The Fearless Future: 2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

UAE Analysis

Global insights

The AI Jobs Barometer reveals AI's global impact on jobs, wages, skills and productivity by examining close to a billion job postings from six continents.

Our data reveals

The AI revolution is accelerating in all industries including those less obviously exposed to AI such as agriculture and construction.

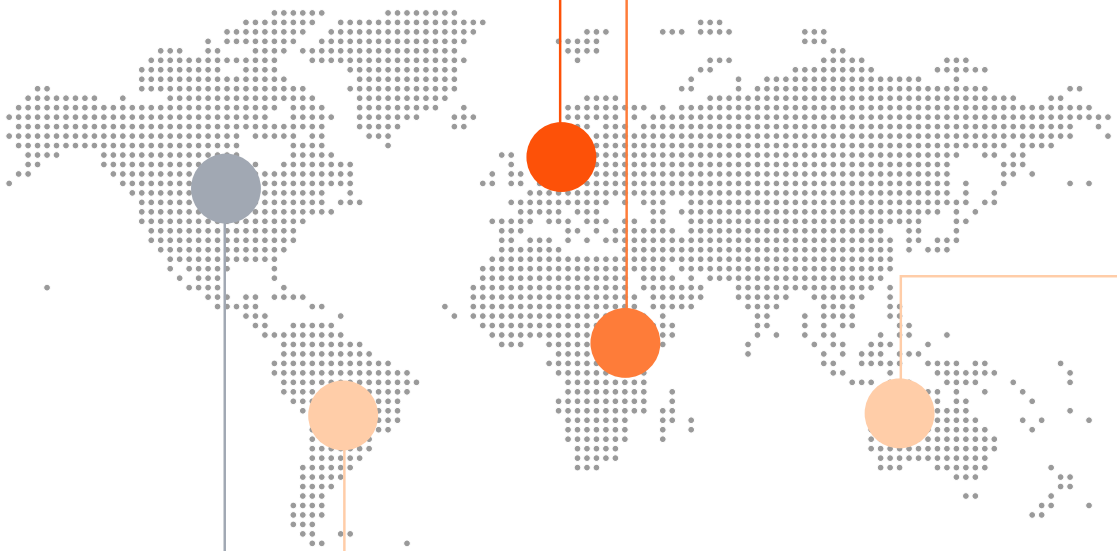
AI is redefining jobs at an accelerated pace. Skills sought by employers for AI-exposed jobs are changing 66% faster compared to other jobs – 2.5x faster than last year.

AI is linked to steady job growth rather than dramatic declines. AI can create more jobs by enabling new types of economic activity. Our data indicates companies use AI to enhance value creation rather than cut jobs.

Please see the global findings report for more insights.

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

The AI Jobs Barometer uses over 840m job ads from 24 countries to examine how AI could impact jobs, skills, wages and productivity



Europe
Belgium
Denmark
France
Germany
Ireland
Italy
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
UK

Africa
South Africa

Australasia
Australia
New Zealand

North America
Canada
Mexico
USA

South America
Brazil

Global headlines

3x

higher growth in revenue per worker in industries more exposed to AI.

100%

of industries are increasing AI usage including industries less obviously exposed to AI, such as mining and agriculture.

66%

faster skill change in AI-exposed jobs jobs are changing 66% faster than for other jobs - over 2.5x faster than last year.

56%

is the wage premium for AI skills, comparing workers in the same job with and without AI skills - up from 25% last year.

2x

is the wage growth in sectors most impacted by AI.

Terminology

Definition of AI jobs

An AI job is any role whose job description includes at least one skill from our AI Skills Taxonomy.

In practice, we assess the skills listed by employers in job postings. If any required skill aligns with our AI taxonomy, the role is classified as an AI job and included in our analysis. This approach is consistent with leading research, including Acemoglu et al. (2022) and Alekseeva et al. (2021).

Definition of AI exposure

AI exposure measures how much a job is influenced by advances in artificial intelligence based on the abilities it requires.

Following Felten et al. (2018, 2019), we assess exposure by identifying occupations that rely on abilities where AI has made the greatest progress such as language processing, image recognition, or speech understanding. These are mapped to human abilities like oral comprehension and inductive reasoning to create an AI Occupational Exposure (AIOE) score for each role.

For example, jobs such as customer service agents have high AI exposure, given AI's progress in language and speech tasks. In contrast, roles like farmers have lower exposure since their core abilities are less automatable.

This measure captures potential impact, not actual adoption. It reflects how susceptible jobs are to AI, rather than how widely AI is currently deployed across sectors or regions.

UAE Insights

The AI Jobs Barometer reveals AI's impact on jobs, skills and hiring patterns in the UAE by analysing close to two million job postings between 2021-2024.

UAE data is directional and not comprehensive given sample size.

AI-related job postings in the UAE have doubled from 5,000 to 10,000 between 2021 and 2024.

The information and communications technology sector leads in AI skills demand, followed by professional and technical services.

AI-exposed occupations grew by 13%, reflecting ongoing skills transformation.

Overall, the United Arab Emirates mirrors global trends in AI adoption and talent demand

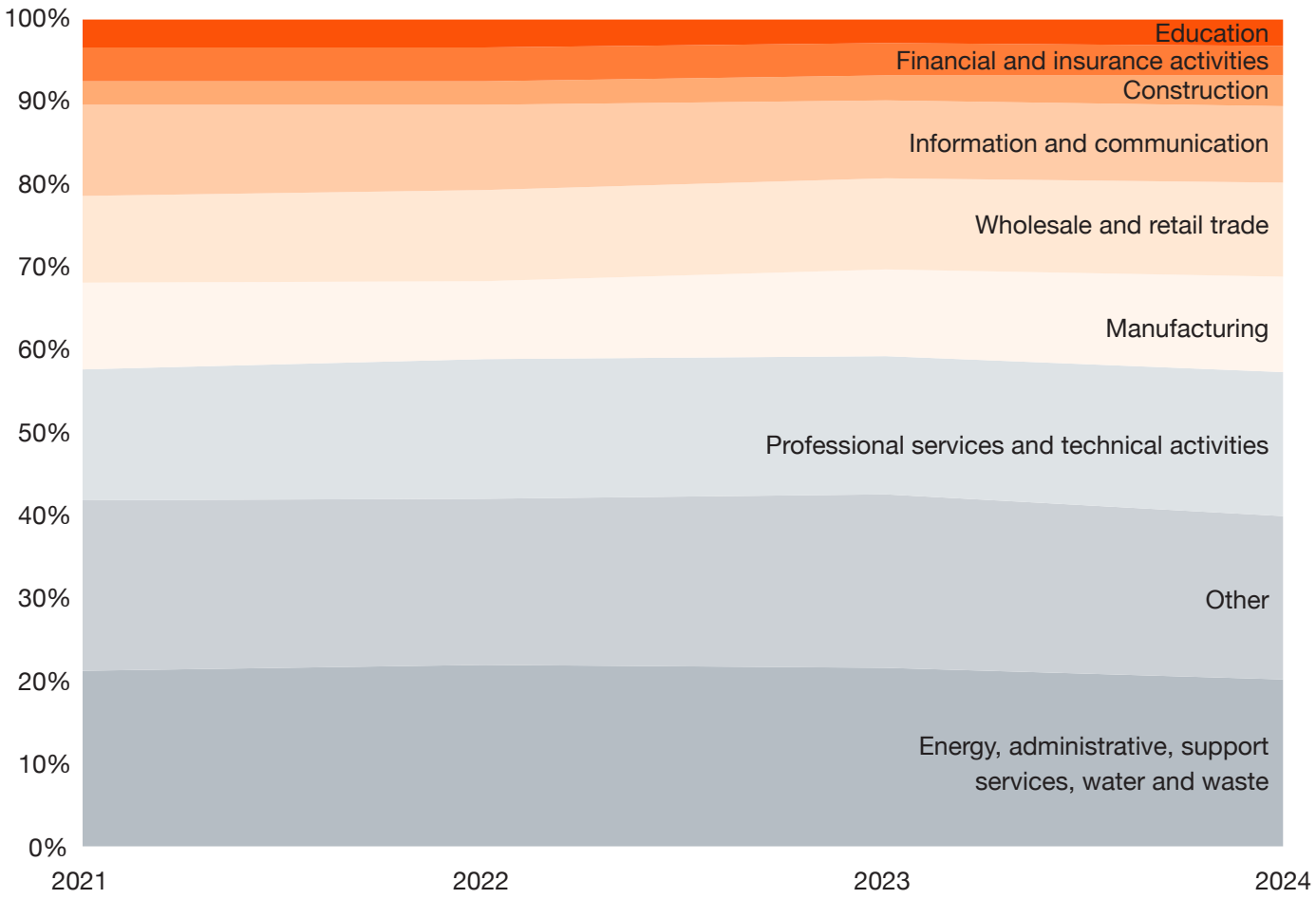
AI job postings growth: +100%

AI-exposed job postings growth: +13%

Skills shift: +45%

Energy, administrative and support services have the highest share of all job postings in the UAE market

Share of all job postings by sector, UAE, 2021-2024



Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

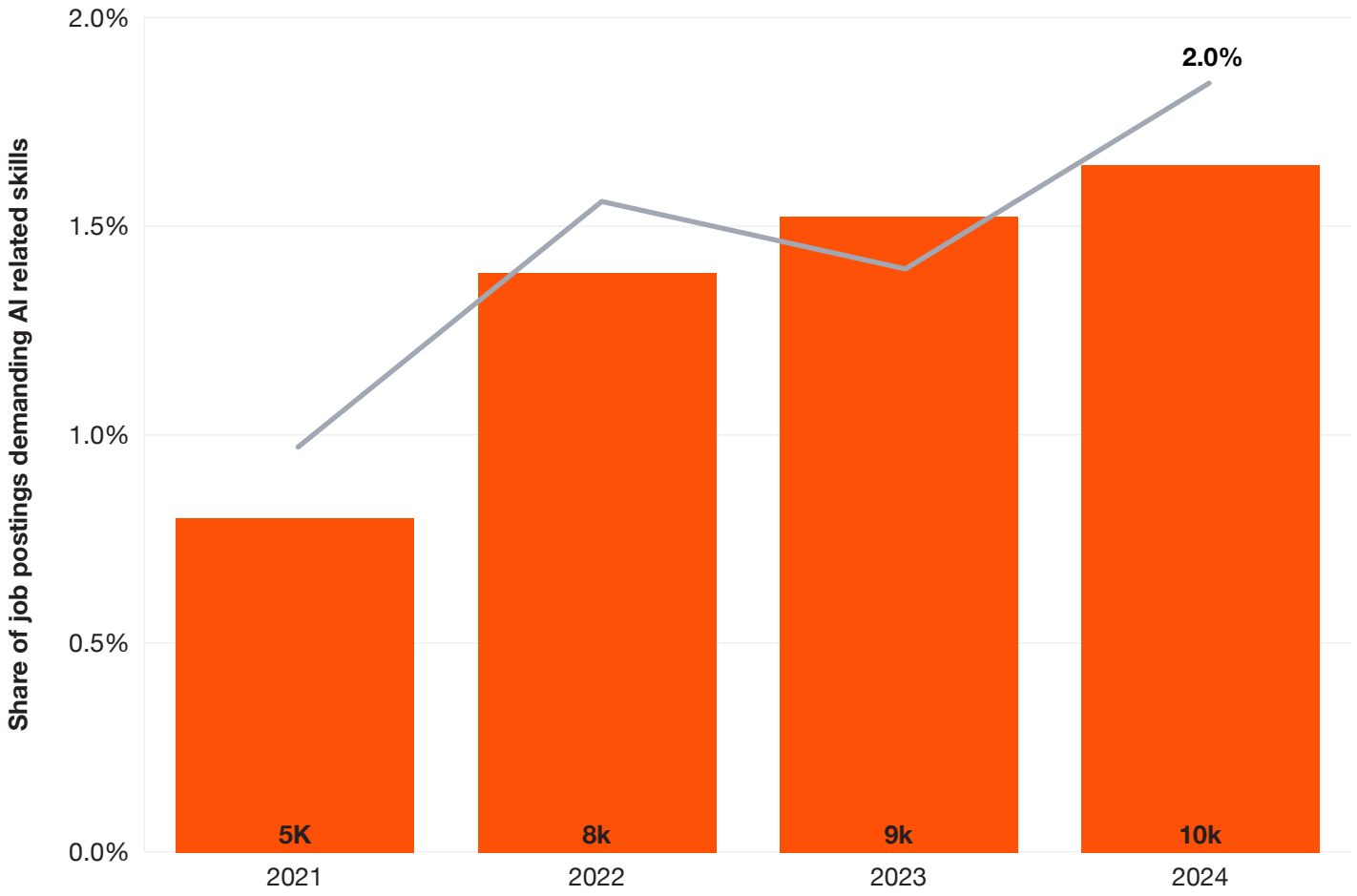
Key findings

- Energy, administrative, support services, water and waste sector maintained their high share of job postings, indicating consistent demand for these roles.
- Information and communication and financial and insurance activities sectors have seen a slight decrease in their share of job postings over time.

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

The UAE demonstrates consistent growth in the demand for jobs requiring AI skills, representing 2% of total job postings in 2024

Total number and share of AI job postings, UAE, 2021-2024



Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

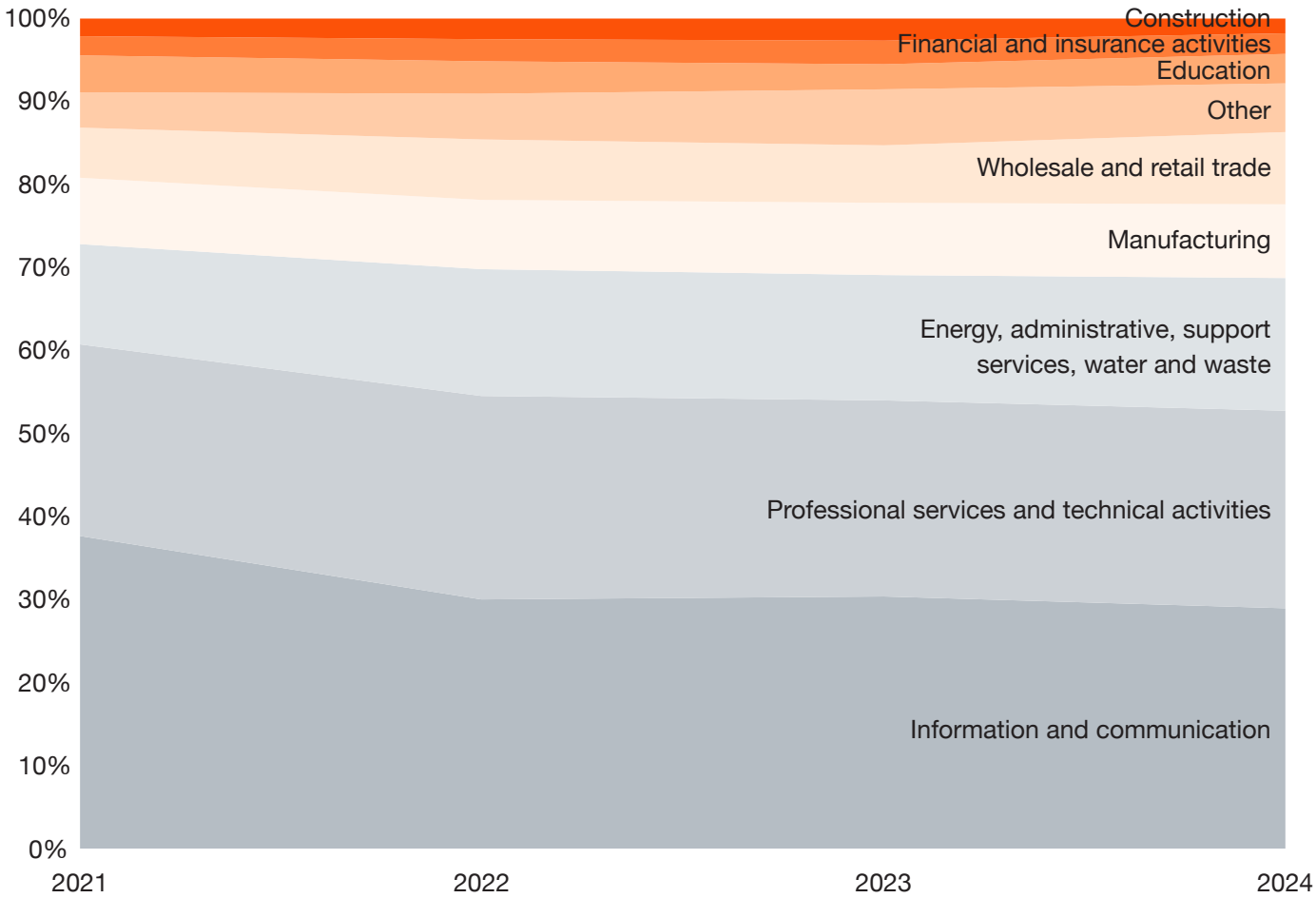
Key findings

- **Rising trend:** The share of AI jobs has shown a clear upward trajectory from 2020 to 2024.
- **Volume increase:** The number of jobs requiring AI skills has doubled from 2021 (5,000) to 2024 (10,000).
- **Industry shift:** The overall trend suggests a growing emphasis for AI jobs, highlighting the increasing integration of AI in various industries.

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI jobs in the UAE are no longer confined to tech and are spreading into services, energy and manufacturing

Distribution of AI jobs by sector, UAE, 2024



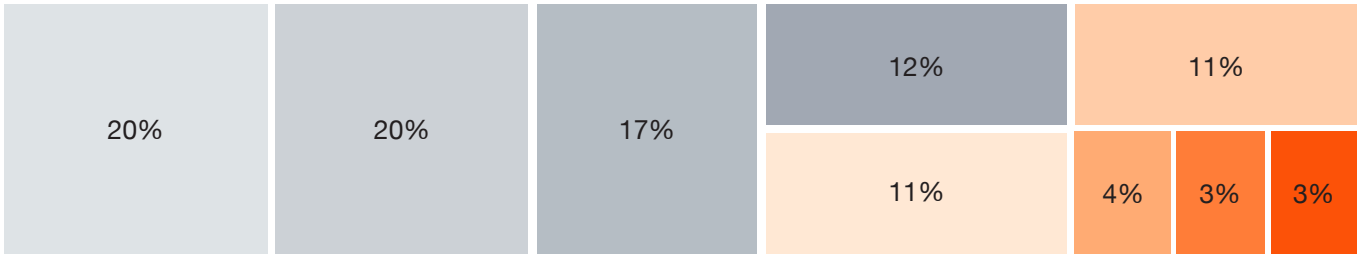
Key findings

- Information and communication AI jobs decreased as a share of total.
- Energy, manufacturing, and wholesale & retail trade are gradually increasing their share of AI jobs, reflecting industrial digitalisation and AI-driven operational efficiency.
- Financial and insurance activities and education sectors show steady but moderate growth, suggesting early-stage adoption and hinting at potential future growth.

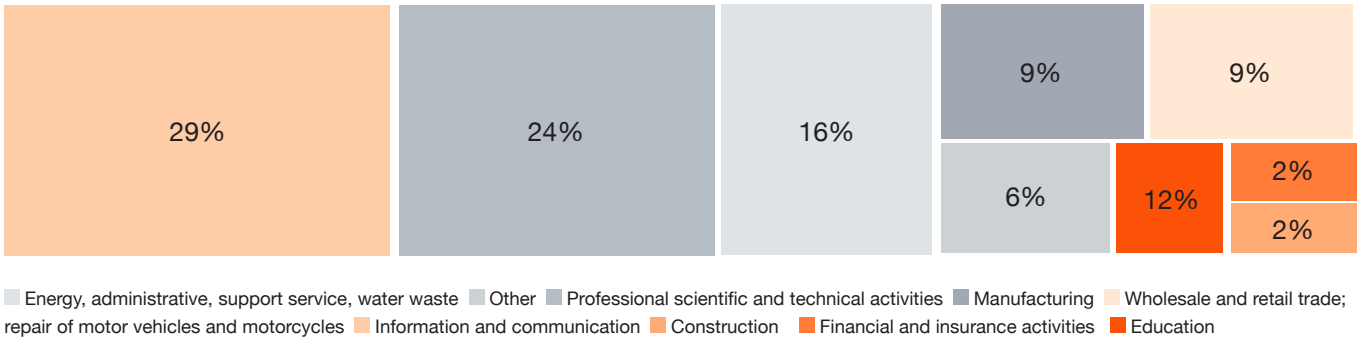
Sources: PwC analysis, lightcast data. Notes: 43% of the jobs requiring AI skills do not have sectoral data. These are omitted from the chart above. Additionally, the following sectors are grouped into 'other': accommodation and food service, activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies, agriculture, forestry and fishing, arts, entertainment and recreation, human health and social work activities, mining and quarrying, other service activities, public administration and defence, real estate activities, transportation and storage.

The majority of the 10,000 jobs requiring AI skills in the UAE are in white collar sectors

Distribution of job postings by sector, 2024



Distribution of AI job postings by sector, 2024



Sources: PwC analysis, lightcast data. Notes: 43% of the jobs requiring AI skills do not have sectoral data. These are omitted from the chart above. Additionally, the following sectors are grouped into 'Other': accommodation and food service, acsocialtivities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies, agriculture, forestry and fishing, arts, entertainment and recreation, human health and work activities, mining and quarrying, other service activities, public administration and defence, real estate activities, transportation and storage.

Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

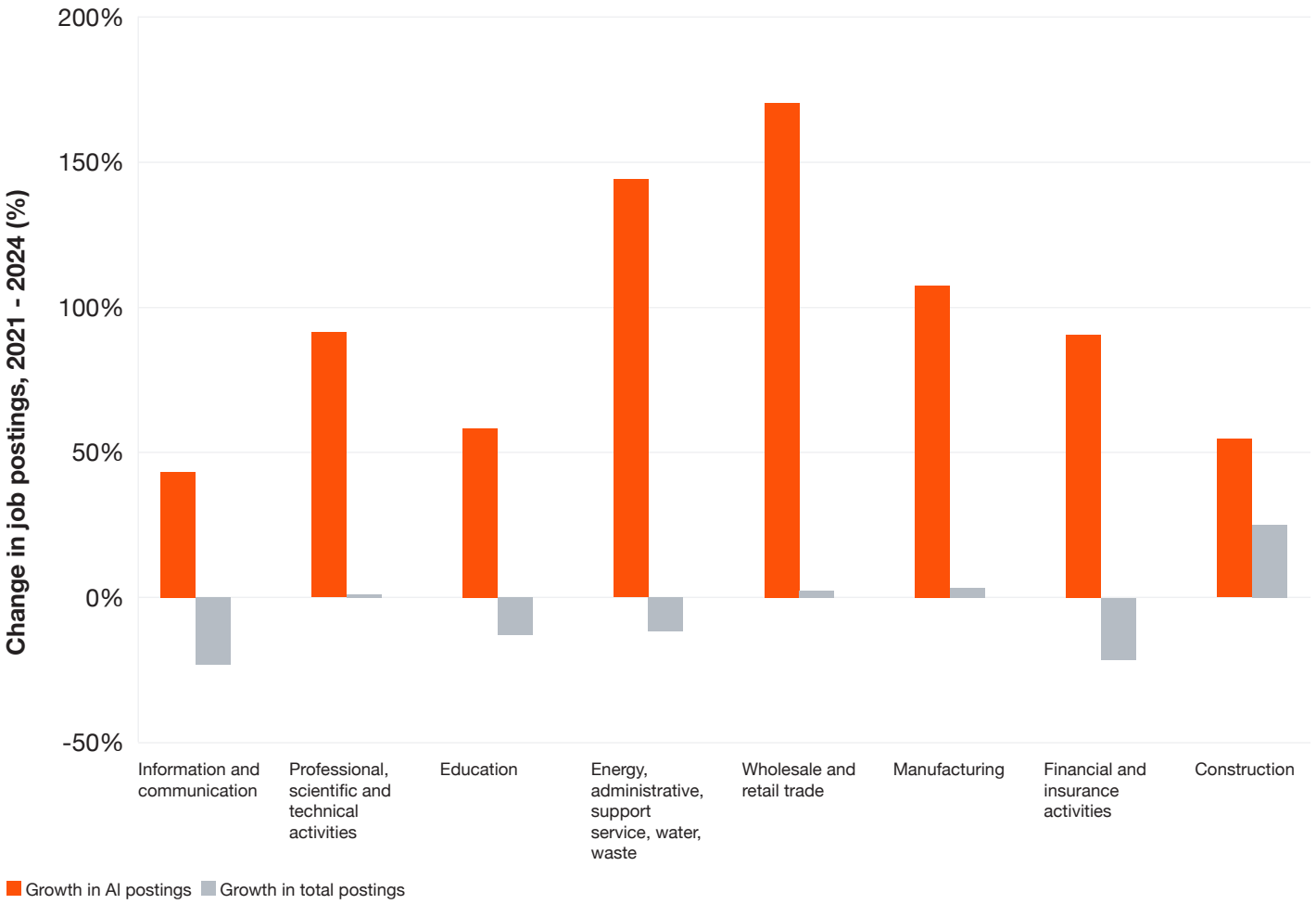
Key findings

- White collar sectors see the largest number of AI job postings, representing over two third of the AI postings in 2024.
- While information and communication represents only 11% of total job postings, it accounts for 29% of AI-skilled jobs - nearly 3× its overall postings share.
- Financial and insurance activities (3% - 2%) and education (3% - 4%) have relatively low but strategic AI footprints and construction (4% - 2%) remains underrepresented

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI job demand is growing 2-3x faster in the UAE than overall job postings, signalling accelerated adoption across UAE sectors

Change in number of total job postings and AI job postings by sector, 2021-2024



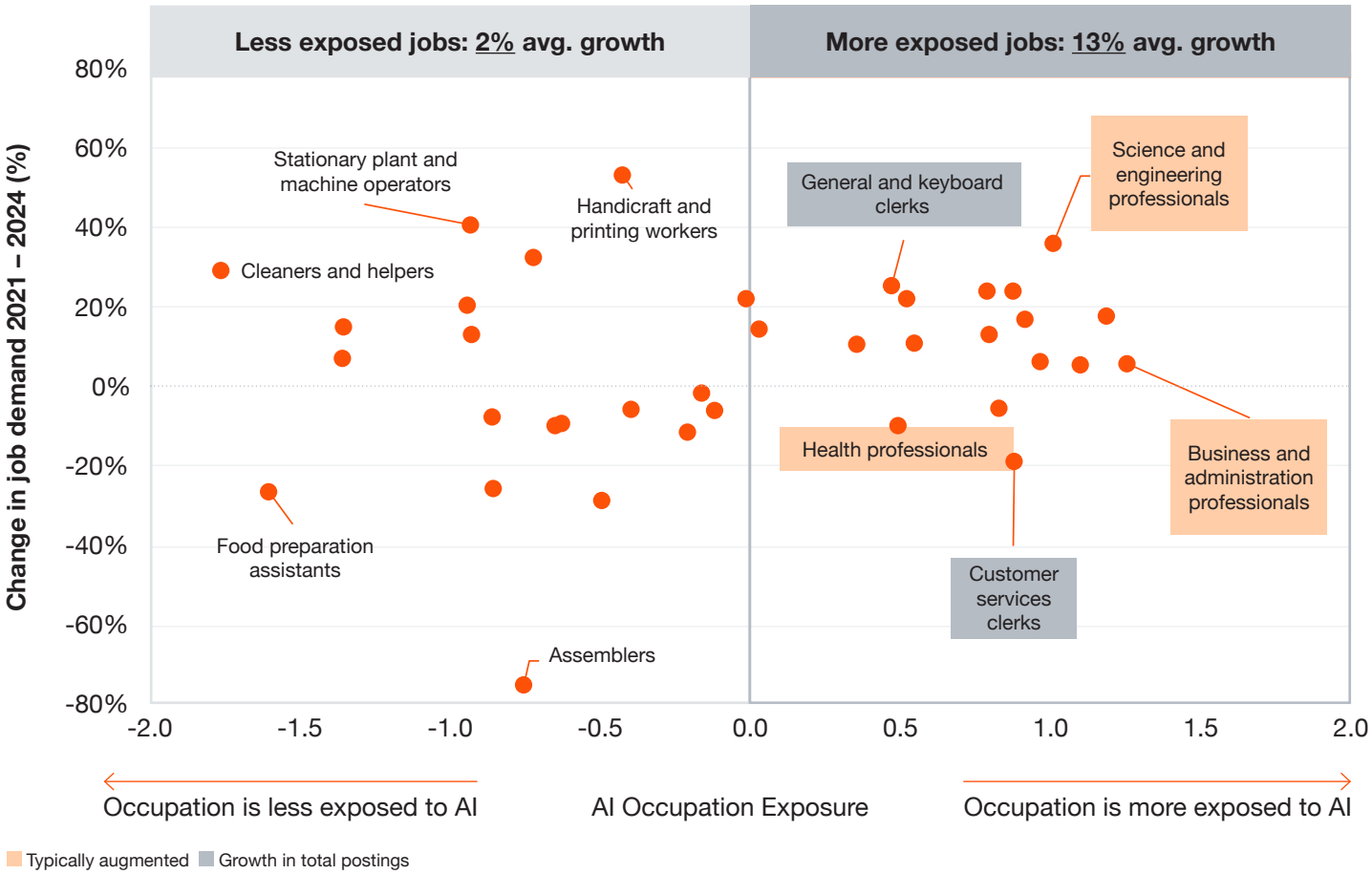
Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Key findings

- Every major sector shows faster growth in AI-related job postings in the UAE than in total postings, underscoring accelerating AI adoption and digital transformation.
- Wholesale and retail trade (+160%) and Energy, Administrative & Support Services (+140%) show the strongest AI job growth, despite modest overall job expansion.
- Manufacturing also shows over 100% growth, reflecting increasing adoption of AI-driven production and quality management systems.

AI-exposed roles are growing faster, signaling augmentation, not automation

Cumulative growth rate in all job postings against exposure to AI, UAE, 2021-2024



Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

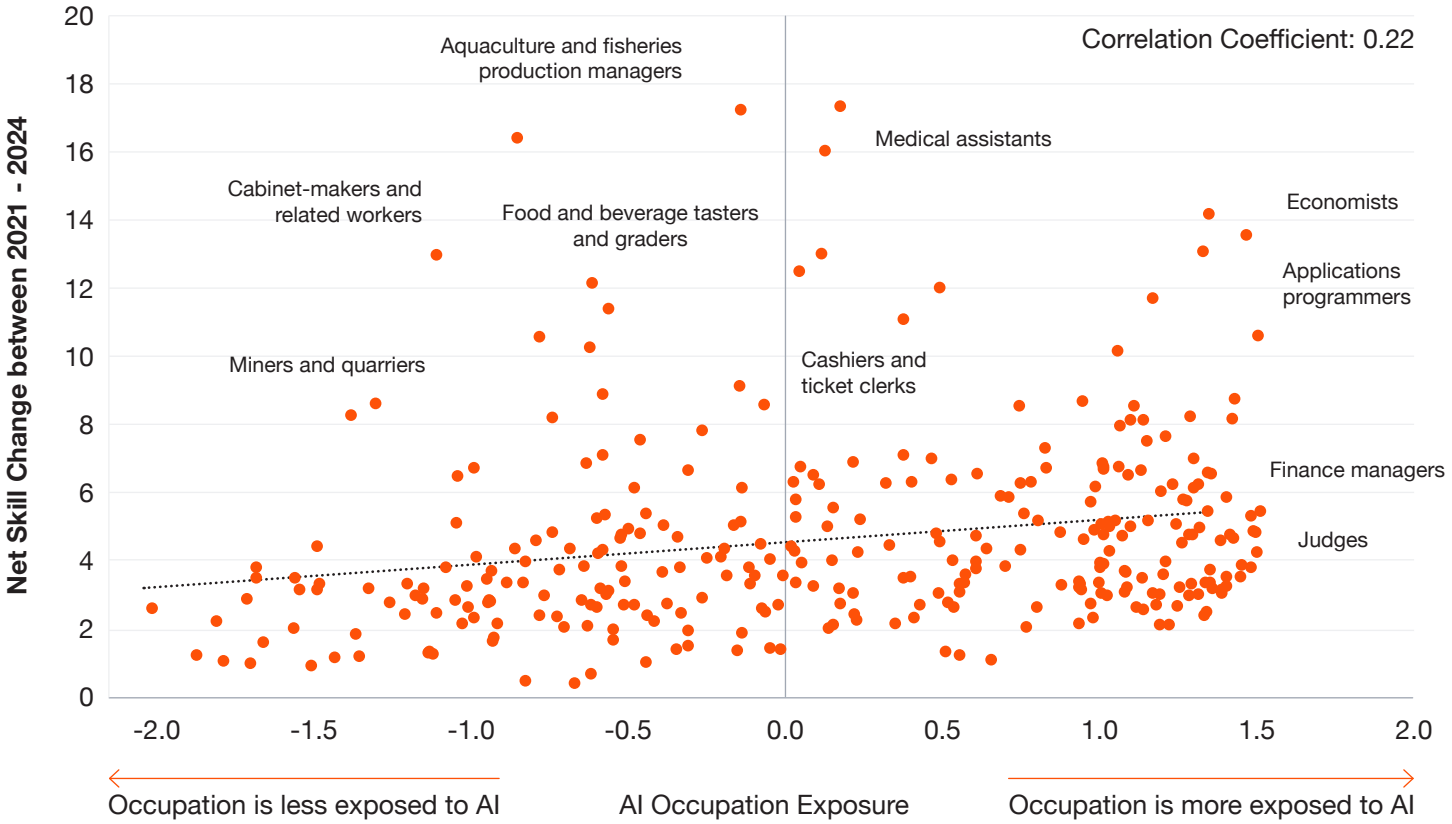
Key findings

- AI-exposed jobs are growing faster: Roles with high AI exposure saw average growth of 13%, compared to just 2% in low-exposure jobs, showing that AI is amplifying skilled work rather than replacing it.
- Professional roles are leading: Science, and engineering professionals are expanding the most, as AI complements analytical and cognitive work.
- AI-driven automation is gradual and uneven: most highly exposed roles are expanding through augmentation, while a few routine-heavy roles - like customer service clerks - are seeing reduced demand.

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI is reshaping UAE job skills: Some soar, others stall

Net change in the number of skills demanded against AI exposure, UAE, 2021-2024



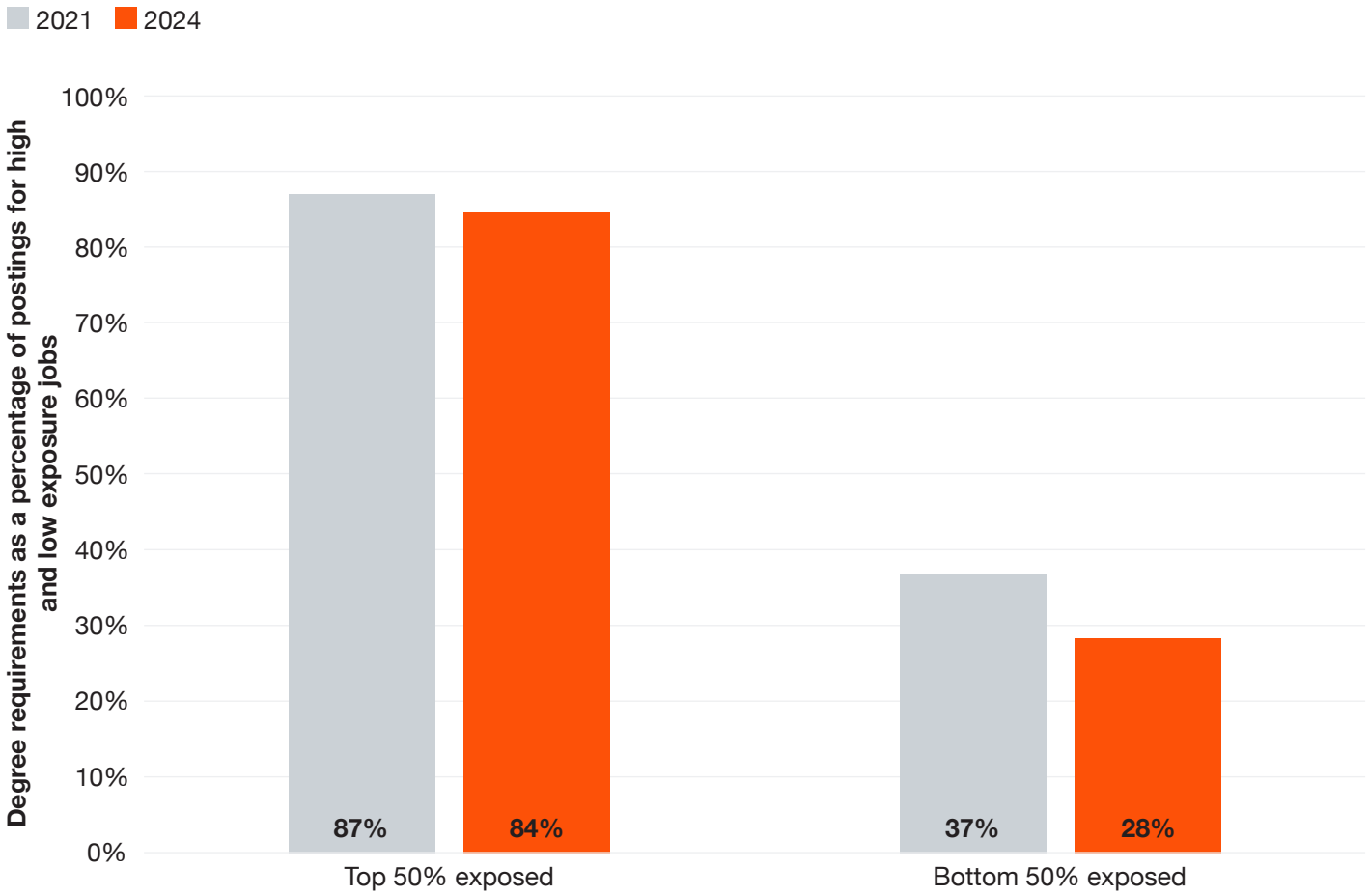
Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data Felten's AIOE

Key findings

- Economists and programmers are evolving ahead of the curve despite already high AI exposure, these roles show even faster skill growth; driven by demand for data science, automation oversight and AI tool fluency.
- Medical assistants and food graders are changing faster than expected. Though low in AI exposure, digital tools (e.g. telehealth, quality sensors) are transforming these roles, pushing employers to upskill frontline staff.
- Finance managers are changing slower than expected despite high AI exposure, skill demand remains stable; due to regulatory complexity and limited direct disruption to core responsibilities.

General degree-based hiring remain strong in the UAE despite a fall in global demand for degrees in more AI exposed occupations

Degree requirements for jobs with high and low AI exposure, UAE, 2021-2024



Sources: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Key findings

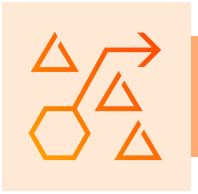
- Despite global trends toward skill-based hiring,[1] UAE employers continue to prioritise degrees for roles with higher AI exposure; 84% of AI-exposed job postings in 2024 still require degree qualifications.
- In the bottom 50% of AI-exposed occupations, degree requirements dropped more notably, from 37% to 28%.

1 https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report-2023

What's next: The implications for both the public and private 'sector when it comes to AI and jobs is clear:

PwC is committed to supporting the UAE in shaping the next chapter of its AI workforce agenda and our team has identified five actions for business leaders:

- AI is becoming a foundational force across UAE sectors – especially in information and communications technology and professional services
- Skills transformation is underway, and demand for formal degrees is starting to decline
- UAE's early momentum aligns with global shifts, but targeted acceleration is possible
- There is an opportunity for the UAE to lead the region in skills-first, AI-enabled workforce development
- Further data partnerships and in-country research can refine insights and inform action

01 

Make AI capability a leadership priority, not a specialist concern

02 

Turn sector-specific AI adoption into your competitive edge

03 

Redesign work around human-AI collaboration and not cost reduction

04 

Future-proof your workforce through reskilling and redeployment

05 

Shift hiring from credentials to skills and capabilities

Methodology

01

Data source:
Job postings (2021-2024), across ~2 million UAE postings

02

Occupational mapping:
ISCO codes (International Standard Classification of Occupations)

03

AI exposure methodology:
Felten et al. (2021) AI Occupational Exposure Index

04

Augmented/Automated classification:
IMF complementarity framework

05

Job postings:
We use Lightcast data for jobs postings, including associated skills

Note: UAE data reflects directional insights; some global metrics unavailable due to sample limitations

Due to data limitations these metrics are not presented for the UAE

Unavailable metrics:

- Number of jobs postings relative to 2012 split by quartile AI exposure is unavailable due to data not being available from 2012
- Net skill change for automated and augmented jobs by sector is unavailable due to many sectors not having a significant sample size

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

pwc.com/aijobsbarometer

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI Skills Taxonomy:

The 376 AI Skills used to identify ‘jobs that require AI skills’

AI Skill
AI/ML Inference
AIOps (Artificial Intelligence For IT Operations)
Applications Of Artificial Intelligence
Artificial General Intelligence
Artificial Intelligence
Artificial Intelligence Development
Artificial Intelligence Markup Language (AIML)
Artificial Intelligence Systems
Azure Cognitive Services
Baidu
Cognitive Automation
Cognitive Computing
Computational Intelligence
Cortana
Ethical AI
Expert Systems
Explainable AI (XAI)
Intelligent Control
Intelligent Systems
Interactive Kiosk
IPSoft Amelia
Knowledge Engineering
Knowledge-Based Configuration
Knowledge-Based Systems
MultiAgent Systems
Open Neural Network Exchange (ONNX)
OpenAI Gym
Operationalizing AI
Reasoning Systems
Soft Computing
Swarm Intelligence
Watson Conversation
Watson Studio
Weka
Advanced Driver Assistance Systems
Autonomous Cruise Control Systems
Autonomous System
Autonomous Vehicles
Guidance Navigation And Control Systems
Light Detection And Ranging (LiDAR)
OpenCV
Path Analysis
Path Finding
Remote Sensing
Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)
AdaBoost (Adaptive Boosting)
Adversarial Machine Learning
Apache MADlib
Apache Mahout
Apache SINGA
Apache Spark
Association Rule Learning
Attention Mechanisms
Automated Machine Learning
Autonomic Computing
AWS SageMaker
Azure Machine Learning
Boltzmann Machine
Boosting
Bot Framework
CHi-Squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID)
Classification And Regression Tree (CART)
Cluster Analysis
Collaborative Filtering
Confusion Matrix
Cyber-Physical Systems
Dask (Software)
Data Classification
Dbscan
Decision Models
Decision Tree Learning
Dimensionality Reduction
Dlib (C++ Library)
Embedded Intelligence
Ensemble Methods
Evolutionary Programming
Expectation Maximization Algorithm
Fast.ai
Feature Engineering
Feature Extraction
Feature Learning
Feature Selection
Game Ai
Gaussian Process
Genetic Algorithm
Google AutoML
Google Cloud ML Engine
Gradient Boosting
H2O.ai
Hidden Markov Model
Hyperparameter Optimization
Inference Engine
K-Means Clustering
Kernel Methods

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI Skills Taxonomy:

The 376 AI Skills used to identify ‘jobs that require AI skills’

Kubeflow
LIBSVM
Loss Functions
Machine Learning
Machine Learning Algorithms
Machine Learning Methods
Machine Learning Model Monitoring And Evaluation
Machine Learning Model Training
Markov Chain
Matrix Factorization
Meta Learning
Microsoft Cognitive Toolkit (CNTK)
MLflow
MLOps (Machine Learning Operations)
mlpack (C++ Library)
ModelOps
Naive Bayes Classifier
Objective Function
Oracle Autonomous Database
Perceptron
Predictionio
Programmatic Media Buying
Pydata
PyTorch (Machine Learning Library)
Random Forest Algorithm
Recommender Systems
Reinforcement Learning
Scikit-Learn (Python Package)
Semi-Supervised Learning
Sorting Algorithm
Supervised Learning
Support Vector Machine
Test Datasets
Torch (Machine Learning)
Training Datasets
Transfer Learning
Unsupervised Learning
Variational Autoencoders
Vowpal Wabbit
Xgboost
Amazon Alexa
Amazon Textract
ANTLR
Apache OpenNLP
BERT (NLP Model)
Chatbot
Computational Linguistics
DeepSpeech
Dialog Systems
fastText
Fuzzy Logic
Handwriting Recognition
Hugging Face (NLP Framework)
Intelligent Agent
Intelligent Virtual Assistant
Kaldi
Language Model
Latent Dirichlet Allocation
Lexalytics
Machine Translation
Microsoft LUIS
Natural Language Generation
Natural Language Processing (NLP)
Natural Language Programming
Natural Language Toolkits
Natural Language Understanding
Natural Language User Interface
Nearest Neighbour Algorithm
Nuance Mix
Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
Prompt Engineering
Screen Reader
Semantic Analysis
Semantic Interpretation For Speech Recognition
Semantic Parsing
Semantic Search
Sentiment Analysis
Seq2Seq
Shogun
Speech Recognition
Speech Recognition Software
Speech Synthesis
Statistical Language Acquisition
Text Mining
Text-To-Speech
Theano (Software)
Tokenization
Voice Assistant Technology
Voice Interaction
Voice User Interface
Word Embedding
Word2Vec Models
Apache MXNet
Artificial Neural Networks
Autoencoders
Caffe (Framework)

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI Skills Taxonomy:

The 376 AI Skills used to identify ‘jobs that require AI skills’

Caffe2
Chainer (Deep Learning Framework)
Convolutional Neural Networks
Cudnn
Deep Learning
Deep Learning Methods
Deeplearning4j
Evolutionary Acquisition Of Neural Topologies
Generative Artificial Intelligence
ChatGPT
Hugging Face Transformers
Large Language Modeling
Transformer (Machine Learning Model)
Generative Adversarial Networks
Keras (Neural Network Library)
Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM)
OpenVINO
PaddlePaddle
Pybrain
PyTorch Lightning
Recurrent Neural Network (RNN)
TensorFlow
Advanced Robotics
Cognitive Robotics
Motion Planning
Nvidia Jetson
Robot Framework
Robot Operating Systems
Robotic Automation Software
Robotic Liquid Handling Systems
Robotic Programming
Robotic Systems
Servomotor
SLAM Algorithms (Simultaneous Localization And Mapping)
3D Reconstruction
Activity Recognition
Computer Vision
Contextual Image Classification
Deck.gl
Digital Image Processing
Eye Tracking
Face Detection
Facial Recognition
General-Purpose Computing On Graphics Processing Units
Gesture Recognition
Image Analysis
Image Matching
Image Recognition
Image Segmentation
Image Sensor
Imagenet
Machine Vision
Mnist
Motion Analysis
Object Recognition
OmniPage
Pose Estimation
Realsense
AI Copywriting
Conversational AI
Predictive Modeling
Synthetic Data Generation
OpenAI Gym Environments
Text Retrieval Systems
Object Tracking
Adobe Sensei
Embedded AI
Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL)
Vespa
CrewAI
Neuro-Symbolic AI
Incremental Learning
t-SNE (t-distributed Stochastic Neighbor Embedding)
Language Models
Neural Ordinary Differential Equations
Image Super-Resolution
Sequence-to-Sequence Models (Seq2Seq)
Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs)
Bagging Techniques
Data Version Control (DVC)
Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN)
Topological Data Analysis (TDA)
Residual Networks (ResNet)
Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF)
Variational Autoencoders (VAEs)
Scene Understanding
Meta-Reinforcement Learning
Reinforcement Learning (RL)
Concept Drift Detection
Text to Speech (TTS)
Thermal Imaging Analysis
Image Captioning
Meta-Learning

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer
UAE Analysis

AI Skills Taxonomy:

The 376 AI Skills used to identify ‘jobs that require AI skills’

Image Inpainting
Digital Twin Technology
Semantic Kernel
Text Summarization
Natural Language Understanding (NLU)
Natural Language Generation (NLG)
Retrieval Augmented Generation
Dynamic Routing
Multimodal Learning
Qdrant
Sentence Transformers
Weaviate
Data Sovereignty
Microsoft Copilot
Automated Data Cleaning
Neural Architecture Compression
Langgraph
Instance Segmentation
Distributed Machine Learning
Summarization Methods
Bayesian Belief Networks
Small Language Model
AutoGen
Neural Architecture Search (NAS)
Graph Neural Networks (GNNs)
PineCone
Spiking Neural Networks
Multimodal Models
Gradient Boosting Machines (GBM)
AI Personalization
Knowledge Representation
Edge Intelligence
Knowledge Distillation
Support Vector Machines (SVM)
Federated Learning
AI Security
Artificial Intelligence Risk
Agentic Systems
AI Testing
Generative AI Agents
DALL-E Image Generator
Google Bard
Stable Diffusion
Amazon Comprehend
Amazon Lex
Amazon Polly
Dialogflow (Google Service)
Disambiguation
GPT-3 (NLP Model)
Information Extraction
Language Identification
Lemmatization
N Gram
Named Entity Recognition
NLTK (NLP Analysis)
Part-of-Speech Tagging
Question Answering
Relationship Extraction
Sirikit
Speech Enhancement
Speech Processing
Speech Technology
Sphinx Speech Recognition
Text Classification
Voice Technology
Word-Sense Disambiguation
K-Nearest Neighbors Algorithm
Artificial Consciousness
LightGBM
Intelligent Automation
Nuance Nina Virtual Assistant
Azure OpenAI
Azure AI Studio
AWS Bedrock
Google Assistant
Automated Planning And Scheduling
LangChain
GitHub Copilot
Human AI Interaction
Few Shot Learning
AI Research
AI Innovation
AI Agents
Agentic AI
Zero Shot Learning
AI Safety
AI Alignment
Graph Algorithms
Time Series
Text Processing
PySpark
Databricks
Neural Machine Translation (NMT)

Partner Sponsors

Joe Atkinson
Global Chief AI Officer,
PwC US

Peter Brown
Global Workforce Leader,
PwC UK

Contributors

Sarah Brown
Global Corporate Affairs and Communications, Director,
PwC UK

Barret Kupelian
Chief Economist, Director,
PwC UK

Mehdi Sahneh
Economist, Senior Manager,
PwC UK

Simon Oates
UK Economics Leader,
PwC UK

Justine Brown
Global Workforce, Director,
PwC UK

Adam Deasy
Economics, Manager,
PwC UK

Nabil Taleb
Senior Associate, Economist,
PwC UK

Harry Ingham
Economist, Associate,
PwC UK

Gabriela Grobelny
Economist, Senior Associate,
PwC UK

William Feng
Economist, Associate,
PwC UK

Mia Williams
Economist, Associate,
PwC UK

Wilf Rutter
Economist, Associate,
PwC UK

Josh Gould
Economist, Associate,
PwC UK

Advisors

Scott Likens
Global AI and Innovation Technology Leader, PwC US

Rusbeh Hashemian
EMEA Chief Information Officer, PwC Germany

Bivek Sharma
Chief AI Officer, PwC UK

Agnieszka Gajewska
Global Government and Public Services Leader and PwC Central and Eastern Europe Clients & Markets Leader, PwC Poland

Euan Cameron
AI and Emerging Technology Leader, PwC UK

Prasun Shah
Global CTO Workforce Consulting & AI Transformation Leader, HR Technology & Transformation, PwC UK

Bastiaan Starink
Workforce, Partner, PwC Netherlands

Khaled Bin Braik
Consulting Partner and Emiratisation Leader, PwC Middle East

Matt Wood
Global and US Commercial Technology & Innovation Officer, PwC US

Marlene de Koning
Workforce AI and Innovation Technology Leader, PwC Netherlands

Parul Munshi
APAC Workforce Transformation Leader, PwC Singapore

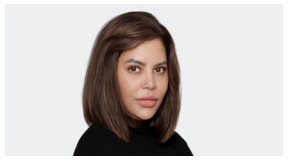
Anthony Abbatiello
Workforce Transformation Practice Leader, PwC US

Vishy Narayanan
Asia Pacific Digital & AI Leader, PwC Malaysia

Anthony Bruce
Global Health Industries Leader, PwC UK

Farbod Nassiri
HR Transformation Leader, PwC Canada

Dan Priest
US Chief AI Officer, PwC US



Dr. Vishalli Dongrie
Workforce Advisory Leader, PwC India

Julia Lamm
Global Workforce Strategy Leader, PwC US