



Government
People Group

AI in Recruitment: Guidance for Hiring Managers

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Candidates are increasingly using AI when applying for roles in the Civil Service. This guidance offers hiring managers support to help ensure the integrity of the assessment process by offering practical advice on and examples of how hiring managers can manage inappropriate use of AI.

Candidates must ensure that if they choose to use AI during the recruitment process, it is used in an acceptable way in line with the [Civil Service code](#). Guidance has been published on the [Civil Service Careers page](#) to advise candidates on acceptable and unacceptable usage of AI within their application, interview and tests. Hiring managers should ensure they are familiar with this guidance before beginning their recruitment campaign.

Departments may also have guidelines or processes in place and it is important to consult with your recruitment teams to understand these before taking action. This document will be regularly updated as artificial intelligence use continues to develop.



1. AI Overview

a. What is AI?

AI tools (and their Generative AI (GenAI) subset such as ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Gemini, etc.) are powerful technologies which can perform tasks that have typically required human thought. Generative AI focuses on creating new content that resembles existing examples by using algorithms to generate new text, images, audio or other forms of media.

AI tools can help in various stages of a candidate's Civil Service job application. If a candidate chooses to use AI tools, which in some areas they are permitted to do, it is vital that these tools are used honestly and with integrity to support an application without providing misleading or false information.

b. How does AI present itself in the recruitment process?

There are many ways that AI can present itself throughout the recruitment process and it is important as a hiring manager and/or panel member to understand these.

- **Applications:** Some candidates are using tools such as ChatGPT to draft CVs and personal statements by inputting job descriptions, public Civil Service documents and personal information. In some instances, these are submitted as is. In other cases, candidates will use AI to shorten responses e.g. for behaviour questions or word limits or to identify better phrasing.
- **Interviews:** Some candidates are using AI text bots or sound/voice recording bots to respond to standard interview questions by copying and pasting them during the interview. There may be instances where a candidate could be joined by an AI bot as a virtual attendee e.g. [Fireflies](#) which may be attached to take notes or to take a record of meetings. Avatars (which can be digital representations of people which mimic human appearance, expressions and even personality) have also been seen in virtual interviews where a candidate may not be who they appear to be on screen. This may look like a person or something more artificially generated. The use of AI during an interview is not acceptable in any form.



This is not an exhaustive list. AI is constantly evolving but it is important hiring managers are aware of real examples which have been seen across the Civil Service so they can take action if faced with unacceptable AI use.

c. AI vs Plagiarism

Whilst there could be instances where a candidate is using AI appropriately, there may also be times where they are not. It is important to understand that **the use of AI is prohibited by candidates where it presents a false narrative, makes a false claim or raises concerns relating to plagiarism.**

Understanding the distinction between acceptable AI usage and plagiarism is crucial to uphold the integrity of the recruitment process.

Acceptable use of AI by candidates includes:

- Thinking about their own personal leadership experiences and asking AI to help improve how they present them.
- Using AI to help list relevant skills for the job based on the key points in the job advert.
- For written examples, [behaviour statements](#) or in preparation for an interview, creating a shortlist of relevant examples from their experience - the candidate could then ask AI to help bring the story to life more articulately.
- Using AI to check their application for readability. It may offer ways to clarify their examples in a more concise form, while maintaining the meaning.

Unacceptable use of AI by candidates includes:

- Using AI to generate a CV, cover letter or any part of the application process and copies text directly from existing sources without any modification.
- Submitting generic, AI-generated content that has not been edited by the candidate and does not reflect their authentic self, experiences and skills.



- Misrepresenting or falsifying their skills or experience or producing AI generated qualifications or experiences which do not reflect the candidate.

d. Your role as a hiring manager

As someone running a recruitment campaign in the Civil Service, it is important that you consider how to ensure a fair and open recruitment process. The rise of AI has presented a number of opportunities for candidates to quickly apply for multiple roles or streamline their writing. Whilst this has existed previously in tools such as Grammarly or spell-check, these are presenting new challenges with larger volumes of applications being received for roles.

It is important that, whilst you may have personal views on AI and its role within an application and interview, you familiarise yourself with the [Civil Service Candidate Guidance](#) and ensure that you do not penalise candidates when they are using AI in an acceptable way.

AI has started to become common practice in CS applications and throughout the recruitment process. It is vital that this is embraced so candidates are supported to accurately reflect their true experience and ability to hiring managers. When unacceptable use of AI or plagiarism is suspected, hiring managers must be vigilant in identifying plagiarised applications and know how and when to challenge this.



2. The Civil Service Commission (The Commission)

a. The role of the Commission in external recruitment

It is a requirement of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 that selection for recruitment to the Civil Service must be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Commission has a statutory duty to ensure that the merit requirement is upheld and is not being undermined. In upholding the merit requirement, the Commission considers itself to be a guardian of principles and not of processes.

Hiring managers must conduct their recruitment process in line with the [Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles](#).

If a candidate is not satisfied that the recruitment campaign has followed the principles they, after following the department's complaints procedure, may choose to raise this with the Commission through their [complaints](#) process. It is important as a hiring manager to understand the role of the Commission with regards to plagiarism and understand their expectations of a department should a complaint be raised.

b. The role of the Commission in plagiarism complaints

The Commission's role in plagiarism complaints is not to determine if plagiarism has occurred in an application: this judgement is to be made by the department. The Commission's role is to ensure that the removal of candidates due to suspected plagiarism is objective, impartial, and consistently applied, in line with the 'fair' requirement of the Recruitment Principles.

If a candidate appeals to the Commission because they believe their application was unfairly removed due to suspected plagiarism, the Commission would assess the competition records and the rationale for removing the candidate to ensure due process was followed. If the Commission concludes a candidate was unfairly removed, a "Serious breach" will be recorded against the department and may be publicly reported.



c. Guidance from the Commission on how to handle plagiarism

This guidance aims to address how government organisations should handle job applications where plagiarism is suspected, acknowledging the varied recruitment processes across departments. The focus is on what information the Commission needs to ensure fair, objective, impartial, and consistent treatment of individuals removed for plagiarism. This includes the following:

- i. **Policy Statement:** Job advertisements should clearly state the department's plagiarism policy and its consequences.
- ii. **Evidence-Based Decisions:** Departments must make evidence-based decisions when removing candidates, providing supporting information (e.g., how judgments were reached and applied consistently).
- iii. **Candidate Notification:** All candidates must be informed of the reasoning for their application withdrawal.
- iv. **Right to Complaint:** Candidates have the right to complain and receive a detailed explanation as per departmental procedures.
- v. **Record Keeping:** Departments must keep sufficient records, including evidence, for all plagiarism-related withdrawals.



3. Advertising a role

a. Job Adverts

When drafting your job advert, please note that standardised guidance on the use of AI is now automatically included on the Civil Service Jobs platform.

You do not need to manually add this wording to your advert text. Doing so will result in duplicative information for the candidate. This automated inclusion ensures all applicants consistently receive clear expectations concerning truthful applications and the consequences of plagiarism before they apply.

For your reference, the automated text informs candidates that:

“Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn and internal candidates may be subject to disciplinary action. Please see our candidate guidance for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.”

This wording will support you in handling cases of misuse and also aligns with the candidate declaration.

b. Candidate Declarations

Alongside this guidance and as part of their application, candidates who apply through Civil Service Jobs must also sign the plagiarism declaration. For your awareness, the wording on AI is below:

Internal Candidates *“I understand my application may be rejected or I may be subject to disciplinary action if evidence of plagiarism is detected. Examples of plagiarism can include presenting the ideas and experience of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own”.*



External Candidates *“I understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my application it may be rejected. Examples of plagiarism can include presenting the ideas and experience of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own”.*



4. Sifting CVs

a. Sifting Applications

As someone running a recruitment campaign in the CS, if you suspect a candidate has used AI inappropriately in their CS application, it is important to know what actions you can take to ensure the legitimacy of the recruitment process.

It is vital that hiring managers, when sifting applications, **do not withdraw or penalise candidates solely based on suspicion** of the use of AI in an unacceptable way. This would be in breach of the [Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles](#) and therefore you should continue to sift applications based on your set criteria for the role. If you have suspicions based on the application, the skills and experiences presented should be tested throughout the ongoing recruitment process.

There may be occasions when suspicion becomes a genuine concern that the evidence presented by the candidate in their application is not factual and is being used to create a false or misleading idea of the candidate's skills and experiences. The guidance below provides information on how to detect unacceptable use of AI in applications and the process you should follow.

b. Detecting the unacceptable use of AI in applications.

If when sifting candidate applications, you notice that multiple applications have large areas of identical or notably similar content, this may have been copied from a GenAI tool used to generate answers to the sift criteria. Regardless of whether AI was used, it should be flagged to recruitment teams if you have two or more applications that are close to identical in content, as this could mean a candidate has plagiarised.

You may find that applications using AI provide generic responses that lack specific details about the candidate's personal skills and experience on what would make them a good fit for the role. Their application may use generic language so not adequately address the sift criteria. As the hiring manager, if insufficient or no



evidence is provided alongside generic language you can score accordingly, as you can only assess the candidate on the evidence presented.

c. Action that could be taken if unacceptable AI use is detected.

If you have noticed an unacceptable use of AI in your campaign, you should consult and gain advice from your recruitment teams or the Government Recruitment Service (GRS) and consider whether the candidate should be withdrawn.

If you suspect a candidate has used AI unacceptably and the evidence is unclear:

If you have noticed generic answers given within a candidate's application but further evidence is given alongside this so the candidate meets the sift criteria, you should continue to test the evidence provided in the application at the next stage of the recruitment process.

If this is an interview, probing questions could be used to help you understand more specific details about the candidate's experiences and enhance the answers given within the application. This will allow you to build a better picture of the candidate's actual experience. However, it is important that hiring managers maintain a consistent interview experience for all candidates to ensure reliable and fair recruitment.

There should not be scenarios where a candidate suspected of unacceptable AI use received lots of additional questions at interview compared to other candidates of the same campaign. It could give candidates an opportunity to provide extra evidence. A well designed interview would allow the hiring manager to dig down onto topics for all candidates which will help test if the generic answers given in the application were used to provide a false, generic image of the candidate.

If you suspect a candidate has used AI unacceptably and the evidence is clear:

There may be instances where you can provide clear evidence of an unacceptable use of AI such as large areas of identical or noticeably similar content. In this scenario, you can make the decision to withdraw the candidate, following advice from your HRBP, recruitment team or departmental recruitment policy lead. The



Commission advises that this should be on the basis of plagiarism only and that you should ensure you have relevant information and reasonings recorded.

You should also align with the principles set out from the Commission in this document (2.C). It is important that you are aware of the legal requirement set out in the Civil Service Recruitment Principles to run a 'fair and open' recruitment process and ensure candidates are notified and given an opportunity to complain should they disagree with this outcome. You should follow your departmental procedures for this.



5. Personal Statements and Tests

Outside of CVs and application forms, there are a number of other ways to pre-sift applicants that can provide you with opportunities to understand candidates' abilities and whether they will be a good fit for the role you are recruiting for.

a. Personal Statements or Pre-interview Questions

These are good tools to use to gain more evidence and information about an individual's experiences and behaviours. Often job adverts will ask for this alongside CVs or they may ask for the written response to be in alignment with behaviours or essential criteria as part of a set of statements. With the advancement of AI, it is easier for candidates to use tools to build more generic statements as part of their application.

In order to mitigate poor quality evidence from generic responses, you may want to consider asking specific questions as part of your request to them, e.g. a Government Digital Service recruitment test-and-learn showed the value of using specific situational knock out questions aligned to the criteria rather than general personal statements to speed up sifting and get the right candidates in roles and has now been implemented as business as usual within their campaigns. It is important to ensure there is specificity within the job advert and submission of an application so that the candidate's write up must be tailored to your role.

b. Online Tests

The use of tests can provide the opportunity to narrow down applicants before they get to the hiring manager. They can test candidates on a range of different skills and identify whether they show an aptitude for the role you are recruiting for.

The Civil Service Assessments team are continually working to improve and build tests that can support sifting and identifying the right candidates. In addition, it is worth checking in with your recruitment teams, as they may offer alternative or different assessment tools as part of their services. This is because some tests can offer opportunities to test other skills and experiences that are not yet a part of the



wider Civil Service offer. This might include tests for specific roles or skills, and tests for specific types of candidate potential.

c. Work-Based Assessments

You may also want to consider assessments that align closely to a test for the skills of the role. For instance, you may want to understand a digital candidate's ability to code, a policy candidate's ability to write or a telephony candidate's ability to speak on the phone.

Testing skills might be done through a role-play or a written brief that you create as part of your recruitment campaign. You may also want to check in with the appropriate profession to understand the alignment with their frameworks. Alternatively, your department may be able to recommend assessments they have tested or run elsewhere in the business that could be applicable in your campaign.

If your department is a GRS customer you may also want to speak with their account managers to engage their Selection and Assessment Design Services.



6. Interviews

Please note, it is important that your job advert outlines every aspect of the assessment structure to a candidate, as this cannot be amended after the recruitment process begins (unless you withdraw the campaign). Take the time to consider your end-to-end campaign well before the interview point.

a. Things to consider before an interview:

- **Should the interview be in person?** With a drive to recruit wider across the UK and make more roles open to candidates in varying locations, this can be a consideration that may not always be applicable. However, if you suspect a campaign will draw an influx of candidates or sifting has shown a high use of AI in the process, you may want to think about meeting candidates face-to-face. This gives the opportunity to ensure the person you are interviewing is who you expected and that, unless there is a valid reason or reasonable adjustment, they are not using AI during their discussions with you.
- **Are you setting up your interview questions in the best way?** It is useful to consider the range of Success Profile elements that can be employed within an interview to understand more about a candidate. For instance, if you have collated a CV as part of your process you can utilise Experience questions to draw out more examples of how that work has developed the candidate. This also means should a candidate be suspected of plagiarism, they might struggle to develop their answers to the right level for your assessment. You may also want to think about the use of Strengths questions, which should be answered in a quicker, less structured way.

b. Things to consider during an interview:

- **Have you set out the standard at the beginning of the interview?** You must inform a candidate in advance of the interview and remind them again at the start of an interview that AI is not permitted as part of the process. This makes it clear the standard of expectation but also supports you if a candidate is using AI inappropriately at any point and you feel you cannot



progress. It is important to give a candidate the opportunity to provide any reasoning before you terminate an interview, e.g. an AI bot may join a call with a candidate but it could be something that is attached to all of their meeting invites to take notes and they may just need a reminder to remove it.

- **Are you asking follow up questions?** There may be times where you utilise questions, such as behaviours, that candidates may have more structured, pre-prepared answers. This might mean that they read more from off screen or it feels rehearsed - but this does not necessarily mean they are using AI inappropriately. It is important that you utilise follow up questions to draw out more detail from a candidate, such as, with regard to behaviours - *'You mentioned having push-back from a stakeholder, how did you handle that?'* - or with regards to the experience - *'can you tell me more about how your team was structured to deliver this change?'*. This is a vital opportunity to understand whether a response is in line with the experiences on the CV, and feels natural or accurate.

c. If you suspect a candidate is using AI during an interview:

If clear evidence of AI misuse is present (e.g., an AI bot joins the call), the procedure is to first inform the candidate of the rules and offer a chance to amend the situation. If they do not comply, you may stop the interview and provide a detailed written outline of the situation.

There will often be times where it is not as clear. If you suspect a candidate is using AI but do not have clear evidence at the time, you should continue the interview. You may choose to utilise more probing questions to understand if a candidate is giving truthful answers. You should not as a panel consult with one another during the interview as this is not providing a fair and positive experience for the candidate. You may however want to have a discussion post-panel if you are concerned that a candidate has not been truthful. You should also consult with your recruitment team if you are unsure. It is the Chair's responsibility to make the final decision and you should have clear evidence and provide a write up to outline reasoning.

It is important to rate a candidate's response on the content and its alignment with the Success Profile element you are testing. You must not mark a candidate down



because you suspect they may be using AI in the process, unless you have identified evidence that they have plagiarised or are giving an inaccurate representation of themselves.

You should also align with the principles set out from the Commission in this document (2.C). It's important that you are aware of the legal requirement set out in the Civil Service Recruitment Principles to run a 'fair and open' recruitment process and ensure candidates are notified and given an opportunity to complain should they disagree with this outcome. You should follow your departmental procedures for this.



7. AI and Reasonable Adjustments

It is unlawful to discriminate during recruitment and the final decision of who to offer employment to. Organisations must make reasonable adjustments to premises or working practices to help disabled job applicants who are placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Where selection tests are used, departments should consider whether to make adjustments if a test or assessment would, or is considered likely to, put a disabled applicant at a substantial disadvantage.

Examples of adjustments which may be reasonable include:

- providing written instructions in an accessible format;
- allowing a disabled person extra time to complete a test;
- permitting a disabled person the assistance of a reader or scribe during the test; and
- allowing a disabled applicant to take an oral test in writing or a written test orally.

To be aware of:

Reasonable adjustments and the use of assistive technology may present themselves in similar ways that the use of AI, for instance, a candidate looking off to the side or taking more time to respond. It is imperative that you are aware of this as a hiring manager and do not make assumptions about a candidate.

There may be instances where a candidate would like to use AI in their recruitment processes e.g. at an interview to transcribe. You should discuss any requests like this with your department who may hold policy lines on what is appropriate and reasonable.

Please engage with your departmental leads or for GRS customers, the GRS Reasonable Adjustment team if you have any questions regarding requests.



8. Use of AI by the Hiring Manager

There are many opportunities to utilise AI as part of the recruitment process. This may be through generating specific interview questions and using AI to help draft job adverts.

Some departments are exploring AI tools and trialling them within the recruitment process. It is important that any tool used in recruitment does not impact the Civil Service's ability to be fair and open, in line with the [Commission principles](#). This includes ensuring that no candidate is unfairly impacted by a tool or there is no bias within the system that could prevent the recruitment of the best candidate for the role. GPG, the Commission and colleagues across the Civil Service are working together to ensure the right balance between speeding up recruitment processes and ensuring AI is used ethically, legally and appropriately.

Hiring managers must only use AI tools that have been explicitly approved and vetted by their department's recruitment policy leads to ensure compliance with Civil Service Commission principles and GDPR.

a. GDPR

It's vital that Hiring Managers understand their role to act responsibly, legally and ethically in regard to candidate data. This involves ensuring transparency, fair processing and the potential for bias. Consequently, **hiring managers must not put candidates' data through AI software such as ChatGPT**. Regardless of whether this is anonymised, this would breach GDPR if done without the candidate's knowledge and consent.

As AI technology develops there may be opportunities to enhance how Hiring Managers can use AI but this would involve total transparency with candidates including their consent for their data to be processed or inputted into AI tools. Questions from candidates would undoubtedly be raised regarding potential bias and ethics and departments would have to prove and justify how decisions have been made, or how AI has been used which is still in line with the Commission's recruitment principle of fairness.



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Please engage with your internal recruitment teams to find out whether any tools are available for usage at the moment. This guidance will continue to be updated as and when tools become available for cross-Civil Service use, or to highlight best practices within the recruitment space.