HSLU Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Data Science and AI: A Profession in Transition

Data alone only gets you halfway to success. It takes people who can read it, interpret it and put it to use responsibly. Applied data scientists who combine technical skills, industry knowledge and entrepreneurial thinking are among the most sought-after profiles on the job market, however the technology develops.

From all-rounder to decision architect
Early ideas of the Data Science professional were shaped by the hype surrounding big data. Statistics, programming and business acumen in a single person? More of an ideal than a reality. In many companies, individual data scientists were technically brilliant but often were not close to the main business or their domain teams.

- Working with large volumes of data is now a team effort, with specialised roles along the value chain: data engineering, modelling and deployment are disciplines in their own right.
- Data scientists are increasingly becoming decision architects and are measured more and more by business outcomes.
- Build less, deploy more intelligently: **employers want people who can evaluate AI systems, orchestrate them and embed them in a business context.**

A look at the Swiss job market
More and more the perception is that University graduates are struggling to get a foot in the door and it would appear that vocational apprenticeships are enjoying a renaissance. What counts is not the degree but the profile.

- **Practical experience is critical** to success in understanding the growing complexity of AI and data products. Over half of all data engineering roles, for example, are mid-level and 36 % are senior. Junior positions account for just 4 %.[1]

- **Demand for AI and data expertise** is now widely spread: 62 % of job advertisements are for roles in SME.[1]

- 72 % of Swiss business leaders plan to integrate AI into their processes within the next 12 to 18 months. The market requires **professionals who can deliver** this transformation responsibly.[2]

The programme: MSc in Applied Data Science and AI
Since 2018, the Master's programme at the Lucerne School of Business has been training professionals who combine technical expertise with industry knowledge and entrepreneurial thinking. It is a programme that understands the developments described above and is designed specifically around them.

- **Rooted in the School of Business**
  Data science and AI are applied to solve business and societal challenges. Data is examined in the context of decision-making processes, business models and organisations.

- **«The classroom inside the company»**
  Students are deployed to real challenges directly within companies. They join experienced teams and also receive coaching from their lecturers. This practice-integrated learning is an integral, ECTS-credited part of the programme. Graduates leave with a demonstrable project portfolio.

- **Multiple perspectives on data and AI**
  The teaching model is interdisciplinary, so that data science and AI are taught holistically. Around 80 lecturers from four HSLU schools (Business; Computer Science and Information Technology; Engineering and Architecture; Design, Film and Art) are joined by external experts from companies such as Google, SAS and IBM, each contributing their own professional perspective.

- **European recognition**
  The programme is part of the European Deep Tech Talent Initiative (EIT DTTI). Alongside their HSLU degree, graduates receive an EU-recognised certificate.

1 HSLU AI Jobs Report 2026
2 Microsoft Work Trend Index 2025

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Facts

Name: Master of Science in Applied Data Science and AI

School: Business

Established: 2018

Degree: Master of Science (MSc), 120 ECTS

Study mode: Part-time

Modules: 70+

Lecturers: 75+

Students: 300 to 320

Proportion of women: 37 % (17.4 % in engineering and IT, FH-Masters, FSO 2025)

Professional experience on entry: 5 to 7 years

Proportion in employment: 95 %

Heads of Programme: Dr Patricia Feubli / Prof. Dr Donnacha Daly

Alumni on the job market: facts and figures

85 % of graduates work in a field relevant to data science or AI.

(Internal alumni survey 2026)

89 % would choose the same programme again.

(FSO graduate survey 2023)

110 Thousand CHF, median salary six months after graduation.

(Internal alumni survey 2026)

4 in 5 came from a background outside of computer science. **More than half of them** work in data, AI or tech roles by the time they graduate.

(LinkedIn data at graduation, 2025/26)



Collaboration is a core skill in data and AI roles.

Our alumni's career path are varied – a selection:

- Master's in English Studies → **Data, Analytics & AI Engineer** at Swisscom
- Bachelor's in Philosophy → **Supply Chain Planning Analyst** at Roche
- Master's in Neuroscience → **Data Scientist** at CSS
- Bachelor's in Primary Education → **Consultant Data & Analytics** at KPMG
- Bachelor's in Media Engineering → **Data Journalist** at SRF
- Bachelor's in Accounting & Tax Law → **VP Risk Management** at Swiss Re
- Master's in Sports Marketing → **Agentic AI Manager** at Akkodis
- Bachelor's in Computer Engineering → **Product Owner** at Swiss
- Bachelor's in Business Information Technology → **Senior Data Manager** at VBS
- PhD in Biomechanics → **Head of Laboratory** at Children's Hospital Eastern CH

«Data science is not designed to solve just one particular problem. It is a platform for problems we don't even know about yet. That is exactly what sets this Master's apart: it encourages open thinking.»

René Raeber, CTO at Microsoft Switzerland

«We need more creativity today than we did just a few years ago. Entrepreneurial thinking and problem-solving skills have become far more important for making an impact.»

Priska Burkard, CEO bei TechFace