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TAICEP
The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals®

POSITION PAPER ON THE **USE OF AI IN CREDENTIAL EVALUATION**

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Introduction

The field of Artificial intelligence (AI) has reached such technological advancements in recent years that all sectors of society are being affected. We are witnessing a growing interest in harnessing the potential of AI even within our own field, credential evaluation. With this rising interest, it is crucial that we also reflect on how our profession is going to transform and the ethical responsibility needed to use AI technology in a thoughtful and appropriate way.

The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals (TAICEP) aims to support and serve the profession of international credential evaluation by conducting research, advancing thought leadership, identifying and advancing professional standards and sharing best practices. This position paper aims to fulfil this mission, by describing leading principles for the use of AI in credential evaluation. This paper should be considered in alignment with **TAICEP's Vision, Mission, Values and Goals** and as a complement to **TAICEP's Statement of Ethics and Professional Competency Profile for Credential Evaluators**.

Definition of AI

In this paper, TAICEP recognizes that there is no standard, universally accepted definition of AI, and we choose to use the definition of UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021): "This Recommendation approaches AI systems as systems which have the capacity to process data and information in a way that resembles intelligent behaviour, and typically includes aspects of reasoning, learning, perception, prediction, planning or control."

Ethical principles for the credential evaluation professional/organization

TAICEP stands behind the following ethical principles for the use of AI in the field of credential evaluation:

A. Humanity-Centered Design

Credential evaluation professionals are involved in the recognition of international educational credentials, supporting global mobility. The evaluations provided by credential evaluation professionals assist a wide range of actors in society including educational institutions, regulatory bodies, assessment agencies, employers, and government authorities.

The concept of humanity-centered design extends beyond the often-used human-centered design. It aims to ensure AI benefits all parts of society. Applying a humanity-centered perspective, we take into consideration not only individuals but also broader societal impacts[1]. It adopts a systems point of view, recognizing that social and technological ecosystems are interconnected. This is particularly relevant to AI technologies which are considered socio-technical systems since they affect our social surroundings.

[1] *Interaction Design Foundation, What Is Humanity-Centered Design? [website], https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/humanity-centered-design, (accessed 11 July 2025).*

Since credential evaluation affects not only individual lives but also has implications for the labour market, immigration policies and other societal actors, humanity-centered approach must guide the use of AI in our field. Credential evaluation organizations must assess the societal impact of AI systems they procure and implement, to ensure that their services remain fair, inclusive and of high quality – serving the needs of society. Rather than focusing solely on workplace automation, we should prioritize AI systems that generate wider social value, such as labour market matching - which both benefits individuals finding employment but also provides skilled workforce for our countries.

B. Accountability

AI systems make mistakes which can have significant consequences for individuals. It is essential to establish mechanisms to ensure accountability. This includes maintaining human oversight of decision-making processes, engaging subject-matter experts in system development and ensuring that system documentation is transparent. Credential evaluators must be able to understand the workings behind the system's suggested decisions and be equipped to explain those decisions to those we serve.

Human control and transparency help clarify the checks and balances, who is responsible when errors occur and ensure that accountability is not lost in automated processes.

C. Fairness

AI systems rely on data - data provided by people. Thus, data is not without errors, biases or prejudices. To prevent the reinforcement of discriminatory practices, we must critically assess and actively engage in what data we provide. Historical evidence has shown that AI systems trained on past data have discriminated against individuals based on gender and nationality.

In alignment with TAICEP's Vision, Mission, Values and Goals and Statement of Ethics, TAICEP members affirm their commitment to fair credential evaluation practices and that they do not discriminate on any grounds. This affirmation must be upheld in the development and application of AI technologies in our field.

D. Explainable AI (XAI)

Credential evaluation must remain evidence-based and transparent. This requires that automated decisions are supported by robust checks and balances, including human involvement. With the rise of AI technologies, we need to make sure that credential evaluations are informed by research, factual data and expert knowledge, not solely by algorithmic recommendations. To uphold quality of credential evaluation, AI models must be trained based on the international standards and best practices of credential evaluation.

XAI refers to AI systems designed in such a way that the users can understand the evidence and reasoning behind the recommended decision. This, in turn, leads to transparent and evidence-based credential evaluation decisions.

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[2] *B.C. Stahl, Artificial Intelligence for a Better Future: An Ecosystem Perspective on the Ethics of AI and Emerging Digital Technologies, Cham, Switzerland, Springer, 2021.*

[3] *K. Stacey, 'UK Risks Scandal Over "Bias" in AI Tools in Use Across Public Sector', The Guardian, 23 October 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/oct/23/uk-risks-scandal-over-bias-in-ai-tools-in-use-across-public-sector, (accessed 11 July 2025).*

[4] *IBM, What Is Explainable AI? [website], https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/explainable-ai, (accessed 11 July 2025).*

[5] *K. Crawford, Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2021.*

E. Sustainability

The carbon footprint of AI technologies is comparable to that of the flight industry. Credential evaluation organizations need to make sure that the technology is used responsibly, for the right purposes. This can be done by identifying strategic areas where AI provides the highest benefit and limit the usage to such areas, rather than adopt the technology for the sake of trends or current hype. Such organizational strategies provide guidance for credential evaluators on where and how they should apply AI in their work.

Sustainable use involves considering technological innovation in the light of environmental and socio-ethical consequences. For example, during procurement, organizations can make sure that the IT providers adhere to sustainability principles, and that their data centers are powered by renewables. Additionally, new AI methods are being developed with lower energy consumption, supporting more sustainable practices.

F. Ethical Working Practices

When procuring AI systems, management needs to be aware of unethical practices such as "AI washing" and the hidden labor referred to as "ghost work". AI washing means that organizations market a product as AI-driven, while it relies very little on AI solutions and instead depends on low-paid workers to perform key functions of the system.

To maintain the professional standards of credential evaluation, organizations must demand transparency from system developers concerning labor conditions.

Key considerations for credential evaluation organizations in the age of AI

1. Training: To make evidence-based decisions, credential evaluators must receive relevant training about disruptive technologies. This can include prompting, practical use of AI in daily tasks, challenges of disinformation and digital forensics.

2. Data Governance: To ensure fair and evidence-based evaluation decisions, it is crucial to identify how data can lead to discriminatory practices (bias) and to use the data lawfully, for its intended purposes. By classifying data, and which data is confidential, we can restrict prohibited/sensitive data usage in AI systems.

3. Risk Assessment: Develop a risk model for AI use by identifying areas where AI poses low, medium or high risk and procure the systems accordingly.

4. Transparency of Services: Clearly communicate the role of AI in your services. Applicants must be informed when AI is involved in the decision-making procedure and in interactions, such as when communicating with a chatbot instead of a human employee.

5. Human-AI Teamwork: Recognize the augmentation-automation paradox: Organizations tend to think about the use of AI to replace employees (cost efficiency), but excluding the human expert often results in poor outcomes. Augmentation, when AI capabilities and human expertise complement each other, has the best productivity effect. Expert knowledge is needed to guide, maintain and update AI systems. Only combining their unique skills sets can lead to quality outcomes.

6. The Power of Critical Thinking: According to TAICEP's Statement of Ethics, credential evaluation professionals should ensure that evaluation decisions are based on appropriate information. In the AI era, this requires professionals to develop new competencies, extended beyond the current Professional Competency Profile. This includes developing critical digital thinking and forensics skills, in addition to grounding decisions on reliable sources and questioning the validity of information.

Conclusion

This position paper, in alignment with TAICEP's Vision, Mission, Values and Goals and as a complement to TAICEP's Statement of Ethics and Professional Competency Profile for Credential Evaluators represents TAICEP's commitment to maintain fair, transparent and credible credential evaluation practices. In the AI era, our best practices must take into consideration additional principles, such as humanity-centered design, accountability, fairness, explainable AI, sustainability and ethical working practices. The position paper is intended to serve as a guidance for both organizations and credential evaluators in ethical and responsible use of AI technologies. TAICEP is committed to stay at the forefront of sharing knowledge about digital transformation initiatives and emerging technologies that have the potential to improve credential evaluation practices.

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