Role Design and Scoping: Applying the AI Capability Framework

1. Purpose of This Scenario

This scenario supports the **design and scoping of roles before recruitment begins**, where early decisions strongly shape fairness, inclusion, and long-term organisational fit.

It addresses a common professional tension: the temptation to use AI to *speed up* job design versus the responsibility to ensure roles are **well-judged, equitable, and genuinely aligned to real needs**.

The aim is not to automate role design, but to help professionals **use AI as a reflective and analytical partner** while retaining human judgement, accountability, and values-based decision-making.

This scenario is designed to support:

- Hiring managers and academic leads
- HR and people partners
- Programme directors and research leads
- Panel chairs and senior decision-makers

2. Situation & Context

A new role is being created, or an existing role is being re-scoped. This may be driven by:

- organisational change
- new funding or projects
- strategic priorities
- workload pressures
- succession planning

At this stage:

- time is often limited
- assumptions about "what the role should be" are strong
- informal language and inherited criteria are common

Decisions made here will influence:

- who feels able to apply
- how candidates are evaluated later
- whether the role actually solves the intended problem

AI may be considered to help draft role descriptions, define criteria, or benchmark similar roles — but these uses carry **hidden risks if not carefully bounded**.

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3. Where AI Might Be Used (and Why That Matters)

AI is often introduced at this stage to:

- draft job descriptions quickly
- suggest role responsibilities or skills
- benchmark against sector norms
- rewrite or "polish" language

These uses matter because:

- early wording shapes who self-selects out
- AI systems often reproduce dominant norms
- over-specification can unintentionally exclude

This scenario therefore treats AI use in role design as **high-impact, medium-risk**, requiring explicit judgement and reflection.

AI should *support sensemaking*, not define the role.

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4. Applying the AI Capability Framework

4.1 Awareness

Before using AI, clarify:

- the real organisational problem this role is meant to address
- which aspects are genuinely uncertain or need exploration
- what assumptions are already embedded in draft ideas

Key awareness questions:

- Are we designing a role, or copying a familiar pattern?
- What constraints (budget, grade, governance) already exist?
- What knowledge about this role is tacit rather than explicit?

AI should be used to **surface blind spots**, not replace this thinking.

4.2 Human–AI Co-Agency

At this stage:

- Humans must remain the *authors* of the role
- AI may act as a challenger, comparator, or clarifier

Good co-agency means:

- humans decide what the role *is for*
- AI supports exploration of alternatives
- responsibility for inclusion and fairness remains human

Explicitly avoid:

- allowing AI to determine essential criteria
- outsourcing judgement about seniority or scope

4.3 Applied Practice

Appropriate AI uses in this scenario include:

- generating alternative role framings
- stress-testing essential vs desirable criteria
- identifying potentially exclusionary language
- comparing role scope across sectors

Inappropriate uses include:

- finalising job descriptions without review
- generating grading or pay decisions
- defining selection criteria in isolation

AI outputs should always be treated as **draft thinking artefacts**, not decisions.

4.4 Ethics, Equity & Impact

This is a critical stage for equity.

Key risks include:

- reproducing gendered or exclusionary language
- over-emphasising credentialism
- embedding unrealistic expectations

Use the Framework to ask:

- Who might this role unintentionally exclude?
- What assumptions about career paths are present?
- Does this role privilege familiarity with certain systems or cultures?

AI can help *surface* these issues — but cannot resolve them alone.

4.5 Decision-Making & Governance

Ensure that:

- the rationale for role scope is documented
- any AI-assisted inputs are transparent
- final decisions are traceable to human judgement

Good governance practices include:

- retaining early drafts
- recording key design decisions
- noting where AI influenced thinking (and where it did not)

This protects both individuals and the organisation.

4.6 Reflection, Learning & Renewal

After the role is scoped, reflect:

- What assumptions were challenged?
- Where did AI help clarify thinking?
- Where did it risk narrowing options?

This reflection supports **organisational learning**, not just one-off hiring.

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5. In-the-Moment Prompts & Checks

Human reflection prompts

- What problem will still exist if this role is filled?
- What would success look like in the first year?
- What are we assuming about the 'ideal' candidate?

Optional AI prompts

- "Identify potentially exclusionary language in this role description."
- "Suggest alternative framings of this role focused on outcomes rather than credentials."
- "Highlight assumptions embedded in these essential criteria."

Pause & check

- Are we comfortable defending this role design publicly?
- Could this role be scoped more flexibly without losing purpose?

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6. After-Action Reflection

Once the role description is finalised:

- What changed from the initial draft?
- Where did AI meaningfully improve clarity or fairness?
- What would we do differently next time?

Capture insights to inform future role design processes.

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7. What This Scenario Delivers

This scenario helps organisations:

- design roles more intentionally and equitably
- avoid downstream recruitment bias
- use AI responsibly at a high-impact decision point
- strengthen accountability and governance
- build AI capability through real work, not training alone

About CloudPedagogy

CloudPedagogy develops practical, ethical, and future-ready AI capability across education, research, and public service.

This scenario is part of the AI Capability Framework Scenario Library, supporting applied, context-sensitive practice using the CloudPedagogy AI Capability Framework (2026 Edition).

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