

M A V E R I C K A I

20 FREE AI CERTIFICATIONS YOU NEED ON YOUR RESUME

The exact certifications that recruiters and hiring managers actually look for

Google, Microsoft, IBM, AWS, and more

Direct links to every certification

Time estimates so you can stack them fast

Which ones to get first (priority order)

How to display them for maximum impact

2026 Edition

Why These Certifications Matter Right Now

AI is the number one skill that every employer is hiring for in 2026. But here is the problem: everyone says they know AI on their resume. Certifications are how you prove it. They give recruiters something concrete to verify, and they get you past automated screening filters that scan for specific credentials.

The 20 certifications in this guide are all free (or have a free path), come from companies that recruiters actually recognize, and can be completed in a few hours to a few weeks. Stack five or six of these and your resume will look completely different from everyone else who just wrote "proficient in AI tools" in their skills section.

THE STACKING STRATEGY

Do not just grab one certification and stop. The real power comes from stacking three to five across different categories: one from Google, one from Microsoft, one from IBM, and one or two domain-specific ones. This tells employers you did not just take one quick course. You went deep.

TIP

Complete certifications in order of impact. Start with Google AI Essentials and LinkedIn AI Learning (highest recruiter recognition), then work through the rest based on your industry. Each certification in this guide is ranked from highest priority to still very valuable.

The Top 5 (From the Video)

These are the five certifications from the video. They are listed first because they have the highest combination of recruiter recognition, speed to complete, and brand value on a resume.

1

Google AI Essentials

GOOGLE

The gold standard starter certification. Covers AI fundamentals, prompt engineering, responsible AI practices, and real-world applications. Google's name on your resume carries serious weight with every hiring manager in every industry.

Time: ~5 hours | Level: Beginner

grow.google/certificates/ai-essentials

2

LinkedIn AI Learning Certificate

LINKEDIN

The smartest certification on this list because it shows up directly on your LinkedIn profile. When recruiters visit your page, they see it immediately without having to scroll to your resume. LinkedIn courses on AI cover everything from generative AI to AI for business strategy.

Time: ~3-5 hours | Level: Beginner

[linkedin.com/learning \(AI Learning Paths\)](https://linkedin.com/learning/AI-Learning-Paths)

3

HubSpot Digital Marketing Certificate

HUBSPOT ACADEMY

Listed as a preferred qualification on almost every marketing job posting. Covers SEO, content marketing, social media strategy, email marketing, and digital advertising. Even if you are not in marketing, this shows you understand how businesses grow.

Time: ~3 hours | Level: Beginner

academy.hubspot.com/courses/digital-marketing

4

GitHub Foundations Certificate

GITHUB

This certification normally costs \$99, but GitHub gives it away free through their education program. It proves you understand the one tool every developer on the planet uses every single day: version control, repositories, pull requests, GitHub Actions, and collaboration workflows.

Time: ~8 hours | Level: Beginner

education.github.com (Foundation Certificate)

5

Microsoft AI Fundamentals (AI-900)

MICROSOFT

One of the easiest certifications on this list, and it is showing up on almost every high-paying AI job posting. Covers machine learning concepts, computer vision, NLP, and Azure AI services. Microsoft offers free learning paths that map directly to the exam content.

Time: ~10-15 hours | Level: Beginner

learn.microsoft.com (AI-900 Certification)

TIP

Microsoft offers free virtual training days that include a free exam voucher for AI-900. Check their events page regularly. The exam normally costs \$165, so catching a free voucher saves you real money.

15 More Free Certifications Worth Getting

These are 15 additional certifications that are legitimate, come from recognized companies, and will strengthen your resume. They are organized by category so you can pick the ones most relevant to your career path.

Cloud and AI Platforms

6

AWS Cloud Practitioner Essentials

AMAZON WEB SERVICES

AWS powers a massive share of the internet. This free digital training covers cloud concepts, AWS service security, architecture, and pricing. It prepares you for the Cloud Practitioner exam and gives you foundational knowledge that every tech employer values.

Time: ~6 hours | Level: Beginner

[aws.amazon.com/training \(Cloud Practitioner\)](https://aws.amazon.com/training/CloudPractitioner)

7

AWS AI and ML Scholars Program

AMAZON WEB SERVICES

A free program that provides training to help you start a career in AI and prepare for the AWS Certified AI Practitioner certification. Served over 50,000 learners from 170+ countries in 2025. Includes mentorship and hands-on projects.

Time: Self-paced (cohort-based) | Level: Beginner to Intermediate

aws.amazon.com/machine-learning/scholarship

8

Google Cloud Data Analytics Certificate

GOOGLE CLOUD

Data analytics is one of the most in-demand skills alongside AI. This free certificate covers dashboards, cloud data tools, BigQuery, and reporting. No coding required. Pairs perfectly with Google AI Essentials for a powerful Google stack on your resume.

Time: ~15 hours | Level: Beginner

skills.google/paths/420

AI Fundamentals and Generative AI

9

IBM AI Fundamentals

IBM SKILLSBUILD

Completely free through IBM SkillsBuild. Covers AI concepts, machine learning basics, natural language processing, and ethical AI. You earn an official IBM digital badge hosted on Credly that you can share directly to LinkedIn. No prior experience needed.

Time: ~10 hours | Level: Beginner

ibm.com/training (AI Fundamentals Badge)

10

IBM Generative AI for Everyone

IBM SKILLSBUILD

A newer course focused specifically on generative AI tools like ChatGPT, image generators, and code assistants. Covers how generative AI works, practical use cases for business, and responsible use. Free certificate and IBM digital badge on completion.

Time: ~6-10 hours | Level: Beginner

skillsbuild.org (AI Learning)

11

Elements of AI

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI + MINNALEARN

Created by the University of Helsinki, this has been completed by over 2 million people in 170+ countries. Covers neural networks, machine learning, and real-world AI applications. Completely free certificate. No math or programming background needed. One of the most respected free AI courses in the world.

Time: ~30 hours | Level: Beginner

elementsofai.com

12

NVIDIA Generative AI Explained

NVIDIA DEEP LEARNING INSTITUTE

NVIDIA is the company behind almost every AI chip on the planet. Their free course covers how generative AI works, large language models, diffusion models, and real-world applications. Includes hands-on labs and a verified NVIDIA DLI certificate.

Time: ~2 hours | Level: Beginner

nvidia.com/training (Self-Paced Courses)

13

ChatGPT Prompt Engineering for Developers

DEEPLEARNING.AI + OPENAI

Taught by Andrew Ng and OpenAI's Isa Fulford. Covers summarizing, inferring, transforming text, and building applications with the OpenAI API. This is the course that started the prompt engineering movement. Free to take with a completion certificate.

Time: ~1.5 hours | Level: Beginner to Intermediate

[deeplearning.ai \(Prompt Engineering Course\)](https://deeplearning.ai/Prompt-Engineering-Course)

14

AI Agentic Design Patterns with AutoGen

DEEPLEARNING.AI

Agentic AI is the hottest topic in the industry right now. This free course covers reflection, tool use, planning, and multi-agent collaboration. Understanding AI agents puts you ahead of 95% of job candidates who only know basic prompt engineering.

Time: ~1.5 hours | Level: Intermediate

deeplearning.ai/short-courses

Business, Marketing, and Professional Skills

15

HubSpot AI for Business Certificate

HUBSPOT ACADEMY

Separate from the Digital Marketing certificate. This one focuses specifically on using AI tools in a business context: AI-powered CRM, automated workflows, AI content creation, and data-driven decision making. Pairs well with the Digital Marketing cert for marketing roles.

Time: ~4 hours | Level: Beginner

academy.hubspot.com

16

Google Project Management Certificate

GOOGLE

Project management skills are critical for any role that involves coordinating work. Covers Agile, Scrum, risk management, and stakeholder communication. Free through Google Skills with a 7-day trial, or audit for free on Coursera. Another strong Google credential to stack on your resume.

Time: ~6 months (self-paced) | Level: Beginner

grow.google/certificates/project-management

17

Salesforce AI Associate

SALESFORCE TRAILHEAD

Salesforce is the world's most used CRM, and they offer free AI training through Trailhead. Covers AI fundamentals applied to business, customer data, and CRM workflows. The Trailhead platform is completely free with badges you can display on LinkedIn. Great for sales, customer success, and business operations roles.

Time: ~10 hours | Level: Beginner

trailhead.salesforce.com (AI Associate)

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Google Analytics Certification

GOOGLE SKILLSHOP

If you work in marketing, e-commerce, or any data-adjacent role, this is a must-have. Covers Google Analytics 4, event tracking, audience building, conversion measurement, and reporting. Completely free through Google Skillshop. Recognized across every industry.

Time: ~5 hours | Level: Beginner to Intermediate

skillshop.google.com (Analytics Cert)

Developer and Technical Skills

19

Machine Learning with Python

FREECODECAMP

A hands-on certification that teaches you to build machine learning projects using TensorFlow. Covers neural networks, NLP, and reinforcement learning with five real projects you must complete to earn the certificate. Completely free, no tricks. One of the most respected free coding platforms in the world.

Time: ~300 hours | Level: Intermediate

freecodecamp.org (ML with Python)

20

Machine Learning Specialization

STANFORD / DEEPLARNING.AI (COURSERA)

Andrew Ng's legendary machine learning course, now updated for 2024+. Covers supervised learning, unsupervised learning, recommender systems, and reinforcement learning. Free to audit on Coursera. This is the single most recognized AI course in the world, and having it on your resume tells employers you went beyond surface-level understanding.

Time: ~3 months (self-paced) | Level: Intermediate

[coursera.org \(ML Specialization\)](https://coursera.org/specializations/ml)

How to Display Certifications for Maximum Impact

Getting the certifications is only half the battle. How you display them determines whether recruiters actually notice. Here is the exact strategy.

On Your Resume

Create a dedicated "Certifications" section near the top of your resume, right below your summary and above your work experience. Format each entry like this:

RESUME CERTIFICATIONS SECTION

CERTIFICATIONS

Google AI Essentials | Google | 2026
Microsoft AI Fundamentals (AI-900) | Microsoft | 2026
GitHub Foundations | GitHub | 2026
IBM AI Fundamentals | IBM | 2026
HubSpot Digital Marketing | HubSpot Academy | 2026

KEY FORMATTING RULES

- Put the most recognizable brand names first
- Include the year you completed each one
- List 5-7 max (quality over quantity)
- Match certifications to the job description

On LinkedIn

LinkedIn has a dedicated "Licenses & Certifications" section on your profile. Add every certification here with the issuing organization and credential ID if available. Recruiters filter candidates by certifications, so this makes you searchable for AI-related roles you might not even know exist.

TIP

When you complete a LinkedIn Learning certification, it automatically appears on your profile. For other certifications, go to your profile, click "Add profile section," then "Licenses & Certifications." Add the credential name, issuing organization, issue date, and credential URL.

In Job Applications

Many applicant tracking systems (ATS) scan for specific certification keywords. If a job posting mentions "AI certification preferred" or lists specific tools like Azure, AWS, or Google Cloud, make sure the matching certification appears in your resume. Mirror the exact language from the posting.

IMPORTANT

Do not list certifications you have not actually completed. Recruiters verify credentials, and most digital badges have public verification links. Getting caught with a fake certification will end your candidacy immediately.

The 90-Day Certification Stacking Plan

If you want to go from zero certifications to a stacked resume in three months, follow this schedule. It is organized so you get the highest-impact certifications first, then layer in specialized ones based on your career path.

Week 1-2: The Foundation

- **Google AI Essentials** (~5 hours) - Start here. Biggest brand recognition.
- **LinkedIn AI Learning Certificate** (~3 hours) - Shows on your profile immediately.
- **NVIDIA Generative AI Explained** (~2 hours) - Quick win with a powerful brand.

Week 3-4: Core AI Knowledge

- **IBM AI Fundamentals** (~10 hours) - Deep fundamentals with Credly badge.
- **Microsoft AI Fundamentals prep** (~15 hours) - Study the free learning path.
- **ChatGPT Prompt Engineering** (~1.5 hours) - Learn directly from OpenAI.

Week 5-8: Specialization

Pick based on your career path:

- **Marketing:** HubSpot Digital Marketing + HubSpot AI for Business + Google Analytics
- **Tech/Dev:** GitHub Foundations + AWS Cloud Practitioner + freeCodeCamp ML
- **Business/Sales:** Salesforce AI Associate + Google Project Management
- **Data/Analytics:** Google Cloud Data Analytics + Elements of AI + Stanford ML (audit)

Week 9-12: Advanced and Extras

- Complete any remaining certifications from your specialization track
- Add the AI Agentic Design Patterns course to stay ahead of the curve
- Update your resume and LinkedIn profile with all new credentials
- Start applying to roles that list these certifications as preferred qualifications

YOUR ACTION PLAN

Block 30 minutes per day for certification work. Most of these can be completed in a single weekend. The hardest part is starting. Open the first link, create an account, and begin. In 90 days you will have a resume that stands out from 95% of applicants.

Quick Reference: All 20 Certifications

#	Certification	Provider	Time
1	AI Essentials	Google	~5 hrs
2	AI Learning Certificate	LinkedIn	~3-5 hrs
3	Digital Marketing	HubSpot	~3 hrs
4	Foundations	GitHub	~8 hrs
5	AI Fundamentals (AI-900)	Microsoft	~10-15 hrs
6	Cloud Practitioner Essentials	AWS	~6 hrs
7	AI & ML Scholars Program	AWS	Self-paced
8	Cloud Data Analytics	Google Cloud	~15 hrs
9	AI Fundamentals	IBM	~10 hrs
10	Generative AI for Everyone	IBM	~6-10 hrs
11	Elements of AI	U of Helsinki	~30 hrs
12	Generative AI Explained	NVIDIA	~2 hrs
13	Prompt Engineering	DeepLearning.AI	~1.5 hrs
14	Agentic AI Design	DeepLearning.AI	~1.5 hrs
15	AI for Business	HubSpot	~4 hrs
16	Project Management	Google	Self-paced
17	AI Associate	Salesforce	~10 hrs
18	Analytics Certification	Google	~5 hrs
19	ML with Python	freeCodeCamp	~300 hrs
20	ML Specialization	Stanford	Self-paced

TIP

Bookmark this page. Come back after each certification and check it off. Seeing your progress builds momentum to keep going.

Pro Tips for Getting the Most Out of Certifications

Take Screenshots of Your Work

Do not just earn the badge. Take screenshots of projects and exercises you completed during each course. These make great talking points in interviews. When an interviewer asks about your AI experience, you can reference specific projects.

Pair Certifications with Real Projects

A certification tells employers you learned the material. A project tells them you can apply it. After each certification, build one small project using what you learned. Even a simple automation or analysis counts.

Use Certification Language in Interviews

When asked about AI skills, reference your certifications by name. Instead of saying "I know about AI," say "I completed Google AI Essentials and IBM AI Fundamentals, where I learned about prompt engineering and responsible AI practices."

Set Up Google Alerts for Free Exam Vouchers

Microsoft, AWS, and Google regularly offer free exam vouchers during virtual training events, conferences, and promotional periods. Set up Google Alerts for terms like "free AI certification voucher" and "Microsoft training day free exam" to catch them.

Audit Expensive Courses for Free

Coursera, edX, and other platforms let you audit most courses for free. You get access to all the video content and readings, just not the graded assignments. Many employers care more about the knowledge than the piece of paper.

Keep Your Certifications Current

Some certifications expire after one to three years. Set calendar reminders for renewal dates. An expired certification on your resume can actually work against you because it suggests you stopped keeping your skills current.

Start Stacking Today

Every certification you complete is another signal to employers that you take your career seriously.
Open the first link, block 30 minutes, and begin.

For more AI tips, tools, and strategies:

Follow @MaverickAI

Drop "JOB" in the comments for the full link list.