



# Principles for agency use of AI in Recruitment

## Purpose

These principles have been developed to guide the ethical, responsible and transparent use of artificial intelligence (AI) by Australian Public Service (APS) agencies throughout recruitment processes.

These principles should be read in conjunction with:

- [AI Plan for the Australian Public Service 2025 | digital.gov.au](https://digital.gov.au/ai-plan)
- [Policy for the responsible use of AI in government | Digital Transformation Agency](#)
- [Australia's Artificial Intelligence Ethics Principles | Department of Industry Science and Resources](#)
- [Guidance material for using AI-assisted recruitment tools | Merit Protection Commissioner](#)

Complementary to these principles are the:

- Guide to managing candidate use of AI in recruitment, and
- Principles for candidate use of AI in recruitment

## Overview

The APS is committed to upholding high standards of integrity, transparency and fairness in its recruitment practices as required by the APS Employment Principles. As AI tools and technologies become more widely used by APS agencies in recruitment processes, it is essential that their adoption is consistent with the AI Plan for the APS, the Policy for responsible use of AI in government and the AI Ethics Principles and their use is compliant with the *Public Service Act 1999*, the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022* and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This document provides a set of guiding principles that support the ethical, responsible and transparent use of AI tools in APS recruitment, including the assessment of candidates through written applications, resumes, interview, work samples and any other assessment activities undertaken to determine candidate suitability for the advertised role. These principles are designed to help agencies harness the benefits of AI tools, while actively managing risks, such as, but not limited to, those relating to bias, discrimination and data privacy. APS agencies are strongly encouraged to embark on their



use of AI in recruitment by starting small and building AI capability while maintaining human-centred oversight and decision-making throughout. This could be through minimising the administrative burden such as using AI to take notes during interviews or to use AI to draft a first cut of a selection report for human review and finalisation.

APS agencies are required to adopt and implement these principles to guide the responsible and transparent use of AI tools in recruitment. This includes ensuring use of AI by recruitment providers undertaking services for the agency aligns with the principles. Doing so will ensure the use of AI tools by agencies is aligned with and upholds the APS Values and Employment Principles and supports merit-based employment decisions.

By embedding these principles into recruitment design, agencies can support better outcomes for candidates, further strengthen trust in APS recruitment and employment decisions, and demonstrate stewardship in the responsible use of emerging technologies.

## Principles

When applied effectively, the use of AI tools in APS recruitment processes has the potential to streamline recruitment timeframes, improve cost effectiveness, enhance consistency of decision making while upholding the principles of merit which underpin APS employment decisions.

The following principles encourage a measured approach to the use of AI in recruitment, with a strong emphasis on human oversight and decision-making, ethical governance and continuous evaluation. The principles align with the [AI Plan for the APS](#), which is built on 3 pillars: Trust, People and Tools. The principles are also consistent with the Policy for the Responsible use of AI in government which require the appointment of a Chief AI Officer at the SES Band 1 level to drive adoption and advocate for strategic change in their agencies and accountable official(s) to take accountability for implementing the policy.

### *Human-centred Oversight and Decision-making*

Human-centred oversight and decision-making in the use of AI in recruitment is essential to upholding the principle of merit. While AI tools can play a valuable role in supporting recruitment, their use must be carefully managed. AI tools should assist, not replace, human judgement, particularly at critical stages of the recruitment process. Relying solely on AI tools for decisions risks undermining the fairness and integrity of the process. For example, where agencies choose to use AI tools to assist with shortlisting, the process should incorporate human oversight through a moderation process or review of a random sample of applications by the selection panel to ensure they support the outcome reached by the AI tool. The size of the sample should be sufficiently robust to provide the panel and delegate with assurance that the AI tools are consistent with the selection panel's assessment.



In accordance with the merit principle, all recruitment and employment decisions must be explainable and defensible. This means that the delegate must be satisfied that the relative suitability of candidates' work-related qualities have been assessed through fair, transparent and competitive selection processes.

### *Governance, Accountability and Risk*

Governance and accountability measures are paramount to ensure the responsible and transparent use of AI tools in recruitment. Agencies using AI at any stage of a recruitment process are required to develop and implement a policy that governs the use of AI in recruitment that fits the agency's specific operating environment. This could be a standalone policy or be incorporated into a general AI policy or recruitment policy that already exists within the agency. The policy should cover things such as:

- outlining the stages of the recruitment process that AI tools can and cannot be utilised
- the types of AI tools that may be used
- whether AI is to be used for administrative tasks or if it can be used to make assessments (noting human oversight would still be required where AI makes assessments)
- where and when human-centred oversight and decision making is required
- how privacy and security are being upheld
- the establishment of audit arrangements to assess the performance of AI tools to ensure they are being used as intended and that their outputs are consistent with initial scoping and validation testing
- who within the agency has accountability/delegation for decisions related to the use of AI tools in recruitment. For example, who within the agency is responsible for decisions related to which AI tools and technologies are safe to use from a security and privacy perspective, who is responsible for the stages at which AI tools can be used, and who is responsible for ensuring the outcomes determined through the use of AI are correct and defensible. And
- AI tools must not make the final decision in recruitment outcomes. This requires human review and oversight and remains the responsibility of the selection panel and delegate.

Before deploying new AI tools to assist with recruitment, agencies will need to complete an [AI impact assessment](#), consistent with the [Policy for the Responsible use of AI in Government](#), to understand the risks and impacts of their AI use and identify ways to address these. Where the impact assessment identifies the AI use to be high risk, the use case must be referred to the AI Review Committee in accordance with the [AI Plan for the APS](#).



### *Transparency and Explainability*

Agencies are required to be transparent about the use of AI in recruitment processes. Agencies must advise candidates in the vacancy advertisements and candidate packs if they intend to use AI including information that explains how and when AI tools may be used. Agencies could also disclose their use of AI in recruitment in their corporate AI transparency statement ([Transparency statements | digital.gov.au](https://www.digital.gov.au/transparency-statements)). Agencies must advise candidates in the vacancy advertisements and candidate packs if they intend to use AI including information that explains how and when AI tools may be used, as well as which AI tools will be used. Agencies should also be clear in their expectations around candidate use of AI tools, which may include advising candidates about which stages they can or cannot use AI tools. Agencies must ensure they provide candidates with a copy of the Principles for candidate use of AI in recruitment.

Further, agencies must understand how the AI tools are used, what capabilities it is testing and outline the human oversight that will be deployed to ensure that AI is supporting the recruitment process and does not remove human decision-making. This includes where AI is being used by a contracted recruitment provider. Agencies should ensure that where contracted recruitment providers use AI tools they are able to explain how the AI tools are used, what security and privacy assessments have been undertaken to ensure candidate data is kept safe, and that the AI tools used are properly aligned to the work-related qualities they need to assess to ensure outcomes are consistent with the APS Employment Principles and uphold merit.

Ultimately, agencies are responsible for the outputs of AI tools, whether used by the agency itself or a contracted recruitment provider. Agencies should be able to document in the selection report the types of AI tools that have been used throughout a recruitment process and how they work. For example, where used for assessments this might include outlining what work-related qualities have been assessed, at what stages each AI tool was deployed and the human-centred oversight that was used to ensure the AI tools have reached an outcome that is consistent with the Employment Principles. In detailing the way the AI is used, agencies can refer to existing documentation where it exists.

### *Fairness, Bias Mitigation and Merit*

Recruitment and promotion decisions must be made on the basis of merit. Agencies must ensure that where AI tools are used they support fair, inclusive, accessible and merit-based recruitment design and practices. This means that all candidates are treated equitably regardless of background or personal attributes and that the AI tools used are accessible for all candidates. For example, if an agency decides to use a pre-recorded or online interview platform they should ensure that it is accessible for vision impaired candidates. To access the online interview questions and any other written instructions within the platform, vision impaired candidates may require a platform that can either be used with screen reader



technology or a platform that has the option for the question to be read aloud to them rather than requiring them to read the questions from the screen.

AI tools and technologies can develop unintended biases, which can result from how the model was originally trained and from the data that is input into it over time. To mitigate this, agencies will need to have a thorough understanding of the AI tools they choose to utilise, ensure that AI tools are aligned with the work-related qualities that are required for the role and must regularly assess AI tools used for accuracy and unintended bias. Where agencies use AI tools for the purpose of assessments, they must understand how it is making those assessment decisions and ensure the methodology and outcomes are robust, fair, accurate and defensible. Without this information, agencies will not be able to confidently ensure that AI tools are working as intended. Where technical expertise on AI and recruitment decision-making authority are organisationally separated, agencies should establish clear governance arrangements to ensure accountability for AI tool performance and fair outcomes remains intact across all levels of the recruitment process.

### *Continuous Capability Building and Adaptability*

Before agencies utilise AI tools in recruitment processes, it is critical that staff are adequately trained in the responsible use of AI tools. This should also include uplift in AI capability for staff to ensure they understand how the AI tools they are using work, the potential risks that may arise, as well as how to monitor that the outcomes produced by the AI tools are both fair and accurate. Agencies may need to consider the benefits of providing more detailed or targeted training for HR / recruitment staff to assist them to explain the benefits and risks of AI tools to recruiting managers and enable them to effectively support them throughout the recruitment process. Agencies should refer to the [guidance for staff training on AI](#) for further information.

Adaptability is also imperative, particularly as AI tools are a highly dynamic, emerging technology. Agencies must be prepared to adjust their recruitment practices in response to new, more effective AI technologies, evolving regulatory requirements and changing expectations of candidates. Continuous capability building and adaptability will ensure that agencies continue to use AI in recruitment in a responsible, inclusive and forward-thinking manner that will assist agencies to effectively attract and select suitable candidates.