FORCE Ai

Co-funded by the European Union

Artificial Intelligence Manager for Higher Education:

Qualification Profile

Fachhochschule des Mittelstands

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

RISEBA UNIVERSITY

ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ

Document Metadata

Project name	Fostering Opportunities, Resources, and Capabilities in AI for Effective Management of Higher Education Institutions
Acronym	FORCE AI
Reference number	2024-1-DE01-KA220-HED-000250975
Funding programme	Erasmus+, Cooperation Partnerships in Higher Education – KA2
Name of the Result	Artificial Intelligence Manager for Higher Education: Qualification Profile
Work package	Work package 2 - Mapping perspectives and needs on AI integration in Higher Education
Lead partner	Fachhochschule des Mittelstands
Contributors	Anadolu University, University of Twente, University of Applied Sciences RISEBA
Language	English
Release date	September, 2025
Dissemination level	Public

Terms of Use

Financial support

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National Agency DAAD. Neither the European Union nor the National Agency DAAD can be held responsible for them.

Co-funded by the European Union

With support from

ÖZYEĞİN UNIVERSITY

AKAD UNIVERSITY

EDTECH-U EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

AISA ADVANCED INFORMATION SOCIETY ASSOCIATION

Contents

Introduction 3

Methodology 3

Qualification Profile at a Glance 4

Dimension 1: AIM4HE tasks 5

- TASK 1: Defining strategic orientation 5
- Task 2: Managing AI implementation initiatives 5
- Task 3: Empowering staff and organisational units 5
- Task 4: Fostering AI literacy culture 6

Dimension 2: AIM4HE Competence Profile 6

- AI Literacy 6
- Strategic Leadership 7
- Innovation & Change Management 7
- Ethics, Integrity & Social Responsibility 7
- Communication & Collaboration 8
- Capacity Building 8

Dimension 3: Professional Qualifications 8

AIM4HE's Institutional Role and Positioning 9

Conclusion and Outlook 10

Bibliography 11

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education presents institutions with new strategic, technical, and ethical challenges. To address these systematically, higher education institutions (HEIs) need professionals capable of shaping the strategic integration of AI in a responsible, technically sound, and cross-organisational manner. These professionals correspond to a new role, the AI Manager for Higher Education (AIM4HE), which calls for a dedicated qualification profile.

The qualification profile presented here outlines the central tasks, competencies, qualifications, and structural conditions for the role of AIM4HE. It was developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ project **Fostering AI Opportunities, Resources and Capabilities for Effective Management of Higher Education Institutions (FORCE AI),** carried out by partners from Germany, Turkey, Latvia, and the Netherlands.

The project aims to unlock the full potential of AI in higher education – from administration to student support – by developing tools, resources, and training opportunities that enable institutions to manage their digital transformation effectively. Its objectives are threefold: first, to identify the essential competencies and roles required for effective AI management within HEIs; second, to consolidate these into the AIM4HE qualification profile; and third, to develop and pilot a tailored online training programme that prepares participants to take on the AIM4HE role.

Further information on the project can be found at www.force-ai.eu.

The AIM4HE qualification profile is designed as a standardised, cross-nationally compatible model. It can serve as a practical reference for decision-makers at HEIs, continuing education providers, educational technology specialists, and policymakers seeking to contribute to the professionalisation of AI governance in the European Higher Education Area.

Methodology

The AIM4HE qualification profile was developed through a combination of empirical study and literature review in the field of AI literacy, both conducted within the FORCE AI project.

The empirical study involved a quantitative transnational survey, using a standardised online questionnaire, followed by qualitative focus groups with educational and technological stakeholders. These activities were carried out as the first step of the FORCE AI project.

The online questionnaire was designed by the FORCE AI partnership, drawing on relevant research literature in the field of AI and on legal frameworks such as the AI Act and the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (UNESCO, 2023). The survey collected responses from 387 participants across 13 countries. The findings highlighted, alongside the current state of AI integration in HEIs, the need for centralised AI governance.

Four focus groups were conducted separately in each of the FORCE AI partner countries (a total of four groups with 44 participants, comprising a mix of HEI staff from various departments as

well as students). These focus groups helped to further define the necessary AIM4HE competencies, qualifications, and governance structures.

The findings from the empirical study were analysed and published in a research report, which is freely available for download in English, Dutch, German, Latvian, and Turkish at the project website: https://force-ai.eu/results-2/.

Finally, the partnership validated the findings against existing frameworks to ensure that the final list of AIM4HE competencies reflects recent trends in the field. The literature and frameworks consulted are listed at the end of this document.

Qualification Profile at a Glance

The AIM4HE qualification profile is structured around three core dimensions: tasks, competencies, and qualifications of the prospective specialist. The table below illustrates these elements, providing a concise synthesis of the profile.

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
TASKS	• Developing AI strategies • Managing AI implementation projects • Empowering university staff • Fostering AI literacy culture
COMPETENCIES	• AI literacy • Strategic Leadership • Innovation & Change Management • Ethics, Integrity & Social Responsibility • Communication & Collaboration • Capacity Building
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	• Completed university degree (Master's or equivalent) in a relevant field • Several years of professional experience in higher education or the digital sector • Additional qualifications, e.g. in project management, data protection or AI ethics

Table 1: Summary of the AIM4HE qualification profile

A detailed description of each dimension is presented in the subsequent sections.

Dimension 1: AIM4HE tasks

AIM4HE plays a central role in shaping the strategic, operational, and organisational use of AI at universities. AIM4HE's tasks can be categorised into four interrelated areas: defining strategic orientation, implementing AI-related initiatives, empowering internal stakeholders and developing structures, and promoting an AI literacy culture.

TASK 1: Defining strategic orientation

In the strategic field of action, AIM4HE is primarily responsible for developing and continuously refining an institutional AI strategy. This strategy not only focuses on technical innovation but also incorporates legal, ethical, and educational policy requirements. AIM4HE advises management bodies, faculty leadership, and quality management structures on the opportunities and risks of AI systems, and supports the formulation of appropriate guidelines and procedures, for example in the area of AI-based decision support. In addition, AIM4HE participates in national and European discourses on digital higher education and helps to translate strategic funding lines and regulatory developments into institutional action plans.

Task 2: Managing AI implementation initiatives

In the operational field of action, AIM4HE's remit includes the systematic identification of AI use cases across the university's core areas: teaching, research, administration, and student services. AIM4HE initiates and supports relevant projects, coordinates interdisciplinary teams, and oversees the selection, implementation, and evaluation of AI technologies. In this role, AIM4HE serves as an interface between internal departments and external service providers, technology partners, and accreditation bodies. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring the legal and ethical safeguarding of AI applications, especially with regard to data protection, transparency, and algorithmic fairness.

Task 3: Empowering staff and organisational units

A third, cross-cutting field of action concerns the empowerment of individuals and organisational units in dealing with AI. AIM4HE designs and implements training measures for staff and faculty, and fosters the institutional development of an innovation-ready and reflective organisational culture. This also includes establishing internal exchange formats, communities of practice, and real-world laboratories in which the responsible use of AI in higher education is tested and further developed. In this way, AIM4HE makes a significant contribution to embedding digital competencies sustainably and to shaping digital transformation in higher education institutions in a coordinated manner.

Task 4: Fostering AI literacy culture

AIM4HE contributes to shaping a shared understanding of the opportunities, risks, and institutional implications of AI. This includes fostering a university-wide AI literacy culture that promotes openness, critical reflection, and responsible innovation. To this end, AIM4HE facilitates dialogue among stakeholders, designs inclusive communication formats, and ensures that information about AI initiatives is transparent, participatory, and adapted to different target groups. The role also involves developing narrative frameworks, internal documentation, and awareness campaigns that build acceptance, alignment, and trust in AI-related transformation processes.

Dimension 2: AIM4HE Competence Profile

The role of an AIM4HE requires an integrated, multi-dimensional set of competencies. This competence profile combines technical expertise in AI with strategic leadership, methodological skills in innovation and change management, ethical and social responsibility, and advanced communication and collaboration abilities. In addition, AIM4HEs need to demonstrate the capacity to build institutional knowledge through teaching and training that align with European and international education strategies.

The competence areas and related competencies outlined below form the foundation for fulfilling the tasks and responsibilities of an AIM4HE. They provide guidance for recruitment and selection processes, serve as a framework for professional development and training programmes, and contribute to the strategic positioning of higher education institutions in the context of digital transformation.

AI Literacy

AI Literacy encompasses the conceptual and evaluative understanding of AI systems in higher education contexts. AIM4HE professionals are expected to assess models, data dependencies, and system landscapes, evaluate application areas, and take sustainable options into account. The specific competencies include:

- Assessing algorithmic structures, data dependencies, model limitations, and system interoperability in higher education contexts,
- Analysing institutional digital infrastructures for AI readiness, including energy efficiency and system compatibility,
- Evaluating AI systems in terms of functionality, application areas, and implications,
- Selecting AI systems for university-specific applications.

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership ensures that AI-related decisions are aligned with an institution's mission, vision, and societal responsibilities. It encompasses cultural transformation, adherence to ethical principles, and the anticipation of technological and regulatory developments. The specific competencies include:

- Developing institutional strategies and roadmaps for AI deployment that align with mission, vision, and societal responsibilities,
- Applying knowledge of ethical AI challenges — including data protection, transparency, non-discrimination, and regulatory frameworks such as the AI Act — to guide responsible AI decision-making,
- Leading organisational change and addressing cultural resistance to AI adoption,
- Conducting scenario planning and foresight to anticipate technological and regulatory shifts.

Innovation & Change Management

Innovation and change management focuses on the effective coordination of interdisciplinary AI initiatives. It requires expertise in project and change management as well as the ability to apply agile and participatory approaches that support institutional transformation. The specific competencies include:

- Managing interdisciplinary AI projects using innovative project and change management methods,
- Applying agile tools and participatory innovation formats (e.g. design thinking, co-creation),
- Evaluating the effectiveness of AI-related professional development through appropriate instruments,
- Using key performance indicators (KPIs) to guide and evaluate AI integration.

Ethics, Integrity & Social Responsibility

Ethical leadership is an essential requirement for AI integration. AIM4HE professionals are expected to act as role models and ensure compliance with ethical standards, legal frameworks, and the broader principles of social responsibility, including sustainability and environmentally responsible practices. The specific competencies include:

- Guiding responsible AI adoption in line with ethical standards and regulatory frameworks,
- Serving as an ethical leader and role model in institutional AI transformation,
- Integrating green and sustainable practices into AI-related decision-making processes as part of social responsibility.

Communication & Collaboration

Effective AI management depends on fostering communication across diverse institutional and external stakeholders. AIM4HE professionals are expected to demonstrate strong interpersonal, intercultural, and networking skills. The specific competencies include:

- Communicating and facilitating dialogue and trust-building with academic, administrative, and technical stakeholders using audience-specific language,
- Liaising with IT departments and external providers during procurement, testing, and integration processes,
- Demonstrating intercultural and multilingual communication skills in international collaborations,
- Building networks and partnerships across institutions, industry, and government.

Capacity Building

Capacity building highlights the multiplier role of AIM4HE professionals: they are responsible for advancing institutional learning through the development of pedagogically sound training formats and alignment with European and international education strategies. The specific competencies include:

- Designing pedagogically sound training programmes for integrating AI into teaching, research, and continuing education.
- Aligning teaching and training efforts with European and global digital education strategies (e.g., Bologna Process[1], EU Digital Education Action Plan 2021 - 2027[2], the Education 2030 Agenda[3]).

The six competence areas outlined above form together an interdisciplinary and multi-faceted competence profile of AIM4HE, capable of strategically guiding, implementing, and fostering responsible, innovative, and sustainable AI use across higher education institutions.

Dimension 3: Professional Qualifications

Given the hybrid nature of the AIM4HE role, positioned at the interface of IT, education, administration, and governance, AIM4HE requires **interdisciplinary qualifications** that combine academic foundations with practical experience in technology and higher education

[1] https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/bologna-process
[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0624
[3] https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en

strategy. Candidates should therefore demonstrate a solid understanding of the interrelationships among the technical, pedagogical, legal, and organisational aspects of AI.

Prospective AIM4HE should hold an **academic qualification** at Master's level (or equivalent) in one of the following or related fields: data science, computer science, educational sciences with a focus on educational technology, information management, public governance, innovation management, or higher education development. In exceptional cases, **equivalent competencies** acquired through professional development and proven practical experience may be recognised, particularly when evidenced by formalised micro-credentials or validation procedures.

Beyond academic qualifications, several years of **relevant professional experience** are expected, preferably within higher education or related public education and research institutions. Applicants should be able to demonstrate involvement in digital transformation processes, particularly those connected to AI applications, data analytics, digital teaching formats, or quality assurance systems.

Experience in interdisciplinary teams combining technical, ethical, legal, and didactic perspectives is especially valuable. **Knowledge of European regulations and initiatives** such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[4], the AI Act[5], or the European Education Area[6] is considered an asset. **Additional qualifications** in areas such as project management, change management, data protection, AI ethics, or digital higher education didactics are recommended.

Future AIM4HE candidates should also show a strong **motivation to learn** and a **commitment to continuous professional development.** Participation in international conferences, European cooperation projects, or certified continuing education programmes on AI governance is regarded as an integral part of professional growth.

AIM4HE's Institutional Role and Positioning

The effectiveness of AIM4HE depends largely on how it is organisationally embedded and functionally positioned within the structure of a higher education institution. As a **strategic interface role**, AIM4HE should be able to act across departments, influence decision-making processes, and actively shape institutional development strategies.

The functional positioning may **vary across organisational units** – for example, within university management, a staff unit for digital transformation, a strategic development department, or a centre for digitalisation and teaching. What matters less is the formal assignment; more important are the institutional sphere of influence and the visibility of the role. AIM4HE should have a clearly defined mandate that ensures access to strategic steering

[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/eng
[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R1689
[6] https://education.ec.europa.eu/

committees, university management decision-making processes, and operational implementation structures.

Key institutional interfaces include academic leaders, programme directors, administrative managers, IT and data centres, data protection and legal departments, quality management, internal continuing education providers, and university teaching centres. AIM4HE acts as a coordinating body and advisory partner on the responsible integration of AI. In this role, AIM4HE mediates between technological innovation and the pedagogical, administrative, and strategic requirements of the institution.

The effective integration of AIM4HE also requires adequate resources. These include personnel support (e.g. project assistants or subject matter experts), financial resources for pilot projects, professional development and external consulting, as well as institutional support in public relations and networking. In many cases, AIM4HE may also be part of an extended team or "digital leadership cluster" that combines various innovation functions (e.g. data steward, EdTech coordinator, digital strategy officer).

Overall, AIM4HE should be understood as a systemic, cross-institutional leadership function. Successful institutional integration is achieved when the role holder is sustainably embedded in planning, steering, and quality assurance processes, enjoys cross-departmental scope for action, and is recognised as a visible driver of digital change at the university.

Conclusion and Outlook

The AIM4HE qualification profile, developed by the transnational FORCE AI partnership, highlights the need for a holistic professional role that combines technical expertise, strategic leadership, ethical responsibility, and strong communicative and pedagogical skills. By integrating six competence categories, the profile offers a coherent framework that links the core tasks of strategy development, project implementation, staff empowerment, and competence-culture building with the broader requirements of digital transformation in higher education. As a transnational reference model, it supports institutions, policymakers, and training providers in professionalising AI governance while strengthening the digital readiness and innovation capacity of European higher education.

In the next step, the AIM4HE qualification profile will serve as the foundation for developing a corresponding curriculum and training programme to prepare professionals for the AIM4HE role. Moreover, the competence profile is conceived as a dynamic, living document that will be systematically translated into knowledge, skills, and competences based on the ESCO[7] grid, with the aim of making it relevant for the EU labour market, education and training.

[7] https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/what-esco

Bibliography

BenMensaoud, F. (2024, Sep. 17). Must-Have Competencies and Skills in Our New AI World: A Synthesis for Educational Reform. EDUCAUSE: Emerging Technologies and Trends. Retrieved at https://er.educause.edu/articles/2024/9/must-have-competencies-and-skills-in-our-new-ai-world-a-synthesis-for-educational-reform

EU (27 Feb 2024). High-level summary of the AI Act. Retrieved at https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/high-level-summary/

OECD (2024). Training Supply for the Green and AI Transitions: Equipping Workers with the Right Skills, Getting Skills Right. OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/7600d16d-en

Punie, Y., & Redecker, C. (2017). European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators: DigCompEdu. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Retrieved at https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC107466

UNESCO (2021). Recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence. Retrieved at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137