AI for Finance and Audit

A Practical Foundation in Using AI, Microsoft 365 Copilot, Power BI and Copilot Studio in Finance, Audit and Compliance Work, and in Understanding AI Risks and Governance

Platform Focus: Microsoft 365 Copilot, Excel, Power BI and Copilot Studio

Level: Introductory to Intermediate

Duration: 40 Hours

Course Overview

This five-day foundation course helps finance and audit professionals use AI and Microsoft tools in their everyday work. It starts with AI fundamentals, prompt engineering, and AI threats and responsible use, then applies them through Microsoft 365 Copilot, Excel and Power BI, and introduces Copilot Studio for building and testing a simple AI agent. The course closes with an introduction to AI governance frameworks and risk assessment, and a capstone project.

The focus is on applying AI and Microsoft tools to practical business tasks such as document review, data analysis and reporting, not on the tools as technical subjects. Examples are drawn from both finance and audit work, using sample or anonymised documents and datasets. The course is a general introduction. It does not replace professional judgement, and it does not prepare participants to carry out a full audit or financial review using AI.

Target Audience

- Finance and accounting professionals
- Internal audit professionals and audit managers
- Business professionals who want practical AI skills for everyday work

Prerequisites

- Working experience in finance, audit, risk, compliance or a related function
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Excel (formulas, sorting, filtering and summarising data)
- Access to the Microsoft products used in the course, as described under Tools & Platforms
- No prior AI, coding or data science experience required

Tools & Platforms

- Microsoft 365 Copilot and relevant Microsoft 365 applications (Word, Outlook and PowerPoint)

- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Power BI
- Microsoft Copilot Studio

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the fundamentals, capabilities and limitations of AI and Generative AI.
- Write effective prompts and verify AI-generated outputs.
- Apply Microsoft 365 Copilot to everyday document, communication and reporting tasks.
- Use AI to support spreadsheet analysis and interpret data.
- Create basic Power BI visualisations and dashboards.
- Understand and build a simple AI agent in Copilot Studio.
- Explain essential AI governance, risk, confidentiality and responsible-use considerations.
- Identify practical opportunities to apply these techniques in finance, audit, risk and compliance activities.

Course Modules

AI Fundamentals, Prompt Engineering and Responsible AI

Module 1 — Introduction to AI and Generative AI

A practical introduction to AI and Generative AI, how they work at a conceptual level, and what they can and cannot do.

- Overview of Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI
- Types and Common Applications of AI
- How Generative AI Works at a Conceptual Level
- Capabilities and Limitations of Generative AI
- Common AI Risks and Potential Threats

Module 2 — Prompt Engineering and Effective Use of Generative AI

How to communicate clearly with AI and obtain useful outputs for everyday professional tasks.

- Fundamentals of Effective Prompting
- Structuring Prompts with Context, Instructions and Expected Outputs
- Prompting Techniques for Different Professional Tasks
- Refining Prompts Through Iterative Improvement
- Using Prompts for Summarisation, Information Extraction, Analysis and Report Drafting
- Reviewing and Improving AI-Generated Responses

Module 3 — AI Threat Landscape and Responsible Use

The main AI risks and threats that business professionals should recognise, and how to use AI responsibly.

- Overview of Common AI Risks and Threats
- Inaccurate, Misleading or Biased AI-Generated Outputs
- Data Privacy, Confidentiality and Information Exposure
- AI Misuse, Manipulation and Prompt Injection
- Responsible Use of AI in Professional Environments
- Human Oversight and Verification of AI-Generated Information

Microsoft 365 Copilot for Everyday Professional Work

Module 4 — Introduction to Microsoft 365 Copilot

How Microsoft 365 Copilot fits into everyday work and how to interact with it effectively.

- Overview of Microsoft 365 Copilot and Its Role in Workplace Productivity
- Interacting with Copilot Effectively
- Applying Prompting Techniques in Microsoft 365
- Reviewing and Validating AI-Generated Content
- Responsible Use of Copilot in a Professional Environment

Module 5 — Applying Microsoft 365 Copilot to Documents and Reporting

Using Copilot in Word, Outlook and PowerPoint for practical finance and audit workplace tasks.

- Using Copilot in Word to Summarise, Draft and Refine Documents
- Using AI to Support Document Review and Information Extraction
- Using Copilot in Outlook to Summarise Communications and Draft Responses
- Using Copilot in PowerPoint to Support Presentation Preparation
- Preparing Summaries, Reports and Structured Business Content
- Identifying Potential Gaps and Checking Findings Against Source Documents

AI-Assisted Data Analysis and Power BI Foundations

Module 6 — AI-Assisted Spreadsheet Analysis

How AI can help analyse finance and audit spreadsheet data, with the user reviewing the findings and checking the results.

- Preparing and Understanding Structured Data
- Using AI to Assist with Spreadsheet Formulas and Analysis
- Exploring Patterns, Duplicates and Potential Data Inconsistencies
- Summarising and Interpreting Analytical Results
- Reviewing AI-Assisted Analysis and Checking the Accuracy of Results

Introduction to Power BI and Data Visualisation

The basics of Power BI for business reporting, at a beginner level.

- Overview of Power BI and Its Role in Business Reporting
- Understanding Data Sources and Importing Data
- Basic Data Preparation and Organisation
- Introduction to Data Modelling and Relationships
- Creating Basic Charts, Tables and Visualisations
- Selecting Suitable Visualisations to Communicate Business Insights

Power BI Reporting and Introduction to AI Agents

Module 8 — Creating Reports and Dashboards for Finance and Audit

Building interactive reports and dashboards around business questions, using sample finance and audit datasets.

- Designing Reports and Dashboards Around Business Questions
- Working with Filters, Slicers and Interactive Visualisations
- Working with Sample Finance, Audit or Compliance Datasets
- Exploring Trends and Differences Across Categories
- Communicating Insights Through Clear Visual Summaries
- How Data Quality Affects Reporting

Module 9 — Introduction to Copilot Studio and AI Agents

What AI agents are, how Copilot Studio supports them, and how agents use approved information to answer questions.

- Understanding AI Agents and Their Practical Business Applications
- Introduction to Microsoft Copilot Studio
- Understanding Agent Instructions, Knowledge Sources and Responses
- How Agents Use Approved Information to Answer Questions
- Basic Considerations Around Information Access and Responsible Use

Building AI Agents, Governance and Capstone

Module 10 — Creating and Testing a Simple AI Agent

Building a simple knowledge assistant from business documents, such as a policy or procedure assistant, then testing and improving it.

- Defining an Agent's Purpose and Intended Users
- Configuring Instructions and Knowledge Sources
- Creating a Simple Agent Using Relevant Business Documents
- Testing the Agent with Representative Questions
- Identifying Incorrect, Incomplete or Unsupported Responses
- Refining Instructions and Improving Response Quality

Module 11 — AI Governance Frameworks and Risk Assessment

An introduction to the main AI governance frameworks and how they support risk assessment and control evaluation.

- Overview of NIST AI RMF, ISO/IEC 42001 and the IIA AI Auditing Framework
- Key AI Governance Principles and Organisational Controls
- AI Risk Assessment and Control Evaluation
- Applying AI Governance Frameworks in Finance, Audit and Compliance

Module 12 — Capstone Project: AI Risk and Control Assessment

A capstone that applies the skills from the course to assess one organisational AI use case in finance or audit.

- Evaluating an Organisational AI Use Case in Finance or Audit
- Reviewing AI-Generated Findings and Supporting Evidence
- Identifying AI Risks and Evaluating Controls
- Presenting Assessment Findings and Recommendations

Expected Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the fundamentals, capabilities and limitations of AI and Generative AI.
- Write effective prompts and verify AI-generated outputs.
- Apply Microsoft 365 Copilot to everyday document, communication and reporting tasks.
- Use AI to support spreadsheet analysis and interpret data.
- Create basic Power BI visualisations and dashboards.
- Understand and build a simple AI agent in Copilot Studio.
- Explain essential AI governance, risk, confidentiality and responsible-use considerations, and the purpose of the main AI governance frameworks.

- Identify practical opportunities to apply these techniques in finance, audit, risk, compliance and other business activities.

This is a foundation course. It does not provide advanced proficiency in any of the tools, production-level implementation capability, or professional qualification in finance, audit or AI assurance.