

Gen AI Meets Gen Z

How Early Career Job Seekers in the UK are Reshaping Recruitment with Gen AI

Early career job seekers are nearly 4x more likely to use Gen AI in their job search than the general population, creating a significant technology divide.



Amongst those using Gen AI, it's used mostly in the early stages.



CVs & Applications

Tailoring content, improving language, matching skills to requirements



Pre-Application Research

Company research, role exploration, opportunity matching



Video/Live Interviews

Generating practice questions, preparing answers



CVs & Applications

Tailoring content, improving language, matching skills to requirements

Key Motivations

Early career job seekers use Gen AI to present their "best self", match their skills to roles, use new technology and give themselves an equal chance of selection.

One respondent noted:

"Tailoring my CV takes 45 minutes without Gen AI – time I cannot afford to lose."

A significant minority – nearly a third (31%) – choose not to use Gen AI.

Of those:



think it's "cheating"



fear penalisation or disqualification



think they don't need it

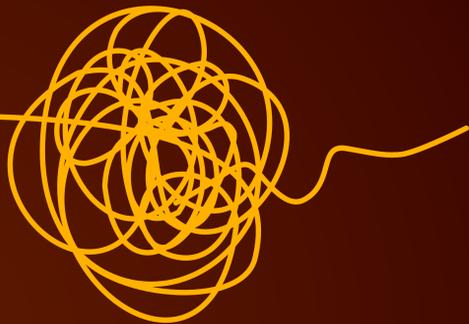
The Fairness Problem

These principled abstainers risk being disadvantaged when competing against AI-enhanced applications. Their authentic approach could inadvertently harm their prospects.

There's a looming communication crisis



of job seekers hear NOTHING from employers about Gen AI usage



Inconsistent Guidance:

When provided, employer guidance varies considerably:

- explicit prohibitions
- responsible use advice
- active encouragement



Hidden Usage:

70% of Gen AI users don't disclose their usage due to unclear policies and fear of penalties

Despite widespread use, only 1% considered Gen AI the main reason for job search success.

However, 76% reported it "helped" their applications, suggesting incremental but meaningful benefits.

How employers can embrace reality and safeguard integrity

The high adoption of Gen AI amongst early career job seekers demands proactive, transparent, and adaptive support from employers. Employers must understand both the opportunities – and threats – from Gen AI use.

Establish Clear Communication

Implement consistent, transparent Gen AI policies to promote ethical and effective engagement during the hiring process. Provide upfront guidance on acceptable usage, disclosure expectations, and consequences.

Review Recruitment Vulnerabilities

Systematically evaluate your recruitment and assessment processes to identify specific points where Gen AI use could disrupt validity or fairness.

Monitor Equity Impact

Track recruitment outcomes to identify potential disadvantages for principled non-users. Ensure your processes don't inadvertently exclude strong candidates who choose not to use Gen AI.

Prepare for Evolution

As Gen AI capabilities advance, continuously evaluate and adapt your recruitment strategy to stay resilient. Partner with assessment specialists to ensure recruitment practices remain equitable, effective, and aligned with organisational goals.

To get the full analysis and understand what this means for your early careers programme, download the full research report, *Gen AI Meets Gen Z: The Role of Gen AI in Early Careers Job & Internship Searches & Applications.*

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