

The Eight Gates

AI Approval Workflow — one-page checklist, idea to live

A proposal that fails a gate is redesigned or declined — it does not continue to the next gate. Use this checklist to track a proposal's progress from idea through to live deployment.

Gate 1**Problem Definition**

Question: Is there a clearly defined problem with measurable impact?

- ☐ Is the problem clearly documented?
 - ☐ Is the current-state cost quantified?
 - ☐ Is the AI hypothesis specific and testable?
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Gate 2**Data Feasibility**

Question: Does the data exist, and is it suitable?

- ☐ Are data sources identified and quality assessed?
 - ☐ Is the legal basis for data processing confirmed?
 - ☐ Are there any data gaps that could block the project?
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Gate 3**Ethical Review**

Question: Does this proposal cross any legal or organisational red lines?

- ☐ Five-Dimension Framework score above 12?
 - ☐ No legal or organisational red-line violations?
 - ☐ Risk mitigation plan for any weak dimensions?
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Gate 4**Build vs Buy Decision**

Question: Should we build this, buy a solution, or use an existing tool?

- ☐ Build/buy analysis documented?
 - ☐ Vendor risk assessed if buying?
 - ☐ Customisation requirements realistic?
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Gate 5**Pilot Design**

Question: Is there a rigorous pilot design with success metrics defined in advance?

- ☐ Pilot scope and duration documented?
 - ☐ Success metrics defined in advance?
 - ☐ Baseline measurement methodology in place?
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Gate 6**Risk Assessment**

Question: Have all material risks been identified and mitigated?

- ☐ All material risks identified?
 - ☐ Mitigations documented?
 - ☐ Residual risk accepted by appropriate authority?
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Gate 7**Stakeholder Sign-Off**

Question: Have all required approvals been obtained?

- ☐ All required approvals obtained?
- ☐ Works Council consulted if legally required?
- ☐ Board sign-off for high-risk AI?

Gate 8**Post-Deployment Monitoring**

Question: Is there a monitoring regime in place before go-live?

- ☐ Performance metrics defined?
- ☐ Monitoring cadence and escalation triggers documented?
- ☐ Named owner assigned for ongoing oversight?

Typical time for a well-prepared proposal to pass all eight gates: 3-6 weeks. Gate 3 (Ethical Review) is the gate most proposals fail; Gate 8 (Post-Deployment Monitoring) is the gate most organisations skip.