



UNITED NATIONS
SYSTEM
STAFF COLLEGE

Syllabus of the UN Generative AI Professional Certificate – Spring Semester 2026

Introduction

Generative AI is rapidly reshaping the way we create, communicate, and make decisions—offering unprecedented opportunities, but also raising critical ethical, social, and governance challenges. As the UN works to harness digital technologies for sustainable development and global cooperation, there is a growing need for UN personnel to understand and engage with Generative AI in a responsible, informed, and practical way.

This course is the first comprehensive training initiative within the UN system to cover Generative AI applications across text, visual, and audio modalities, combining hands-on practice with multiple tools and a curriculum fully tailored to the realities of UN work. Participants will explore the potential of these tools to support knowledge work, communication, innovation, and decision-making—while also critically examining their limitations and risks.

The course is grounded in the UN's evolving normative and policy frameworks, particularly the recommendations of the High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence in its report *"Governing AI for Humanity"* (2023), which calls for global cooperation to ensure that AI is aligned with human rights, sustainable development, and the public interest. It also draws on the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) about the need for transparency, accountability, data governance, and inclusion.

It aims to equip UN staff with the knowledge and confidence to use Generative AI tools responsibly and strategically—aligned with UN values and mandates.

Learning outcomes

The course provides a comprehensive understanding of Generative AI, covering its mechanisms and practical applications in text, video, and images. This blended programme offers a unique combination of self-paced modules and instructor-led sessions fully tailored to the UN context.

Upon successful completion of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Explain and apply the core principles of Generative AI, including key concepts such as large language models, neural networks, and ethical considerations related to their use.
- Analyse how Generative AI systems operate, gaining a foundational understanding of the underlying algorithms, training data, and model architectures that power text, image, and audio generation.
- Experiment with a variety of Generative AI tools for creating text, visuals, and AI service, evaluating their potential applications and limitations in professional settings.
- Apply Generative AI in hands-on activities tailored to real-world UN scenarios, exploring how these technologies can support analysis, communication, knowledge management, and innovation across different functions.

Target audience

All UN personnel (professional and general service staff) at headquarters and field locations.

Scope of work and format

1) Thematic self-paced modules

A comprehensive curriculum of thematic self-paced modules delivered online through UNSSC's e-learning platform. More information on the 5 thematic modules is displayed below.

Module 1: Unlocking the Power of Generative AI

This module introduces foundational concepts of Generative AI, including large language models (LLMs), embeddings, and deep learning. It explores the UN's use of Gen-AI, key ethical considerations, and regulatory frameworks.

Module 2: Mastering Textual Gen-AI, from Q&A to Summarization

This module explores how large language models function and focusing on textual applications, this module covers prompting techniques, summarization, translation, and generating different perspectives.

Module 3: Visual Creativity with Generative AI

Participants will learn how AI can generate visual content, exploring tools that support design, illustration, and image editing.

Module 4: Leveraging Generative AI at the Workplace

This module centers on workplace productivity using AI copilots. It showcases Microsoft Copilot in Outlook, Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, demonstrating real-world applications.

Module 5: Building Your Own Generative AI Service

An advanced module guiding learners through the steps of tailoring and deploying a basic Generative AI-powered service or assistant. It introduces RAG, fine-tuning, and agents.

Participants will have the opportunity to interact and peer exchange discussion forums linked to the self-paced modules and get access to a compilation of key resources to be consulted at any time throughout the course.

2) Live webinars

Four interactive live webinars with AI experts and practitioners will complement the self-paced learning. Each webinar will be 120 minutes long and will include practical, hands-on exercises. A 45-minute orientation session will be held at the start of the course.

Live session	Time	Date
Orientation webinar	45 min	13 April
Understanding AI and Generative AI	120 min	16 April
Hands-On with text-based Generative AI	120 min	23 April
Hands-On with visual creativity Generative AI	120 min	30 April
Building your own generative AI service	120 min	7 May

3) Assignment

Hands-on exercise with a real-world scenario to apply Gen AI best practices. Participants will be provided with a case that will require to apply text, visual, and audio using Gen AI tools.

The assignment should be submitted by 21 May. Feedback will be provided by the faculty by 31 May.

Training Needs Assessment

Participants will be asked to fill in a training needs assessment to know more about their past experience with Generative AI tools in order to fully meet their specific learning goals.

Tools

Learners will explore and practice with a range of Generative AI tools. No prior technical experience is needed. Tools used will be web-based and any cost related to their use during the course is included in the course fee.

Completion requirements

To receive the UN Gen-AI Professional Certificate, learners must:

- Completed all self-paced lessons in the Modules
- Participate in the live webinars
- Submitted and successfully passed the assignment
- Answered a final survey about the course

Digital certification

A digital certificate will be issued as indicator of accomplishment of the acquired learning. It will be possible to display and verify the certificate online following open badge standards.