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# HOW TO USE THE GLOBAL SKILLS MATRIX 2026

**A Practical Guide for Recruitment Professionals  
Who Specialise in Administrative Roles**

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# HOW TO USE THE GLOBAL SKILLS MATRIX 2026

## A Practical Guide for Recruitment Professionals Who Specialise in Administrative Roles

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There is a problem that every recruiter in this space knows. Administrative roles are described under more than 187 different job titles worldwide. The same title means entirely different things in different organisations. Clients brief roles using their own internal language, candidates describe their experience using theirs, and the conversation about level, scope and value happens in a vacuum, without a shared reference point. The Global Skills Matrix 2026 is that reference point. This guide shows you how to use it.

The GSM is a five-level capability framework for the administrative profession, developed by the World Administrators Alliance from survey data covering 3,221 administrative professionals across 69 countries. It defines contribution by the level of judgement exercised, the complexity of coordination involved and the organisational impact of the work, not by job title or tenure. Every application in this guide is built on that foundation. The full framework, Skills Matrix and Tasks Matrix are available free at [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com).

## The Strategic Case for Your Business

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The recruiter who speaks the language of organisational capability rather than job titles owns the client conversation. Right now, most clients are briefing roles against internal titles that bear no consistent relationship to the work being done or the level of contribution required. Most candidates are describing their experience in terms of tasks rather than the judgement and impact they have delivered. The GSM gives you a common architecture to cut through both problems.

When you reference the GSM in your job advertisements, your client conversations and your candidate assessments, you are positioning your business as the specialist that understands this profession at a level your competitors do not. You are also doing something more important: you are helping to establish a consistent professional standard that makes the market work better for everyone, including your clients, your candidates and your business. The agencies that embed this language earliest will own it longest.

*The profession exists under 187 different job titles. A "Senior Executive Assistant" at one organisation is doing Level 2 work. At another, they are doing Level 4. Without a shared framework, you are placing people into roles that neither party has accurately described. The GSM fixes that.*

## 2.

### Job Advertisements

The most visible immediate application. Referencing the GSM level in a job advertisement signals to candidates that the role has been properly defined and that your agency understands the difference between an Executive Assistant doing Level 3 operational coordination and one doing Level 4 strategic interpretation. Candidates who know the framework will self-select accurately. Those who do not will be curious, and that curiosity opens a conversation about the profession that positions you as the expert.

#### How to use it

- Define the GSM level of the role before writing the advertisement, using the Tasks Matrix to confirm what level the work actually requires. Then write the advertisement to reflect that level, including the specific capabilities and judgement requirements it demands.
- Include a line in every advertisement such as: "This role has been assessed at Level [X] of the Global Skills Matrix 2026, the internationally recognised capability framework for administrative professionals. Learn more at [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com)."
- Use the Skills Matrix capability language in the "what you will bring" section of the advertisement rather than generic task lists. "Governance awareness and documentation control" is Level 3 language. "Executive decision sequencing and risk anticipation" is Level 4. The right candidates will recognise it immediately.
- For senior roles (Levels 4 and 5), referencing the GSM is also a signal to the client that you are placing at a genuinely senior level, which supports the conversation about appropriate remuneration.

#### The competitive edge

- You become the agency that defines roles properly when competitors are still writing task lists. In a market where candidates are sophisticated and experienced, that differentiation is visible and valued.
- Candidates who know the GSM will specifically seek out agencies that use it. As the framework becomes more widely adopted, being an early adopter means you attract the most professionally engaged candidates in the market.
- You reduce mismatches. When both the role and the candidate are assessed against the same framework, the probability of a successful placement increases and the probability of an early departure decreases.

## 2.

# Client Conversations and New Business

The GSM changes the quality of your client conversations from the first briefing call. Instead of discussing job titles and task lists, you are discussing the level of contribution the organisation needs, the judgement required, the governance exposure involved and the organisational impact the role is expected to have. That is a more sophisticated conversation, and it positions you as an adviser rather than a transactional supplier.

### How to use it

- Open every new role briefing by establishing the GSM level. Ask: "Based on the Global Skills Matrix, which we use to ensure consistency across all our placements, this sounds like a Level 3 or Level 4 role. Can we confirm that by looking at the governance exposure and the scope of independent judgement involved?" That question reframes the whole conversation.
- Share the full GSM report or the Executive Summary with clients when briefing new roles or pitching for retained assignments. Position it as a tool that helps them articulate what they need and assess what they get.
- When a client briefs a role at the wrong level, either over-grading a Level 2 role because it reports to a senior executive, or under-grading a Level 4 role because the title is "Executive Assistant", the GSM gives you an objective, external reference point to have that conversation without it feeling personal.
- Include the GSM level in your role specifications and terms of business documentation. It demonstrates rigour and creates a shared reference point for managing expectations throughout the placement process.

### The competitive edge

- Clients who experience the GSM-based briefing conversation will not want to go back to a task-list briefing with a different agency. The depth of the conversation is itself a retention mechanism.
- You will identify misaligned briefs earlier, which protects your time and your reputation. A client who is advertising a Level 4 role at Level 2 remuneration is setting up a failed placement. The GSM gives you the language to surface that problem before you take the brief.
- Sharing the report with clients positions you as a thought leader in the market, not just a supplier. That changes the nature of the relationship.

### 3.

## Candidate Assessment and Briefing

The GSM gives you a consistent, objective basis for assessing and briefing candidates that goes far beyond a CV review. It allows you to assess the actual level at which a candidate has been operating, regardless of their job title, and to brief them against the specific capabilities required at the level of the role you are placing them into. That combination of accurate assessment and specific briefing is what separates a specialist recruiter from a generalist one.

#### How to use it

- In your candidate interview, use the GSM level questions as your assessment framework: What judgements does this person make independently? What is the organisational consequence if they get it wrong? What is the scope of their cross-functional coordination? These questions reliably reveal operating level in a way that “walk me through your CV” does not.
- Assess candidates against the Skills Matrix at the level of the role, not just the Tasks Matrix. Task familiarity is trainable. The right capability profile at the right level is not. A candidate who has been doing Level 4 work under a Level 2 title is a very different proposition from one who has genuinely been operating at Level 4.
- Brief candidates against the GSM level of the role before they go to interview. Give them the specific capability language of that level so they can articulate their experience in terms the client will understand. A candidate who walks into an interview and speaks the language of the level is a stronger candidate, and a stronger placement reflects well on you.
- Include the candidate’s assessed GSM level in your candidate profiles. It signals to clients that your assessment process has rigour, and it creates a common reference point for the hiring conversation.

#### The competitive edge

- You will consistently identify candidates who are under-titled but operating at a higher level than their CV suggests. These are often your strongest placements because they represent genuine capability that has not been formally recognised. The GSM gives you the tool to find them.
- Candidates who feel properly assessed and properly briefed are more loyal to the agencies that treated them that way. In a profession where referral and reputation matter enormously, that loyalty has long-term commercial value.
- GSM-briefed candidates perform better at interview because they are speaking the language of contribution rather than the language of tasks. Better interview performance means higher conversion rates and fewer wasted shortlists.

## 4.

# Salary Surveys and Market Intelligence

Salary data for administrative roles is notoriously unreliable because it is almost always structured by job title rather than by level of contribution. An “Executive Assistant” salary range in a market survey conflates Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 work under a single title, which makes the data nearly useless for either clients trying to set competitive remuneration or candidates trying to assess their market value. The GSM gives you the architecture to fix this.

### How to use it

- Structure your salary surveys by GSM level rather than by job title. For each level, capture the salary range, the sector distribution, the typical scope of responsibilities and the AI capability profile of the cohort. This produces data that is genuinely useful rather than headline figures that obscure more than they reveal.
- When presenting salary data to clients, use GSM levels to anchor the conversation. “The market rate for Level 3 operational coordination in this sector is X to Y. Your current banding sits below that, which is why you are not retaining people at this level.” That is an advisory conversation, not a data dump.
- For candidates, GSM-structured salary benchmarking is transformative. Many experienced administrative professionals have never had access to accurate market data for their actual level of contribution because the data has never been collected at that level of precision. Being the agency that provides it creates significant loyalty.
- Include a note in your salary surveys referencing the GSM as the framework and linking to [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com). Every person who reads your survey is a potential adopter of the framework, and every adopter strengthens the market infrastructure that makes your data more valuable.

### The competitive edge

- GSM-structured salary data is a genuine market differentiator. No other agency in most markets will be producing it. That exclusivity has value in client relationships, new business pitches and media coverage.
- Clients who receive GSM-structured salary data understand immediately why their grading is misaligned. That insight drives conversations about retained assignments, role redesign and talent strategy, all of which are higher-value engagements than a single contingency placement.
- Over time, as the GSM becomes the market standard, the agencies that built their data infrastructure around it first will have the most historically consistent and therefore the most valuable longitudinal data in the sector.

## 5.

# Your Website and Market Positioning

Your website is your most visible signal to both clients and candidates about the depth of your specialism. Referencing the GSM on your website, linking to the full report and explaining how you use it in your process communicates something that a list of sectors served and a photo of a smiling team does not: that you understand this profession at a structural level that your competitors almost certainly do not.

### How to use it

- Add a dedicated section to your website explaining how your agency uses the Global Skills Matrix in every stage of the recruitment process, from role definition through to candidate assessment and placement.
- Link directly to [globalskillsmatrix.com](https://globalskillsmatrix.com) from your website and encourage both clients and candidates to download the full report. Positioning the GSM as a resource you recommend is itself a signal of expertise.
- Use GSM level language consistently across your website copy, your job advertisements and your thought leadership content. The more consistently you use the framework's terminology, the more strongly your brand becomes associated with it in the market.
- Consider publishing a short annual piece on your website that uses your own GSM-structured placement and salary data to comment on the state of the market. That kind of insight-led content is far more credible than generic market commentary.

### The competitive edge

- First-mover advantage in your market is real and durable. Once you own the GSM conversation in your sector or geography, it becomes very difficult for competitors to catch up without appearing derivative.
- Clients and candidates increasingly seek out specialists who demonstrate genuine depth of knowledge. A website that references the GSM is evidence of that depth in a way that claims of "specialist expertise" are not.
- The WAA and its member associations actively support and promote agencies that adopt the GSM. That network effect has commercial value in terms of candidate referrals, client introductions and profile within the profession.

## 6.

# Retained Search and Senior Placements

For retained search work at Levels 4 and 5, the GSM is particularly powerful. At this level, the difference between a candidate who is operating at the right level and one who is not is significant. The consequences of a poor placement are expensive, and the ability to articulate precisely what “right” looks like is what justifies a retained fee structure. The GSM provides that articulation.

### How to use it

- Use the Level 4 and Level 5 capability definitions as the basis for your retained search specification. The framework distinguishes precisely between Level 5A (leading the administrative function as a discipline) and Level 5B (executive operations leadership adjacent to senior leadership). That distinction matters enormously at this level and most clients will not have articulated it without your help.
- Present the GSM level definitions to the client at the start of the retained assignment as part of your briefing process. Ask them to confirm which level they are recruiting for and what specific capabilities from the Skills Matrix are most critical. That conversation will sharpen their thinking and protect your placement.
- For senior candidates, include a GSM level assessment in your candidate presentation alongside the standard profile. Show the client not just what the candidate has done but at what level of contribution and judgement they have been operating. That evidence base is what justifies both the senior grading and the retained fee.

### The competitive edge

- Retained clients at this level are exactly the clients for whom demonstrating specialist depth matters most. The GSM gives you a professional architecture for the conversation that generalist recruiters simply cannot match.
- Senior administrative professionals are an underserved market in retained search. Most retained search firms do not specialise at this level. The combination of GSM expertise and retained methodology positions you in a segment with high fees, loyal clients and limited competition.

*The Global Skills Matrix is designed to become the common language and architecture of the administrative profession globally. The agencies that embed it earliest will not just be using a useful framework; they will be shaping the professional standard that the whole market moves toward. That is a significant position to occupy, and it is available now.*

Full report, skills matrix and tools  
**globalskillsmatrix.com**

Also on the site  
**Executive Summary,  
guide for administrative professionals  
and guide for HR leaders**



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