



AMSTERDAM
DATA ACADEMY

The Skills of Tomorrow's AI Workforce (2026)

From skills to roles to
organisational readiness



Early insights from Amsterdam Data Academy's ongoing workforce research

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AI adoption is accelerating — workforce readiness is not.

Organisations across sectors are rapidly adopting AI technologies, yet many struggle to embed AI into daily work in a responsible, scalable and effective way.

While investment in AI tools is high, success increasingly depends on how well organisations align people, roles and responsibilities with the pace of technological change. Traditional training approaches, focused on individual skills and one-off courses, are no longer sufficient.



Our research shows a clear shift over the past three years:

from individual data skills,
to emerging AI-related roles,
to a growing need for organisational ownership,
governance and scalable upskilling.

AI workforce readiness is no longer a technical challenge
— it is an organisational one.

WHY THIS RESEARCH

Across industries, organisations are experimenting with AI at unprecedented speed. Generative AI tools are widely accessible, and AI-driven systems increasingly support decision-making, automation and knowledge work.

At the same time, organisations report growing uncertainty around:

- which skills truly matter,
- how roles are changing,
- and who is responsible for AI-related decisions.



Skills alone no longer explain success or failure. AI impacts teams, workflows and organisational design.

This research aims to understand how organisations can move from fragmented AI adoption towards structured, responsible and scalable workforce development.

OUR RESEARCH JOURNEY (2024–2026)

Over the past three years, our research focus has evolved alongside organisational maturity.



2024 — Data & AI skills

Focus on individual competencies such as data analysis, business intelligence and machine learning.



2025 — Roles & task shifts

Growing attention to how AI reshapes job roles, responsibilities and daily work.



2026 — Organisational readiness

A shift towards ownership, governance, ethics and scalable upskilling.



This evolution reflects a broader realisation: AI is no longer just a skills issue, but an organisational challenge.

INSIGHT 1: THE AI SKILLS GAP IS WIDENING



Organisations show strong ambition to invest in data and AI skills, yet training uptake remains limited.

69%

Approximately **69% of organisations** indicate a strong willingness to invest in AI skills,

20%

while only around **20% of employees** currently participate in structured training. This gap highlights the difficulty of translating strategy into organisation-wide capability.

What this means

Ambition without execution increases risk. Without broad workforce readiness, AI adoption remains uneven, fragile and dependent on a small group of specialists.

INSIGHT 2: DATA LITERACY REMAINS FOUNDATIONAL

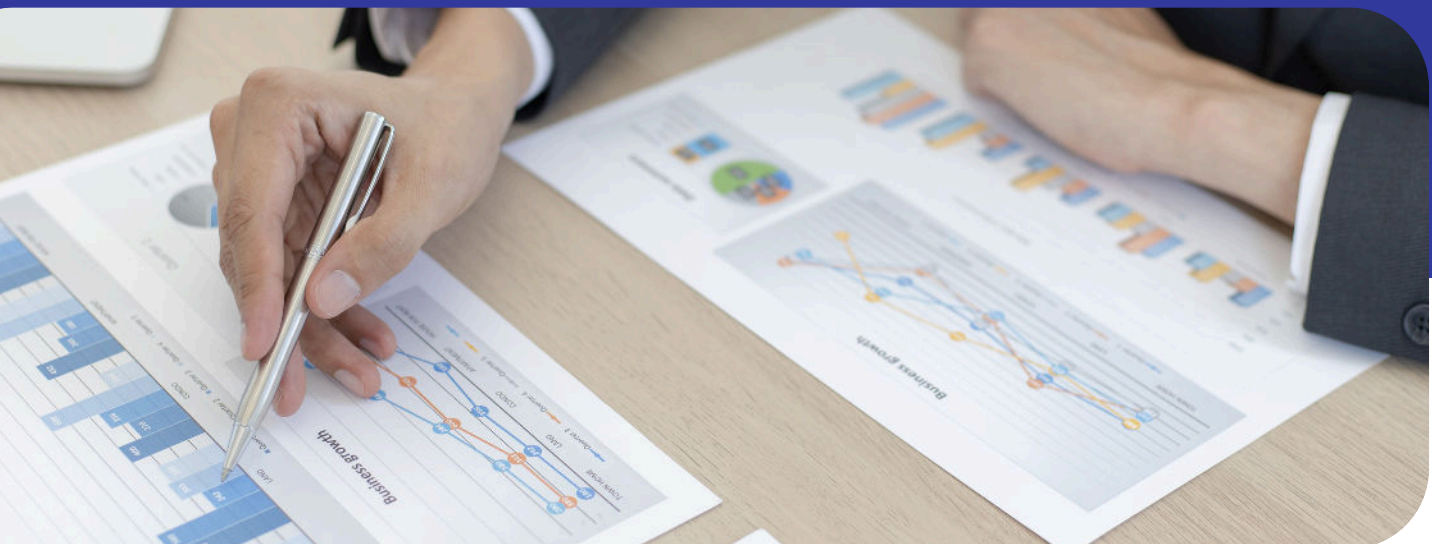
Despite the rapid rise of Generative AI, basic data understanding continues to be the most important skill across organisations.

While GenAI represents the fastest-growing skills gap, many professionals still lack a shared understanding of data, AI concepts and limitations. Without this foundation, advanced AI use cases struggle to deliver sustainable value.



What this means

Advanced AI cannot succeed without strong, organisation-wide data literacy.



INSIGHT 3: AI IS ALREADY RESHAPING WORK

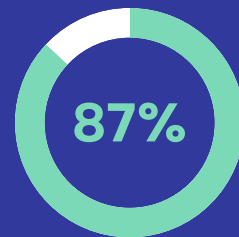
AI is no longer a future scenario. Approximately **87% of organisations** expect AI to replace or significantly change certain roles, and **37% expect more than half of work activities** to change within the next three years.

These changes affect not only technical roles, but also functions such as HR, marketing, operations and management.

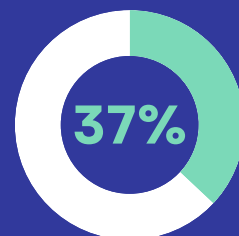
What this means

Workforce transformation is already underway. Organisations that delay preparation will struggle to adapt as roles, tasks and team structures continue to shift.

expect AI to
change
existing roles



expect
major task
transformation
within 3
years





INSIGHT 4: UPSKILLING MUST SCALE

84%

The majority of organisations indicate an urgent need for AI training. Around **84% report immediate demand for upskilling initiatives.**

However, one-off courses and isolated training programs are no longer sufficient to keep pace with AI-driven change.

What this means

Organisations need continuous, scalable learning models aligned with roles, responsibilities and long-term strategy.

FROM SKILLS TO SYSTEMS

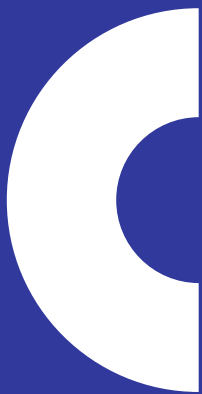


Taken together, these insights point to a fundamental shift.

- **Skills alone are not enough.**
- **Roles alone do not scale.**
- **AI requires organisational ownership.**

Successful AI adoption depends on how organisations design responsibilities, decision-making structures and learning pathways — not just on technical expertise.

AI workforce readiness is ultimately a leadership and organisational design challenge.



EMERGING AI ROLES & WHAT COMES NEXT

As organisations struggle with structure and ownership, new roles are emerging, including:

- **Prompt Engineer**
- **AI Product Owner**
- **AI Coach**
- **AI Governance / Ethics Officer**

These roles signal a broader organisational need: guiding AI use, supporting adoption and ensuring responsible decision-making.

What comes next

This research will be expanded with deeper quantitative analysis, industry benchmarks and practical frameworks. The full 2026 report will explore how organisations can translate insight into action.



About Amsterdam Data Academy

Amsterdam Data Academy supports professionals and organisations in developing future-ready data and AI capabilities. We combine ongoing workforce research with practical, role-based education to help organisations adapt to technological change.