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AI Governance Readiness Assessment

A Self-Scoring Framework for Law Firms

This assessment helps law firms evaluate where they stand on AI governance across seven critical domains — and surface the gaps that create professional responsibility exposure.

Complete each section by scoring each statement 0, 1, or 2. Add your section scores. Refer to the results guide on the final page to interpret your firm's overall readiness level.

Firm Name: _____

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Aligned with ABA Model Rules 1.1, 1.6, 5.1, 5.3, ABA Formal Opinions 512 and 477R, and current state bar guidance
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How to Use This Assessment

This assessment covers seven domains of AI governance that every law firm deploying AI systems should have addressed. For each statement, assign a score:

0	Not in place. No policy, practice, or documentation exists.
1	Informal or partial. Some awareness or ad-hoc practice exists, but not formally documented or consistently applied.
2	Fully in place. Formally documented, communicated to staff, and consistently practiced.

Score each statement honestly based on your firm's current state — not aspirational plans. The goal is an accurate baseline, not a perfect score.

At the end of each section, record your section total. Transfer all section totals to the Results Summary on the final page to calculate your overall readiness score.

Domains Covered

	Domain	Questions	Max Score
A	AI Tool Adoption & Oversight	5 statements	10 pts
B	Data Privacy & Confidentiality	5 statements	10 pts
C	Competence & Training	4 statements	8 pts
D	Client Communication & Disclosure	4 statements	8 pts
E	Supervision & Accountability	5 statements	10 pts
F	Vendor & Third-Party Management	4 statements	8 pts
G	Incident Response & Audit Trails	4 statements	8 pts

Total possible score: 62 points

Domain A — AI Tool Adoption & Oversight

ABA Model Rule 1.1 (Competence) requires lawyers to understand the benefits and risks of relevant technology, including AI. This section assesses whether your firm has a structured, supervised approach to adopting and monitoring AI tools.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
A1	Our firm has a written policy governing which AI tools may be used in legal work.		
A2	AI tools used by the firm have been evaluated against defined criteria before adoption (accuracy, security, vendor reputation).		
A3	There is a designated person or committee responsible for overseeing AI tool adoption and ongoing use.		
A4	All AI-generated work product is reviewed by a licensed attorney before use or delivery to a client.		
A5	Our firm maintains an inventory of all AI tools currently in use across the practice.		
	SECTION SCORE (max shown above)		

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Domain B — Data Privacy & Confidentiality

Rule 1.6 requires reasonable efforts to prevent unauthorized disclosure of client information. AI systems that process client data create new confidentiality obligations — this section assesses whether those obligations are met.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
B1	We have assessed what client data flows into each AI tool we use, and have confirmed that data handling meets Rule 1.6 requirements.		
B2	We have reviewed the data retention, storage, and processing terms of every AI vendor we use.		
B3	Attorneys and staff are trained on what types of client information may and may not be entered into AI systems.		
B4	Our AI vendor agreements include appropriate confidentiality, data protection, and data deletion provisions.		
B5	We have a process to notify clients when AI tools are used in connection with their matters, where required by state bar guidance.		
	SECTION SCORE (max shown above)		

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Domain C — Competence & Training

Competent use of AI requires understanding its capabilities, limitations, and failure modes. Rule 1.1 and Comment 8 make clear that lawyers must stay current with technology relevant to their practice.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
C1	Attorneys and staff who use AI tools have received formal training on how those tools work — including their limitations and known failure modes.		
C2	Our firm has a process for staying current with ABA guidance, state bar opinions, and ethics developments related to AI.		
C3	We have defined minimum competency standards for AI tool use that apply to all attorneys and relevant staff.		
C4	Training on AI competence is documented and updated at least annually.		
	SECTION SCORE (max shown above)		

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Domain D — Client Communication & Disclosure

Several state bars now require or recommend disclosure when AI is used in client matters. This section assesses whether your firm has addressed its communication and transparency obligations.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
D1	We have evaluated whether our jurisdiction requires client disclosure of AI use — and have a standard approach for making that disclosure when required.		
D2	Our engagement letters or client communications address the use of AI tools in connection with their matters.		
D3	We have a policy governing how AI-generated content is attributed or identified in client deliverables.		
D4	Clients have not been billed for AI-generated work product without attorney review, in a manner inconsistent with applicable ethics rules on billing.		
	SECTION SCORE (max shown above)		

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Domain E — Supervision & Accountability

Rules 5.1 and 5.3 require partners and supervising attorneys to ensure that supervised lawyers and non-lawyer staff conform to the Rules. AI systems are subject to the same oversight obligations.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
E1	Supervisory responsibilities for AI use are clearly assigned — attorneys know who is accountable for AI-generated work at each stage.		
E2	We have defined review and approval procedures for AI-generated work product before it is used in client matters.		
E3	Non-lawyer staff use of AI tools is supervised in a manner consistent with Rule 5.3.		
E4	We have defined escalation paths for AI errors, failures, or unexpected outputs.		
E5	Our AI oversight procedures are documented and communicated to all relevant staff.		
SECTION SCORE (max shown above)			

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Domain F — Vendor & Third-Party Management

When law firms use third-party AI vendors, professional responsibility obligations do not transfer to the vendor. This section assesses whether your firm has appropriate vendor governance in place.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
F1	We have conducted due diligence on every AI vendor we use — including their security practices, data handling, and subprocessor relationships.		
F2	Our AI vendor contracts include provisions addressing confidentiality, data security, breach notification, and compliance with applicable law.		
F3	We have a process for reviewing vendor changes (e.g., model updates, policy changes, ownership changes) that could affect our ethical obligations.		
F4	We have identified alternative vendors or manual procedures for each AI tool, in case a vendor relationship is terminated or a tool fails.		
SECTION SCORE (max shown above)			

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Domain G — Incident Response & Audit Trails

When AI systems produce errors, expose client data, or generate harmful outputs, the firm needs clear procedures to respond. This section assesses your firm's readiness to identify, contain, and report AI incidents.

#	Statement	Score (0–2)	Notes
G1	We maintain audit trails or logs that would allow us to reconstruct how AI tools were used in connection with a specific client matter.		
G2	We have a defined incident response plan for AI-related failures — including hallucinations, data leaks, or unauthorized disclosures.		
G3	Staff know how to report an AI error or incident, and there is a clear process for escalation and remediation.		
G4	We have reviewed our malpractice insurance coverage to assess whether AI-related errors are covered.		
	SECTION SCORE (max shown above)		

Scoring key for each statement: 0 = Not in place | 1 = Informal / partial | 2 = Formally documented & practiced

Results Summary

Transfer your section totals here:

	Domain	Max Score	Your Score
A	AI Tool Adoption & Oversight	10	
B	Data Privacy & Confidentiality	10	
C	Competence & Training	8	
D	Client Communication & Disclosure	8	
E	Supervision & Accountability	10	
F	Vendor & Third-Party Management	8	
G	Incident Response & Audit Trails	8	
	TOTAL	62	
	My score: _____ out of 62		

Interpreting Your Score

50–62 | Strong Foundation

Your firm has meaningful governance structures in place. The focus should be on formalizing any remaining informal practices, ensuring consistency across all attorneys and staff, and staying current as AI technology and ethics guidance continue to evolve.

35–49 | Developing — Gaps Present

Your firm has made a start on AI governance, but material gaps exist that create professional responsibility exposure. Priority areas should be addressed before expanding AI use. A structured implementation plan would help close the gaps efficiently.

0–34 | Significant Exposure

Your firm has significant governance gaps that warrant immediate attention. Continuing to expand AI use without addressing these gaps creates real risk of Rule violations and potential liability. External implementation support is strongly advisable.

What to Do Next

Whatever your score, the gaps you just identified are fixable — and most cost less to fix than the exposure they create.

Book a free 20-minute Time-Leak Check and bring your results. On the call we'll walk through your two or three highest-priority gaps and take a first pass at where your firm's hours are going — the workflows that leak time are usually where the governance gaps live. This is an orientation, not a comprehensive review. A verified readiness review — your self-scores checked domain by domain — is included in our Workflow Assessment, and twenty minutes is enough to tell you whether that's worth doing.

Book your free Time-Leak Check at makoworkflow.com/contact

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