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AI Professional Role Profiles and Educational Profiles

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CEN**CWA 18398****WORKSHOP**

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AGREEMENT

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English version

AI Professional Role Profiles and Educational Profiles

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Foreword

This CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA 18398:2026) has been developed in accordance with the CEN-CENELEC Guide 29 “CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements – A rapid way to standardization” and with the relevant provisions of CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations - Part 2. It was approved by the Workshop CEN AI “Professional Role Profiles and Educational Profiles”, the secretariat of which is held by UNE consisting of representatives of interested parties on 2026-05-22, the constitution of which was supported by CEN following the public call for participation made on 2025-04-16. However, this CEN Workshop Agreement does not necessarily include all relevant stakeholders.

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Introduction

0.1 General

Artificial Intelligence (AI) constitutes a highly dynamic field, characterised by continuous technological advances, shifting application domains, and changing societal and regulatory expectations. The pace of innovation in AI methods, architectures and tools remains exceptionally high, driven by progress in data availability, computational capacity and algorithmic development. As a result, the professional landscape surrounding AI is in constant evolution: new roles, specialisations and skill requirements emerge, while others evolve, merge or decline in relative importance.

This CWA is intended to function as a living reference point: a common baseline that can support dialogue, alignment and comparability, while remaining open to revision as the AI field continues to mature and transform. Readers and users of this document are encouraged to interpret and apply it with this dynamic context in mind, recognising both its value as a shared framework and its limitations in a field defined by rapid and ongoing change.

This CWA is partially based on the results of the Artificial Intelligence Skills Alliance (ARISA) project, funded under the Erasmus+ programme 'Partnerships for Innovation; Alliances for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills' of the European Commission.

0.2 Aim

CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement (CWA 18398:2026) seeks to provide a common language and create a common ground between different stakeholders to discuss the needed roles, competences, skills and knowledge necessary to develop a professional workforce in the field of AI.

It does not seek to provide a definitive or exhaustive taxonomy of AI professions. Instead, it offers a structured snapshot of the current state of play, capturing roles, competences and learning needs that are considered relevant and representative at the time of drafting. It reflects a synthesis of current practice, expert consensus and observable trends, rather than a fixed or future-proof classification. The intrinsic impermanence of the AI field underscores the importance of flexibility, continuous learning and adaptability as core professional attributes. AI professionals are expected to engage in ongoing upskilling and reskilling, while organisations and education providers must regularly reassess and update role definitions, curricula and training pathways.

The work performed by the workshop participants to arrive at this workshop agreement is one of CEN's standardisation processes. The CWA focuses on the AI professional and further and ongoing shaping of the AI field as a professional field. It does so by the identification of key roles, tasks, competences and skills that are presented in a structured AI professional role profiles framework and an AI educational profiles framework. The workshop itself and this resulting document are part of this codification and systematisation process of the AI profession, in coherence with the ongoing professionalisation of the whole ICT field and IT professionalism in general. The adherence to a formal CEN process amplifies this.

This CWA supports the professional development of a skilled European AI workforce aligned with market needs, addressing existing skills gaps and skills shortages. It also supports the further development of professionalism in the AI field, not only by highlighting the technical competences and skills, but also by explicitly addressing cross-cutting skills and including concepts such as critical evaluation, validation, ethics and governance at different levels throughout the document.

0.3 Relevance

It goes without saying that AI is currently considered a highly relevant topic. There are several reasons for this, but some of the most important ones are its intrusive nature, the possibilities it offers and, at the same time, its disadvantages and risks.

AI extends beyond basic automation and is not confined to routine tasks. It is increasingly embedded in everyday life, ranging from personalised recommendations to fully autonomous systems. The field of AI is developing at a rapid pace, with its applications expanding across a wide range of industries and organisations. The adoption of AI provides a substantial competitive advantage, not only for individual organisations or industries, but also at regional, national, and international scales.

This is also reflected in the definition of an AI system and its key characteristics, set out in the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) [9]: "A machine-based system that is designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy and that may exhibit adaptiveness after deployment, and that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments" (Art. 3(1)). In the first considerations of the AI Act, the key characteristics of AI systems are laid down (Recital 12): their goal-oriented nature, their capacity to generate outputs that shape real-world outcomes, and their operation across different levels of autonomy. It also deliberately encompasses a broad range of techniques and approaches, reflecting the diversity and rapid evolution of the field.

While AI offers significant benefits, it also introduces numerous risks and challenges. Issues like accountability, bias, privacy, and security pose serious concerns. Besides, there are also more fundamental threats such as the use of AI in creating disinformation and social manipulation, a decline in critical thinking based on a belief in the correctness of results, human disempowerment, the amplification of socio-economic inequalities, and the possibility of uncontrollable self-conscious AI, to name just a few.

Given its transformative potential and huge competitive advantages, the stakes are high, and it has become imperative to address these concerns and mitigate the risks in order to maintain confidence in AI's capabilities and exploit them in a harmless manner. Currently, one of the most fundamental challenges is striking the right balance between fostering innovation and ensuring safety and ethical use.

This essential issue is clearly reflected in the first statement of the AI Act (Recital 1), describing the purpose of the regulation: "[...] to improve the functioning of the internal market [...] to promote the uptake of human centric and trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI) while ensuring a high level of protection of health, safety, fundamental rights [...] to protect against the harmful effects of AI systems in the Union, and to support innovation".

In this uncertain environment, companies are struggling to find the right personnel and train their existing staff with the right skills. Given the wide range of risks and concerns and their severity, it is also clear that it is not just a matter of keeping pace with technological advances. There are regulations, ethical principles and safety considerations that must be taken into account. Not in the least to gain and maintain the trust of the general public and of controlling authorities, like regulatory and auditing bodies. The people sought are largely professionals working in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, but they need to be trained not only as ICT professionals but also as AI professionals with the right competences, skills and knowledge.

Although universities are producing a pool of highly skilled AI professionals, Europe still faces the challenge of retaining talent and having enough diversified AI-related profiles. This is part of a broader problem: the gap between the available number of ICT professionals versus the number of ICT professionals that is actually needed. The gap is perceived from 8 currently to 20 million professionals required in 2030. The EU has set itself two main goals for the digital transformation of businesses by 2030: more than 90% of SMEs should reach at least a basic level of digital intensity, and 75% of EU companies should use cloud computing services, perform big data analysis or use artificial intelligence.

The demand for AI-related positions is increasing. A flexible, modular approach to education and training that responds to rapid technological change is essential. This must begin with early-age AI literacy so that young learners develop a foundational understanding of how AI works and how it affects their lives. Strengthening teacher professional development is also crucial to ensure educators are equipped to teach emerging AI concepts confidently and responsibly. Policymakers and decision-makers need a basic understanding of the moral, ethical and legal dimensions of AI. Moreover, a societal approach to AI skills development is needed to promote diversity and inclusion within the AI sector. As AI technologies

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expand, organisations need to create a welcoming environment and prioritise retraining programmes for workers in lower-paid, shrinking occupations.

Despite current initiatives, there remains a gap between educational supply and market demand. Cooperation between academia and other education institutes and the labour market, rapid retraining programmes and better access to existing initiatives are necessary steps. In addition, sectors that rely heavily on AI technology should actively support AI skills development.

Guidelines on how to translate the needed competences, skills and knowledge into learning outcomes that fit different AI roles at various levels are essential tools for trainers and educators. Such guidelines ensure uniformity and comparability between courses and training providers and are also beneficial for learners and employers. Therefore, this CWA includes educational profiles with learning outcomes at different levels, directly linked to a set of role profiles for AI professionals that outline the necessary competences as demanded by the market. The set of role profiles provides a clear orientation and common reference point to public and private stakeholders on AI professional needs from organisation and workplace perspective, with their related missions, tasks, deliverables, competences and performance levels. These role profiles will contribute to a shared reference language for developing, planning, and managing AI professionals' needs, thereby supporting the maturity of the AI profession as an important specialising field within the broader digital and IT professional domain overall.

0.4 Target audience

This document is addressed to a broad range of stakeholders involved in the development, deployment, use and governance of AI, as well as in the education and professional development of the AI workforce. It is intended to serve as a common reference point across organisational, professional, educational and policy contexts.

For *organisations and human resources departments*, the CWA provides structured insight into the capabilities associated with different AI professional roles. It supports workforce planning, recruitment and talent management by enabling a clearer understanding of required competences and by facilitating the comparability of individual qualifications across roles, organisations and sectors.

For *professionals* working in, or aspiring to work in, the field of AI, the document offers a framework for self-evaluation and professional reflection. It supports the identification of training and upskilling opportunities, continuous professional development and career progression, and facilitates mobility across organisational and national boundaries by providing a shared reference language for roles and competences.

For *education, training and certification providers*, as well as *learning and development departments*, this CWA supports the design, development and quality assurance of learning programmes, training courses, assessments and certifications. By linking professional role profiles to educational profiles and learning outcomes, it enables the design of coherent learning and development trajectories, including modular pathways and individualised learning routes aligned with labour market needs.

For *students and learners*, the document provides guidance for understanding current AI-related roles and competence requirements. It supports self-assessment, the definition of learning goals, and informed decision-making when selecting appropriate learning programmes or training courses, while also facilitating mobility across educational institutions.

Finally, for *social partners and policy makers* at regional, national and European level, the CWA offers insight into the AI and ICT labour market and emerging professional needs. It supports the identification of skills gaps and shortages and informs the targeted design of skills, education and labour market policies and initiatives. In doing so, it contributes to building confidence in the availability of a competent, ethical and trustworthy AI workforce in Europe.

0.5 Use of this CWA

[Clause 5](#) describes the AI professional in general terms and sets out a number of key characteristics. It examines the differences between lay users and professional users and relates this to professionalism. The relationship between AI professionalism and AI literacy is also explored.

Further details are provided in [Annex O](#), which clarifies the distinction between lay users, professional users and AI professionals, and [Annex P](#), which clarifies the distinction between AI literacy and AI professionalism.

[Clause 6](#) introduces the AI role profiles framework. It describes the basis of this framework and outlines how it relates to labour market developments, organisational size, trustworthy AI and the AI Act.

Clause 6 is closely linked to: [Annex B](#) that contains the full descriptions of the AI professional role profiles defined in this CWA; [Annex D](#) which explains the template used to structure and present the AI professional role profiles and [Annex H](#), which provides an overview of the role profile titles and their related titles.

A number of annexes address the development of the framework: [Annex F](#) provides a description of how the AI Role Profiles were created and [Annex G](#) gives a list of criteria for adding roles to the framework.

A number of summary tables with mappings is provided: [Annex I](#) maps the AI professional role profiles to the competences of the European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) [\[1\]](#), including indicative proficiency levels; [Annex J](#) contains a table that links each e-CF competence to its AI descriptors at the relevant proficiency levels; [Annex L](#) links the e-CF competences to AI skill areas, with [Annex K](#) containing the descriptions for each AI skill area; [Annex M](#) links role profiles to personal skills; [Annex N](#) links role profiles to interpersonal skills.

[Clause 7](#) addresses the educational profiles. It describes the basic principles and the benefits of using these profiles.

[Clause 7](#) is closely linked to [Annex C](#), which contains the full descriptions of the educational profiles corresponding to the AI professional role profiles and [Annex E](#), describing the template used to describe the AI Educational Profiles with.

Finally, [Annex Q](#) provides an example of application in a specific sector, i.e. the health sector; [Annex R](#), describes the relationship between this CWA and existing standards and frameworks; [Annex S](#) contains a detailed mapping between the AI skill areas distinguished in this CWA and ESCO skills [\[30\]](#)[\[31\]](#), and [Annex T](#) contains a mapping between the AI Role Profiles and the roles distinguished in context of the AI Act [\[9\]](#). [Annex A](#) provides an overview of all the annexes, including short descriptions.

The [Bibliography](#) is included at the end of this CWA.