

Your Guide to Pre-Screening Early Careers Talent in the Age of AI



Chris Platts, CEO of ThriveMap, shares the do's and don'ts for recruiters to navigate AI challenges in early career talent acquisition.

AI is changing the game for graduate and apprentice recruitment around the world.

- 50% of workers and students are using AI to support their job applications.
- Tools like ChatGPT make an average of 14 embellishments per CV and are being used to write cover letters and complete application forms.
- Job search automation tools apply directly for roles without applicants ever needing to read the company or role details.

How many candidates are we shortlisting for the assessment centre?



The AI impact: What's happening?

The rise of generative AI is having a significant impact on the job application process, changing the way candidates apply and how employers evaluate talent. As applications increasingly start to resemble one another, any manual screening processes grow increasingly challenging.

A well-crafted resume or cover letter was once deemed a reliable indicator of a candidate's potential. Now, it's likely to have been generated by AI, telling you little about a candidate's true commitment or competence.

And while the number of applications to graduate programs and apprenticeships is on the rise, so too is candidate drop-off, complicating the recruiter's task of filtering and finding the right applicants.

What approaches are early career recruiters adopting to address the challenges posed by AI?

1.

Deter

Many recruiters now have clear policies on the acceptable use of AI in applications, assessments and interviews, combined with AI detection tools. However AI tools are consistently counteracting this by becoming smarter. It's now almost impossible to detect which candidates have used AI to write a resume or cover letter.

2.

Design

Most recruiters now realise that AI technology will be used ubiquitously across many tasks and jobs; this includes job applications. Rather than reject it, they have accepted it will be used regardless. The solution therefore lies in designing a pre-screen process that minimises the advantages of using generative AI in the hiring process.



3 recommended steps to combat AI challenges in pre-screening

1

Ditch the cover letter and any application forms:

Traditional documents like cover letters can easily be crafted by AI, making them less reliable for evaluating candidates.



2

Disqualify applicants who do not meet basic role criteria

Set clear standards, such as a valid right to work and minimum educational qualifications. Ensure that all eligible applicants are invited to the next step in the hiring process.



3

Implement a post-application screen

This step needs to be resistant to AI and ensures a level playing field for all candidates.

Automated approach: Consider using a pre-hire assessment, especially for entry-level roles with expected applicant volumes exceeding 10 or more candidates. This method saves recruiters' time while efficiently filtering qualified applicants.

Manual approach: For roles with lower applicant volumes, such as highly technical positions, a thorough phone screen can be the preferred method. Although it requires more recruiter time, it allows for a more qualitative assessment of candidates.



How to ensure your pre-screening assessment is AI-proof

Do's

- ✓ Use multiple-choice, situational, or interactive assessments that require more than just text-based responses, making it harder for AI to generate answers.
- ✓ Develop nuanced, company-specific questions that reflect real-world scenarios not easily found in public data forums or AI databases.
- ✓ Focus on context-rich, job-specific tasks or situational judgment questions, which require either human judgement or skill that cannot be easily predicted by AI.
- ✓ Create custom, human-generated questions that involve creative problem-solving or critical thinking unique to your company's challenges.
- ✓ Implement assessments that require applied knowledge or reasoning, such as problem-solving exercises tied to real-world tasks.
- ✓ Use job simulations that require candidates to demonstrate practical skills in scenarios that mimic actual job responsibilities.

Dont's

- ✗ Use any questions that require a written open-text response. This can easily be answered by generative AI.
- ✗ Use any assessments that have generic, pre-existing questions (e.g., already found on the internet) as AI may already have answers in its training data.
- ✗ Use any question types that are easily answered by AI, such as most "non-contextual" questions (e.g., standard math problems).
- ✗ Use questions that have been created by generative AI, as another AI is likely to recognise and answer them easily.
- ✗ Rely on questions that can be solved with simple fact-checking or data recall, as AI can quickly provide accurate answers.
- ✗ Use questions that focus solely on knowledge recall (e.g., general trivia or definitions).

Build an AI-proof application process with ThriveMap's Realistic Job Assessments:

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