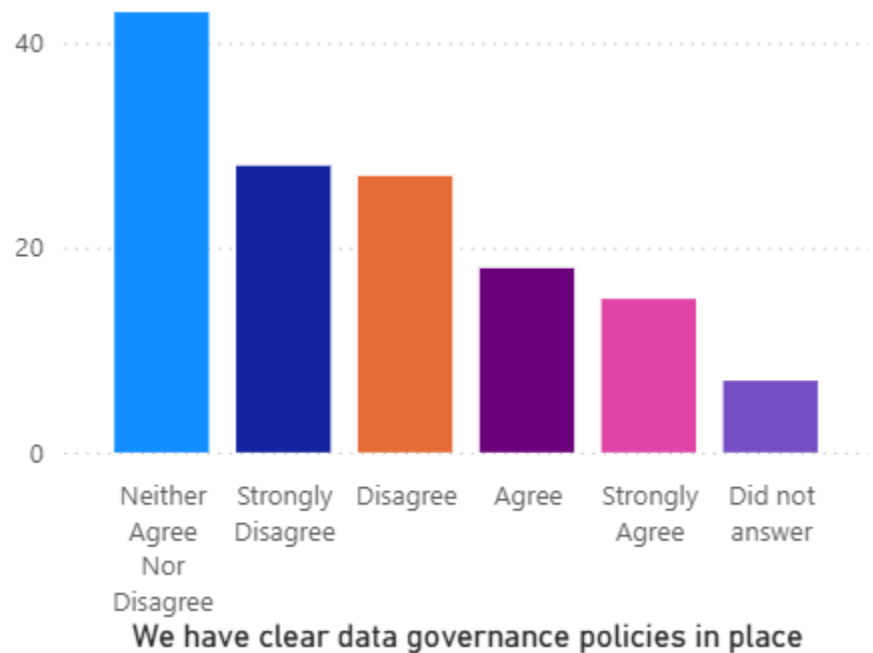
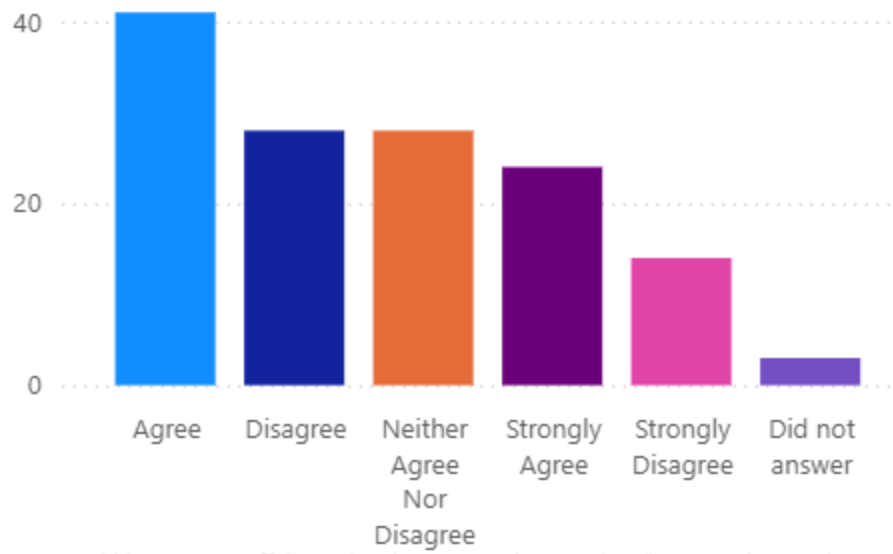


Figure 13 - All - Clear data governance in place

Confidence in Security and Privacy of Data

Compared to other data related issues, participants manifested a relatively high level of trust that their data is secure and privacy protected, indicating an imbalance between data security and data governance. Out of 65 answers, 24 participants *Strongly Agreed* and 41 *Agreed* that their data is protected. However, 42 respondents expressed concern about their data protection, with 14 *Strongly Disagree*, with 28 *Disagree*. 28 respondents remained neutral, *Neither Disagreeing nor Agreeing*, which may be due to lack of involvement in security practices. 3 provided no answer.



We are confident in the security and privacy of our data

Figure 14 - All - We are confident in the security and Privacy of our data

Risk Assessments

Formal risk assessment for AI use has not been performed in 95 institutions, suggesting limited preparedness and no active identification of potential AI use related risks. Formal risk evaluation was carried out by only 9 institutions, while 34 reported uncertainty, *Don't Know* answers, this may be due to limited engagement in this area or gaps in organisational communication. The results show that compared with the high level of awareness on using AI responsibly, risk management is low.

Has your organisation conducted any formal risk assessments regarding the use of AI in qualification recognition?

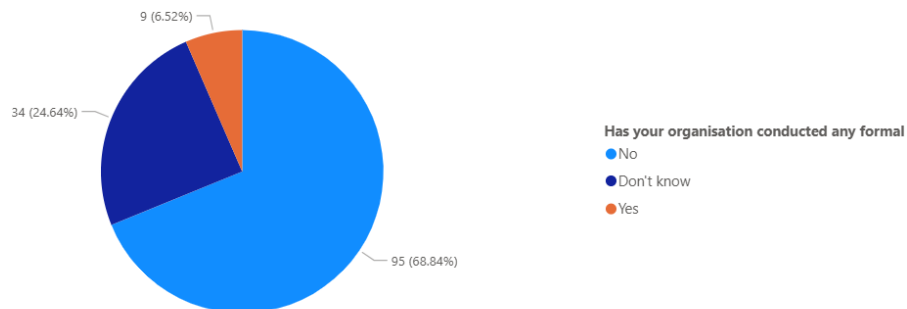


Figure 15 - All - Formal risk assessment conducted

It is concerning that, of the 37 institutions reporting the use of AI in evaluating qualifications, only five confirmed that a risk assessment had taken place at their institution, while 22 responded negatively. This could reflect either a lack of awareness or weak organisational communication, or it may simply indicate that risk assessment procedures are absent within these institutions. The working group could consider identifying which institutions have not yet undertaken a risk assessment related to testing HUDERIA—the evaluation methodology under the CoE Convention on AI.

Scope of Risk Assessments

As above only 5 participants described briefly the purpose of the risk assessment conducted by their institutions:

- verification of study documents authenticity
- data protection
- risks and advantages of AI
- bias and fairness risks
- transparency and explainability, assessing the need for outputs that can be understood and that support, rather than undermine, human decision-making.
- human oversight and accountability, ensuring that responsibility for recognition decisions remains with qualified professionals.
- data protection and security, in line with GDPR principles and privacy-by-design approaches
- organisational and skills-related risks, including over-reliance on automation and its impact on professional roles and competencies.

Ethical Guidelines and Policies

The data confirms a gap between the use and interest for AI and governing policies. Most of the participating institutions, 82, have not established ethical guidelines or policies for the use of AI in qualification evaluation, which aligns with previous findings on implementing AI formally. A significant number 49 have already developed or plan to develop such frameworks, which indicates that there is awareness of ethical consideration.

Has your institution established ethical guidelines or policies for the use of AI in qualification evaluation or intends to do so if AI tools will be applied?

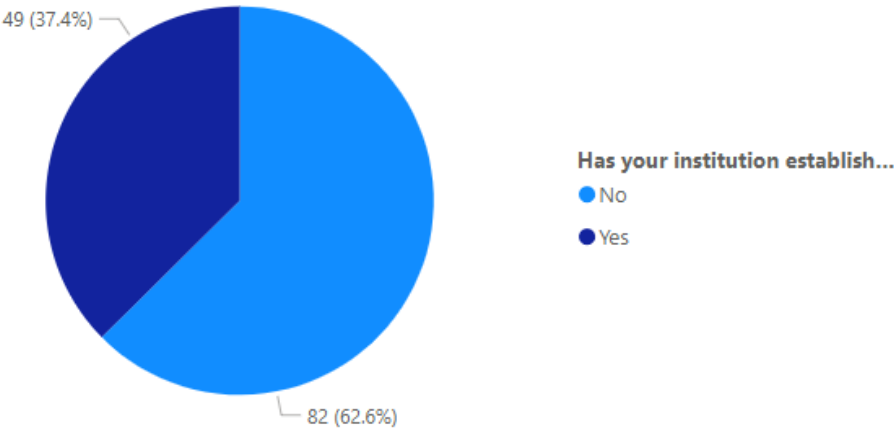


Figure 16 - All - Ethical guidelines or policies in place

Again, when we filter on institutions reporting the use of AI in use, while the majority of these do have ethical guidelines and policies in place there is still a significant number operating without.

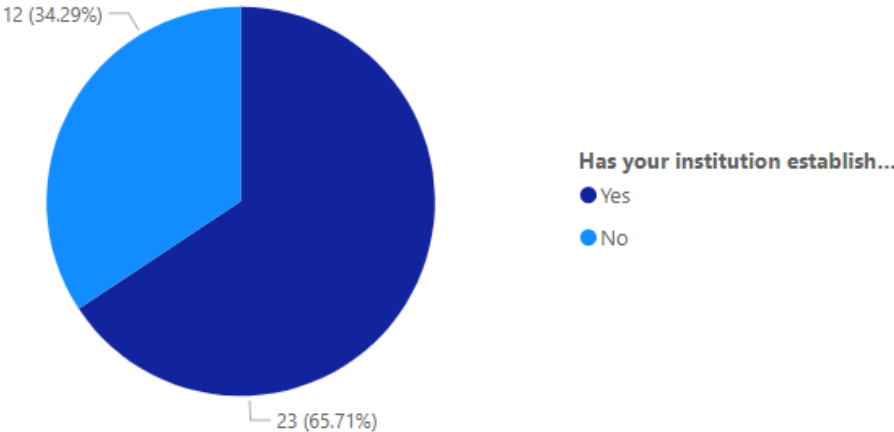


Figure 17 - AI Yes - Ethical guidelines or policies in place

Transparency in AI-assisted decisions

Among institutions currently using AI to evaluate qualifications, the primary approach to maintaining transparency is through human oversight. Nine institutions make a point to inform applicants that AI is involved in the decision-making process, while six institutions have AI systems that can provide explanations for their recommendations.

These results suggest that while AI tools are being adopted, institutions are prioritising human involvement to ensure decisions remain transparent and trustworthy. Informing applicants about AI use supports openness and helps manage expectations, while having AI systems that can explain their recommendations further enhances transparency and accountability.

However, the relatively low numbers indicate that, in most cases, transparency relies more on manual human oversight rather than on automated explanations or proactive communication with applicants.

How is transparency ensured regarding AI-assisted decisions or will be ensured in case AI tools will be applied?

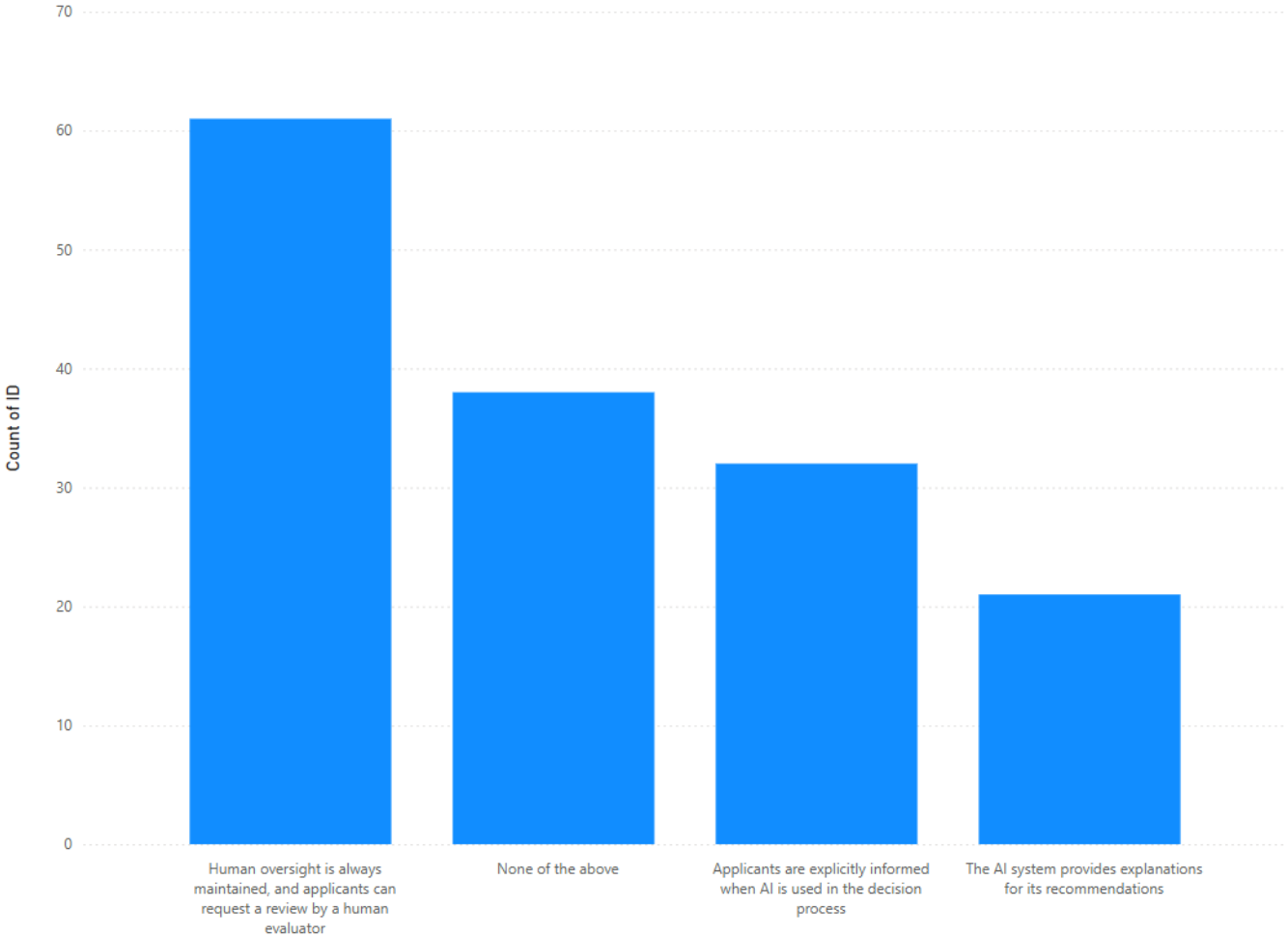


Figure 18 - How is/will transparency be ensured

Human responsibility for Recognition / admission decisions

There is a consensus among participants, 110, that humans retain responsibility for recognition/admission decisions, or will do so if AI is implemented. The data confirms earlier findings that human oversight is preferred to ensure transparency and avoid bias in AI outputs. 10 participants reported AI has full responsibility in the evaluation process, but based on previous results, this item was likely selected from a forward-looking perspective, assuming in the future AI systems are fully developed to perform complex tasks.

Overall, the data confirms earlier findings that AI is perceived as a supportive tool, not an autonomous decision maker.

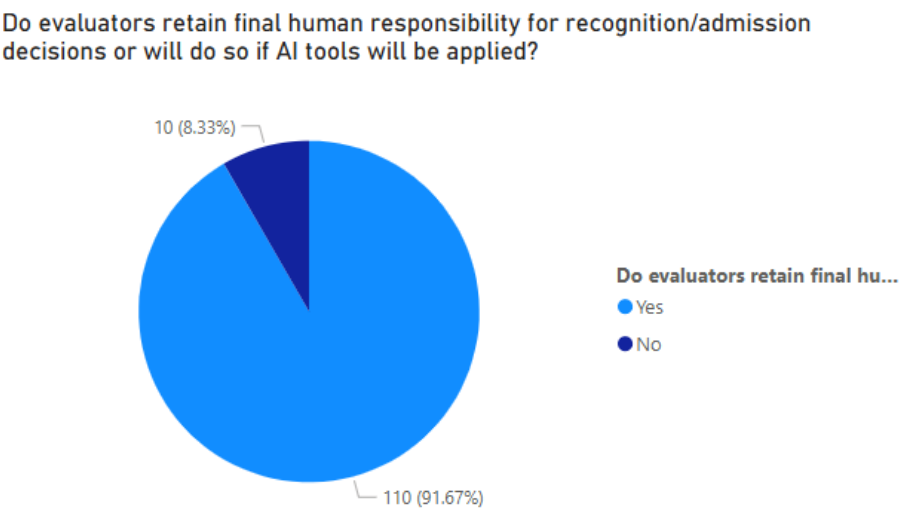


Figure 19 - All - Do evaluators retain final human responsibility

Monitoring or Correcting Bias or Error in AI-Generated results.

When asked *How will bias or error in AI-generated results monitored or will be monitored or corrected if AI tools will be applied*, most respondents *reviewing AI recommendations by human evaluators*, reported 86 times. More advanced governance measures applied include *retraining AI systems with diverse dataset*, selected 23 times, *regular audits* selected 28 times, and *on-request independent review* selected 20 times. 8 institutions do not actively monitor and correct bias and error in AI evaluation of qualifications, which can result in AI repeating wrong patterns and rejecting automatically qualified applicants. Uncertainty, lack of clarity and no intention to implement AI were reported by 40 respondents who previously reported they are not using AI in the qualification evaluation. Participants who selecting the answers I don't know/ none, could indicated either lack of institutional communication or strategy, or an unclear position of the institution on the issue of AI, or potentially low level of personal involvement in this area.

An analysis of responses from institutes who are currently utilising AI revealed similar trends. Notably however, two institutions indicated that bias and errors are not actively monitored or addressed, highlighting concerns evidenced in previous questions regarding the use of AI without established risk assessments and ethical guidelines.

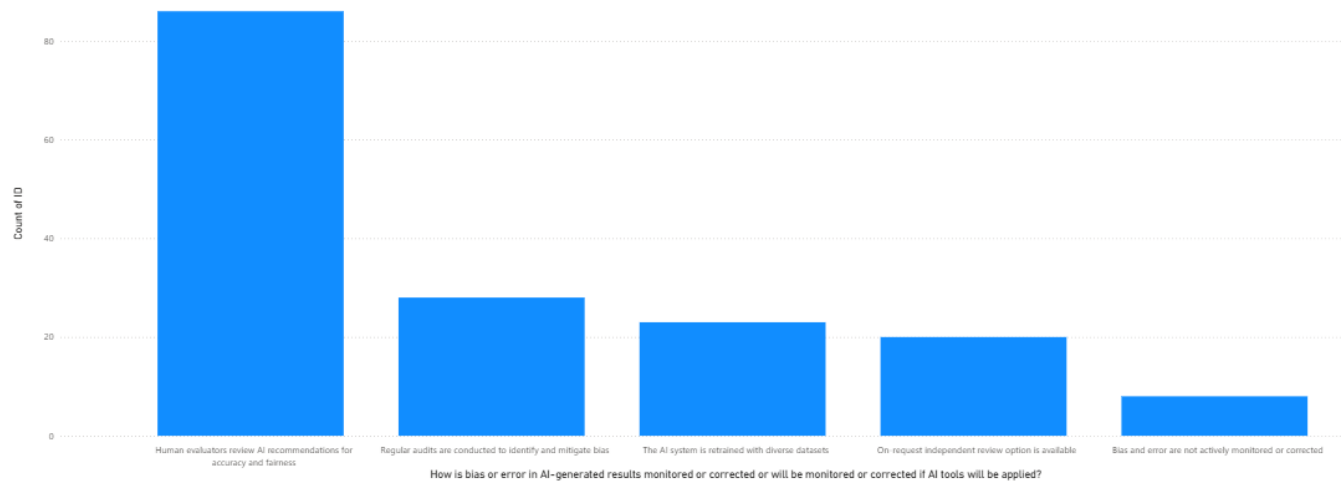


Figure 20 - All - How is bias or errors monitored or corrected

Future AI Applications for Improving Recognition and Admission processes

The most preferred AI tools are those that can ensure the integrity and security of the evaluation process, *Improved fraud detection*, reported 111 times, *automated document verification*, reported 101 times. Their selection could indicate an interest in reducing manual workload and automation of routine processes. *Automated translation* of documents was selected 98 times, reflecting the need to process multilingual documents efficiently, and a potential desire to reduce translation costs for applicants.

More sophisticated credential evaluation assistance was selected 58 times, *Predictive analytics to identify potential challenge*, selected 48 times. Other items selected once, were *automated research for accreditation information*, *detecting fulfilled requirements*, or *checking standard elements of a qualification*, indicating the need for tools able to perform very specialised tasks.

It is interesting to note that complex tasks to be performed by future AI applications were moderately selected, reflecting mistrust in AI ability to perform sophisticated processes in qualification evaluation. It could also indicate that evaluators, although not denying AI’s importance in repetitive activities, remain cautious when dealing with nuanced interpretations and professional judgement. Distrust may be fuelled by the fact that AI cannot reproduce exact human judgement, particularly in non-standard cases which require different legal frameworks.

What types of AI applications would you consider most useful for improving recognition/admission processes in the future? (Select all that apply)

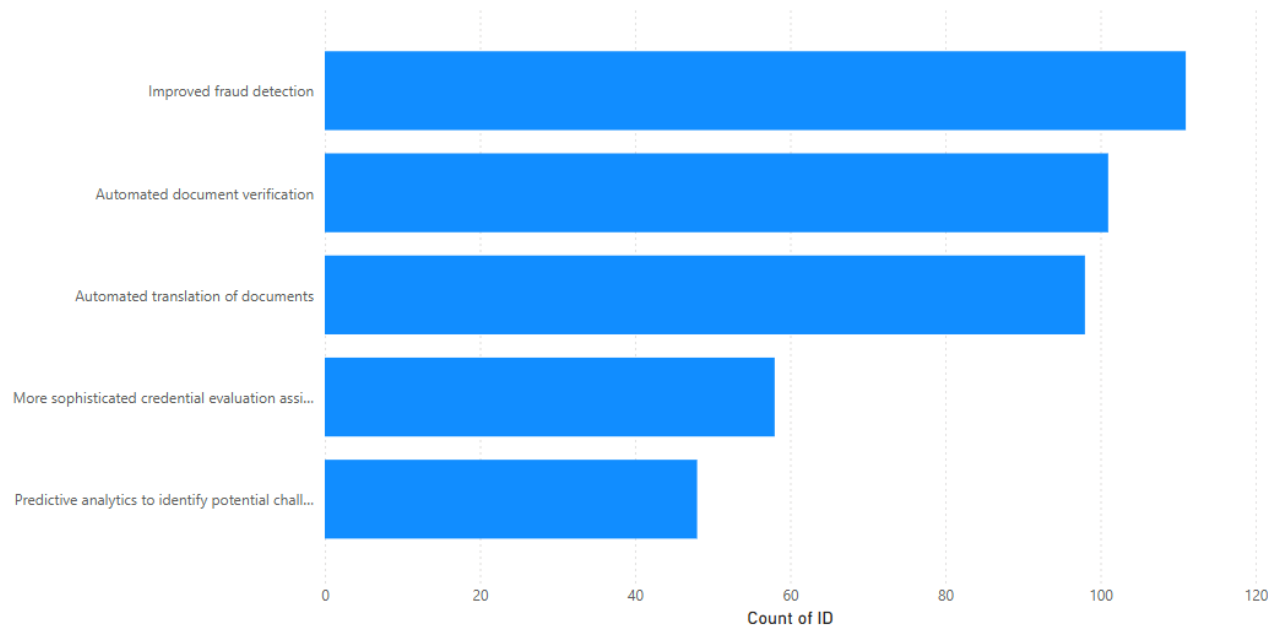


Figure 34 - All - Future AI applications

The working group should take these findings into account when reviewing **Key Deliverable 4: pilot projects** on testing AI systems for fraud detection, analysing learning outcomes, and evaluating how AI can improve international academic mobility.

Concerns on Ethical Implications of AI usage in Qualification Recognition

The biggest concern is *Data privacy and security*, selected 108 times, with one respondent clearly expressing concern regarding sensitive data leaking when external AI providers are used, conforming earlier findings on barriers and the need of strong governance.

The second biggest concern is *Over-reliance on AI tools and loss of human judgement*, selected 93 times, revealing the fear that the role of the human evaluator will be diminished. *Lack of transparency and accountability* selected 76 times, and *Potential bias and discrimination*, selected 69 times, indicate concern related to fairness and liability. Another relevant concern, but secondary in comparison with ethical risks and governance, is *Job displacement for human evaluators*, selected 46 times, revealing the respondent's fear of being replaced with automated systems. One participant indicated *Energy consumption* while 6 did not provide any answer.

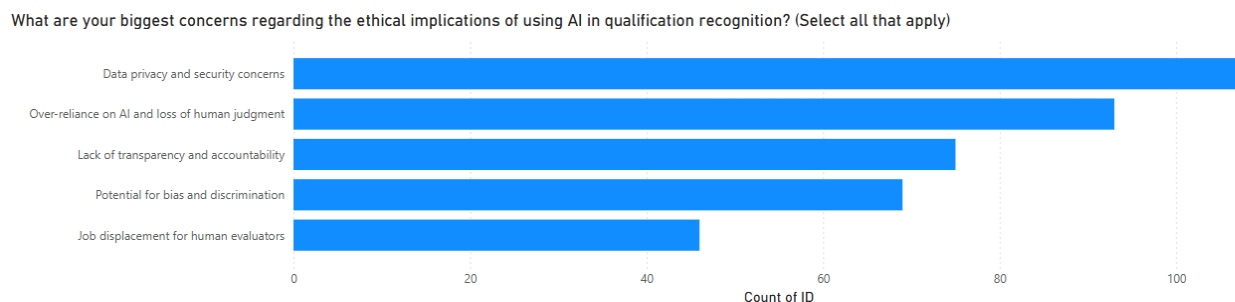


Figure 21 - Biggest concerns re ethical implications of AI

The working group should once consider these findings when reviewing **Key Deliverable 3 Creation of a self-learning online module for credential evaluators & Workshops and seminars on integrating AI in recognition workflows**, which is planned for 2026, to address these concerns where possible.

Conclusion and Recommended Actions

The analysis reveals both opportunities and challenges in adopting AI for qualification recognition. Institutions are interested in using AI for tasks like fraud detection, document verification, and translation to improve efficiency. However, many remain cautious about fully integrating AI due to concerns around data privacy, security, bias, and loss of human judgement, highlighting the need for clear governance and ethical oversight.

Currently, AI is mainly applied for support and operational tasks, such as translation and document verification, reflecting a pragmatic approach focused on straightforward solutions. Advanced functions like predictive or qualification analysis are rarely used.

Most respondents prefer cloud-based AI providers over local solutions, balancing efficiency, cost, and technical capacity. Many express concerns about data protection, transparency, and confidentiality, particularly in the absence of robust governance for responsible AI use.

Key barriers to adoption include lack of expertise, poorly structured data, unclear governance, and limited resources. As AI in qualification recognition is at a transitional stage, its wider use depends on the development of standardised and ethical frameworks, resource availability, and the ability to complement human judgement.

Resistance to change is also reported. Established procedures make new technology seem a potential threat to decision coherence and predictability. Human evaluators fear AI could impact the quality and fairness of recognition decisions and reduce professional autonomy, while management faces additional costs for training and role adaptation.

AI is seen as a useful tool for increasing efficiency, but not yet reliable enough for decisions with significant professional or legal consequences. Most respondents emphasise the need to maintain human judgement, especially for document authenticity and qualification level.

Trust in AI may grow if the technology becomes fully developed, regulated, and verifiable.

At present, AI serves as an aid, not a replacement for human judgement or institutional responsibility, requiring ongoing human oversight and careful integration.

To address these gaps and support responsible AI adoption, the working group should prioritise:

- **Pilot projects:** Test AI systems for fraud detection, outcome analysis, and academic mobility, with ongoing monitoring for bias and errors. Share best practices across member institutes.
- **Training and online modules:** Develop targeted workshops and online modules for credential evaluators on ethical AI use, risk assessment, and maintaining human oversight, with regular updates.
- **Governance and policy:** Establish and document SOPs, audit logs, appeal pathways, and risk assessments. Clarify legal bases for data transfers and distinguish between security and compliance in future policies.
- **Quality metrics:** Monitor decision quality metrics such as agreement rates, error rates, and appeal reversals, to ensure AI adoption improves fairness and consistency.

These actions support a balanced approach, safeguarding ethical standards and maximising AI's benefits in qualification recognition, while meeting stakeholder concerns and regulatory needs.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of Qualifications (Copy)

This questionnaire, developed within the framework of the programme on Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of Qualifications of the Education Department of the Council of Europe, aims to understand the current and future use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within qualification recognition processes. Your responses will help us identify best practices, challenges, and opportunities in this evolving field.

For the purposes of this questionnaire, AI refers to computer systems that can analyse information and make suggestions, classifications, or decisions that support human evaluators. Use cases include document verification, data extraction, or fraud detection. AI includes tools that learn from data or adapt their behaviour over time, but does not include purely manual processes or simple automated tasks such as data entry or rule-based form checking.

Section 1

Respondent & Institutional Profile

1. Name of your Institution

2. Type of Institution

- ☐ Higher Education Institution (HEI)
- ☐ ENIC-NARIC Centre
- ☐ National authority with competence on recognition (Ministry)
- ☐ Other

3. Country

4. Your primary role within the qualification recognition department:

- ☐ Credential evaluator
- ☐ IT/Technical Lead
- ☐ Department Head/Director
- ☐ Policy/Legal advisor
- ☐ Other

Section 2

Current AI Usage

5. What levels of education do you primarily assess? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ General secondary/vocational secondary education (with access to higher education)
- ☐ Short-cycle higher education
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ PhD

6. Does your institution currently use any form of AI in the in the evaluation of qualifications?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, but only in the form of piloting/experiments
- ☐ No (skip to Section 3, question 14)

7. In which areas is AI currently used?

- ☐ Document Verification (e.g. fraud detection)
- ☐ Credential Evaluation Assistance (e.g. suggesting equivalencies/comparability)
- ☐ Case Assignment/Workflow Management
- ☐ Chatbots/Virtual Assistants for Enquiries
- ☐ Data Extraction from Documents
- ☐ Predictive Analytics (e.g., identifying potential challenges in verification)
- ☐ Automated Translation
- ☐ Checking the status/accreditation of an educational institution/higher education institution
- ☐ Checking accreditation of an educational program
- ☐ Checking the content of a diploma/certificate (template, document security elements, name/surname of the issuing authority official, etc.)
- ☐ Other

8. What are the main purposes for which AI is applied in your evaluation process? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Speeding up administrative processing
- ☐ Improving consistency
- ☐ Detecting fake documents
- ☐ Improving accuracy
- ☐ Reducing costs
- ☐ Other

9. Which AI tools does your organisation use?

- ☐ generative AI
- ☐ predictive AI
- ☐ Other

10. Your organisation deploys AI models, training and inference data

- ☐ on local servers
- ☐ through external services

11. How are AI outputs used in decision-making? (If both are used, please specify under Other)

- ☐ Fully automated decision-making
- ☐ Decision support for human evaluators
- ☐ Other

12. To what extent do you trust the results of the use of AI in your institution?

- ☐ Above 50%
- ☐ 50%/50%
- ☐ AI is used only as a supplementary information resource

13. For which regions/countries are educational documents most often used with AI in the process of credential evaluation at your institution (If any)? (List regions/countries)

14. For what kind of credentials authentication do you use AI tools? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Diploma/Certificate
- ☐ Diploma/Certificate supplement - transcript of records
- ☐ Other

15. Has the introduction of AI tools affected the Human Resources strategy of your organisation? If this is the case, please describe briefly

Section 3

Planned Adoption & Barriers

16. Is your institution planning to implement any new AI tools or applications in its qualification recognition processes within the next 12-24 months?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

17. If your organisation is currently *not* using AI or planning to expand it, what are the main barriers?(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of Funding/Resources
- ☐ Lack of Technical Expertise
- ☐ Data Quality/Accessibility Issues
- ☐ Concerns about Data Privacy/Security
- ☐ Lack of Clear Legal Framework/Guidelines
- ☐ Resistance to Change within the Organisation
- ☐ Unsure of Potential Benefits
- ☐ Other

18. Has your organisation already provided any training on AI literacy, digital literacy or data literacy?

- ☐ Yes (skip to question 18)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

19. If not, do you consider it important to ensure a critical and responsible understanding of AI use (e.g. maintaining human oversight, ensuring human-centred approaches)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

20. At which organisational level(s) should such training be targeted?

☐ Policy/leadership

☐ Credential evaluators

☐ Administrative staff

☐ All of these

Section 4

Data, Ethics & Governance

21. Specify to what extent you agree with the following statement regarding your organisation's data readiness for AI implementation: We have sufficient quality data for training AI models (Rating Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

☆☆☆☆☆

22. Specify to what extent you agree with the following statement regarding your organisation's data readiness for AI implementation: Our data is properly structured for AI analysis (Rating Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

☆☆☆☆☆

23. Specify to what extent you agree with the following statement regarding your organisation's data readiness for AI implementation: We have clear data governance policies in place (Rating Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

☆☆☆☆☆

24. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your organisation's data readiness for AI implementation: We are confident in the security and privacy of our data (Rating Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

☆☆☆☆☆

25. Has your organisation conducted any formal risk assessments regarding the use of AI in qualification recognition?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

26. If Yes: describe briefly the scope of the assessment

27. Has your institution established ethical guidelines or policies for the use of AI in qualification evaluation or intends to do so if AI tools will be applied?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

28. How is transparency ensured regarding AI-assisted decisions or will be ensured in case AI tools will be applied?

- ☐ Applicants are explicitly informed when AI is used in the decision process
- ☐ Human oversight is always maintained, and applicants can request a review by a human evaluator
- ☐ The AI system provides explanations for its recommendations
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other

29. Do evaluators retain final human responsibility for recognition/admission decisions or will do so if AI tools will be applied?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

30. How is bias or error in AI-generated results monitored or corrected or will be monitored or corrected if AI tools will be applied?

- ☐ Regular audits are conducted to identify and mitigate bias
- ☐ The AI system is retrained with diverse datasets
- ☐ Human evaluators review AI recommendations for accuracy and fairness
- ☐ On-request independent review option is available
- ☐ Bias and error are not actively monitored or corrected
- ☐ Other

31. What types of AI applications would you consider most useful for improving recognition/admission processes in the future? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Automated document verification
- ☐ Improved fraud detection
- ☐ Automated translation of documents
- ☐ Predictive analytics to identify potential challenges
- ☐ More sophisticated credential evaluation assistance
- ☐ Other

32. What are your biggest concerns regarding the ethical implications of using AI in qualification recognition? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Potential for bias and discrimination
- ☐ Lack of transparency and accountability
- ☐ Data privacy and security concerns
- ☐ Job displacement for human evaluators
- ☐ Over-reliance on AI and loss of human judgment
- ☐ Other

Section 5

Contact details and Privacy notice

33. Full name

34. Email

35. Phone number

36. By ticking the checkbox below, I consent my data will be used in the aims described in the **Privacy Notice** (<https://rm.coe.int/privacy-notice-education-department-survey-use-of-ai-in-the-recognition/4880291900>). If I submit any confidential or personal data from others, I hereby confirm their agreement before. *

☐ I agree

References

Gartner. (n.d.) AI Maturity Model & Roadmap Toolkit. Available at: <https://www.gartner.com/en/chief-information-officer/research/ai-maturity-modeltoolkit> (Accessed 8 August 2025)