AI FOR IMPACT
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MEASURE YOUR TEAM'S AI CAPABILITY.

AI Capability Self-Assessment

A practical diagnostic for understanding how effectively you and your team work with AI.

UNDERSTAND • PRACTICE • COLLABORATE • ASSESS

AI for Impact | BoulevardLabs + James Madison University

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START HERE

AI access is not the same as AI capability.

This self-assessment helps you identify what you can do with AI today, where your habits are strong, and where additional practice would make the biggest difference.

The goal is not to determine whether someone is "good at AI." It is to examine a set of practical behaviors that transfer across tools, models, and changing technology. The assessment focuses on how people understand, question, apply, verify, and make decisions with AI in real work.

This assessment measures eight capabilities

- **Verification:** Recognizing when a polished AI answer still needs evidence or independent checking.
- **Source Evaluation:** Checking whether a source exists, is credible, is current, and actually supports the claim.
- **Context & Interaction:** Framing tasks, providing useful context, and iterating with AI instead of treating it like a fixed-answer database.
- **Information & Context Management:** Working intelligently with long documents, large inputs, retrieval limits, and important details.
- **Prioritization & Judgment:** Recognizing when an accurate output still misses what matters most.
- **Responsible Use:** Knowing what information belongs in an AI tool, what does not, and when policies or permissions matter.
- **Decision Judgment:** Using AI recommendations as inputs to human reasoning rather than as automatic decisions.
- **Tool Evaluation:** Starting with the problem and evaluating whether a new AI product is actually useful, appropriate, and worth adopting.

IMPORTANT

This is a self-assessment, not a certification, hiring test, or validated performance instrument. Use it to create a baseline, prompt discussion, and choose development priorities. Scores are most useful when you can point to real examples from your work.

HOW TO USE IT

Rate behavior, not confidence.

For each statement, choose the rating that best reflects what you consistently do in practice - not what you believe you could do if needed.

SCORE	LEVEL	WHAT IT MEANS
1	**Not yet**	I rarely do this or would not know how to begin.
2	**Developing**	I understand the idea but apply it inconsistently or with help.
3	**Capable**	I can usually do this independently in familiar situations.
4	**Strong**	I do this consistently and can adapt the behavior to different tasks.
5	**Advanced**	I do this consistently, can explain why it matters, and can help others apply it.

A good assessment habit

- Choose a rating only after thinking of a recent example.
- If you cannot think of an example, rate yourself lower rather than giving yourself the benefit of the doubt.
- Complete the assessment individually before discussing results with a team.
- Retake it after a period of deliberate practice to see what changed.

SCORING

Each capability has four statements and a maximum score of 20. Your overall assessment includes 32 statements and a maximum score of 160. You will calculate both capability averages and an overall average at the end.

01 CAPABILITY 01 Verification

Can you recognize when an AI answer needs evidence rather than simply sounding convincing?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I recognize that a confident or polished AI response can still be incomplete, unsupported, or wrong.	○	○	○	○	○
I can identify when the stakes of a task require independent verification before I use an AI-generated answer.	○	○	○	○	○
I distinguish between a generated answer and evidence that has been checked against an authoritative source.	○	○	○	○	○
I verify important facts, calculations, quotations, or claims before they influence a consequential output or decision.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

AI gives your team an answer that sounds completely certain. The response is detailed and authoritative, but no one knows where the information came from. What should happen next?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Pause before relying on the answer. Identify which claims matter, determine what evidence would support them, and check those claims against independent, appropriate sources. Treat confidence as presentation - not proof.

REFLECTION

Where in your work are you most likely to trust a polished answer too quickly?

02

CAPABILITY 02

Source Evaluation

Can you tell whether the evidence behind an AI-assisted answer is real, relevant, and trustworthy?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I check whether AI-provided citations, links, titles, statistics, or references actually exist.	○	○	○	○	○
I evaluate whether a source is authoritative, current enough, and relevant to the question being asked.	○	○	○	○	○
I check whether the cited source actually supports the specific claim rather than merely being related to the topic.	○	○	○	○	○
I understand the difference between AI generating a plausible reference and a system retrieving information from a traceable source.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

AI produces a well-written answer with several citations. One citation looks legitimate but does not exist. Would you catch it - and what would you check next?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Open and inspect the source rather than trusting the citation format. Confirm authorship, publication, date, relevance, and whether the source supports the claim. If traceability matters, prefer workflows that make source grounding explicit.

REFLECTION

What sources do you consider authoritative for the kinds of work you do most often?

03 CAPABILITY 03
Context & Interaction

Can you shape an AI interaction by providing the right task, context, constraints, and feedback?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I clearly define the task, audience, desired outcome, and important constraints before asking AI to help.	○	○	○	○	○
I provide relevant context without assuming the AI already understands my organization, project, or priorities.	○	○	○	○	○
I refine weak outputs by correcting assumptions, adding context, or changing constraints rather than immediately starting over.	○	○	○	○	○
I understand that wording, conversation history, instructions, settings, and model choice can change an AI response.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

Two people ask AI the same basic question and get noticeably different answers. What factors would you examine before deciding that one answer is “better”?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Compare the actual instructions, context, conversation history, model/tool, and constraints. Evaluate the outputs against a shared definition of success. AI interactions are shaped by both the system and what the user provides.

REFLECTION

Which part of your prompting or interaction habits most often limits the quality of your results?

04 Information & Context Management

CAPABILITY 04

Can you work intelligently with large documents and information without assuming that uploaded means understood?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I understand that giving AI a large document does not guarantee that every detail will be interpreted, prioritized, or retrieved correctly.	○	○	○	○	○
I identify which sections, facts, definitions, or constraints matter most before asking AI to work with a large body of information.	○	○	○	○	○
I ask AI to ground important answers in specified material and, when appropriate, identify the source section or evidence it used.	○	○	○	○	○
I return to the original source to verify critical details instead of relying solely on the AI-generated summary or extraction.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

You upload 100 pages and ask AI for a summary. The response is accurate overall but misses one critical requirement buried in the document. What should your workflow have included?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Structure the task around what matters: identify priority sections, ask targeted questions, require evidence or section references when possible, and verify critical requirements against the source. More input is not a substitute for intentional context management.

REFLECTION

When you work with long documents, which details would be costly to miss?

05

CAPABILITY 05

Prioritization & Judgment

Can you tell the difference between an accurate output and an output that is actually relevant to the decision?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I recognize that an AI summary can be technically accurate while still omitting the information that matters most.	○	○	○	○	○
I define the criteria that determine what is important before asking AI to prioritize, summarize, or recommend.	○	○	○	○	○
I look for meaningful omissions, overemphasis, and information that may be correct but irrelevant to the goal.	○	○	○	○	○
I use domain knowledge, stakeholder needs, and situational context to decide what deserves attention.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

The AI summary is accurate, concise, and polished - but it leaves out the one issue that will drive the final decision. What capability was missing from the workflow?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Human prioritization. AI can compress and organize information, but the user must define what matters and evaluate the output against that context. Reframe the task with explicit priorities, then review for omissions.

REFLECTION

What criteria do you use to decide what matters most when information is abundant?

06 CAPABILITY 06 Responsible Use

Can you improve an AI interaction without crossing data, privacy, security, or policy boundaries?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I know what types of information are appropriate to enter into the AI tools I use.	○	○	○	○	○
I check organizational policy, tool permissions, and data-handling requirements before providing sensitive, proprietary, personal, or restricted information.	○	○	○	○	○
I provide only the context needed for the task rather than exposing unnecessary information.	○	○	○	○	○
I know when to use an approved secure environment, anonymize information, or avoid using AI for a task altogether.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

More internal context would clearly improve the AI answer, but some of that context is sensitive. How do you decide what to provide?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Check the tool, policy, permissions, and sensitivity of the information before sharing anything. Minimize data, use approved environments, anonymize when appropriate, and do not trade security or privacy for a better answer.

REFLECTION

Which information categories in your work require the most caution when using AI?

07 CAPABILITY 07 Decision Judgment

Can you use an AI recommendation to improve human reasoning without quietly turning it into the decision-maker?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I treat AI recommendations as inputs to a decision rather than as authority to act.	○	○	○	○	○
I examine the assumptions, criteria, missing information, and uncertainty behind an AI-generated recommendation.	○	○	○	○	○
I consider tradeoffs, consequences, stakeholder impacts, and context that the AI may not have been given.	○	○	○	○	○
I maintain clear human accountability for consequential decisions even when AI contributes analysis or recommendations.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

AI recommends Option B and the analysis looks convincing. Everyone agrees immediately. What should happen before the decision is finalized?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Interrogate the recommendation. Check assumptions and evidence, compare alternatives, examine missing context and tradeoffs, and make the human decision criteria explicit. AI can support judgment; accountability remains with people.

REFLECTION

Where could an AI recommendation become overly influential in your current work?

08 CAPABILITY 08 Tool Evaluation

Can you evaluate a new AI product based on the problem it solves rather than the quality of its demo?

RATE YOURSELF

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
I start by defining the problem, user, and desired improvement before evaluating an AI tool.	○	○	○	○	○
I assess whether the tool fits the actual workflow, data environment, permissions, and level of human oversight required.	○	○	○	○	○
I define measurable success criteria before a pilot or adoption decision.	○	○	○	○	○
I can compare AI tools across usefulness, output quality, usability, risk, cost, integration, and adaptability rather than relying on hype or feature lists.	○	○	○	○	○

CAPABILITY SUBTOTAL: ____ / 20 **AVERAGE: ____ / 5**

SCENARIO CHECKPOINT

A new AI tool promises dramatic productivity gains and gives an impressive demo. What should your team ask before adopting it?

YOUR RESPONSE

A CAPABLE RESPONSE USUALLY INCLUDES

Start with the real problem. Identify who will use the tool, where it fits, what data it needs, what happens when it fails, how success will be measured, and whether the benefit justifies the effort, cost, and risk.

REFLECTION

What is the last AI tool you evaluated, and did you define success before trying it?

YOUR RESULTS

Build your capability profile

Your overall score matters less than the shape of your profile. Look for the capabilities that are already reliable strengths and the ones that would benefit most from deliberate practice.

For each capability, copy your subtotal from the assessment page. Divide the subtotal by 4 to calculate the capability average. Then total all 32 statement ratings and divide by 32 for your overall average.

CAPABILITY	SUBTOTAL /20	AVERAGE /5	LEVEL	EVIDENCE / EXAMPLE
Verification				
Source Evaluation				
Context & Interaction				
Information & Context Management				
Prioritization & Judgment				
Responsible Use				
Decision Judgment				
Tool Evaluation				

Overall

TOTAL SCORE / 160

OVERALL AVERAGE / 5

Your profile at a glance

- Two strongest capabilities:
- Two highest-priority development areas:
- One capability that surprised you:

INTERPRETATION

What your scores mean

Use the levels as development language, not labels. A lower score simply identifies a capability that deserves more practice or clearer organizational support.

AVERAGE	LEVEL	DEVELOPMENT FOCUS
1.0–1.9	**Emerging**	The capability is not yet a consistent part of your AI workflow. Focus on awareness, basic habits, and guided practice.
2.0–2.9	**Developing**	You understand the capability but apply it inconsistently. Build repetition using familiar, low-risk tasks.
3.0–3.7	**Capable**	You can usually apply the capability independently. Strengthen consistency and transfer it to more complex situations.
3.8–4.4	**Strong**	The capability is a reliable part of your work. Practice adapting it across tools, tasks, and higher-stakes contexts.
4.5–5.0	**Advanced**	You apply the capability consistently and can help others use it. Continue testing your habits as technology and contexts change.

Do not over-read the number

Self-assessment scores are influenced by experience, confidence, role, and the examples that come to mind. Treat the score as a conversation starter. The strongest evidence of capability is observable behavior: how you actually frame tasks, verify outputs, protect information, evaluate tools, and make decisions.

LOOK FOR GAPS BETWEEN ACCESS AND CAPABILITY

A team may use AI frequently and still score low in verification, source evaluation, responsible use, or decision judgment. High usage is not the same as high capability.

TEAM USE

Turn individual scores into a team conversation

The purpose of a team review is not to rank people. It is to identify shared strengths, inconsistent habits, and capabilities the organization should intentionally develop.

Recommended team process

01 Have each person complete the assessment independently before discussing it.

02 Ask people to bring one real example that supports each of their two highest and two lowest capability scores.

03 Compare patterns across the team. Focus on capability ranges and recurring gaps, not individual rankings.

04 Discuss where the team relies on informal habits instead of a shared approach.

05 Choose one or two capabilities to strengthen over the next 30–60 days.

06 Define what observable improvement would look like and schedule a reassessment.

Team discussion prompts

- Where do we have the greatest variation in how people work with AI?
- Which capability creates the most risk if it is weak?
- Which capability would create the most value if it improved?
- Where do our tools, policies, training, or workflows make good behavior easier - or harder?
- What should become a shared team habit rather than an individual preference?

USE WITH CARE

If this assessment is used in a workplace, do not treat it as a validated employee performance measure. It is designed for development, reflection, and team learning.

ACTION PLAN

Choose the capability that will change your work

Do not try to improve all eight capabilities at once. Pick one or two priorities and turn them into observable behaviors you can practice.

Development plan

Priority capability

Why this matters in my work

Behavior I want to practice

Task or workflow where I will practice it

Evidence that I am improving

Person or team I can practice with

Reassessment date

Match the gap to a next step

- **Need stronger foundations?** Use the AI Fluency Field Guide to strengthen core concepts and vocabulary.
- **Need repetition and confidence?** Use the 30-Day AI Skills Challenge to practice small, transferable behaviors.
- **Need better human + AI workflows?** Use Human + AI: The Collaboration Lab Workbook to practice how AI contribution and human contribution work together.
- **Need a team baseline?** Have the team complete this assessment individually, compare patterns, and choose shared development priorities.

RETAKE

Capability grows through practice, not a one-time score.

Use this assessment as a baseline. After deliberate practice, retake it using recent examples and compare the shape of your capability profile.

Before you reassess

- Practice your priority capability in real work at least several times.
- Keep examples of outputs, decisions, or workflows that show what changed.
- Ask a colleague for feedback on the behavior, not just the result.
- Notice whether the capability transfers to unfamiliar tools or tasks.

Reassessment notes

DATE

OVERALL AVERAGE

BIGGEST IMPROVEMENT

CAPABILITY STILL NEEDING ATTENTION

NEXT DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY

THE GOAL

A capable AI user is not someone who knows every tool. It is someone who can enter an unfamiliar AI situation and still ask the right questions, apply sound judgment, protect important boundaries, and adapt as the technology changes.