Ethical and Effective AI Use in Your Job Search

A Practical Session for Job Search & Career Change

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Online

Jobs & Skills Month
Future, Referenced

Pathways to Success
Jobs & Skills Month 2026

Learn more at jobsandskillsmonth.gov.au

Introductions

A bit about me

- Career coach and educator, and author of *Read the Room: Empathize at Work*. Also, briefly, an amateur theatre critic
- A decade of so in 'careers education' at LSE, UCL and Imperial College London in the UK; Monash in Australia
- Registered Career Development Professional (CDI), EMCC coaching practitioner and NAGCAS member
- Interest and research into ethical AI use in career guidance (Advance HE, 2026) and occasional foray into vibe-coding apps for puppy training!



Captions

Live captions should be available in Teams, under *More* > *Language* and speech.

Chat

Please do use it throughout. If you'd rather not post, jotting thoughts down works just as well.

Questions

Pop them in the chat whenever they come to mind. I've also planned time at the end.

Afterwards

The slides will go to everyone who registered.

Where are you with AI in your job search?



Go to:
menti.com

Use code:
8895 9903

A No, by choice

B Not at all, but am considering it

C I've used it once or twice

D I've used it quite a lot

E I use it all the time

Today's plan



Your resume/CV and cover letter
Practical, safe, and effective ways to draft with AI that still represent you

Interviews
Preparing, practising, and checking what AI tells you

Job research and career planning
Where AI adds value to searching and exploring, and how you retain your identity

Where to be cautious
Accuracy, authenticity, the ethical balance, and keeping career decisions yours

Live Q&A
Your questions on today's topics!

Efficiency and Ethics

Efficiency

Time

Structure

A sounding board



Ethics

Accuracy

Authenticity

Privacy

Who decides

Chat One task you'd hand to AI? One you'd keep?

Five principles



Security

Safe to share?

Ethical Balance

How much is this me?

Reliability

Have I checked?

Empowerment & Accountability

Is this helping me and is my use accountable?

Continuous Review

What am I learning?

Adapted from FACE framework (Mollett, 2026)

Begin with your brain, end with your brain



Your brain

Purpose · facts · your words

AI

Map · draft · sound-board

Your brain

Check · revise · decide

Defining the balance between you and AI



When can AI help in job search, and when it would stand in for reflection or thinking it would be valuable for you to do?

Where it can add value

- Mapping tasks: breaking a job ad or search into steps
- Drafts: a rough first version to react to and rewrite
- Sounding board: talking ideas through, practising answers

Where it needs care

- Facts about employers, salaries and sectors
- Anything that goes out in your name
- Feedback, which tends towards the flattering

Where it stays yours

- Your values and motivations
- Your evidence and stories
- Decisions about your career

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Your resume/CV and cover letter



What employers are looking for



Commitment
Do you genuinely want this role, at this organisation?

Competencies
Can you do the job, and what's your evidence?

Fit
How would you work with their people and values, and would it suit you?

A job description tells you what an employer wants, but the whole picture needs your evidence of what you have.

Any AI system only knows the parts of your story you choose to share, so it fills any gaps with what's typical, expected, or inferred.

What are your ‘raw materials’?



- Master CV
- Job ad, marked up
- Your evidence
- Your own words
- Other trusted sources and benchmarks

Reflect What wouldn’t an AI system know unless you told it? What have you already told it?

Meet an individual... Ian Dividual

We'll use Ian's resume, cover letter, interview answers and career notes throughout the session.



Ian Dividual (fictional)
Digital Learning Lead · Melbourne
Ten years in education, looking to move into edtech

Where he is

- Ten years in education: teacher, then programs coordinator, now Digital Learning Lead
- Eight applications in four months, with one interview coming up
- Currently drafting an application (most of his time on this), also has a coffee chat with a start-up founder

What he's thinking

- He's hoping to move within six months
- He'd like a small team to lead and a voice in product decisions

What he's unsure about

- Whether a commercial company is right for him after schools and a not-for-profit
- Where the smaller, less visible edtech organisations are

Resumes and cover letters: a sense check



Where AI can add value to a draft

- Picking out the main requirements of a job ad
- Asking you questions to draw out your evidence
- Giving you a rough draft to react against
- Suggesting a structure, such as a skills-based format for a career change
- Tightening wording and catching errors

Before anything goes out, ask yourself

- Would I say this out loud?
- Could I give an example for every line at interview?
- Has it added anything I didn't tell it?
- Are there any AI requirements the recruiter has put in place?
- Does this sound like the person my referees, colleagues, or mentors would describe?

Using AI as a resume sounding board



Effective editing

Individual's first draft	*'Responsible for the school's new learning management system.'*	Just the task listed with a brief sense of management skill
"Rewrite this for me"	*'Spearheaded a transformative digital learning journey, leveraging cutting-edge technology to drive innovative, future-ready outcomes across the school community.'*	Plenty of impressive words, and very little of Individual in them.
AI asked questions first	*'Led the school-wide rollout of a new learning management system for 1,100 students and 85 staff, with 92% of staff using it weekly by the end of the first term.'*	Individual's own facts, showing skills and context concisely. All of it could be talked through at interview.

Building a cover letter draft | DEMO



1. Share the job ad and ask it to map out the main requirements.
2. Share Ian's rough notes and/or experience from resume and ask it to question me before drafting anything.
3. Write key points myself, then ask for critique against the ad.
4. Edit by hand, read it through, and check every fact and experience.

AS I DO THE DEMO…

Note where I accept, change or set aside what it offers, and why.

What would you do differently?

Auditing AI's direction of output



ASK BEFORE YOU WRITE

Before redrafting, ask me up to five questions that would help me show results and achievements from my resume experiences that could be relevant to this job's criteria.

SET SOME LIMITS

Retain my wording where possible, highlighting changes that are made to the draft. Don't add facts, numbers or skills I haven't given you – ask me questions to clarify. Use skills and requirements for the job from the PDF attached.

ASK FOR CRITIQUE

What would a recruiter for this role find unclear or unconvincing in this paragraph?

FIND THE GAP

Compare my resume with this job ad. Map each of the key person specification criteria to my experience. Which requirement am I evidencing least? Which areas are ambiguously presented?

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Interviews



AI as your interview background researcher

Themes to research

- Their website & reports
- Recent news
- People
- Labour market data

For every claim AI provides, check and validate against a source

The limits of the background research...



What's online is a small part of an organisation's story, much as your resume is a small part of yours.

	Experience	Outlook	Action
About them	How did you move into this role?	What are you learning at the moment?	What helped you most when you started?
The role	Who do you work with most?	What projects are coming up?	Where might my experience be useful?
The organisation	What's it like to work there?	What changes are ahead?	What do new starters do well?
The industry	How has the sector changed?	What's likely to change next?	What should I read or follow?



Some of these questions can be answered with online sources drawn by AI...

... But so much perspective and story comes from what isn't written down, from people and culture. Don't overlook this!

Interview questions: the balance of AI assistance



Type	Example	Where AI can help	Where you take control
Motivation	*Why this organisation?*	Researching the business and industry;; mapping motivations to your experience	The reasons need to be genuinely yours and ones you can believe
Competency	*Tell me about a time you…*	Anticipating likely questions; checking your STAR structure; formatted feedback	The example needs to be something you did
Strengths	*What do you most enjoy doing?*	Spotting patterns in your own notes and reflections; structuring answers concisely	Confirming and articulating what energises you and if it is true
Scenario	*How would you handle…?*	Practising with realistic scenarios drawn from company website, job description or news articles	Sense check that scenarios fit the actual role based on other research (e.g. networking)

Live demo: AI for interview practice



THE QUESTIONS PROMPT

I have a 30-minute interview for the following role [attach job spec]. I would like you to act as my job interviewer and draft me interview questions relevant to this role. Specifically, I need:

- 10 competency questions linked to the job description, with key sub-level competencies I could mention to particularly showcase the skill in my example.
- 5 motivational questions, with a possible structure and things to mention about the organization/role.
- 5 commercial awareness questions, including relevant current affairs, and provide me a PESTLE analysis on key trends currently in the sector I can reference.
- 2-3 questions about my relevant experience, highlighting what may be particularly effective to emphasize given the role description.

Include a final question on 'What 3 key strengths I have to best fit this role'. The interview is online. Please provide any key points I should note for each question. Please also give me a 2-3 sentence summary of the organisation I'm applying for and a 2-3 sentence summary of the role I'm applying for – before listing out the interview questions as a context summary.

Other follow ups:

"What would a sceptical panel member ask next?"

Practising out loud, with voice mode or by recording yourself

Practising with a person too, who can see how you come across

Live demo: AI for interview practice



THE PROMPT II

Now act as an interviewer for this role: [paste the job details and person specification if needed]. Ask me one question at a time and wait for my answer. After each answer, give me feedback on content, structure, and relevance of answer, measured against the ad. Be direct and remain neutral in tone.

Other follow ups:

- "What would a sceptical panel member ask next?"
- Practising out loud, with voice mode or by recording yourself
- Practising with a person too, who can see how you come across

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Job research and career planning



What are the unwritten things that matter to you?



Pain points

What has left you frustrated or low on energy?

Example: *Report-writing season, and rolling out tools I had no say in choosing*

Plus points

What has left you engaged and full of energy?

Example: *Getting a new tool working for a whole staff group, and seeing it stick*

Purpose points

What would make work feel worthwhile?

Example: *Students who were behind catching up, and teachers getting time back to teach*

THEN, IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE WITH A STARTING PROMPT

I've described below some pain (things to avoid or minimise), plus (I enjoy) and purpose (I find valuable and meaningful) points related to what I look for in a job and in my career. Evaluate these against this job description and key candidate criteria. Show where it aligns, where it conflicts, and any questions where I could research further. Don't tell me to apply or not to apply, I will make this decision.

How and when jobs are found affects how AI is useful



Less visibility to AI

Fixed & advertised

Yearly intakes e.g. apprenticeships, placements, graduate programs

AI can help: Building a deadline tracker from programme pages; mapping applications to job criteria

AI can hinder: Dates and eligibility it gives may be old; AI-shaped applications at scale tend to read alike; higher capacity to write applications isn't necessarily good

Fluid & advertised

Almost all advertised roles on job boards!

AI can help: Comparing job descriptions to spot recurring requirements; tailoring quickly to each posting

AI can hinder: Encourages volume over fit; can't tell you which roles are already earmarked internally; can take job requirements overly literally compared to reality

Fixed & networked

Referrals into structured programs, recurring annual freelancing

AI can help: Preparing thoughtful questions for key contacts to build network and position for job opportunities

AI can hinder: A referral or intro rests on trust, and outreach that reads as AI-written can undermine this; hard to identify initial contact points

Fluid & networked

Speculative, hidden and networked roles; recruitment agencies

AI can help: Mapping organisations and teams within them; preparing for information interviews

AI can hinder: Least visible to AI, narrows back towards well-documented organisations and advertised/visible opportunities

Why AI struggles with the hidden market



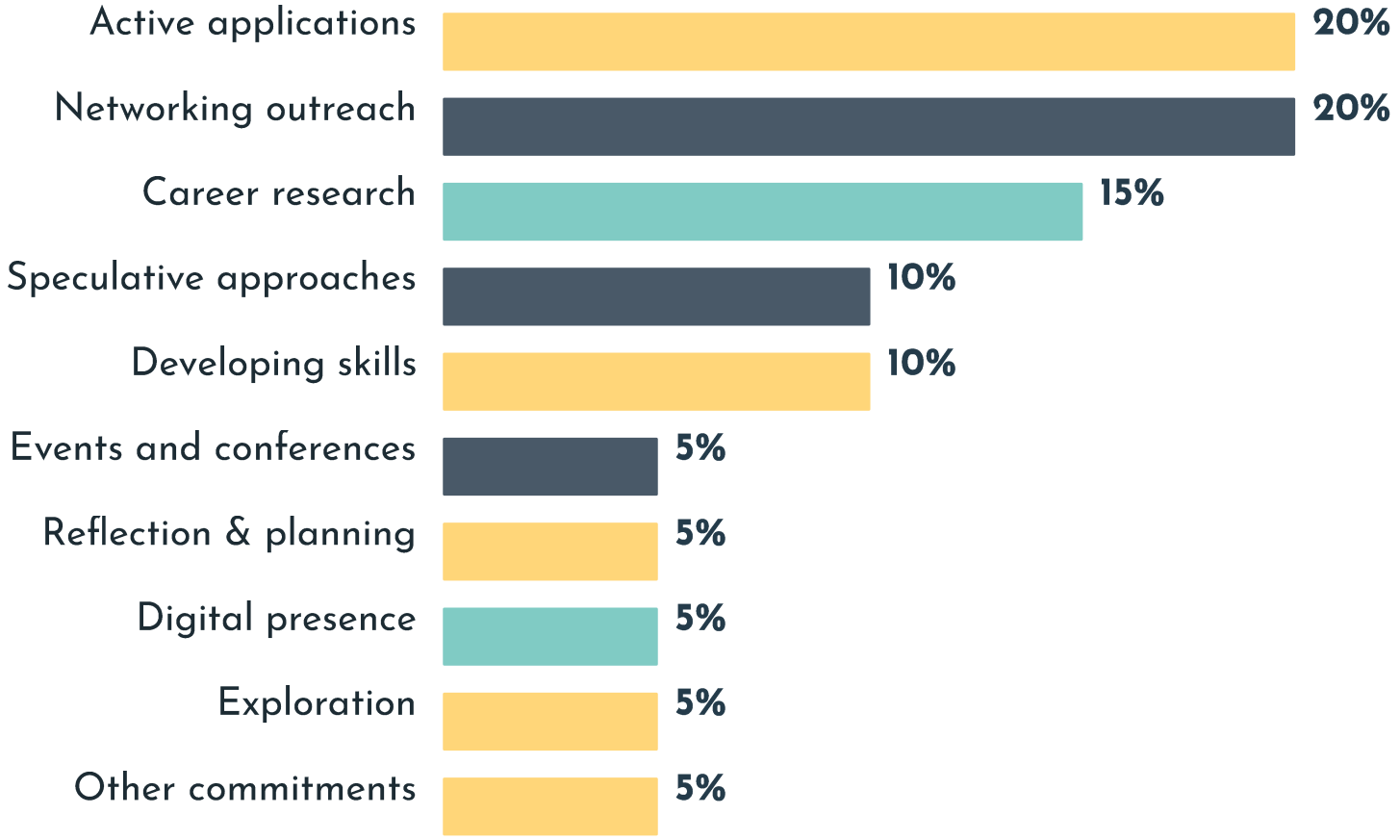
Visibility bias

Recursive narrowing

Weak ties

AI can widen your ‘horizons for action’, or narrow them

Job search strategy: your time and AI



Where does your saved time go?

AI can shorten

AI can assist

Mostly relational

Job search: the balance of AI and you



Component	How AI might assist	What you control
Active applications	Mapping requirements; critiquing your drafts	Your evidence, motivation and final wording
Networking outreach	Preparing informational interview questions	The relationship, the follow-up, the thank you
Speculative approaches	Researching an organisation's current priorities	Judging fit; the pitch, using your own voice
Skills development	Explaining concepts; generating practice tasks	How and when you learn; lifelong learning habits
Career research	Mapping sectors, roles and entry points	Checking sources; deciding what matters
Events and conferences	Briefing you on speakers and organisations	Turning up, listening, having conversations
Reflection & planning	A sounding board; structuring a plan	Your values, narrative, decisions, and time!
Digital presence	Drafting and refining a LinkedIn summary	Sounding like you; what you choose to share
Exploration & curiosity	Suggesting fields to look into, actions to take	Following what genuinely interests you
Other commitments	Planning a realistic weekly schedule	Knowing your own capacity and priorities

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Words of caution



‘Proto-advice’, and keeping decisions yours



What I mean by proto-advice

Plausible, early-stage suggestions that we take on and act on with more confidence than they’ve earned. Because AI tends to agree with us and offer one confident answer, it’s an easy habit to slip into, especially when we feel uncertain.

Questions to ask yourself with AI ‘career outputs’

Which parts of this feel most genuinely mine?

What in my thinking came from me, from others, and from AI?

How confident am I in each of those, and why?

If this plan disappeared tomorrow, what would I keep?

What does another human think?



Two sides of empathy

Cognitive empathy is understanding someone's perspective; affective empathy is sharing something of what they feel. AI can produce the language of both, but it hasn't met the people you'll work with, doesn't feel what you feel, and won't live with the outcome.

Handing over too much

Relying on others to act for us and take decisions is 'proxy agency' (Bandura, 2001).

With AI, when does that drifts from tasks towards decisions about who you are, how you feel, and where you'll spend your working life?

What stays with you

Your values

What drains you, energises you and feels worthwhile

Your people

The team, workplace and culture you'll be joining

Your purpose

Your 'career tether': the direction that keeps pulling you forward; what you value

Summary: Principles in (Job Search) Practice



	Security	Ethical Balance	Reliability	Empowerment & Accountability	Continuous Review
YOUR RESUME/CV AND COVER LETTER	Am I aware what happens to any data I share?	Do my documents still represent me?	Are there any fabricated elements?	Could I defend any line, and reproduce it?	Is the way AI tools review my resume changing?
INTERVIEWS	Have I removed personal or confidential info?	Are my interview example accurate and genuine?	Have I fact-checked employer info with sources?	Am I learning to build my answers rather than AI's?	How is AI evolving job interviews themselves?
JOB RESEARCH AND CAREER PLANNING	What am I happy sharing and not sharing?	To what extent is AI a sounding board vs. giving answers?	Are deadlines, eligibility, and job info accurate?	Have I had agency in driving my plans?	How is AI changing how I search for jobs?

Thank you!

Questions?

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