

AI CERTIFICATION ROADMAP, CHEAT SHEETS & PROJECT IDEAS

# AI Certification Decision Kit 2026

Choose the right AI certification for your AI Engineer career

## Pick the right path

Beginner, Developer, ML, Cloud  
or Architect Certification

## Build proof

project + GitHub + demo

## Use 90 days wisely

Learn, certify, build, publish  
, interview

# How to use this decision kit

Use this PDF while watching the video. Pick one path, one certification, and one portfolio project.

## The career rule for 2026

- Do not choose a certification only because it is trending.
- Start with your target role, then choose the certification that supports that role.
- Certification is a signal. Projects, GitHub, deployment and interview explanation create stronger proof.

| Your current stage            | Best first move              | Certification direction                             | Project proof to build          |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Beginner / Fresher</b>     | Learn fundamentals first     | AI Fundamentals or AI Practitioner                  | Chatbot or PDF Q&A app          |
| <b>Software Developer</b>     | Add AI to apps               | Azure AI Engineer or AWS AI/ML                      | RAG app with cloud deployment   |
| <b>Cloud Engineer</b>         | Use your cloud strength      | Choose based on Azure, AWS or Google Cloud          | AI API service with monitoring  |
| <b>ML / Data Professional</b> | Go deeper into production ML | Google ML, Databricks, MLOps                        | End-to-end ML pipeline          |
| <b>Architect / Consultant</b> | Focus on solution design     | Claude / GenAI Architect, Enterprise AI, Governance | AI assistant workflow blueprint |

# Choose your AI career path first

The best certification depends on who you are today and what role you want next.

## Beginner path

Build AI vocabulary, responsible AI basics and confidence. Start simple and create two small projects.

## Developer path

Use your coding skill to build AI apps, RAG systems, agents, APIs and deployed demos.

## ML/Data path

Go deeper into data pipelines, model evaluation, deployment, monitoring and MLOps.

## Cloud path

Use Azure, AWS or Google Cloud AI services to build scalable AI-enabled products.

## Architect path

Design enterprise-ready AI solutions with governance, privacy, security and business value.

## Quick self-check before choosing

- Open 10 job descriptions for your target role and highlight repeated keywords.
- If those keywords repeat cloud AI, choose a cloud-aligned certification.
- If those keywords repeat RAG, agents and LLM apps, build a GenAI portfolio project.
- If those keywords repeat MLOps and pipelines, prioritise production ML skills.

# AWS Certified AI Practitioner

Best for: beginners, cloud learners and professionals entering AI from an AWS angle.

| Area                   | Guidance                                                                                |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recommended background | Basic cloud awareness and interest in AI concepts.                                      |
| Skills to focus on     | AI concepts, generative AI basics, AWS AI service awareness, responsible AI vocabulary. |
| Career fit             | Beginner AI learner, cloud learner, developer exploring AWS AI.                         |
| Project to build       | AI document summariser or basic AI assistant using an AWS-oriented architecture.        |
| Avoid for now if       | You already need deep ML engineering or production MLOps depth.                         |

## How to make this certification valuable

- Do not stop after passing or completing the course. Convert the learning into a visible portfolio project.
- Create a GitHub repository with README, architecture diagram, setup steps and screenshots.
- Prepare a 60-second interview explanation: problem, approach, tools, result and improvement plan.

# Microsoft Azure AI Engineer

Best for: software developers and enterprise professionals building AI applications on Azure.

| Area                   | Guidance                                                                                   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recommended background | Programming experience and basic cloud understanding.                                      |
| Skills to focus on     | Azure AI services, search-based AI, language/vision use cases, integration and deployment. |
| Career fit             | AI application developer, enterprise AI engineer, cloud AI developer.                      |
| Project to build       | Enterprise document Q&A chatbot using RAG-style retrieval and cloud deployment.            |
| Avoid for now if       | You have no programming base and need first-level AI fundamentals.                         |

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# Google Professional Machine Learning Engineer

Best for: ML/data professionals targeting technical ML engineering roles.

| Area                   | Guidance                                                                                |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recommended background | Machine learning fundamentals, data handling and cloud learning readiness.              |
| Skills to focus on     | ML solution design, train/evaluate/deploy thinking, model lifecycle and production ML.  |
| Career fit             | ML engineer, data scientist moving to engineering, applied ML professional.             |
| Project to build       | End-to-end prediction pipeline with model API, evaluation metrics and deployment notes. |
| Avoid for now if       | You are a complete beginner with no ML or data foundation.                              |

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# Databricks ML / Data + AI Path

Best for: data engineers and analytics professionals moving into ML and AI workloads.

| Area                   | Guidance                                                                                |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recommended background | Data pipelines, SQL/Python basics, notebooks or analytics experience.                   |
| Skills to focus on     | Data engineering, lakehouse thinking, notebooks, ML workflows and data-to-AI pipelines. |
| Career fit             | Data engineer, ML platform learner, analytics professional, MLOps learner.              |
| Project to build       | Data ingestion to transformation to ML model to dashboard or prediction output.         |
| Avoid for now if       | Your target role is purely beginner AI awareness or non-technical productivity.         |

## How to make this certification valuable

- Do not stop after passing or completing the course. Convert the learning into a visible portfolio project.
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- Prepare a 60-second interview explanation: problem, approach, tools, result and improvement plan.

# Claude / GenAI Architect Path

Best for: GenAI builders, tech leads, consultants and architects designing AI workflows.

| Area                   | Guidance                                                                                |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recommended background | Comfort with GenAI concepts, prompting, solution thinking or software architecture.     |
| Skills to focus on     | LLM workflows, tool use, RAG, agent design, safety, evaluation and enterprise patterns. |
| Career fit             | GenAI engineer, AI solution architect, consultant, tech lead.                           |
| Project to build       | Business AI agent workflow such as resume analyser, support assistant or policy Q&A.    |
| Avoid for now if       | You still need basic programming or AI fundamentals first.                              |

## How to make this certification valuable

- Do not stop after passing or completing the course. Convert the learning into a visible portfolio project.
- Create a GitHub repository with README, architecture diagram, setup steps and screenshots.
- Prepare a 60-second interview explanation: problem, approach, tools, result and improvement plan.



# 90-day AI certification + project roadmap

A practical execution plan for learners who want visible progress, not random badge collection.

| Days  | Focus                                                  | Outcome                                   |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1-15  | Learn AI basics and scan job descriptions              | Clear target role and keyword list        |
| 16-30 | Choose one certification and complete core learning    | Structured foundation                     |
| 31-45 | Practice labs, mini demos and exam preparation         | Ready for assessment or course completion |
| 46-65 | Build one portfolio project using certification skills | Proof of applied skill                    |
| 66-80 | Deploy, publish on GitHub and write README             | Shareable portfolio asset                 |
| 81-90 | Update resume and practise interview storytelling      | Job-ready explanation                     |

## Success rule

- One focused certification + one strong project beats five random certificates.
- Your portfolio should make your learning visible to recruiters, managers and interviewers.
- Every week, publish something small: notes, project progress, architecture diagram or demo clip.

# Portfolio project ideas by certification track

Use these projects as proof after completing the certification or learning path.

| Track                 | Project idea                                                 | What it proves                                              |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AWS AI</b>         | AI document summariser or internal FAQ assistant             | Cloud AI awareness and applied problem solving              |
| <b>Azure AI</b>       | Enterprise document Q&A chatbot with search and LLM response | AI app integration and enterprise use case thinking         |
| <b>Google ML</b>      | Prediction pipeline with API endpoint and evaluation metrics | ML lifecycle and model deployment thinking                  |
| <b>Databricks</b>     | Data + ML pipeline from raw data to model output             | Data engineering plus ML workflow                           |
| <b>Claude / GenAI</b> | AI agent workflow for resume analysis or support automation  | Agent design, RAG thinking and business workflow automation |

## Make every project recruiter-friendly

- Use a business problem title: Resume Screener, PDF Q&A Bot, Support Ticket Classifier, Career Coach Agent.
- Add screenshots, architecture overview, tools used, limitations and next improvements.
- Explain output quality: what works, what fails, and how you would evaluate it.

# Resume keywords and interview talking points

Use these phrases naturally only if you can genuinely explain them and connect them to your project.

## Resume keyword bank

- AI Engineer, GenAI Engineer, RAG, Vector Database, LLM Application, AI Agent, Prompt Engineering, Azure AI, AWS AI, Google Cloud ML, Machine Learning Pipeline, Databricks, MLOps, Model Evaluation, Responsible AI, Cloud Deployment, API Integration, GitHub Portfolio, Document Intelligence, Business Automation

| Interview question                         | Strong answer direction                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Why did you choose this certification?     | Connect it to your target role and job description keywords.                        |
| What project did you build after learning? | Explain the problem, user, architecture and business value.                         |
| How did you deploy or share your work?     | Mention GitHub, README, screenshots, demo video or cloud deployment.                |
| What was difficult?                        | Talk about data quality, prompt reliability, retrieval quality, cost or evaluation. |
| What would you improve next?               | Mention monitoring, guardrails, better evaluation, UI polish or scaling.            |

# Your next step

Use this PDF as a decision guide, then turn the decision into action.

## My recommended action plan

- Pick one career track: Beginner, Developer, ML/Data, Cloud or Architect.
- Choose one certification or learning path from that track.
- Build one project that maps directly to the certification skills.
- Publish the project on GitHub and explain it clearly in your resume and interviews.

## Need 1:1 mentorship?

- If you are confused about which AI certification to choose, how to build AI projects, or how to move from software development to AI engineering, connect with me for one-to-one mentorship.
- Website: [koushikmaji.com](https://koushikmaji.com)
- Channel: TechWithKoushik

## Important note

- This PDF is a career planning and learning guide, not an official exam syllabus.
- Always check the latest official certification page before booking any exam.
- Certification alone does not guarantee a job. Use certification to structure learning and combine it with projects, GitHub, deployment and interview preparation.

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