

AI Operational Readiness Checklist

For Small & Mid-Sized Law Firms

Why This Matters

Generative AI is transforming how law firms draft, research, and serve clients.

But without the right guardrails, risks such as data leaks, bias, and ethical missteps can outweigh the benefits. This AI Operational Readiness Checklist helps firms evaluate where they stand and identify practical next steps toward safe, compliant, and efficient AI adoption.

1. Leadership & Strategy Alignment

- ☐ Managing partner or leadership team has endorsed an AI strategy
- ☐ Clear objectives defined (efficiency, client service, quality, innovation)
- ☐ AI steering committee or responsible partner designated
- ☐ Policy on acceptable AI use approved and communicated
- ☐ Awareness of state bar and ABA guidance on AI ethics

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Strategically Aligned)

2. Data Security & Confidentiality

- ☐ Attorneys and staff trained on protecting privileged information
- ☐ AI tool settings configured to prevent data retention or external sharing
- ☐ Client consent policy defined for AI-assisted work
- ☐ Secure storage or sandbox for client data used in AI workflows
- ☐ Output review protocol for potential data exposure

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Data Governance in Place)

3. Workflow & Use-Case Prioritization

- ☐ High-volume repetitive workflows identified (e.g., NDAs, briefs, discovery)
- ☐ 2–3 low-risk high-ROI use cases selected for pilot
- ☐ Practice group leads validated each use case
- ☐ Success metrics defined (time saved, accuracy, cost)
- ☐ Approval process for adding new AI use cases established

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Ready to Pilot Focused Use Cases)

4. Technology & Vendor Assessment

- ☐ Existing systems inventoried (document management, billing, CRM etc.)
- ☐ AI tool integrations verified for security and compatibility
- ☐ Vendor privacy terms and model-training policies reviewed
- ☐ IT or consultant completed risk assessment for each AI platform
- ☐ Backup and disaster recovery plans updated for AI components

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Secure Technology Foundation)

5. Training & Change Management

- ☐ Firm-wide AI literacy and prompt-writing training completed
- ☐ Attorneys understand bias, hallucination, and confidentiality pitfalls
- ☐ Paralegals and support staff trained on responsible AI usage
- ☐ Policy for reviewing AI outputs before client delivery implemented
- ☐ Quarterly refresher or ongoing learning sessions scheduled

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Trained and Capable Workforce)

6. Risk & Compliance Oversight

- ☐ Partner responsible for AI compliance and governance assigned
- ☐ Audit trail or version history kept for AI-generated outputs
- ☐ Bias and accuracy testing performed periodically
- ☐ Policies aligned with bar guidance and state regulations
- ☐ Governance reviews scheduled every 60–90 days

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Compliance-Ready Operation)

7. Pilot & Continuous Improvement

- ☐ One practice area selected for initial AI pilot
- ☐ Success metrics tracked (hours saved, quality scores, client satisfaction)
- ☐ Feedback from attorneys and clients collected
- ☐ Lessons from pilot applied to policy updates
- ☐ Plan to scale AI across practice groups defined

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Pilot Complete and Scalable)

8. Culture & Client Transparency

- ☐ Firm encourages innovation and responsible AI experimentation
- ☐ Clients informed transparently about AI-assisted work when relevant
- ☐ Marketing claims accurately reflect AI use
- ☐ Recognition for teams improving efficiency via AI
- ☐ Firm participates in professional AI forums or bar initiatives

Readiness Score: ____ / 5 (4 + = Sustainable Innovation Culture)

Interpreting Your Scores

0–2 = Early Stage – Establish policies and awareness

3–4 = Operational – Ready to pilot with limited supervision

5 = Optimized – Mature, measurable, repeatable process

Next Step: Turn Readiness into Results

Ready to operationalize AI responsibly?

Enroll in Generative AI for Law Professionals — our MCLE-accredited program offering policy templates, workflow blueprints, and real-world legal use cases.

EXPLORE THE COURSE

