GMAC

A framework for artificial intelligence in business education

Executive summary for admissions, marketing, recruitment, and program management professionals

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Business schools worldwide are actively determining how to integrate AI in their programs effectively, ethically, and at any scale. The pace of change has compressed what might have taken years into months, with institutions making decisive moves that reshape curriculum, pedagogy, faculty development, and institutional strategy.

Inspire Higher Ed has partnered with AACSB, the Graduate Business Curriculum Roundtable, and GMAC to systematically document and share how business schools are integrating artificial intelligence across teaching, learning, research, and operations. This collaboration highlights institutional exemplars and effective practices while providing academic leaders and educators with a practical framework to guide their own AI journeys.

Analysis of AI initiatives across 48 participating institutions reveals eight consistent themes that characterize successful integration efforts. This executive summary outlines these themes—including one actionable next step—and considers the implications of the findings specifically for professionals working in admissions, marketing, recruitment, and program management.

Eight characteristics of successful AI integration efforts

1. Comprehensive AI ecosystems and infrastructure

Build the organizational structures, technical platforms, and coordination mechanisms that enable systematic AI integration while ensuring institutional sustainability.

Next step: Dedicate organizational infrastructure
Nearly every program featured has established centers, coordinators, or committees specifically for AI integration.

2. Democratization of AI education

Shift AI literacy from specialized tracks to universal competency for all business students and stakeholders.

Next step: Move from optional to required
Universal AI exposure is becoming standard across program types and levels.

3. Domain-specific AI applications

Embed AI within business disciplines to ensure immediate career relevance and practical application.

Next step: Embrace domain variation as strength
Different business functions use AI differently, and curriculum should reflect these distinctions.

4. Faculty development as critical success factor

Invest in faculty capabilities and support structures that determine integration success.

Next step: Provide ongoing rather than one-time training
Sustained support through workshops, communities of practice, and peer mentoring outperforms single training events.

5. Responsible AI and ethics integration

Ensure ethical considerations are woven throughout curriculum rather than treated as separate topics.

Next step: Address multiple ethical dimensions
Cover bias and fairness, transparency and explainability, privacy, human-AI collaboration, and societal impact.

6. Strategic partnerships accelerating capabilities

Leverage external collaborations to access resources and expertise that accelerate transformation.

Next step: Invest in active management
Partnerships require ongoing attention; they do not maintain themselves. Build relationships that can adapt as AI's rapid pace makes rigid agreements quickly outdated.

7. Evolution of AI-enhanced pedagogical approaches

Transform how business education is delivered through AI-augmented teaching and learning methods.

Next step: Teach AI collaboration skills
Students need to learn to think with and work with AI, critical evaluation of AI outputs, and human-AI orchestration.

8. Leadership in times of transformation

Demonstrate bold, visionary leadership that drives institutional change despite uncertainty.

Next step: Build coalitions and address resistance
Successful transformation requires alliances with faculty champions, industry advisors, student leaders, and peer deans. Resistance is normal and should be addressed through empathy, support, and persistence rather than dismissal.

What this means for admissions, marketing, recruitment, and program management professionals

AI is the first point of contact for many prospective candidates.

Beyond curriculum and messaging, many schools are beginning to use AI within recruitment and admissions operations themselves—from chatbots that support prospective students, to AI-assisted interview prep, to tools that personalize outreach and advising.

While adoption varies, the trend points toward AI becoming part of the recruitment experience before students encounter any person in an admissions office. Marketing and recruitment directors must therefore consider how AI-enabled tools reflect institutional values and tone as well as how to be transparent about AI use in candidate-facing interactions.

Used well, these tools reinforce a school's innovation narrative. Used poorly, they risk undermining trust.

Ethics and clarity are now part of brand trust.

As AI becomes more visible, candidates are paying attention to how schools handle ethical use, transparency, and expectations. Institutions highlighted in the report are moving toward clear, assignment-level guidance rather than blanket restrictions—an approach that resonates with students preparing for real-world workplaces. For recruitment and marketing teams, clear policies reduce applicant anxiety and confusion.

AI literacy is now a baseline expectation for every business graduate, not a specialization.

The challenge now shifts from "should we require AI?" to "how do we ensure meaningful AI literacy at any scale?" Programs that treat AI as an add-on module will fall behind those that weave AI throughout the student journey. The schools documented in this report show multiple pathways—from framework-driven approaches to domain-specific integration to universal bootcamps—but all share commitment to comprehensive reach.

AI is reshaping how programs are positioned within a school's broader portfolio.

Many institutions now differentiate offerings not by modality alone, but by depth and application of AI. Business master's programs might emphasize applied analytics or AI-enabled decision-making, while executive and professional programs may focus on leading AI-enabled transformation.

For program directors and marketing leaders, this requires tighter coordination. Positioning must align with actual learning outcomes, and recruitment teams must understand where AI depth truly differs across programs to guide candidates effectively.

Generic claims about "AI focus" are no longer sufficient. Specificity builds credibility.

Next steps

- Align program design, admissions messaging, and marketing narratives around practical AI use
- Equip frontline recruitment teams with concrete examples of how students engage with AI
- Differentiate programs clearly based on depth, application, and outcomes—not buzzwords
- Ensure operational use of AI reinforces, rather than contradicts, institutional values
- Audit public-facing materials regularly to ensure AI claims reflect current practice

For prospective students, AI is increasingly shorthand for readiness, relevance, and return on investment. For practitioners across admissions, marketing, recruitment, and program management, the challenge—and opportunity—is to ensure that the promise is real, visible, and consistently delivered.

About the framework

The 48 schools represent a snapshot of AI integration efforts at a moment in time, January 2026, and span significant variation across multiple dimensions:

- **Research intensity:** From R1 universities with billion-dollar research portfolios to regional institutions focused primarily on teaching.
- **Scale:** From systems enrolling 88,000+ students to specialized schools with fewer than 4,000.
- **Funding models:** The U.S. subset is public-leaning (25 public, 15 private), plus eight non-U.S. participants.
- **Geography:** Representation across all US regions plus eight non-U.S. schools.
- **Selectivity:** From highly selective programs to open-access institutions.

This diversity suggests that the themes, challenges, and effective practices identified in this report have relevance beyond any single institutional type. Though the AI domain continues to move quickly, the strategic principles, organizational approaches, and leadership lessons transcend specific technologies.