CLOUDSWITCHED

FREE RESOURCE — ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

AI Readiness Assessment Checklist

A comprehensive assessment of your organisation's readiness to adopt artificial intelligence — covering data infrastructure, technical capabilities, governance, security, and cultural preparedness across 50+ evaluation items.

6	50+	/10	Fillable
ASSESSMENT SECTIONS	EVALUATION ITEMS	SCORE EACH SECTION	TICK & TYPE IN ANY VIEWER

DATA FOUNDATIONS · GOVERNANCE & ETHICS · SECURITY · CHANGE & CULTURE

PREPARED FOR	PREPARED BY	VERSION	FORMAT
Cloudswitched Knowledge Library	Cloudswitched Ltd.	2026 Edition	Interactive PDF

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How to use this checklist

Work through each section with your **senior leadership team and IT department**. Tick every item that is fully in place today, then award each section a score out of 10. Score each item honestly — **overestimating readiness is the single biggest cause of failed AI projects.**

Any section scoring **below 5** should be addressed before committing to an AI initiative. Use the results to build a prioritised readiness improvement plan, capturing your top three actions on the summary pages at the back. This is an **interactive PDF** — tick the boxes and type your scores and notes directly in any modern PDF viewer.

WHAT THIS CHECKLIST IS

A baseline readiness self-assessment for UK organisations preparing to adopt AI — spanning data foundations, technical skills, candidate business processes, governance and ethics, security and compliance, and the people side of change. It is not a formal maturity audit, but it is a fast way to surface the gaps that will derail an AI programme before it starts.

SCORING GUIDANCE

Award one point per item where you have evidence the capability is genuinely in place — a policy, a pipeline, a contract, a documented process. Half measures and good intentions do not score. Round each section to the nearest whole number out of 10 and carry it forward to the summary on the back pages.

The six sections

- **01 Data Infrastructure & Quality** — catalogues, pipelines, retention, data quality.
- **02 Technical Capabilities & Skills** — ML skills, cloud/GPU, environments, integration.
- **03 Business Process Analysis** — use cases, ROI baselines, pilot selection.
- **04 Governance & Ethics Framework** — oversight, ethics policy, impact assessments.
- **05 Security & Compliance** — DPIAs, data processing, audit trails, AI threats.
- **06 Change Management & Culture** — leadership, skills gaps, AI champions, comms.

01

Data Infrastructure & Quality

AI is only as good as the data it learns from. Assess whether your organisation's data foundations are strong enough to support AI workloads.

- ☐ Your organisation has a **centralised data catalogue** documenting all major data sources, formats, and ownership across departments *(including legacy systems)*.
- ☐ Data is stored in **structured, accessible formats** rather than trapped in spreadsheets, email inboxes, or paper-based filing systems.
- ☐ You have **at least 12 months of clean historical data** available for the business processes you intend to apply AI to *(more is better for training models)*.
- ☐ A **data quality framework** is in place with defined rules for accuracy, completeness, consistency, and timeliness of business-critical data.
- ☐ Your databases and data warehouses have **sufficient storage capacity and compute performance** to handle the additional load that AI model training and inference will generate.
- ☐ Data from different departments and systems can be **linked and joined reliably** using consistent identifiers such as customer IDs, product codes, or employee references.
- ☐ You have **automated data pipelines** that regularly cleanse, transform, and load data rather than relying on manual exports and imports *(ETL/ELT processes)*.
- ☐ There is a **documented data retention policy** that complies with UK GDPR and defines how long different categories of data are kept and when they are purged.
- ☐ Your organisation regularly **audits data quality metrics** and has a process for identifying and correcting errors, duplicates, and missing values.

SECTION 01 SCORE _____ / **10** *Aim for 8+. Below 5 = data foundation gap.*

SECTION NOTES / OWNER / TARGET DATE

02

Technical Capabilities & Skills

Evaluate whether your team has the technical skills and infrastructure to build, deploy, and maintain AI solutions effectively.

- ☐ Your IT team includes staff with **experience in Python, R, or similar languages** commonly used in data science and machine learning *(or you have a plan to acquire these skills)*.
- ☐ At least one team member understands **machine learning concepts** such as supervised vs unsupervised learning, overfitting, feature engineering, and model evaluation metrics.
- ☐ Your organisation has access to **cloud computing resources** (Azure ML, AWS SageMaker, Google Vertex AI) or sufficient on-premises GPU capacity for model training.
- ☐ You have a **development and testing environment** that is separate from production, allowing safe experimentation with AI models without risking live systems.
- ☐ Your team is familiar with **API integration patterns** and can connect AI services to existing business applications such as CRM, ERP, and customer service platforms.
- ☐ A **version control system** (Git or similar) is used for code management, and your team follows structured development practices *(code review, testing, documentation)*.
- ☐ You have identified whether your AI approach will be **build, buy, or integrate** — custom model development, pre-built AI services, or embedding third-party AI into existing tools.
- ☐ Your network infrastructure has **sufficient bandwidth and low latency** to support real-time AI inference if your use cases require it *(e.g. chatbots, fraud detection)*.

SECTION 02 SCORE _____ / **10** *Aim for 8+. Below 5 = skills / infrastructure gap.*

SECTION NOTES / OWNER / TARGET DATE

03

Business Process Analysis

Identify which business processes are suitable candidates for AI and whether they are well-defined enough to benefit from automation or augmentation.

- ☐ You have **mapped your core business processes** end-to-end, identifying inputs, outputs, decision points, and bottlenecks in each workflow.
- ☐ At least three **specific use cases for AI** have been identified with clear business value — not vague aspirations but defined problems with measurable outcomes.
- ☐ The identified use cases have been **prioritised by business impact and feasibility** — quick wins that demonstrate value are scheduled before complex, high-risk projects.
- ☐ You have quantified the **current cost and time** associated with the processes you intend to apply AI to, creating a baseline for measuring ROI after implementation.
- ☐ Process owners and **subject matter experts** have been identified and are willing to collaborate with the AI team to define requirements and validate outputs.
- ☐ You understand which tasks within your processes are **repetitive and rule-based** (suitable for automation) versus those requiring **nuanced judgement** (suitable for AI augmentation).
- ☐ There is a **clear definition of success** for each AI use case — specific metrics, target improvements, and acceptable error rates have been agreed with stakeholders.
- ☐ You have assessed whether your **current process volume** justifies AI investment — some processes are better served by simple automation or improved workflows rather than AI.
- ☐ A **pilot project** has been selected that is low-risk, high-visibility, and will generate measurable results within 3–6 months to build confidence and momentum.

SECTION 03 SCORE _____ / **10** *Aim for 8+. Below 5 = use-case definition gap.*

SECTION NOTES / OWNER / TARGET DATE

04

Governance & Ethics Framework

Responsible AI adoption requires clear governance structures, ethical guidelines, and accountability frameworks before technology is deployed.

- ☐ Your organisation has appointed an **AI governance lead or committee** responsible for overseeing AI strategy, ethics, risk, and compliance across all initiatives.
- ☐ A formal **AI ethics policy** has been drafted covering fairness, transparency, accountability, and the boundaries of automated decision-making within your business.
- ☐ You have established **clear criteria for when AI decisions require human oversight** versus when fully automated decisions are acceptable *(risk-based approach)*.
- ☐ There is a process for conducting **AI impact assessments** before deploying new AI systems, evaluating potential effects on customers, employees, and other stakeholders.
- ☐ Your organisation has reviewed guidance from the **UK AI Safety Institute** and the ICO's AI and data protection guidance to ensure alignment with current best practice.
- ☐ A **model documentation standard** is in place requiring all AI models to be documented with training data sources, performance metrics, known limitations, and update history.
- ☐ You have a **process for handling AI errors and complaints** — when AI makes a wrong decision, there is a clear escalation path and a human review mechanism.
- ☐ Your governance framework includes **regular review cycles** (at least quarterly) to assess whether deployed AI systems continue to perform as expected and remain aligned with business objectives.

SECTION 04 SCORE _____ / **10** *Aim for 8+. Below 5 = governance gap.*

SECTION NOTES / OWNER / TARGET DATE

05

Security & Compliance

AI systems introduce new security risks and compliance obligations. Assess your readiness to manage these before deployment.

- ☐ You have conducted a **data protection impact assessment (DPIA)** for any AI use case that involves personal data, as required by UK GDPR and recommended by the ICO.
- ☐ Your **data processing agreements** with third-party AI vendors clearly define data handling, storage locations, retention periods, and sub-processor arrangements.
- ☐ AI model training data is **classified and protected** according to its sensitivity level, with appropriate access controls and encryption at rest and in transit.
- ☐ You have verified that any **cloud-based AI services** you intend to use store and process data within jurisdictions acceptable under UK data protection law.
- ☐ Your organisation has a **policy on using generative AI tools** (ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) that defines what data employees may and may not input into these services.
- ☐ There is a **security review process** for AI models before they are deployed to production, including testing for adversarial attacks, data poisoning, and prompt injection.
- ☐ Your **cyber insurance policy** has been reviewed to confirm it covers incidents arising from AI system failures, data breaches involving AI, or AI-related liability claims.
- ☐ You have established **audit trails for AI decisions** that affect customers or employees, ensuring you can explain and justify outcomes if challenged *(explainability requirement)*.
- ☐ Regular **penetration testing and vulnerability assessments** include AI-specific attack vectors such as model extraction, training data leakage, and inference manipulation.

SECTION 05 SCORE _____ / **10** *Aim for 8+. Below 5 = security / compliance gap.*

SECTION NOTES / OWNER / TARGET DATE

06

Change Management & Culture

Technology is only half the challenge. Assess whether your people and culture are prepared for AI-driven change across the organisation.

- ☐ Senior leadership has **publicly endorsed the AI strategy** and communicated a clear vision for how AI will benefit the organisation and its employees.
- ☐ You have conducted a **skills gap analysis** identifying which roles will be most affected by AI and what training or reskilling is needed to prepare your workforce.
- ☐ An **AI training programme** is planned or underway to improve AI literacy across the organisation — not just the IT team but all departments that will interact with AI tools.
- ☐ There is a **clear communication plan** addressing employee concerns about job displacement, explaining how AI will augment rather than replace their roles *(where applicable)*.
- ☐ You have identified **AI champions** within each department — enthusiastic individuals who will advocate for AI adoption and support colleagues through the transition.
- ☐ Your organisation has a track record of **successfully adopting new technologies** (cloud migration, digital tools, remote working) that gives confidence in your ability to manage AI change.
- ☐ A **feedback mechanism** exists for employees to raise concerns, report issues, and suggest improvements related to AI tools they use in their daily work.
- ☐ Your change management plan includes **realistic timelines** that acknowledge AI adoption is iterative — expecting transformational results in the first 3 months is a common cause of disappointment.

SECTION 06 SCORE _____ / **10** *Aim for 8+. Below 5 = culture / change gap.*

SECTION NOTES / OWNER / TARGET DATE

Σ

Audit summary & action plan

Transfer the score for each section into the table. Set a priority (H/M/L) based on the gap to target. Anything scoring below 5 is a candidate for the top-three actions on the next page.

#	ASSESSMENT AREA	SCORE / 10	PRIORITY
01	Data Infrastructure & Quality	_____ / 10	☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
02	Technical Capabilities & Skills	_____ / 10	☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
03	Business Process Analysis	_____ / 10	☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
04	Governance & Ethics Framework	_____ / 10	☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
05	Security & Compliance	_____ / 10	☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
06	Change Management & Culture	_____ / 10	☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
Σ	**TOTAL SCORE**	_____ / 60	—

HOW TO READ YOUR TOTAL

Six sections, each scored out of 10, give a maximum readiness score of 60. The interpretation bands on the next page translate your total into a readiness verdict and tell you whether to proceed, prioritise, or pause.

Interpretation & priority actions

Translate your total score (out of 60) into a readiness band, then commit to a small number of next steps. The goal is one page of decisions, not a wish list.

Score interpretation

48–60	**AI-ready.** Strong foundations across data, skills, governance and culture. Proceed with your prioritised pilot and focus on measurement.
36–47	**Promising, gaps exist.** Address any section scoring below 5 with named owners and deadlines before scaling beyond a pilot.
Below 36	**Significant gaps.** Adopting AI now puts the business at risk. Build readiness first — consider an external readiness review before committing.

Top 3 priority actions

01 _____

02 _____

03 _____

Additional notes

_____

_____

_____

ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY _____ DATE _____ NEXT REVIEW DUE _____

Need help getting AI-ready?

Cloudswitched helps UK organisations build the data, security and governance foundations for AI — from readiness reviews to pilot delivery, with fixed-price improvement plans.

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