



WORLD ADMINISTRATORS  

---

ALLIANCE

# HOW TO USE THE GLOBAL SKILLS MATRIX 2026

**A Practical Guide for  
Administrative Professionals**

---

Developed by World Administrators Alliance  
Research and framework development led by Lucy Brazier OBE





The Global Skills Matrix 2026 was designed to change how organisations think about administrative capability. But you do not have to wait for your organisation to act. This guide shows you how to use the framework yourself, right now, to understand where you are, articulate what you do and take control of where you go next.

## Why This Matters to You

I want to be direct with you about something. The Global Skills Matrix 2026 was deliberately written for leaders. For CHROs. For chief executives. For the people who make decisions about how administrative roles are graded, structured and developed. That was intentional. Because the argument for change needs to land at the level where the decisions get made.

But here is what I know from speaking to administrative professionals in every corner of the world. You cannot afford to wait for your organisation to read a report and decide to act. You have a career happening right now. You have a conversation with your manager coming up. You have a performance review, a promotion case, a pay review, or simply a quiet sense that what you are doing every day is not being properly seen or properly valued.

The Global Skills Matrix gives you something you may have never had before: a framework that reflects what you actually do, not what your job title suggests. It gives you language. It gives you evidence. And it gives you a mirror in which to see your own contribution clearly, probably for the first time.

This guide is for you. It explains how to use the framework in your own hands, whether or not your organisation has ever heard of it.

*43% of administrative professionals report that their job title does not accurately reflect their responsibilities. 51% have no clear career pathway. If either of those statistics describes you, this framework is where you start.*

## What the Global Skills Matrix Actually Is

The Global Skills Matrix is a five-level capability framework that defines administrative work by the level of judgement exercised, the complexity of coordination involved and the organisational impact of the contribution. It was developed by the World Administrators Alliance, drawing on survey data from 3,221 administrative professionals across 69 countries.



It does not define levels by job title. It does not define them by how long you have been in the profession. It does not define them by the seniority of the person you support. It defines them by what you actually do and the quality of judgement you bring to it. That is a fundamental shift from how most organisations currently think about administrative roles, and it is one that puts you in a much stronger position once you understand it.

The five levels run from Level 1 (Apprenticeship/Foundational) through to Level 5, which splits into two distinct senior pathways: Level 5A (Administrative Leadership, which focuses on leading the administrative function as a discipline) and Level 5B (Executive Operations Leadership, which focuses on enterprise-level coordination adjacent to senior leadership). Most experienced administrative professionals reading this will find themselves somewhere between Level 2 and Level 4. Many will discover they are operating significantly higher than their current title or grading would suggest.

*The framework distinguishes clearly between increased workload and increased level of work. More tasks is not a higher level. A higher level means more complex judgement, broader accountability and greater organisational impact. That distinction is important for how you read your own position.*

## The Five Levels: What They Mean for You

Here is what each level looks like in practice, written in plain terms rather than the framework language of the full report.

### LEVEL 1

#### Apprenticeship/Foundational

You are learning the role. You are working under supervision, executing defined tasks within established procedures. Your focus is on accuracy, consistency and building your professional foundations: communication, digital literacy, confidentiality and organisational awareness. This is where everyone begins. The goal is reliability.

### LEVEL 2

#### Professional Administrative

You are independently managing defined administrative processes. You own your calendar, your logistics, your processes. You exercise judgement within established frameworks. You use digital tools including AI assistance to work more efficiently. You interact with stakeholders and maintain structured reporting. Your judgement is primarily procedural, but you operate with increasing autonomy. If someone can trust you to run things without being told how, you are here.

### LEVEL 3

#### Operational and Project Coordination

This is the operational centre of gravity of the profession, and it is where the transformation in administrative work becomes most visible. At Level 3 you are not executing tasks. You are orchestrating workflow across functions. You coordinate cross-functional activity. You support



and lead defined projects. You interpret and present operational data. You manage competing priorities across multiple stakeholders. You support governance documentation and flag risks and dependencies. You are, in effect, an operational manager, even if no one is calling you that. If you are doing this work and being graded as a Level 2, that gap is precisely what the Global Skills Matrix exists to close.

#### LEVEL 4

### Strategic Interpretation and Alignment

At Level 4, your contribution has moved into the strategic layer of the organisation. You are interpreting priorities, not just executing them. You are managing information flow at senior levels, deciding what reaches your executive and in what form. You are supporting board and governance processes. You are anticipating operational and reputational risk before it becomes visible to others. You are translating strategic direction into coordinated organisational action. You may be working closely with C-suite leadership or the board, though the level is defined by the judgement you exercise, not purely by whom you sit next to.

#### LEVEL 5A

### Administrative Leadership

You lead the administrative function as a professional discipline. You design job families and progression pathways. You align capability to organisational need. You lead digital and AI integration within your team. You oversee governance processes. You manage budgets and workforce planning. You are responsible not just for the work but for the architecture of how the work gets done.

#### LEVEL 5B

### Executive Operations Leadership

You operate at enterprise level, adjacent to senior leadership. You manage the executive operating rhythm of the organisation. You coordinate enterprise-level priorities. You oversee governance reporting structures. You integrate cross-functional initiatives. You manage risk and continuity frameworks. Your judgement influences organisational direction and execution. You are, by any honest definition, an operational leader.

*Read those level descriptions and ask yourself honestly: What level am I operating at? Then ask: What level do my title, grading and salary suggest I am operating at? The gap between those two answers is the conversation you need to have.*

## How to Assess Your Own Level

The full Global Skills Matrix report includes both a Skills Matrix and a Tasks Matrix, which together define the capabilities and responsibilities associated with each level. I encourage you to read both in full. But here is a practical starting point for self-assessment.

Ask yourself these questions honestly, and be specific. Vague answers will not help you in a conversation with your manager or HR team.



## Questions to ask about your current role

- 1. What is the scope of my judgement?** Am I following defined processes, or am I making independent decisions about priorities, sequencing and approach? Am I escalating decisions upward, or am I the one resolving them?
- 2. How complex is the coordination I manage?** Am I coordinating within a team, or across functions and organisations? How many competing priorities am I holding at once, and how do I decide between them?
- 3. What is my governance exposure?** Do I support board preparation, governance documentation or compliance reporting? Am I in the room, or do I prepare the room?
- 4. What is the organisational impact if I get something wrong?** Would a mistake affect one person or many? Would it be visible at leadership level? Would it have reputational, financial or strategic consequences?
- 5. How do I use AI and digital tools?** Am I aware of them, or actively using them? Am I using them for basic tasks, or deploying them to generate insight, improve workflow and enhance decision-making?
- 6. Who do I advise?** Do I execute instructions, or do I provide input that shapes decisions? Do leaders ask for my view, or just my output?

Your honest answers to those questions will tell you more about your level than your job title ever will. The framework is not asking whether you have been given permission to operate at a particular level. It is asking whether you are, in practice, already doing so.

## A note on tenure and experience

Here is something I feel strongly about. Many of you have been in this profession for a long time. Over 80% of the people who took part in our global survey have more than ten years of experience, and more than half have over twenty. That experience is extraordinary. The organisational knowledge you carry, the contextual awareness you have built, the relationships you have navigated over years: these are genuinely valuable assets.

But I want to be honest with you too. Tenure is not the same as level. If the roles you have held have never been clearly defined against capability thresholds, and if your organisations have never formally assessed your contribution against a structured framework, then your experience may not have been translated into the progression it deserved. That is not a reflection of your capability. It is a reflection of a structural gap in how the profession has been managed. The Global Skills Matrix is the beginning of closing that gap, but you have a role to play too: you need to understand your own level clearly enough to advocate for it.

*You cannot have a conversation about your level of contribution if you do not know what that level is. That is where this framework starts.*

## How to Use the Framework in Conversations

Once you have a clear sense of your own level, the framework becomes a tool for conversations that may have felt impossible before. Here is how to use it in three specific situations.



## In a performance review or development conversation

Most performance reviews for administrative professionals are conducted against task lists: did you manage the diary, coordinate the travel, prepare the materials? The Global Skills Matrix gives you a different basis for the conversation. Instead of defending a task list, you can present your contribution in terms of organisational impact.

Come to the conversation prepared with specific examples that illustrate the level at which you are operating. Not “I manage the board papers” but “I oversee the governance preparation process, which includes coordinating input from six functions, managing the timeline to ensure documentation is complete before the board meeting, and flagging dependencies and risks to the CEO before they reach the board. Based on the Global Skills Matrix, this is Level 4 contribution.” That is a different conversation.

### Prepare for your review

- *Download the Global Skills Matrix from [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com) and read the Level 3 and Level 4 capability and tasks descriptions in full.*
- *For each capability or task at your assessed level, write down a specific example from the last six months that demonstrates it.*
- *Note any responsibilities you currently hold that sit at a higher level than your current grading suggests.*
- *Bring the framework to the conversation. It gives both you and your manager a shared language and a credible external reference point.*

## In a reclassification or promotion conversation

If you believe your role has grown beyond its current grade, the Global Skills Matrix is your most powerful piece of evidence. The framework was specifically designed to address the gap between the work being performed and the level being recognised. It is not your personal opinion about your own contribution. It is a globally validated, evidence-based capability architecture developed from 3,221 professionals across 69 countries. That matters when you are sitting across from an HR director.

The argument is straightforward. “The framework defines Level 3 contribution as operational coordination and project management across functions. Here is the evidence that I am doing that work. My current grading reflects Level 2. The gap between those two things is what I am asking you to address.” That argument is hard to dismiss when it is presented clearly, with evidence, against an external framework rather than a personal assertion.

### Make your reclassification case

- *Map your actual responsibilities to the Tasks Matrix at the level you believe you are operating at.*
- *For every task or capability at that level, provide a concrete example with visible organisational impact.*
- *Identify any structural responsibilities you carry (governance, risk, project leadership, cross-functional coordination) that are not reflected in your current job description.*
- *Ask HR to assess your role against the Global Skills Matrix framework. Frame it as a request for alignment, not a complaint.*
- *If your organisation has not yet adopted the GSM, share the report with your manager and HR team. Let the evidence speak.*



## In a conversation about your development

The framework is just as useful for forward planning as it is for capturing what you already do. If you are currently operating at Level 3 and want to move toward Level 4, the Skills Matrix tells you exactly what capabilities you need to develop: executive-level communication, advanced stakeholder influence and negotiation, governance oversight, executive decision sequencing, risk anticipation and mitigation, business and financial awareness, strategic adaptability and AI-enabled insight generation. That is a development plan, not a wish list.

Use it to have a specific conversation with your manager or L&D team about what development investment is needed and what opportunities within the organisation would allow you to build those capabilities. The framework gives you a professional basis for asking, and it gives your organisation a professional basis for responding.

## A Word on AI

The 2025 survey found that 42% of administrative professionals are already using AI tools as an embedded part of their workflow. Self-reported AI confidence averages 53 out of 100, which tells us the profession is polarising: some people are advancing rapidly with AI, and others are being left behind.

I want to be direct about what this means for you. AI proficiency is becoming a differentiating capability within the profession. The Global Skills Matrix embeds AI expectations at every level, from foundational awareness at Level 1 to AI-enabled executive analysis at Level 5B. This is not optional. It is the direction the profession is moving, and the speed at which it is moving is faster than most organisations have recognised.

If you are already using AI confidently, make sure that is visible in how you describe your contribution. It belongs in your performance review, your reclassification case and your professional profile. It is a Level 3 and Level 4 capability, and it should be recognised as one.

If you are not yet using AI with confidence, please do not be discouraged. The divide in confidence scores is not about intelligence or capability. It is almost entirely about access to structured development and support. If your organisation has not invested in your AI development, that is an organisational failure, not a personal one. And the framework gives you the language to ask for that investment explicitly.

*AI integration without role redesign creates ambiguity rather than efficiency. If your organisation is implementing AI tools without adjusting what your role is expected to do at a higher level, you have the right to ask for that conversation.*



## How to Share This with Your Organisation

Reading this guide and understanding your own level is the first step. The second step is bringing your organisation with you. Here is how to do that without it feeling confrontational.

### Share the report, not just your conclusions

The full Global Skills Matrix 2026 report is available at [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com). Download it and share it with your manager, your HR director or your CHRO. You do not need to present it as a complaint about your current situation. You can frame it as something you came across and thought would be valuable for the organisation. Let them read it. Let the evidence do its work.

### Ask for a role review, not a pay rise

The most effective way to use the framework is to ask your organisation to review how your role maps to the five levels, rather than leading with a compensation request. A role review is a professional, forward-looking conversation. It invites your manager and HR team to engage with the framework rather than defend against a demand. The compensation conversation follows naturally once the level is correctly identified.

### Connect it to organisational priorities

Leaders respond to business cases, not personal narratives. When you bring the Global Skills Matrix into a conversation with your organisation, connect it to something they care about: executive effectiveness, governance quality, digital transformation, talent retention, succession planning. The framework makes the case that administrative capability is a measurable lever for all of these outcomes. Your job is to show how your specific contribution connects to the outcomes your organisation is trying to achieve.

### Find your allies

You are not alone in this. There are administrative professionals across your organisation, and across the world, who are having exactly this conversation. Connect with professional associations in your country, engage with the World Administrators Alliance and its member organisations, and seek out networks of peers who understand what it means to operate at Level 3 or Level 4. You will find that the language of the framework resonates immediately with people who have been doing this work for years without a framework to describe it.



## Your Next Steps

I want to leave you with something concrete: a specific set of actions you can take this week.

### This week

- Download the full *Global Skills Matrix 2026 report* from [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com). Read *Section 4 (The Five Levels)* and the *Skills Matrix* and *Tasks Matrix* in full.
- Spend thirty minutes honestly mapping your current responsibilities to the *Tasks Matrix*. Which level does your work sit at?
- Write down three to five specific examples from the last six months that demonstrate your contribution at that level, in terms of judgement exercised and organisational impact delivered.
- Note the gap, if there is one, between the level you are operating at and the level your current title and grading reflect.

### This month

- Request a development or review conversation with your manager. Bring the framework. Come prepared with your self-assessment and your examples.
- If you are currently operating at Level 3 or above and your organisation does not have structured career pathways for administrative professionals, ask HR to begin a role mapping exercise against the GSM.
- Identify one capability gap between your current level and the next level up, and ask for a specific development opportunity to address it.
- If AI is a gap in your profile, ask for structured support. Name it as a capability investment, not a personal shortcoming.

### Ongoing

- Share the *Global Skills Matrix* report with your manager, HR director or CHRO. Let the evidence work on your behalf.
- Connect with your national administrative professional association and encourage them to adopt the GSM as a reference standard for development and certification.
- Build a professional narrative around your level of contribution, not your job title. Update your LinkedIn profile, your CV and how you introduce yourself professionally to reflect the level at which you operate.
- Keep reassessing. The framework is a living reference. As your contribution evolves, your level should too.

The Global Skills Matrix 2026 was built from the evidence of what administrative professionals are doing around the world. It reflects your work. It validates your contribution. And it gives you, for the first time, a globally recognised framework to stand behind when you make the case for being seen, valued and developed at the level at which you actually operate.

You have always deserved that. Now you have the framework to make it happen.

### Lucy Brazier OBE

CEO, Executive Support Media

Research and Framework Development Lead, World Administrators Alliance

Download the full  
Global Skills Matrix 2026 report at:  
**[globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com)**



WORLD ADMINISTRATORS

ALLIANCE

Research and framework development led by  
Lucy Brazier OBE, CEO, Executive Support Media

World Administrators Alliance

© World Administrators Alliance 2026. [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com)