

Transparency Notice: How we use MAXQDA and AI to analyse submissions

Purpose of this notice

This notice explains:

- how MAXQDA software helps us analyse submissions
- the situations in which we will use MAXQDA to support submissions analysis
- the features within MAXQDA that use AI to support analysis
- what this means for people who make submissions.

Overview

At times we will use MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis tool, to assist with analysing submissions. Some features within MAXQDA use artificial intelligence (AI). These features help us identify themes more efficiently when we have large volumes of submissions.

We aim to use these tools in a way that is fair, transparent, and maintains people's trust and confidence.

MAXQDA may be used to support our analysis, but it does not replace human judgement.

When we will use MAXQDA

When there is strong public interest in a select committee process or consultation, we can receive a high volume of submissions. Reviewing everything manually takes significant resource, and to complete the analysis within the required timeframe relies on additional support.

People at MSD remain responsible for all analysis. The software supports our work - it does not replace it.

How MAXQDA supports submissions analysis

MAXQDA is a qualitative data analysis tool commonly used in research settings. It will help us organise and review large amounts of written information more efficiently, consistently, and accurately, and helps ensure we reflect the views shared with us.

Using a tool like MAXQDA reduces the time it takes to complete manual tasks such as entering information and grouping similar comments, increasing consistency and allowing our analysts to focus on the critical work of interpreting information, identifying insights, and providing a comprehensive report on submissions.

Some analyses may use optional AI-supported features within MAXQDA to assist with tasks such as:

- Suggesting groupings once initial categorising has been completed

- Suggesting themes for submissions on policy settings.

These features can improve consistency when working with large volumes of information.

Our approach

We are committed to using data and technology in a way that is:

- Transparent – we communicate when and how we are using AI tools.
- Accountable – MSD staff are responsible for all outputs.
- Fair and respectful – analysis reflects the intent of submissions.
- Privacy-protective – personal information is handled appropriately.

We take steps to ensure our analysis is fair, accurate, and fit for purpose.

- Human analysts review all AI-generated outputs.
- AI outputs are treated as draft analytical inputs only.
- Analysts apply professional judgement and context and bring subject matter expertise.
- Quality assurance processes are used to check findings.

How we analyse submissions

People lead this process at every stage.

MAXQDA is only used to analyse selected parts of submissions, rather than entire documents at once. For example, we may group together text related to a specific policy topic and use MAXQDA to analyse it to identify themes. This helps organise large amounts of information into manageable categories and improves consistency in how similar content is reviewed.

Our analysts review all themes suggested by MAXQDA alongside the original submissions. They also check that the themes are supported by the evidence and apply their knowledge, context, and professional judgement. Our analysts decide whether to accept, change, or reject any suggested themes. We do not rely on themes produced by MAXQDA without this review by our people.

How we will use AI safely

AI-supported features are used only to assist with analysing submission content. They are **not** used to:

- decide whether a submission is accepted, excluded, or given more weight

- rank, score, or prioritise submissions or submitters
- identify, verify, or create profiles about submitters
- determine eligibility, entitlements, or service outcomes

MSD staff remain fully responsible for all analysis and outputs. MSD staff:

- are responsible for the whole process including assurance measure
- check, validate, and interpret all AI-generated outputs
- apply judgement, context, and expertise
- produce all reports and recommendations

Managing risks

AI-supported tools can help manage large volumes of information, but they have limitations. They may:

- miss nuance or context
- reflect biases present in the source material
- oversimplify complex views

AI features will only process the content provided in submissions for analysis purposes. We limit what is shared with the tool to only what is necessary. All results are reviewed by our analysts before being used. Oversight and verification by our people is applied at every stage.

Privacy and data protection

We handle submissions in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020 and MSD's information policies.

- Access to submissions and analysis tools is restricted to authorised staff.
- Information will be analysed in aggregated form where appropriate.
- Information is stored, protected, and retained in line with MSD policies.
- Submitters right to access or correct their information will be managed by the organisation running the process – this will be Office of the Clerk for Select Committee submissions or MSD for consultations.

Using AI-supported features does not change our responsibilities to securely manage private information.

MAXQDA meets General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and has been reviewed by MSD's Information, Privacy and Security Group.

A formal privacy and risk assessment has been completed. This includes how data is handled, stored, and protected. Any data uploaded to MAXQDA for AI analysis will use servers based in Europe.

Only the information needed for analysis is shared with the tool. Data sent to the AI component is stored for a short time (generally less than 48 hours) and is deleted after processing.

MAXQDA states that submissions are not used to improve or teach the AI model. This helps protect your personal information.

Contact us

If you have questions about how submissions are analysed, or how your information is used, you can contact us:

MSD Policy Branch

Policy_Office@msd.govt.nz

Ministry of Social Development

The Aurora Centre, 56 The Terrace, Wellington 6011