The state of the AI-enabled candidate 2024-25

How candidates are using AI in the recruitment process — and why traditional selection tools are now redundant

ARCTIC SHORES

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Part 1

Why Talent Acquisition teams must rethink their selection process right now

Executive summary

From Robert Newry, CEO & Co-founder of Arctic Shores

Our insights are drawn from a survey of more than 2,000 students, recent graduates — and, for the first time, professionals with **3 to 40 years of experience**. As well as from peer-reviewed research into the vulnerability of various assessment tools.

We hope you find these findings as illuminating as we did. Please reach out to us via **hello@arcticshores.com** if you have any questions.

Eighteen months ago the world changed. ChatGPT exploded into practically every laptop, smartphone and dinner conversation. Within two months, it reached **100 million users** — faster than TikTok, Instagram, Spotify, and Uber. Today, people of all ages use it much like a calculator to enhance their abilities. Only instead of being limited to maths, it helps generate better writing, images and videos — while also enhancing reasoning and arithmetic.

Adoption of these tools in the recruitment process has happened faster than anyone imagined.

Thousands of TA teams now feel the impact. Overwhelmed with a 10X rise in the volume of applications, they're seeing a stark difference between candidate performance in the early, digital stages of the selection process — and their performance in later, in-person stages.

Here are the key trends driving this change in candidate behaviour.

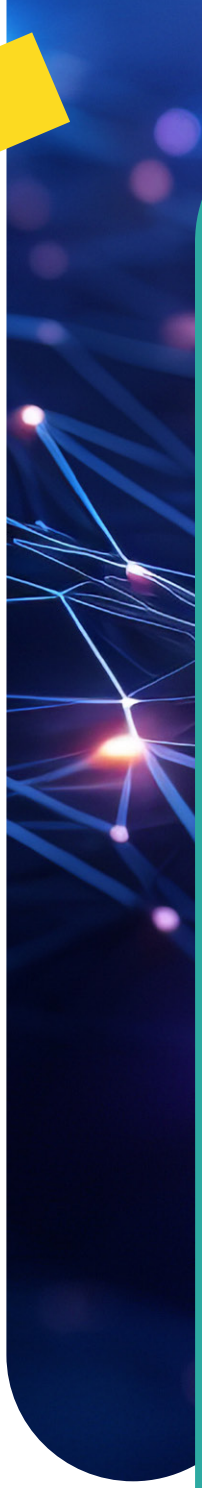
Adoption and proficiency in AI tools is rising rapidly

It's clear that AI has taken root with **students and recent graduates, with a staggering 88% now using it regularly**. Just last year, this figure sat at 72%, showing how quickly AI adoption is accelerating among this generation.

And it's not just frequency of use that's growing — **86% of Early Careers candidates now consider themselves proficient in AI**. Advanced use is no longer limited to a few outliers; it's becoming the new norm.

Perhaps most surprising is that these trends also hold true for professionals and experienced hires. **61% of professionals are now using AI regularly**. And with 2 in 3 experienced hires with 10-20 years of experience tapping into AI tools, it's clear that usage goes far beyond Gen Alpa and even Gen Z.

This widespread adoption is reshaping the recruitment process in a big way. Our findings show that AI is shifting the balance of power, giving candidates an edge and forcing recruiters to adapt.

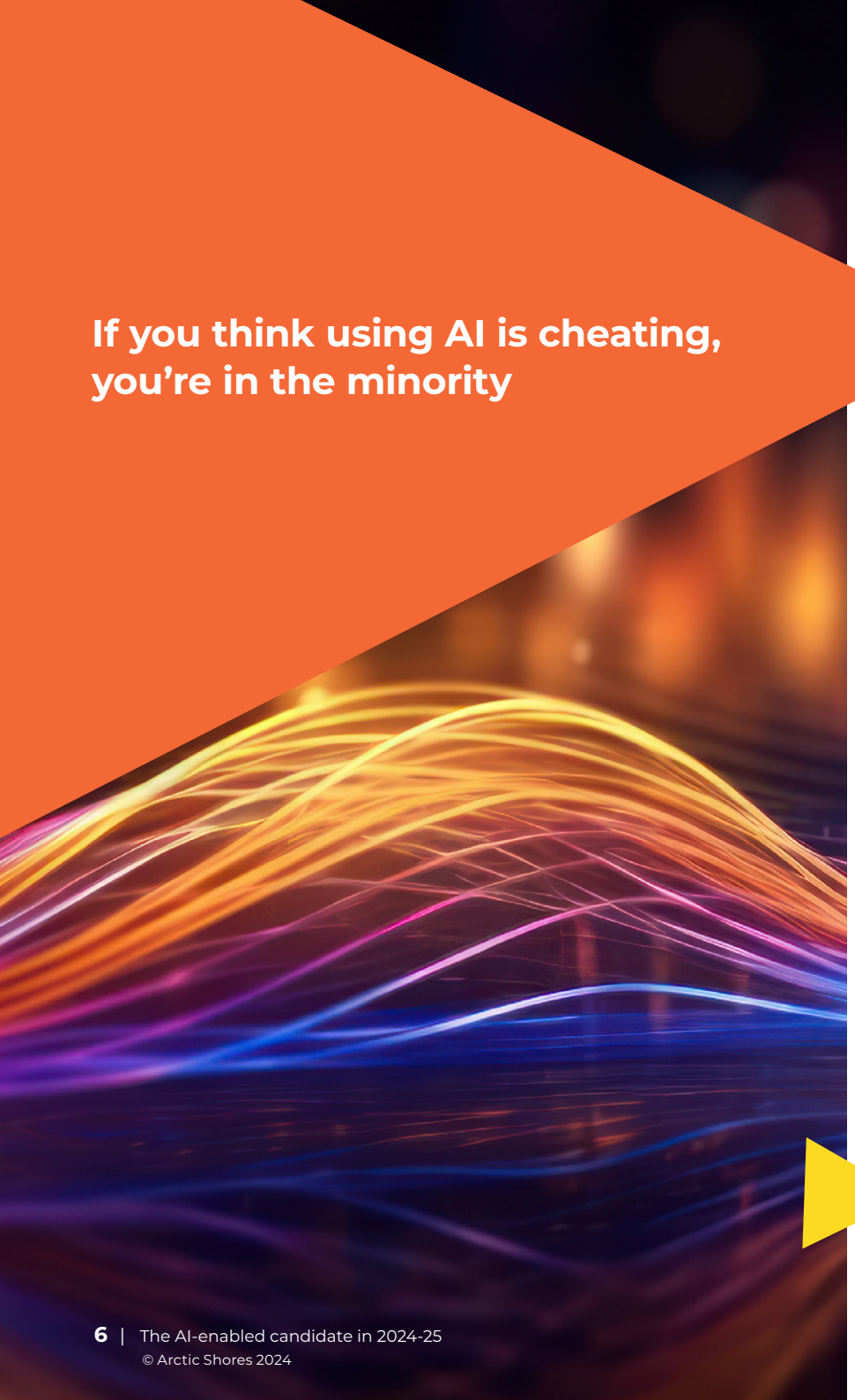


The balance of power has shifted towards candidates

AI is now woven into the fabric of the recruitment process for candidates — **59% of students and recent graduates, and 58% of professionals, have already** or plan to **use AI** in the next 12 months to boost their chances of landing the perfect role.

Candidates aren't just polishing their CVs with AI, they're using it to prepare for interviews and automate applications. **1 in 5 are even using AI to tackle psychometric assessments.** This level of adoption signals a shift in candidate behaviour, giving job seekers more control over the hiring process.

For talent acquisition leaders, this means one thing: **candidates are evolving, and your recruitment strategies need to evolve with them**. The days of using traditional methods are numbered if you want to maintain an efficient, effective process. Now, it's on TA leaders to stay one step ahead in a landscape where the balance of power is increasingly tipping in candidates' favour.



If you think using AI is cheating, you're in the minority

Candidates and professionals alike are not turning to AI to cheat the system — far from it. Only 8% of Early Careers respondents and 10% of professionals want to cheat. Instead, **the majority are using AI to enhance their chances in a competitive job market:** 33% of Early Careers candidates and 37% of professionals say they're simply trying to give themselves the best shot at landing a role.

Many also use AI to improve their writing and clarify their thinking (36% across both groups), while others (19% of Early Careers candidates and 20% of professionals) are adopting it to avoid being left behind by their peers.

The message is clear: AI isn't being used to cheat — it's levelling the playing field for those struggling to break through.

Especially for underrepresented groups like Black professionals, where 1 in 3 report using AI to help them break through, after a long period of applying for roles without being successful.

At the same time, the growing consensus is that employers need to embrace AI. One in three Early Careers candidates wouldn't work for a company that banned AI, and 59% see it as their right to use AI when applying for jobs. This feeling is even stronger among professionals, with 58% of those with 3-10 years of experience feeling that banning AI would make an employer seem outdated.

As the use of AI grows, employers who fail to adapt risk losing credibility and a competitive edge. Especially in the eyes of a workforce increasingly reliant on these tools to compete and succeed.

AI has shattered recruitment best practices. TA professionals must act now

Standing still is no longer an option. As candidate behaviour shifts, traditional recruitment processes are starting to crack under the pressure.

In partnership with UCL researchers, Arctic Shores revealed: ChatGPT didn't just hold its own in verbal reasoning tests — **it outperformed 98.8% of human candidates**. (This research has now been **validated and peer reviewed**.) It also scored in the **70th percentile on Situational Judgement Tests**. And when it comes to Personality assessments, it's unbeatable — **just by scanning the job description**.

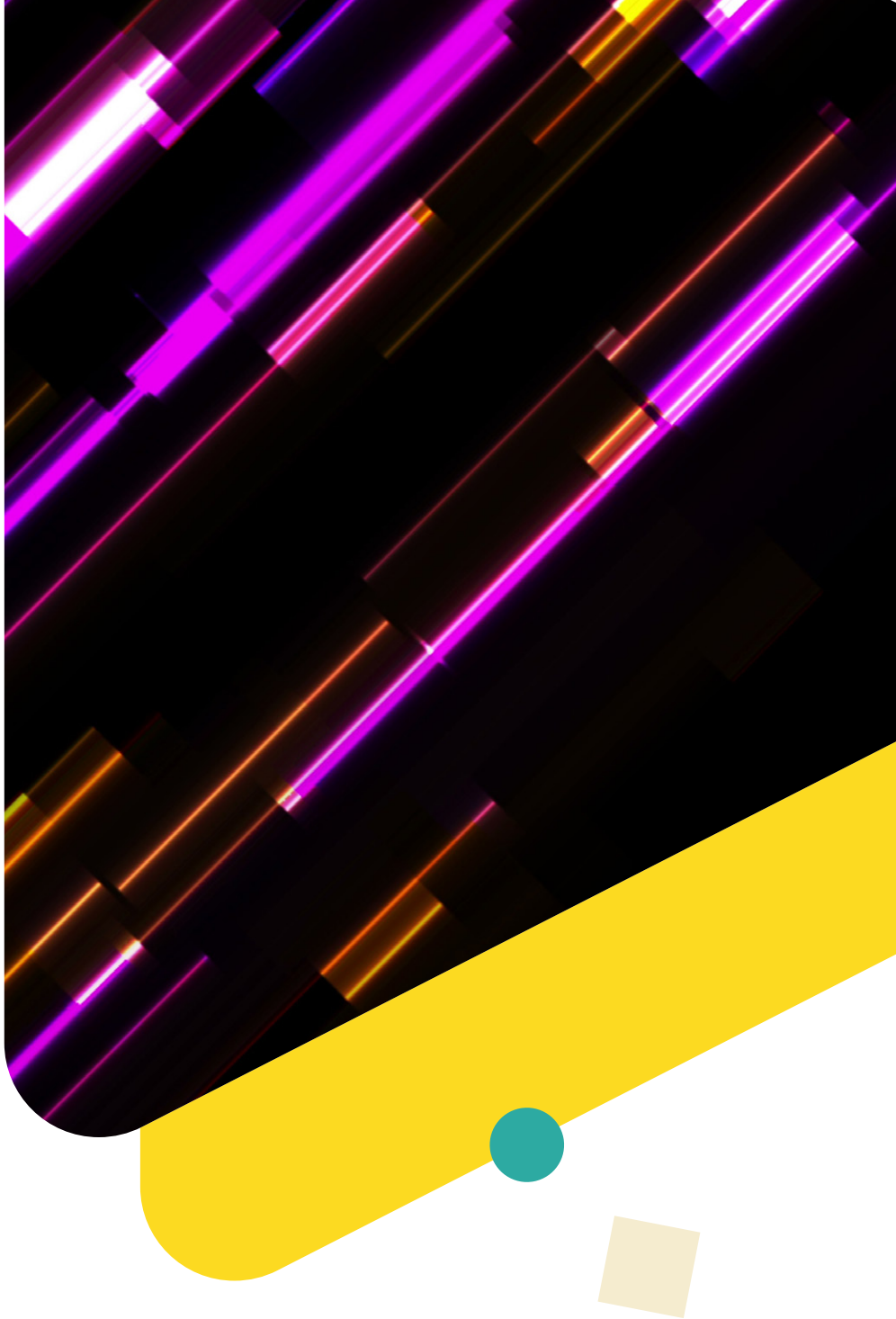
When you combine these AI breakthroughs with the rapid adoption of tools like **AutoApplyAI**, it's clear the recruitment landscape is changing fast.

We're already seeing examples where application volumes are soaring from 12,000 in 2023, to 45,000 in 2024. And who knows what 2025 will have in store.

Candidates can now apply to thousands of roles while they sleep, leaving TA teams buried under an avalanche of applications.

In response, some teams have resorted to hiring extra staff to sift through the mountain of CVs, but this costly fix only addresses part of the problem. With more CVs comes a greater risk of becoming numb to top talent and letting them slip through the cracks.

Without a scalable, accurate way to sift through this growing pool of candidates, recruitment processes will become inefficient, unsustainable, and most importantly, ineffective at finding the right people for the job. It's time to evolve, or risk falling behind.



Dive deeper into these findings in the next two chapters, before addressing the vulnerabilities of traditional recruitment methods in Chapter four.

If you're ready for practical steps on building an AI-proof selection process, jump straight to Chapter five and the **three options TA leaders have to adapt their selection process in 2025**.

What's the solution?

TA leaders need to act fast to rethink their selection process — or face significant challenges:

1. Overstretching already stressed recruitment teams, forced to manually screen a flood of candidates.
2. Missing out on top talent due to 'CV numbness' from higher quality, AI-improved applications.
3. Increasing bias, as it becomes harder to fairly differentiate high volumes of AI-enhanced applications.
4. Giving an unfair advantage to candidates with financial means who can afford to pay for premium versions of tools like ChatGPT to boost their applications.
5. Relying on more in-person interviews as current processes struggle to effectively sift the right candidates.

The solution isn't just to deter or detect AI usage. Instead, we need to rethink selection processes to embrace AI—without sacrificing accuracy or fairness.

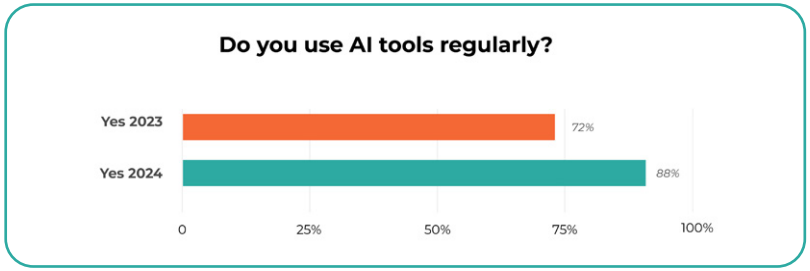
Part 2

DEEP DIVE: Early Careers

1 Adoption *and* proficiency are rising rapidly

If TA Leaders and Early Careers Specialists were in any doubt about whether ChatGPT is increasingly affecting their hiring process, our survey data shows that it is.

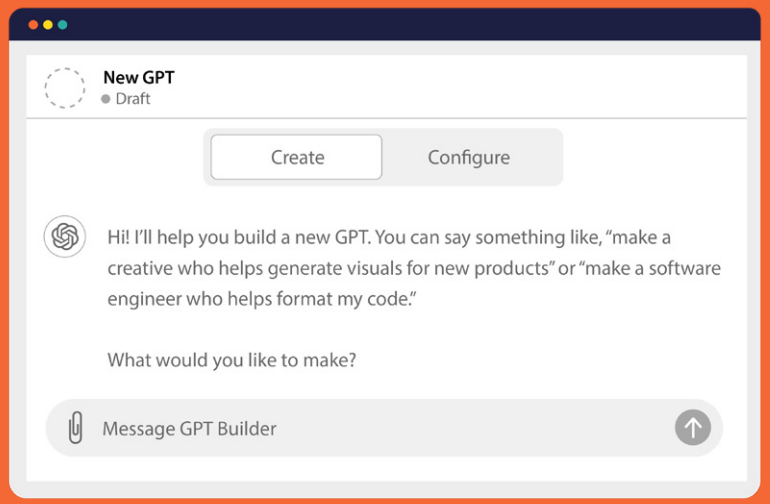
A year ago, 72% of candidates were using AI tools regularly. Today, this figure has grown even higher to 88%.



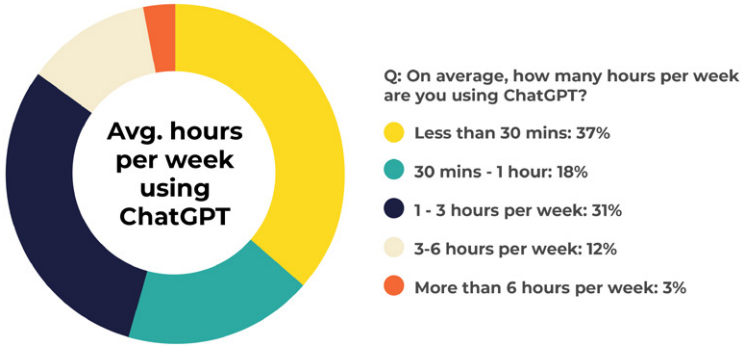
And with higher usage comes more proficiency. 86% of students and recent graduates describe themselves as proficient users. With 1 in 5 creating a Customer GPT *. This shows increasing levels of sophisticated uses by students and recent graduates.

What is a custom GPT?

A Custom GPT is a specialised version of the original GPT model developed by OpenAI, tailored to address specific needs or tasks within various fields or applications. 1 in 5 Early Careers candidates has created one.



Given these figures, it will be no surprise that the average candidate uses ChatGPT for 1 hour and 29 minutes per week. This is up from 1 hour and 14 minutes last year. **1 in 3 use it for 1-3 hours per week.**



Early Careers candidates are becoming consumers of AI

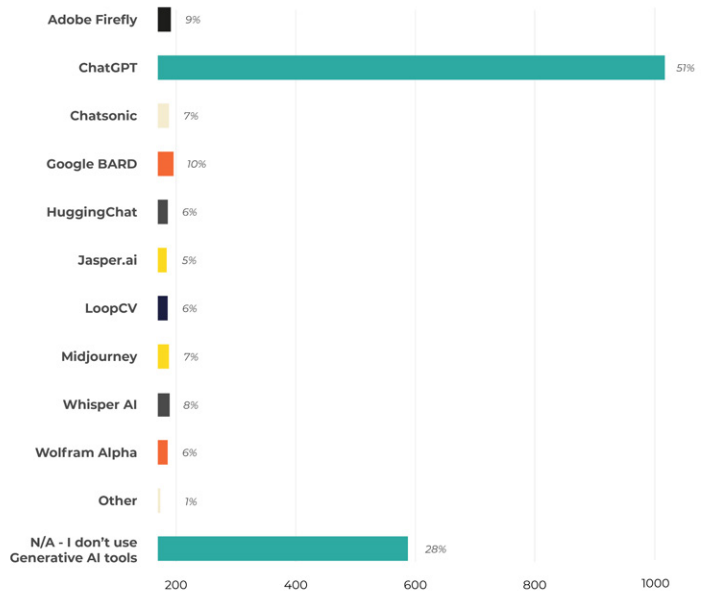
What's perhaps more interesting is that ChatGPT is no longer the only dominant AI tool on the market. While it's still the most popular choice by far (72% have used it), Bing AI (27%), Canva AI (22%) and Google BARD/Gemini (17%) all have a lot more users than last year. Showing that Early Careers candidates are experimenting with different tools and becoming true consumers of AI technology.

What's also worth noting is the reduction in students and recent graduates who have **NOT** used **any** AI tools since last year — falling from 28% last year, to just 12% this year.

VS

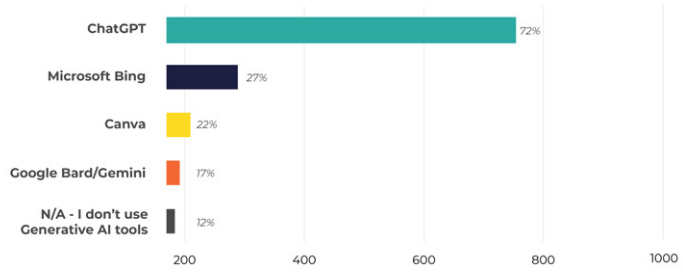
2023

Which, if any, of the following Generative AI tools do you use?



2024

Which, if any, of the following Generative AI tools do you use?



The conclusion is clear. Adoption of AI tools by students and recent graduates is accelerating at breakneck speed. And so are proficiency, levels of experimentation, and the number of points within the recruitment process where candidates are beginning to use AI to automate their journey.

In short, AI is changing how Early Careers talent behaves. If TA teams weren't worried about the impact of AI, or didn't have an opinion, that's no longer an option.

So *where* are Early Careers candidates using AI in the recruitment process?

2

Most candidates are *now* using AI in recruitment

59% of respondents have used AI in the recruitment process in the last 12 months or plan to do so.

45% **have or would use AI to help them write a CV**

36% **have or would use AI to prepare for interviews**

20% **have or would use AI to automate applying for jobs**

17% **have or would use AI to complete psychometric assessments**

This correlates with much of the feedback Arctic Shores has heard from the TA community:

> We've seen a huge increase in the **volume and quality** of written applications at first sift but a huge **drop in quality at final interview** or assessment centre

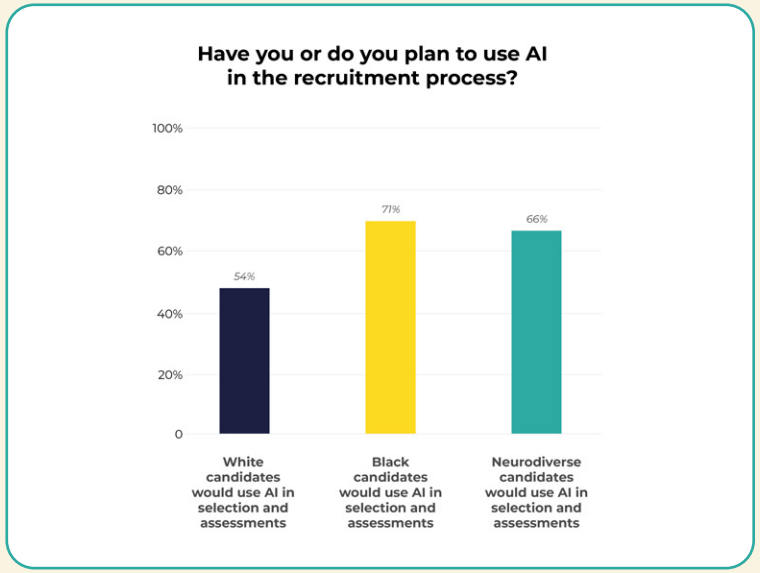
In many cases, this has led to rerunning assessment centres and interview stages — placing even greater strain on already-stretched recruiters and hiring managers.

Underrepresented groups are using AI in the process at disproportionately high rates

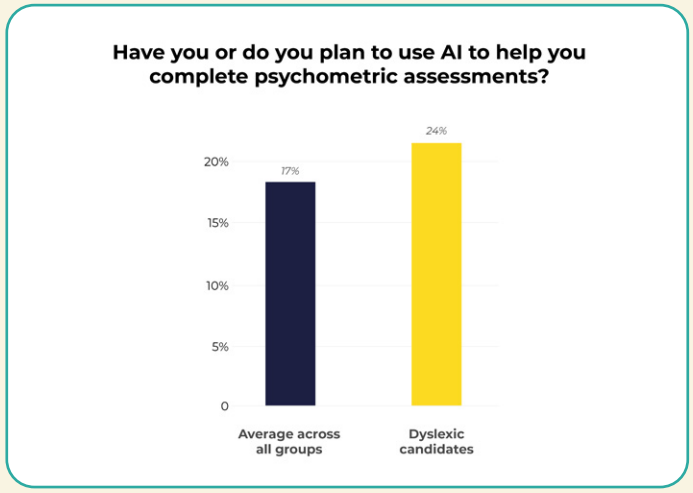
Interestingly, there are some big differences between demographics when it comes to using AI in the recruitment process.

54% of white candidates say they have used or would use AI for this purpose. While 71% of Black candidates say the same.

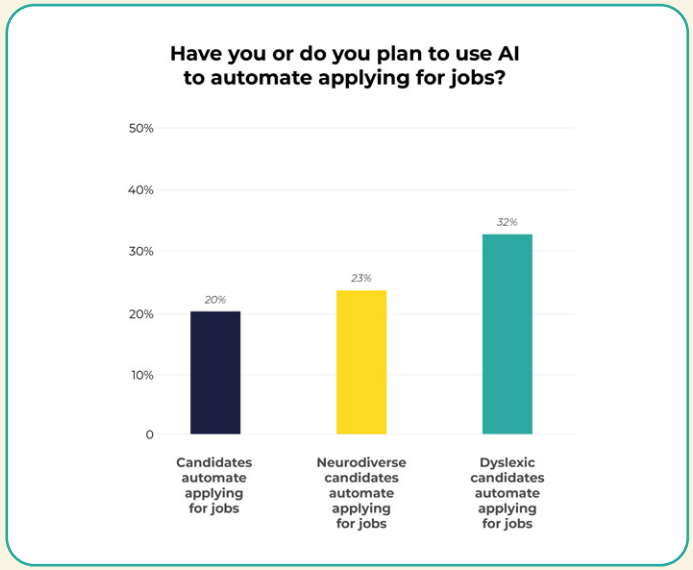
66% of neurodiverse candidates also have or would use AI tools in the recruitment process.



On average, 17% of students and recent graduates use AI in psychometric assessments — but this jumps to 24% of dyslexic respondents.



Likewise, on average 20% of Early Careers students are using AI to automate applying for jobs — but this rises to 23% for neurodiverse candidates and 32% for dyslexic candidates.



Underrepresented groups are using AI in the process at disproportionately high rates

In recent months, we've seen a range of responses to this increased use of AI in selection and assessments. Traditional psychometric vendors in particular have been very vocal about the need to treat AI usage as cheating and to deter and detect any use of tools in the process.

However, our next insight shows this approach may in fact damage companies' credibility, harm their employer brand, and mean they penalise under-represented groups.

3

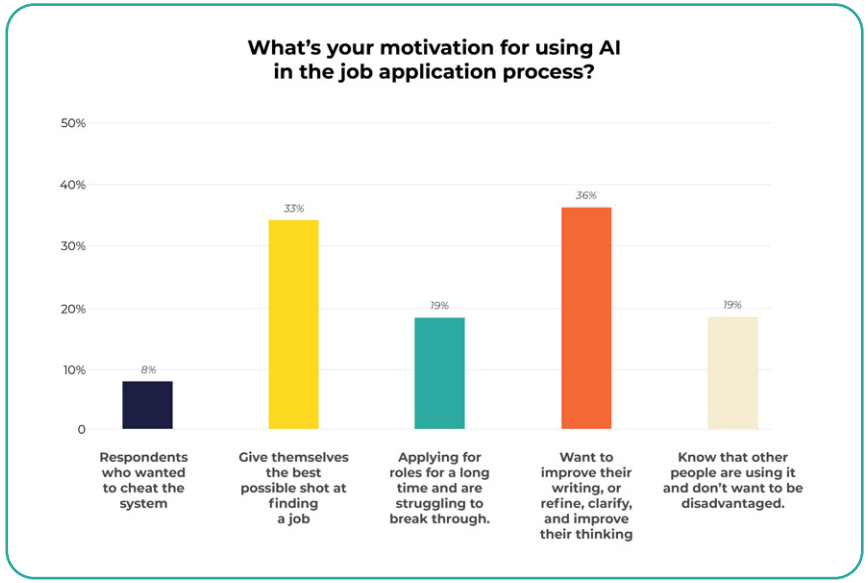
Candidates are *not* using AI to cheat

Only 8% of survey respondents said they wanted to cheat the system.

33% just want to give themselves the best possible shot at finding a job... which is unsurprising as 19% say they've been applying for roles for a long time and are struggling to break through.

36% want to improve their writing, or refine, clarify, and improve their thinking.

While 19% know that other people are using it and don't want to be disadvantaged.



Differences in demographic usage

The need to move away from viewing AI-enabled candidates as 'cheats' becomes even more obvious when we look at the demographic data.

Neurodiverse candidates

- 42% use AI to improve writing
- 48% use AI to refine, clarify and improve thinking

Black candidates

- 45% use AI to improve writing (vs 32% of white candidates)
- 45% use AI to refine, clarify and improve thinking (vs 31% of white candidates)

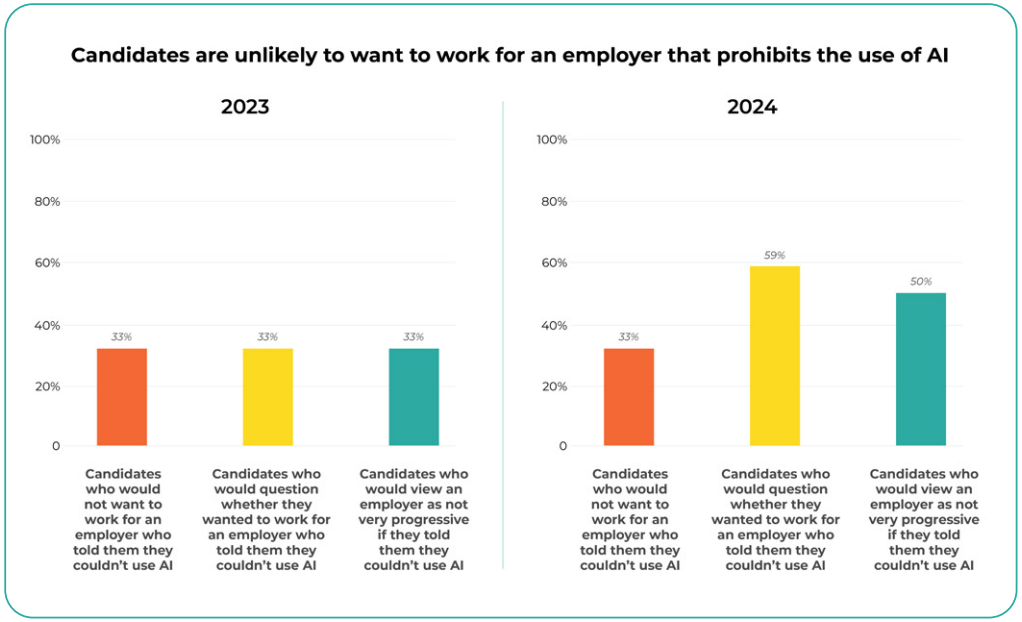
The message from candidates is clear:

> **AI is not being used to cheat. Candidates are using AI like a calculator — a tool to help level the playing field.**

Candidates think employers must *embrace* AI usage

A third of candidates *wouldn't* want to work for an employer who banned AI. 59% think it's their right to use AI, and 50% think an employer would be behind the times if they banned it.

This is a marked increase from last year.



Again, these numbers are even higher for some diverse groups.

65% of Asian candidates and 67% of Black candidates believe prospective employers should allow you to use AI to improve your chances when applying for a job (vs 54% of white candidates).

Should employers deter and detect AI usage, or embrace it in Early Careers?

49% of candidates would be most likely to accept an offer with a company that embraces and guides AI use vs just 16% of candidates who would accept an offer with a company that detects it.

Again, this number increases across certain demographics:

62% **Black candidates prefer 'embrace and guide' vs 13% who prefer 'detect'**

68% **of men are comfortable with monitoring (detection) vs just 54% of women**

The fact is that 53% of students and recent graduates already use AI at work.

22% use AI at work even if their employer doesn't allow it

And this is even higher for dyslexic respondents at 27%.

The message is clear: deterring and detecting AI usage will damage companies' credibility and harm their employer brand – especially with traditionally underrepresented groups.

5 Not embracing and guiding candidate use of AI makes the playing field uneven in additional ways

We also have to consider the additional benefit that some users are gaining from paid subscriptions to AI tools, which perform at a higher level than free versions — or offer greater, uncapped use.

For example, OpenAI o1 (the latest version of **ChatGPT**) uses reinforcement learning and chain-of-thought processing to "think" before responding, mimicking human problem-solving. It outperforms expert humans on PhD-level science questions and ranks in the 89th percentile for competitive programming. The model also solved 83% of International Mathematics Olympiad qualifying exam problems, compared to GPT-4o's 13%.

But this model sits behind a paywall and, to date, **only 45% of respondents have paid for ChatGPT premium**.

60% of students and recent graduates are unwilling to pay because they think it's too expensive.

This breaks down into 52% of men and 67% of women. Meaning that women are at risk of being left behind by their male counterparts who are benefitting from the enhanced reasoning capacity of subscription AI models.

In total, 60% of Early Careers candidates are priced out of subscription models; raising concerns that only a minority with financial means will benefit most from the new model's increased reasoning ability.

So if you choose to do nothing or continue without defining an approach, you're giving some people a leg up and holding others back.

Summary: Adoption and perceptions of AI for Early Careers candidates

Adoption and proficiency are rising rapidly:

88%

of students and recent graduates already use AI tools regularly. And 86% describe themselves as proficient users.

Most candidates have used or plan to use AI in selection and assessments:

59%

have used AI in the process in the last 12 months, or plan to do so. 1 in 5 plan to use AI to help complete psychometric assessments.

These candidates are not using AI to cheat:

1 in 3

simply want to improve their writing, or refine, clarify, and improve their thinking.

Candidates think employers must *embrace* AI usage:

59%

think it's their right to use AI tools. A third of candidates *wouldn't* want to work for an employer who banned AI. And 50% think an employer would be behind the times if they banned it.

Not embracing AI usage makes the playing field uneven in additional ways: 60% of students and recent graduates won't pay for ChatGPT premium because it's too expensive.

Part 3

DEEP DIVE: Professionals with 3+ years of experience

1 Adoption has gone mainstream among professionals

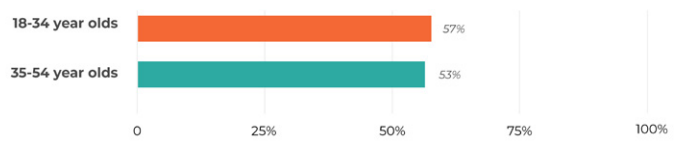
It's not just Early Careers candidates who are using AI. Our data also shows that professional adoption of AI is now *mainstream*.

Half of all professionals now use ChatGPT regularly.

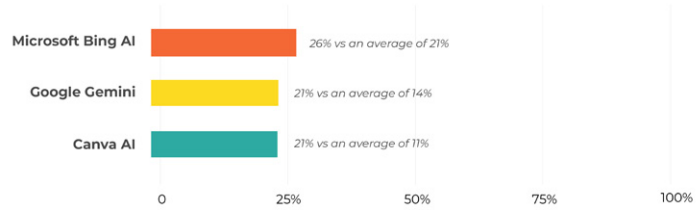
And AI adoption is not simply the reserve of Gen Z and younger Millenials. 57% of 18-34 year olds in this group are using the platform — followed closely by 53% of 35-54 year olds.

That said, 18-34-year-olds are greater consumers of AI tools, experimenting with what they use more widely: Bing AI (26% vs an average of 21%), Google BARD/Gemini (21% vs an average of 14%), Canva AI (21% vs an average of 11%).

GenAI adoption is not only used by GenZ and younger Millenials



Which other AI tools do you use?

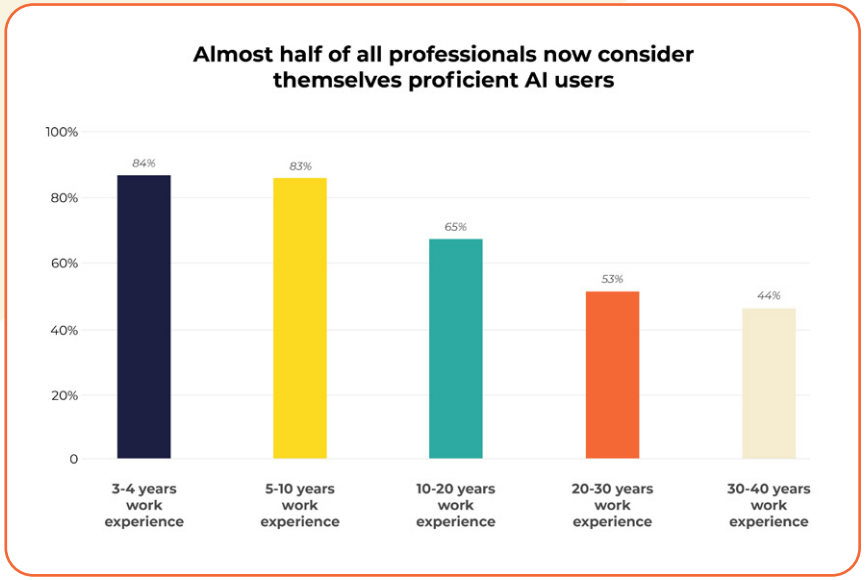


This shows that while ChatGPT has now firmly established itself across all age groups, there is perhaps greater understanding and desire to experiment from younger professionals.

Yet this openness to experimentation does not detract from the fact that the **majority of professionals with all levels of work experience now see themselves as proficient AI users.**

68% of respondents describe themselves as proficient users.

Given experienced hires are less willing to experiment with AI tools, you might also expect proficiency to be much lower for this group. However, we found that **over half of experienced hires with 20-30 years of experience classify themselves as proficient users**. As a result, employers can no longer underestimate the presence of AI in their recruitment process, based solely on years of experience.



The data clearly shows that while age and experience do play a part in candidates' use of AI, they are not an inhibiting factor.

Differences in demographic usage

There are also huge disparities in terms of proficiency when it comes to traditionally underrepresented groups.

88% of Black candidates describe themselves as proficient, vs 63% of white candidates.

This indicates these groups of professionals are deriving more value from ChatGPT, potentially to help them level the playing field. In fact, compared to the 43% of white candidates using ChatGPT, the following groups are using the AI model at a significantly higher rate:

74% **of Black candidates**

64% **of Mixed ethnic groups**

Added to this 52% of Neurodiverse candidates are using ChatGPT, compared to an average of 47%.

Despite these disparities, on average professionals spend 1 hour and 29 minutes using AI every week — showing that AI usage is officially (almost) as mainstream for experienced professionals as for Early Careers candidates.

2

Professionals are using AI in the recruitment process

58% have used AI in the recruitment process in the last 12 months, or plan to do so — almost the same number as in Early Careers.

46% **have or would use AI to help them write a CV**

37% **have or would use AI to prepare for interviews**

27% **have or would use AI to automate applying for jobs**

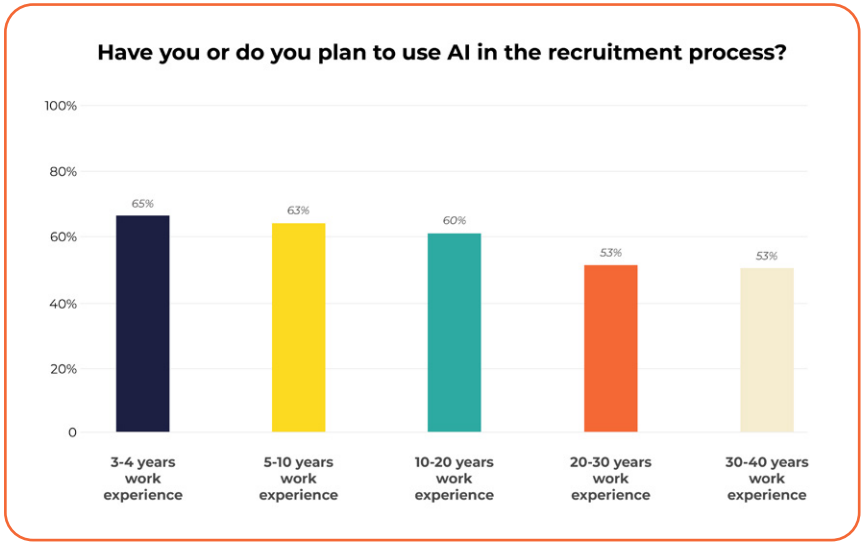
19% **have or would use AI to complete psychometric assessments**

As with Early Careers candidates, this correlates with much of the anecdotal feedback Arctic Shores has heard from the TA community:

> We're already stretched and now we're manually reviewing application forms vs ChatGPT responses - **80% are copy and pasted from ChatGPT**

This is leading many TA teams to hire an extra recruiter to sift CVs manually — even though they're worried that this approach will mean experiencing 'CV fatigue' because of the high volumes, and missing great talent.

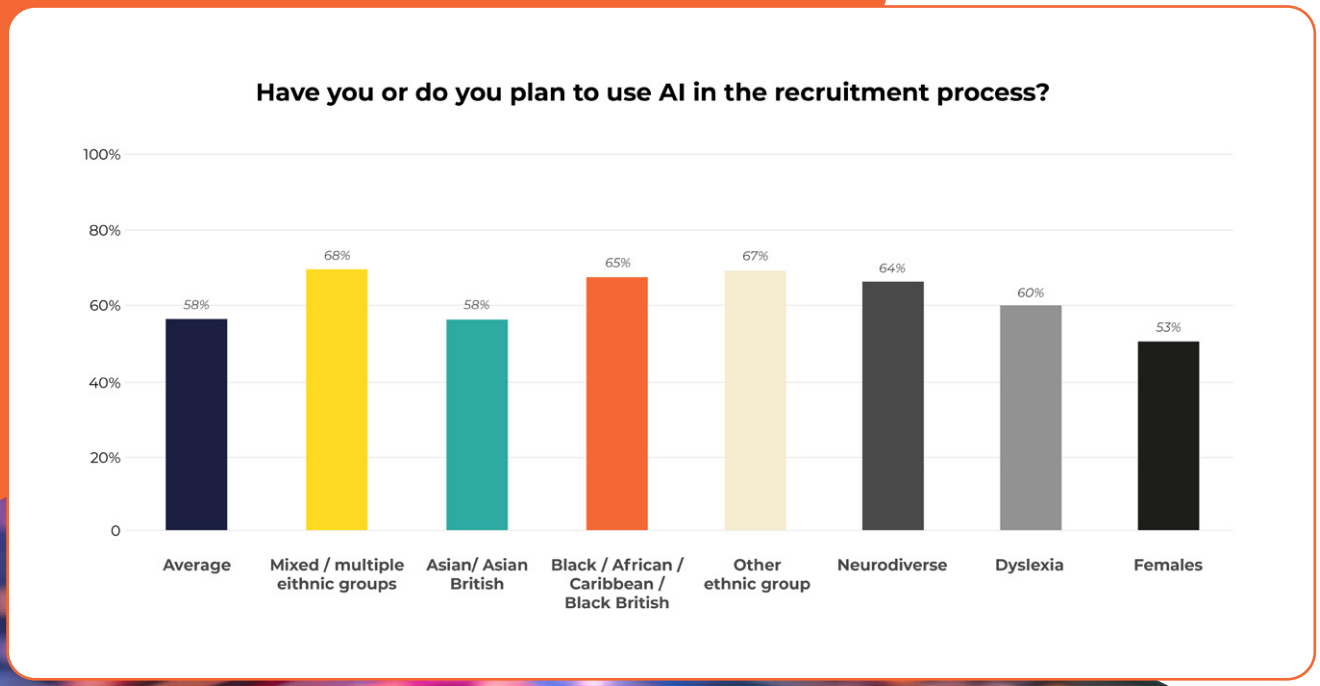
Again, it may be tempting to think that only younger, less experienced professionals are using AI in the recruitment process. Yet respondents with all levels of work experience use it for this purpose.



Candidates' use of AI in the selection process is officially the new normal.

Differences in demographic usage

When it comes to using AI in the recruitment process, almost all traditionally underrepresented groups are using it more than the average of 58%.



3

Professionals are *not* using AI to cheat

Just 10% of respondents say they want to cheat the system.

37% just want to give themselves the best possible shot at finding a job — and this rises to 47% for those with 10-40 years of experience.

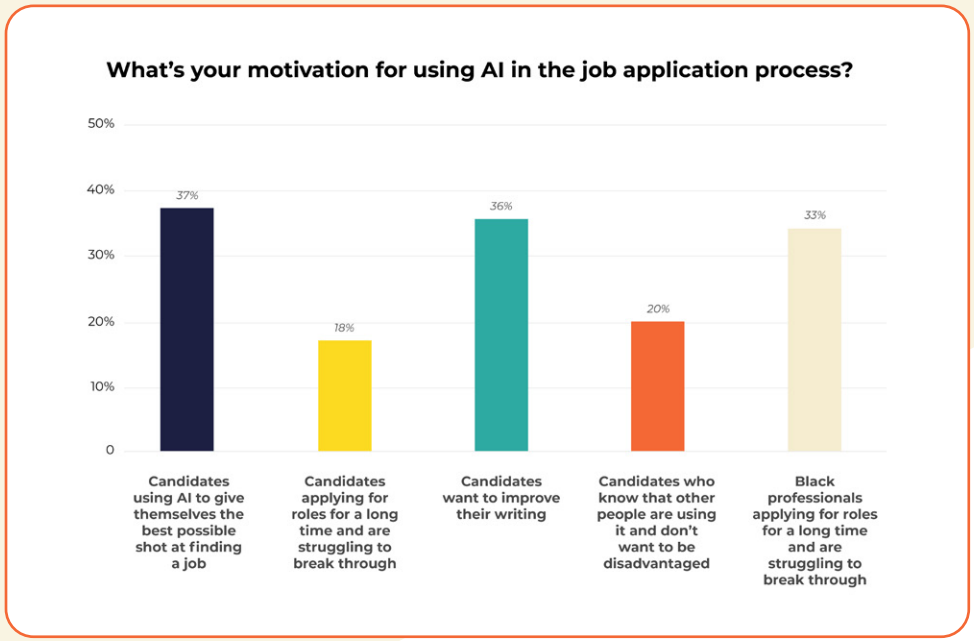
This is unsurprising as 18% say they've been applying for roles for a long time and are struggling to break through. Although this jumps even higher, to 1 in 3, for Black professionals.

36% want to improve their writing, or refine, clarify, and improve their thinking.

While 20% know that other people are using it and don't want to be disadvantaged.

When you consider these statistics alongside the increased usage of AI by diverse groups, the message from candidates is clear:

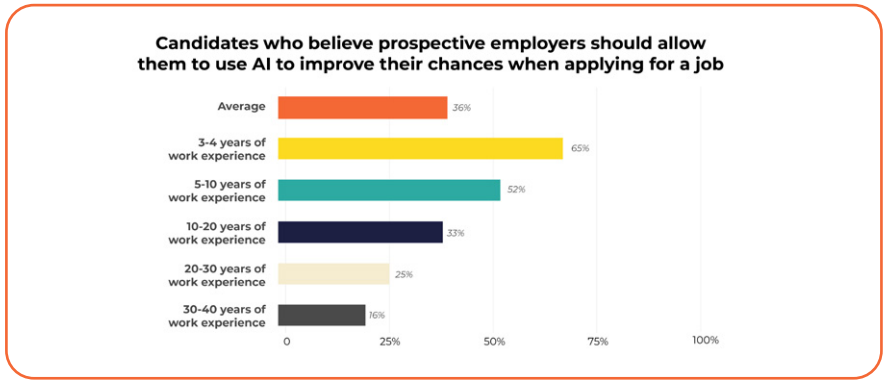
> **AI is not being used to cheat — it's helping to level the playing field**



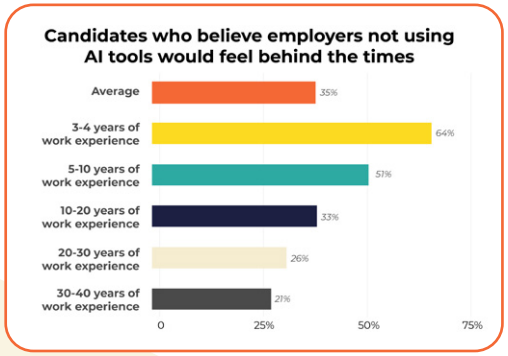
To maintain credibility, employers must *embrace* AI usage

One in three professionals believe it's their right to use AI. This rises to 64% for those with 3-4 years of work experience, and 53% for 5-10 years. While the numbers decrease in line with years of experience, 1 in 4 professionals with up to 30 years experience still share this view.

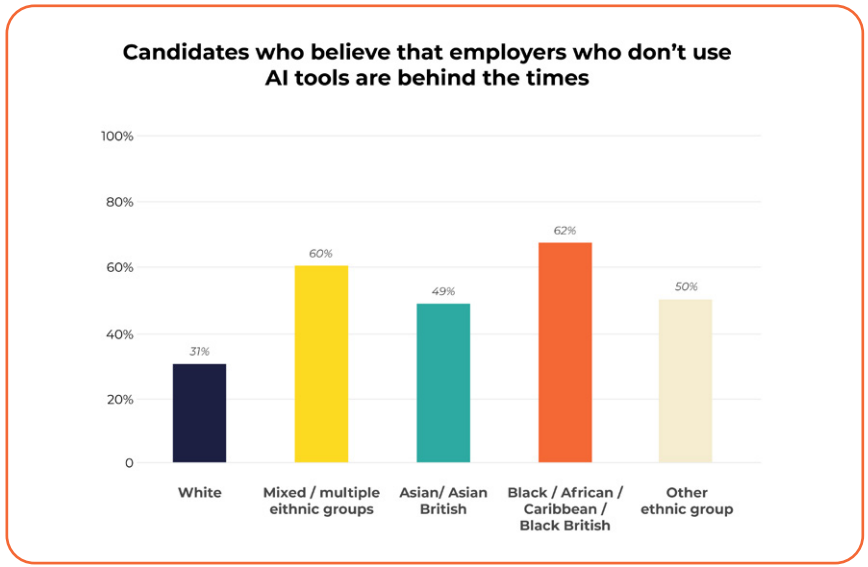
The same distributions play out when it comes to whether employers should let candidates use AI to improve their chances when applying for a job.



So it should come as no surprise to see that while 35% of professionals feel that *not* using AI tools would feel behind the times, this figure jumps massively for those with 3-4 years and 5-10 years of experience. Although 1 in 5 professionals with up to 40 years experience feel the same.



Likewise, many traditionally disadvantaged groups, who are now using AI tools at a disproportionately high rate, also feel that not using them would be behind the times:



Should employers deter and detect AI usage, or embrace it in professional and volume hiring?

The above data shows that while professionals at all levels of experience think employers should embrace AI usage — those who are younger and those from traditionally underrepresented groups believe this even more.

Added to this, 39% of Black candidates believe companies should guide the use of AI, versus just 19% of white candidates.

The takeaway here is the same as with students and recent graduates: deterring and detecting AI usage will damage companies' credibility and harm their employer brand – especially with traditionally underrepresented groups.

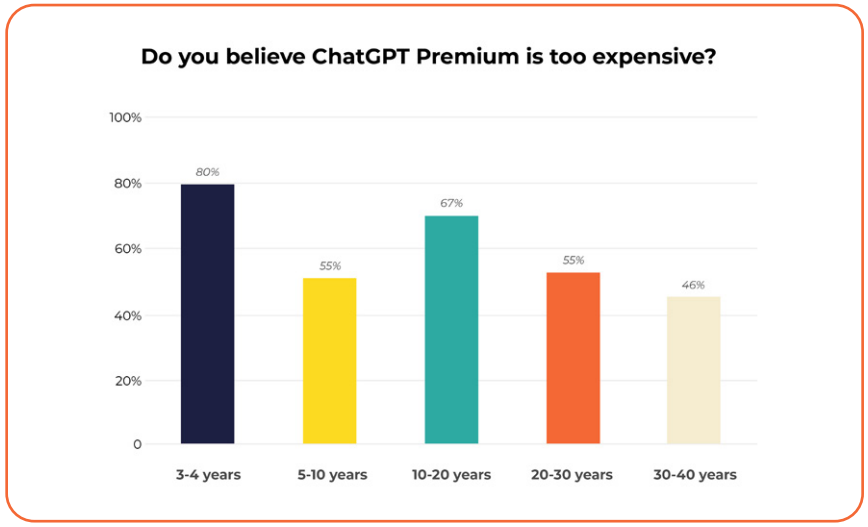
5

Not embracing and guiding candidate use of AI affects the playing field in other ways

Here we refer again to the impact of paid versions of AI tools, which either perform to a higher level than their free alternatives — or offer uncapped usage (especially needed for applications and assessments).

58% of professionals surveyed said they wouldn't pay for ChatGPT at £16 a month.

On average, 59% of this group feel that ChatGPT Premium is too expensive. However, there is a huge disparity between those with 3-4 years of work experience and those with 30-40 years:



So even if you choose not to define your company's approach to managing candidate use of AI, you'll be inadvertently giving some people a leg up while holding others back.

Summary: Adoption and perceptions of AI for Professionals

Adoption and proficiency are now mainstream:

61%

of professionals use AI tools regularly. 68% describe themselves as proficient users.

Professionals are using AI in selection and assessments:

58%

have used AI in the recruitment process in the last 12 months, or plan to do so — leading many TA teams to increase headcount to cope with an increase in volume.

Professionals are *not* using AI to cheat:

1 in 3

just want to give themselves the best chance of finding a job. 36% want to improve their writing. While another 36% want to refine, clarify and improve their thinking.

To maintain credibility, employers must embrace AI usage:

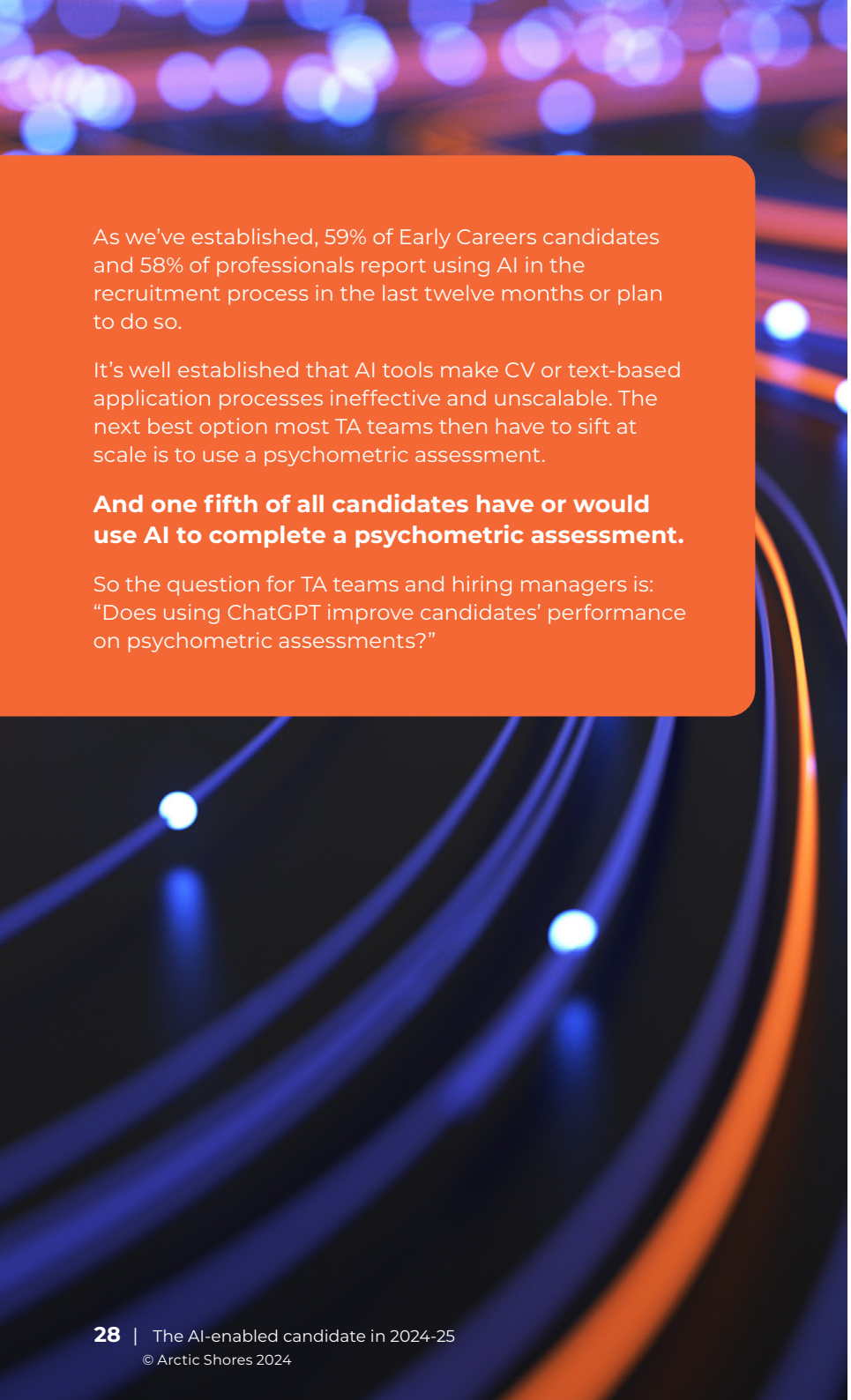
1 in 3

believe it's their right to use AI tools. While another third of professionals feel that *not* using AI tool would feel behind the times.

We also have to consider the effects of economic factors: 58% of professionals won't pay for ChatGPT. Meaning that without guidance, AI usage will enable some groups and hold others back

Part 4

How vulnerable are psychometric assessments to ChatGPT... and should TA leaders be worried?



As we've established, 59% of Early Careers candidates and 58% of professionals report using AI in the recruitment process in the last twelve months or plan to do so.

It's well established that AI tools make CV or text-based application processes ineffective and unscalable. The next best option most TA teams then have to sift at scale is to use a psychometric assessment.

And one fifth of all candidates have or would use AI to complete a psychometric assessment.

So the question for TA teams and hiring managers is: "Does using ChatGPT improve candidates' performance on psychometric assessments?"

The research

In 2023, Arctic Shores' Senior Data Scientist and two UCL postgraduate researchers conducted a series of rigorous, systematic studies across the four main psychometric assessment types – Aptitude Tests, Situational Judgement Tests, Personality Assessments, and Task-based Assessments.

Their goal was to answer the following two fundamental questions:

1. **Can candidates use Generative AI models like ChatGPT to complete psychometric assessments and tests, and outperform the average candidate?**

2. **Can they do this with little or no specialist training?**

They found the following vulnerabilities:	
Verbal Reasoning tests	ChatGPT outperforms 98.8% of human candidates
Situational Judgement tests	ChatGPT scores in the 70th percentile
Personality assessments	ChatGPT aces question-based assessments for any role, by simply reading the job description
Task-based assessments	ChatGPT could not complete a Task-based assessment using text inputs, image-to-text or image recognition software

All of our research is publicly available via the links above.

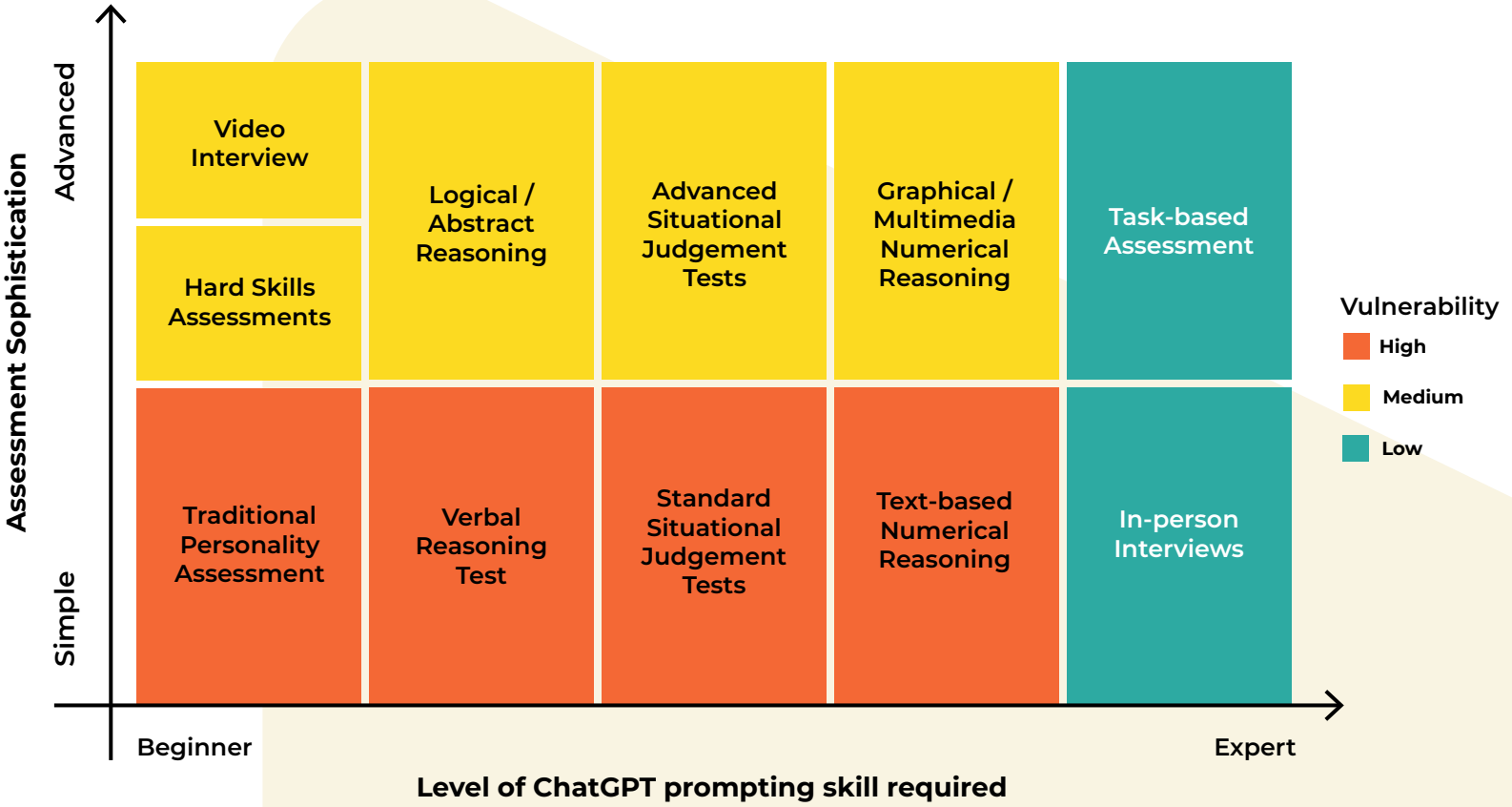
Our research into aptitude tests has also been peer-reviewed in the International Journal of Selection and Assessment and can be viewed here.

We have since reviewed the above findings in light of evolving AI models and conclude the findings still stand.

The ChatGPT Vulnerability Matrix

The matrix below helps to visualise these findings, by mapping the vulnerability of common assessment types vs ChatGPT. This varies along two dimensions: the sophistication of the assessment method, and the level of ChatGPT prompting skill required.

Most traditional text-based assessment types are highly vulnerable to AI, while in-person assessments and Task-based Assessments have low vulnerability.



Advances in AI technology in the past year — a spotlight

As we established in the executive summary, since we first conducted this research last year, AI models have advanced at rapid pace — and their language processing skills have become even more sophisticated.

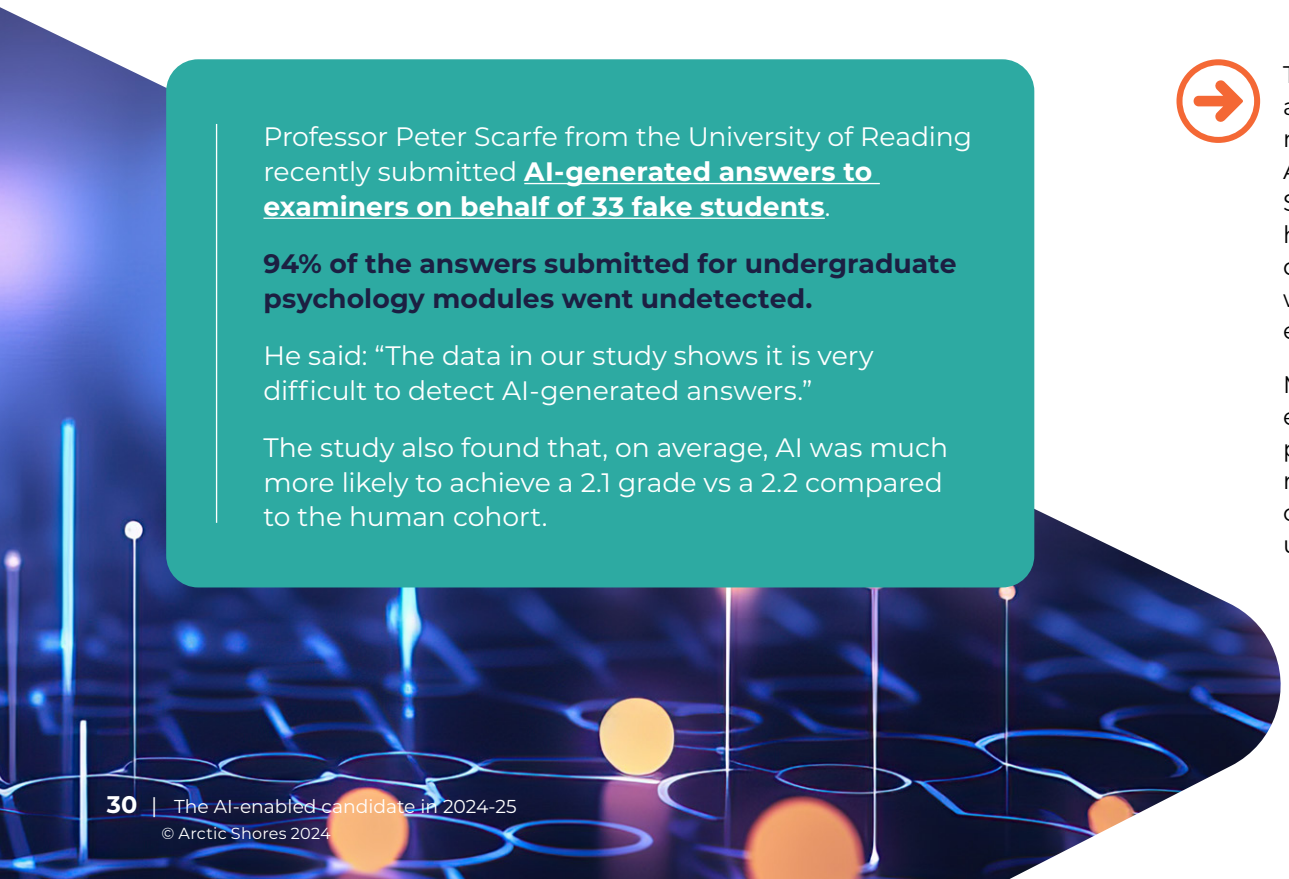
AI models are now ongoing undetected

Professor Peter Scarfe from the University of Reading recently submitted **AI-generated answers to examiners on behalf of 33 fake students**.

94% of the answers submitted for undergraduate psychology modules went undetected.

He said: "The data in our study shows it is very difficult to detect AI-generated answers."

The study also found that, on average, AI was much more likely to achieve a 2.1 grade vs a 2.2 compared to the human cohort.



The conclusion then is that both the language processing skills and reasoning capability that AI models available off-the-shelf now possess have serious implications for TA teams. Firstly, that AI-detection methods are in many cases ineffective and obsolete. Secondly, we need to rethink how we select — if candidates will have access to AI tools at work, is there any value in asking them questions that AI can answer in the selection process? Or should we re-evaluate what is a useful predictor of success instead in the era of the AI-enabled workplace?

Much research has been conducted over the past few years to establish which skills, competencies, and behaviours are most predictive of success in an AI-enabled workplace. Arctic Shores recently undertook a comprehensive industry review to analyse common patterns across research sets and used the insights to update our model. You can view a summary of our research **here**.

AI models are about to get even smarter

Over the past year, ChatGPT has been proven to:

- **Pass the Legal Bar exam, scoring in the 90th percentile**
- **Passed all three parts** of the United States medical license exam
- **Passed an MBA exam** set by a Wharton Business School Professor

And that was all before OpenAI (the parent company behind ChatGPT) launched a major update in the Summer of 2024 introducing a new model called OpenAI o1 — currently available in preview for some users.

Described by its developers as "a new series of reasoning models for solving hard problems", we can expect OpenAI o1 to make existing vulnerabilities in already vulnerable selection tools even greater. **Here's how OpenAI describe the new model:**

"We trained these models to spend more time thinking through problems before they respond, much like a person would. Through training, they learn to refine their thinking process, try different strategies, and recognize their mistakes. In our tests, the next model update performs similarly to PhD students on challenging benchmark tasks in physics, chemistry, and biology."

Summary

If ChatGPT-4 can get a 2:1 in a psychology degree and OpenAI o1 can complete a chemistry exam to PhD standard, we can assume that it's skill in completing text-based psychometric assessments is only going to continue to improve.

There is no doubt that in order to maintain the efficacy and equity of the selection process, TA teams must consider moving away from text-based measures of potential.

We have made most **of our research public** so TA Teams and academics can assess this claim for themselves — and we encourage all employers to request the same levels of transparency from their assessment providers to make an informed decision.

Part 5

Three options TA leaders have to adapt their selection process in 2025

What happens next?

It's now clear that both Early Careers candidates and professionals can and are using AI in the selection process — with 1 in 5 using tools like ChatGPT to complete traditional, question-based psychometric assessments and tests. This has big implications for TA leaders and their teams.

There are three schools of thought on how to respond.

Option one: **Fight.**

If TA teams take the position that using AI in the recruitment process is cheating, they'll need to fight against candidates using AI. This approach relies on a Deter and Detect strategy.

Option two: **Freeze.**

TA teams may feel unqualified to make a decision on the best way forward. In this case, it can be natural to remain undecided and neither deter and detect AI usage, nor guide candidates on a position.

Option three: **Friend.**

TA teams who are empowered to move quickly can opt to redesign their process to get ahead of the challenges that will be posed to them in the next year. These teams will also be able to make use of increased candidate numbers — ensuring they are sifting effectively to make better hires more quickly.

We explain each of these options in more detail below.

Option 1

Fight

Deter and Detect usage of AI in the selection process

Explanation

The ‘deterrence’ element comes, unsurprisingly, from making candidates aware that they’ll be monitored or prevented from using it. Careers sites have always highlighted that if an applicant is caught ‘cheating’, they’ll be removed from the selection process.

The difficulty with this approach is **the majority of candidates don’t consider using AI ‘cheating’**, any more than they would using a calculator instead of relying on mental arithmetic.

Detecting candidates using AI means using monitoring algorithms to ‘flag’ suspect responses. These tools were effective when manipulation happened only in around 10% of applications, but as AI tools are increasingly used by the majority, **and as evidence proves them to be ineffective**, this is likely to be an unreliable option — both for detecting AI in CVs or written applications, as well as its use in psychometric assessments.

A more draconian option offered by some psychometric assessment vendors is online video proctoring — an option which has been around for some time — and enables a test-taker’s entire assessment session to either be streamed live or be recorded by the system automatically, by auto-enabling a device’s webcam. It’s then up to either a test administrator or an AI system, to closely monitor video details, examining suspicious activities during an online test or assessment.

But remember that when it comes to using AI in the recruitment process **59% of candidates think employers should allow them to use it**.

This number jumps to 68% for Black Early Careers candidates and 61% for Black professionals.

Plus, only 54% of women in Early Careers (just over half) feel comfortable with monitoring (vs 68% of men).

Meaning proctoring runs the very real risk of negatively affecting your company’s employer brand with these groups.

Effectiveness

Traditional assessment vendors who advocate for a ‘Deter and Detect’ approach take the position that using AI tools like ChatGPT is a form of cheating. They argue that there has always been a challenge with candidates sharing questions online or being coached on how to improve their answers and they have the means to flag and highlight such cases. Perhaps for this reason, traditional assessment vendors claim that detecting candidates using ChatGPT is both accurate and effective.

Option 1

Fight

Deter and Detect usage of AI in the selection process

Five reasons why Deterring and Detecting Generative AI usage may not be effective

1. **No ChatGPT detection models have been shown to work effectively as of today.** Some sources even report that 2 in 10 times these detection methods produce a false positive; meaning you risk falsely accusing 20% of your candidates of cheating, potentially harming your employer brand.

2. **Detection models will date quickly.** It's also worth noting that given how quickly the underlying language models change and improve, there's a high chance these detection methods will become out of date.

3. **Prevention tools are easily circumvented.** Candidates can easily use an iPhone or Android phone to scan text, feed it into the ChatGPT app, and input the suggested answer into a computer in just a few seconds. See this example of how easily an SJT can be completed.

4. **Flagging candidates as suspicious could harm diversity.** Given candidates from traditionally underrepresented groups are more likely to use AI in the selection process — 65% of Black professionals and 64% of Neurodiverse professionals vs an average baseline of 58% — penalising usage means you risk making your process inequitable, excluding underrepresented groups, and harming the diversity of your shortlists. As well as presenting your employer brand as technophobic.

5. **Poor candidate experience.** We have to consider the impact of harsher detection measures on the candidate experience. Existing research shows how these methods (especially online proctoring) are likely to increase candidate anxiety, blurring your view of candidates' real abilities, and reducing the diversity of your talent pool further (Hausdorf, LeBlanc, Chawla 2003)

Option 2

Freeze

Do nothing

Explanation

As the name suggests, this option involves maintaining the status quo. Given the higher rates of traditionally underrepresented groups using AI, this may seem like a win-win situation. Processes can remain the same, while diversity increases.

However, the reality is more complex.

Effectiveness

For starters, not all AI uses are created equal. Think of a 'cut and paste' job from ChatGPT, compared to where AI has been used to help enhance someone's writing or align their application to the job description. If all candidates aren't coached on what good AI usage looks like then underrepresented groups, whose usage is disproportionately higher, risk being excluded at a much higher rate.

Added to this, an influx of AI-generated applications and assessment responses may seem like a good problem to have. But without the right processes and tools in place to accurately sift these increased numbers, TA teams risk burning themselves out trying to keep up — as well as losing hiring manager trust when candidate quality falls sharply at the interview stage (due to poor-fit, AI-enabled candidates scoring highly at the earlier stages of the process).

The other point to consider is that while AI levels the playing field for some groups, it can potentially disadvantage others — specifically those without the financial means to pay for the premium version of ChatGPT. OpenAI o1, the most recent model to be released, will sit behind a paywall. Early evidence suggests o1 significantly outperforms 4o in several areas — especially in reasoning tasks. It outperforms expert humans on PhD-level science questions and ranks in the 89th percentile for competitive programming. **The model also solved 83% of International Mathematics Olympiad qualifying exam problems, compared to GPT-4o's 13%**.

60% of Early Careers candidates and 58% of professionals **unwilling to pay for a Premium subscription because of the price point**, there are concerns that those with financial means will benefit most from the new model's increased reasoning ability.

Option 3

Friend

Embrace and guide AI usage, and redesign your selection process to ensure a level field

Explanation

The other option is to redesign your selection process to be progressive and embrace the AI-enabled candidate. This will mean reviewing each step of the process and deciding where you're comfortable with AI usage vs where you aren't.

For example, Talent Acquisition leaders might decide they're comfortable with candidates using AI to help them complete an application form but want to make sure that psychometric assessments used for sifting cannot be completed using AI, even if a candidate wanted to use it.

Instead of layering on more detection tech, this approach would involve simply replacing the vulnerable language-focused sifting methods (whether a form or a test) with a different type of assessment design.

Our research has revealed that TA teams should review the vulnerability of their traditional question-based assessments and either amend their assessment design to address the weaknesses (where possible) or consider a more modern assessment design that is Task-based.

Three key elements required for a robustly designed selection process.

The Task-based Assessment has three components which make it more robust. TA teams could also consider looking for these elements in other assessment designs too.

1. **They should be non-verbal:** Instead of relying on language-based questions, a Task-based design can be built on visual interactions that bypass ChatGPT's linguistic prowess. Interactive, visual tasks provide an inherent defence against AI.

2. **There is no right or wrong answer:** Most traditional assessments have a definite or 'preferred' answer, and this binary nature leaves them vulnerable to AI tools. However, Task-based Assessments offer a different approach - they capture how candidates respond to tasks through subtle shifts in behaviour and score every move they make, rather than simply giving a right or wrong score. While some traditional assessments may claim to lack a right or wrong answer, their robustness must be tested with ChatGPT. Moreover, these traditional assessments lack a cognitive element.

3. **Refreshed and novel items:** AI tools rely on a chatbot-style input method to explain the task. Traditional assessments have just one format and style whereas Task-based Assessments have multiple styles, and within each style, a fast-changing set of requirements. It would be too time-intensive to craft the prompts each time, let alone within the time limit.

Option 3

Friend

Embrace and guide AI usage, and redesign your selection process to ensure a level field

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the selection process is dependent on two things:

1. **Being able to differentiate fairly and consistently between candidates**
2. **Giving the candidate the opportunity to be their authentic selves**

Our research has shown that AI both supports and undermines these two key pillars of effectiveness. If they are to be achieved in an AI-centric world, then the selection process has to be designed with these in mind - not just tinkered with. We need to do more than simply update our career sites with new language and instead, design our process from the ground up with the knowledge that these tools exist and candidates want to use them.

Using assessment designs that sidestep the traditional question-based, right-or-wrong format will allow organisations to open up a rich landscape of opportunities to gauge candidates' true potential to succeed in a role. After all, the main draw of the 'Friend' solution is allowing for a more nuanced understanding of candidates' abilities, tapping into areas that are untouched by AI assistance, and hence, presenting a truer picture of what they're really capable of.

And where Business Psychology support is available to help explain, embed and develop this approach within their organisations, forward-thinking TA Teams have an opportunity to not only survive in the age of AI — but to thrive.

Want to know how industry leaders from Siemens, HelloFresh and many more are embracing and guiding AI use in their recruitment processes? Download your free copy of The ultimate guide to managing candidates' use of AI.

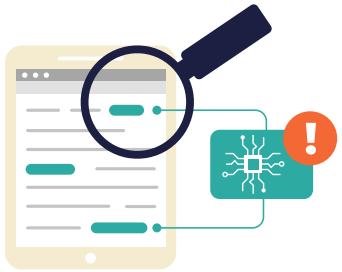
Packed full of context, advice and templates, it's the only guide written specifically to help TA teams define and communicate a position on candidates' use of AI.

Fight, Freeze, or Friend?

How Talent Acquisition teams can mitigate against AI's use in the selection process.

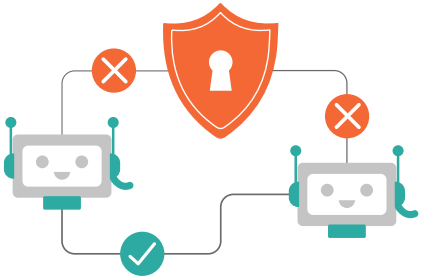
Fight

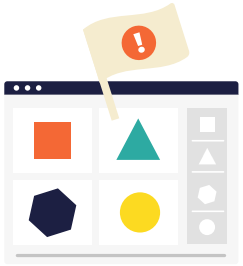
Why Deterring and Detecting AI usage may not be effective



1 No ChatGPT detection models have been shown to work effectively as of today.

2 Prevention tools are easily circumvented

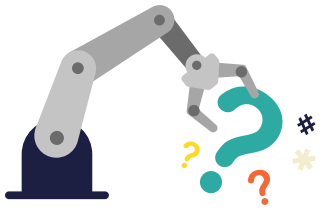




3 Flagging candidates as suspicious could harm diversity.

Friend

Three elements required for a robustly designed selection process

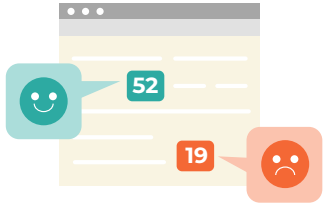


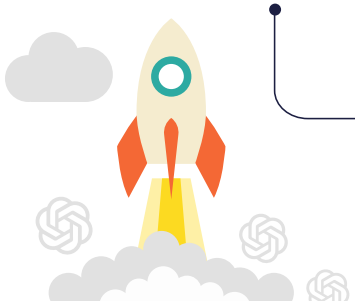
1 **Make your assessment visual**

Removing text and questions makes it almost impossible for AI to interact with the assessment

2 **Make it dynamic**

An assessment with a fast-changing set of requirements can't be explained to an AI model





3 **Remove binary scoring**

Score every step the candidate takes for a more complete picture of their ability


Conclusion
6

Three steps for TA professionals to take now

AI and tools like ChatGPT are now mainstream among candidates. Ignoring their impact is not an option.

We've shared our research on how broadly these tools are being used and how with little or no training any user can 'ace' traditional assessments, especially those which are language and reasoning based.

We don't pretend to have all of the answers. But based on the above insights and observations, we believe there are some immediate actions that Talent Acquisition professionals must consider when thinking about how to adapt their hiring processes in light of candidates' increasing use of AI.

Step 1

Conduct an AI Vulnerability Audit to understand which stages in your process need immediate attention, and where longer-term changes are appropriate

It will be too late to address issues if application volume becomes completely unmanageable, pass rates suddenly jump, quality becomes more variable, and diversity targets start to fall again. This is especially important as it's the top of the funnel sifting that is most at risk of distortion.

Understanding which stages are most at risk is the first step towards developing a robust future-focused approach to avoid homogenous or inflated candidate results.

Step 2

Create a set of internal recommendations that outline how you plan to redesign the selection process to embrace AI, rather than criminalise it.

Once Step 1 above has been completed, you'll have the information on the areas you need to address both immediately and in the long term. Depending on the results of your audit, one obvious change could be revisiting your assessment design and ***how*** you measure candidate potential — ensuring you move from a language-based to a non-language-based alternative.

You also might decide to change the wording on your career site to make your position on the use of AI explicit — whether welcoming it or cautiously accepting its use.

Get started today, by downloading our free guide on **Managing candiates' use of AI**.

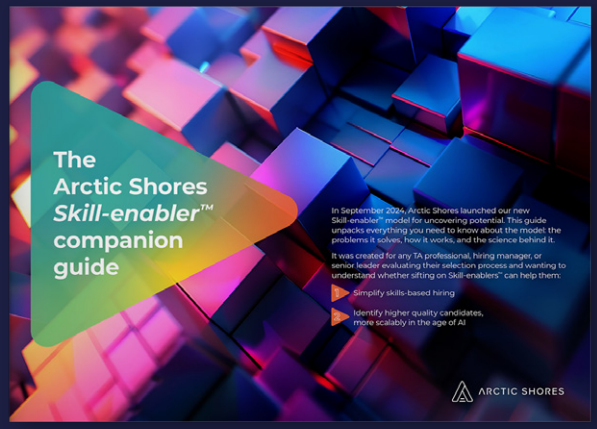
Step 3

Rethink what you measure in your selection process

As TA teams and hiring managers move to sifting and selecting AI-enabled candidates, we also need to rethink *what* we measure. In a world where candidates enhance their natural reasoning abilities with AI, most employers will prioritise human-focused capabilities such as communication and collaboration.

Different cognitive skills will also come to the fore. For example, learning agility will be essential when role requirements change rapidly, brought on by the ever-evolving tech landscape.

For practical insights and guidance on this topic, **download The pragmatist's playbook for skills-based hiring: helping TA leaders navigate a new era of recruitment**



For the latest research on what we need to select for in the AI-enabled workplace, drawn from industry trends and data taken from a pool of 3 million candidate completions, **download the Skill-enablers™ companion guide**.

18 months ago, ChatGPT changed the world forever.

In Talent Acquisition, candidates' adoption of (and proficiency in) AI tools is now extremely high and growing — shifting the balance of power heavily towards candidates.

However, the story doesn't end there.

By starting with the three steps listed above, TA leaders and teams can adapt their processes for this new world, ensuring that recruitment remains robust, accurate and scalable — even where candidates are using AI.

More than this, a recruitment process that's properly designed for the AI-enabled candidate will ensure that companies benefit from the rise in AI-generated applications — turning the tide to their advantage.

Join the TA Disruptors community

Listen to our **podcast** or watch the episodes on **YouTube**, as TA leaders share how they're future-proofing their recruitment processes.

And for the latest insights and new data on this topic, **register for the TA Disruptors newsletter**

TA DISRUPTORS

In the age of Generative AI and a rapidly shifting requirement for skills, Arctic Shores gives you the power to uncover human potential and see more in people than you can from a CV or application form.

Our next-generation selection platform uses tasks (which provide 100X more data points than questions) to help identify the candidates with the greatest potential to be successful in your organisation. Our transparent and validated matching model widens talent pools and delivers diverse and high potential candidates in any economic climate.

Proven to counter natural bias during the recruitment process and build the diverse, successful workforce of tomorrow, our task-based assessment widens talent pools and unearths high-quality candidates in any economic climate.

We've given over 3 million candidates worldwide something different: a stress-free, unbiased candidate experience that truly rewards them for their time. Join the 350 talent disruptors leading the way in the CV-less hiring revolution, including Vitality, **Molson Coors**, **Burness Paull**, Amazon, TalkTalk and **Siemens**.

Find out more here.

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