

Microsoft Learn for Organizations Playbook

A guide to skill up your team for AI and beyond



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Agility matters in organizational training

The speed of change, driven by AI, demands new skills in every arena of digital work—and fast. Every role in every organization is being impacted by these expanded skill requirements. And the shift isn’t done yet; skilling will continue to be a moving target.

You know this better than anyone. Even before this AI shift began, you and your colleagues saw that skilling up was the key to remaining competitive—both as individuals and as an organization—in today’s rapidly changing tech landscape. Research shows that 70% of business leaders report a critical gap within their organizations, impacting business performance.¹

You’ve seen this gap firsthand during the arduous and time-consuming challenge of finding new employees with the leading-edge skillsets your team needs to efficiently and successfully complete key projects and drive business-critical innovation. According to the latest IDC report, by 2026, over 90% of organizations worldwide will experience the effects of the IT skills crisis, potentially leading to \$5.5 trillion in losses due to product delays, impaired competitiveness, and loss of business.²

The good news is that there’s significant potential for closing the skills gap—for both new hires and existing employees. According to a recent LinkedIn Learning report, providing learning opportunities is considered the top strategy for employee retention, with 88% of organizations expressing concern over retention and recognizing the importance of investing in employee development.³

Creating an organization-wide culture of learning and equipping employees the systems and tools to succeed can have a positive impact on hiring, retention, and overall business success.

But where do you start?





This playbook is a step-by-step guide to help you—team leaders, learning managers, and anyone who coordinates training—create a thriving learning culture in your organizations. This guide also makes it easier for you to tap into the rich portfolio of Microsoft Learn offerings, specifically to help your team members gain the technical skills they need to drive project and business success. You'll have access to a wide variety of comprehensive [technical content and resources](#) on all of the latest Microsoft solutions to help your team get skilled up and ready to power AI transformation with the Microsoft Cloud.

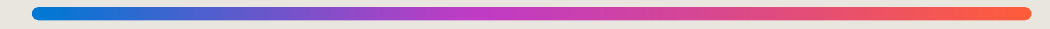
In this playbook you'll find tools to help you:

- Develop and execute a plan to identify and assess skill gaps
- Build and execute skilling plans
- Measure progress
- Share successes and new credentials throughout the process
- Maximize your impact at the individual, team, or organizational level through actions that we'll help you plan, tailor, execute, measure, and optimize.



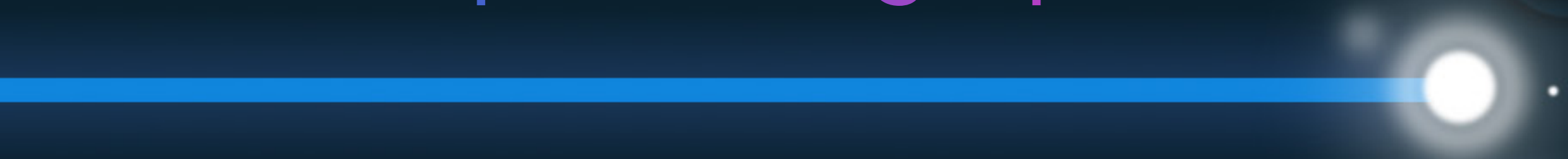
Let's get started

How do you create a learning culture? Essentially, it comes down to this: Finding every opportunity to model, promote, and amplify an organizational mindset that centers on learning, growth, and development. Managers, training leaders, and everyone who coordinates training play an indispensable role in this effort, so as you work through this playbook, remember that your strategies affect not only your team, but your organization as a whole. Strategize and collaborate with your colleagues, especially those across traditional silos. Look for opportunities to demonstrate that continuous learning and development isn't just good for team members; it's good for business.



Step 1

Develop a strategic plan



Step 1

Develop a strategic plan

This playbook and the resources available at Microsoft Learn for Organizations can help you leverage the power of Microsoft Learn to build a strong learning culture that supports your skilling roadmap so you stay on track, even as the tech landscape continues to shift.

Developing a thoughtful, strategic skilling plan can be overwhelming, so start by breaking it down into manageable chunks.

Centralize skilling

If one doesn't already exist, establish a centralized, organization-wide repository for all onboarding and skilling resources, including training modules, policies, and FAQs.

For help, [check out Viva Learning](#)—a best-practice solution used by Microsoft to provide Day One access to learning content via Microsoft Teams from different sources including Microsoft Learn and other providers, learning management systems, and organization-specific content.

Build a roadmap

Organizations with a defined skilling roadmap are better prepared to address competency gaps and keep pace with business needs. According to Randstad's 2025 Workmonitor report, employees now expect structured development opportunities—ranking them alongside work-life balance as a top priority.⁴ A clear, strategic training plan helps teams stay aligned, supports workforce readiness, and builds engagement.

Follow [this template](#) to sketch out a rough roadmap to help you clarify your objectives.

Skilling roadmap template

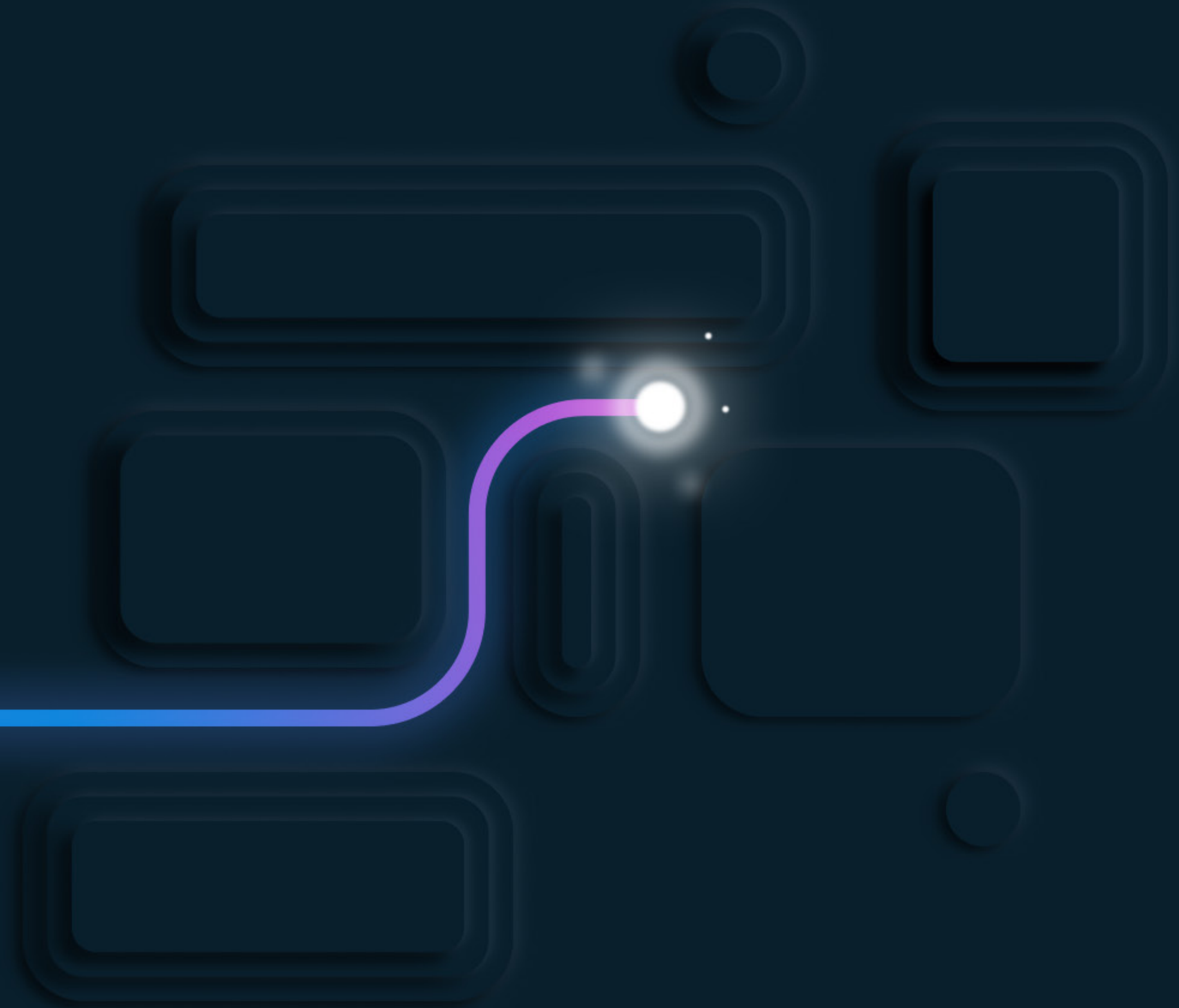
> aka.ms/RoadmapTemplate

Questions to guide your roadmap outline

- What training materials will new hires require on Day One, and how will these align with our broader training strategy?
- What feedback have I received from my team, colleagues, or leadership regarding known skills gaps, and how have these gaps impacted project success?
- What are the priority projects this quarter/fiscal year, and what skills are needed for their successful completion/execution?
- What urgent business need or skills gap will this training strategy address, and what data is needed to make the case for increased awareness and/or investment?
- What are the preferred learning methods for employees and how can we accommodate diverse learning preferences?
- What strategies will be implemented to help ensure high employee engagement and participation in the training programs?
- Who are the key partners in the broader effort to develop and nurture a learning culture across our company?
- How would I assess the level of support from executives, management, and individuals toward training initiatives?
- What is the current budget for training initiatives, and how can it be optimized to maximize impact?
- How can long-term, organization-wide learning goals be integrated into my short- and mid-term skilling plans?
- What key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to measure the success of training programs?

Step 2

Perform a skills assessment
and gap analysis



Step 2

Perform a skills assessment

Once you've established the why of your strategy—you've identified your priority projects, clarified what skills will be needed to successfully complete them, and specified which urgent business objectives will be supported through this training—it's time to focus on the what.

What does your team currently know how to do and what does your organization actually need them to do?

Discovering the skills contained within your organization is more than counting degrees and titles. Identifying the skills gap requires a thoughtful, formal inventory across all departments, levels, roles, and geographies. From there, you can evaluate what training and development tools are necessary to close the gaps.

Skills assessment tools

Assessment tools are available to help test current knowledge and identify skills gaps within your workforce. These assessments provide actionable insights to help you tailor your training initiatives. The Microsoft Assessments below provide a series of questions and recommendations that result in a curated guidance report that's actionable and informative.

Microsoft Learn Assessments Hub: Assess skills to find curated skilling content

[The Microsoft Learn Assessments hub](#) provides resources to evaluate your proficiency level or needs on a specific topic and provides a curated set of Microsoft Learn Collections to take the next step with skilling on the Microsoft Cloud. Assessments are a great tool for teams, as different individual responses will yield different outcomes, ensuring that each team member gets the relevant content they need to grow their skillset.

Depending on what kind, level, and timeframe your skilling goals include, Microsoft Learn for Organizations can connect you with a variety of curated training resources, including [Plans on Microsoft Learn](#), to fill your particular skills gaps. For those new to a topic, start with Fundamentals before progressing to role-based plans. You can get started with simple self-service options, along with assessments and tools to guide your journey.

Evaluate your team's AI skills

If you're not sure where to begin, we recommend you start with the [AI learning journey assessment](#). Answer a few simple questions to get tailored training recommendations. Whether you're just starting to learn about AI or need to skill up your organization to embed AI into your everyday applications, you can use the AI learning journey to quickly assess your team's needs, find curated AI training content through Microsoft Plans, and continue to grow your skills. To build a strong foundation, encourage your team to start with the [AI Fundamentals Plan](#) and progress from there.

Inventory of verified credentials

Assessing your team's verified credentials is a key step in understanding your organization's technical capabilities. Microsoft Credentials—including role-based Microsoft Certifications and scenario-specific Applied Skills—demonstrate expertise with Microsoft products and services that organizations depend on.

Maintaining and expanding these credentials helps your workforce stay ahead of evolving technology, adapt to new roles, and drive business impact, all while strengthening your organization's market value.

Surveys and polls

You can also gather valuable insights on skilling needs from your employees themselves. This process often generates surprising revelations. Intentionally listening to employees and acting on what you hear also demonstrates that you're wholeheartedly invested in a culture of learning.

Skills gap analysis template

> aka.ms/GapAnalysis

Consider conducting employee surveys and quick polls on:

- Onboarding training – level of satisfaction, what's missing, what would make it better
- Satisfaction with current training opportunities
- Perceived skills gaps and areas where additional training is needed
- Preferences for training delivery methods (online, in-person, blended)
- Preferred learning styles
- Professional development opportunities

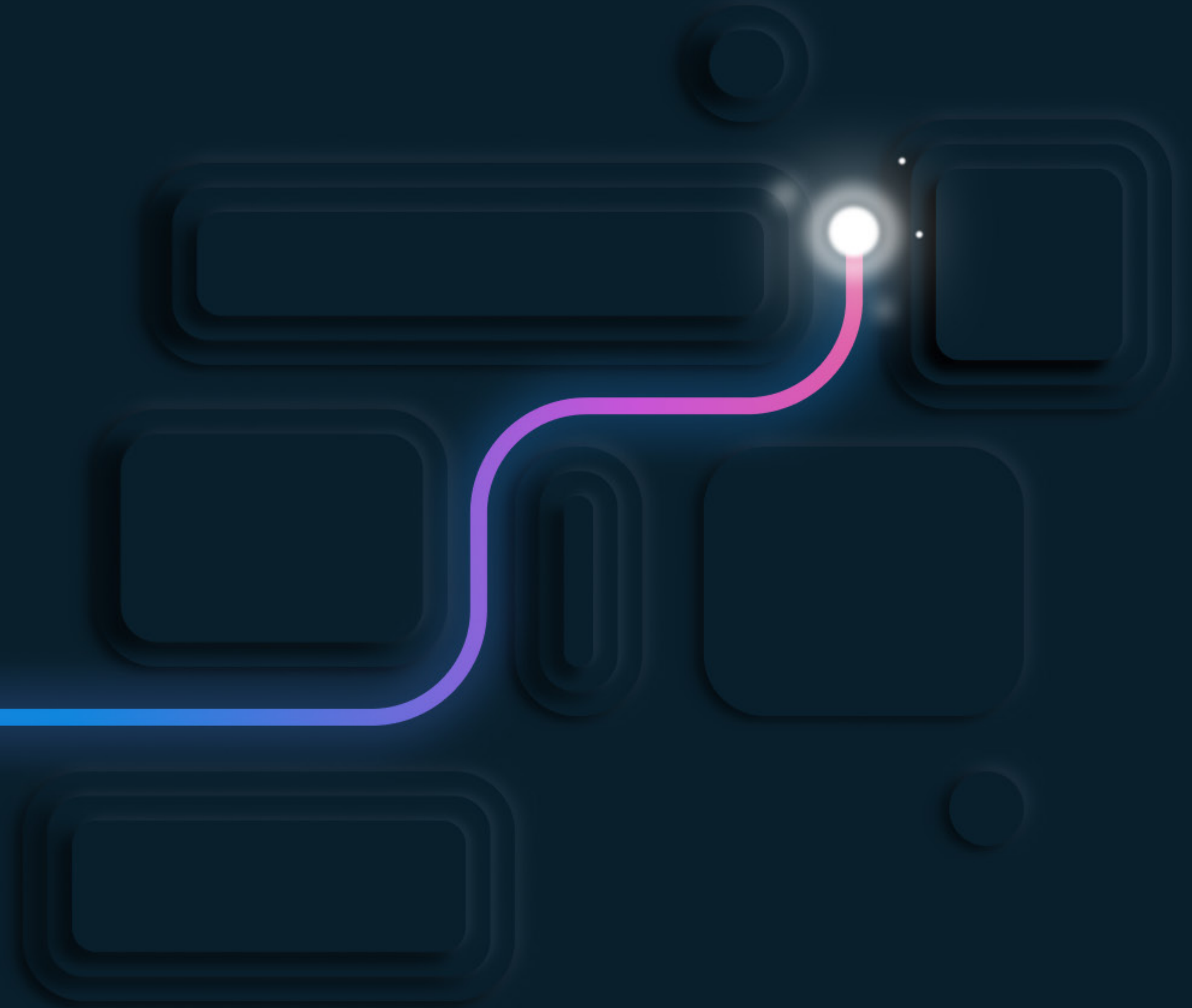
Skills gap analysis

Once you've completed this skills assessment, revisit your strategy document. Consider which skills are needed to successfully accomplish your key initiatives. This should clearly show you the skills gaps you'll need to address in your skilling plan.



Step 3

Create a training plan



Step 3

Create a training plan

Now that you've clarified the skills that you and your team need to develop in the short, mid, and long term, it's time to build your training plan.

As you work on your long-term training plan, remember: cultivating a culture of learning involves more than embracing training. You want to encourage a learning mindset, the belief that potential is not set at birth but continues to develop throughout our lives. We are all adaptable, curious creatures capable of growing and changing to attain goals we may not have believed possible. To do that, we need to experiment, to learn, and even to fail sometimes. That's how we become the best versions of ourselves.

As you're building out your training plans, also keep in mind that everyone learns differently. Microsoft Learn meets your team members wherever they are, offering flexible options such

as instructor-led training (ILT), course videos, customized learning paths, and additional learning experiences that support a variety of learning styles.

Use this training plan template to:

- Define the specific learning objectives and goals of the training program.
- Identify the skilling needed for each employee and assign training based on role.
- Assign individual courses, course videos, Microsoft Virtual Training Days, or Plans tailored to each role.
- Create a training schedule.
- Capture other details such as training modality. Include information about the Training Services Partner, if instructor-led training is part of the program.

Training plan template

> aka.ms/TrainingPlan_Template



Create curated experiences with Plans on Microsoft Learn

Now that you’ve identified the learning goals and skills needed, use Plans on Microsoft Learn to create a comprehensive curriculum for your learners, including milestones and automated reminders to help individuals and teams stay motivated to achieve their learning outcomes.

Help your teams to learn how to use new technologies and get project-ready efficiently with [Plans on Microsoft Learn](#). A Plan is a set of curated content that can include documentation, code samples, modules, learning paths, and more. Plans feature **built-in milestones, sharing capabilities, automated reminders** and **reporting** to help individuals and teams to achieve their learning outcomes. Plans allow the creator to monitor learner progress.

Plans on Microsoft Learn

> aka.ms/PlansforLearn

Official Plans

Get a head start with Official Plans, created by Microsoft to help close the skills gap for common scenarios. These plans offer clear, actionable steps to build skills in specific areas, including AI. Explore a range of [AI-related Official Plans](#) and more to help your organization stay ahead in the rapidly evolving field of AI. For more Plans across various topics, explore the [full list of Official Plans](#) on Microsoft Learn.

With Plans, you can:

- Quickly help a team get project-ready on topics based on a targeted content set from Microsoft.
- Create a curriculum that leads to specific learning outcomes for employees.
- Create project-based curriculums that lead learners to gain skills necessary for the tasks at hand.
- Create Plans based on project timelines to ensure employees reach critical milestones.

Training and content to include in your Plans

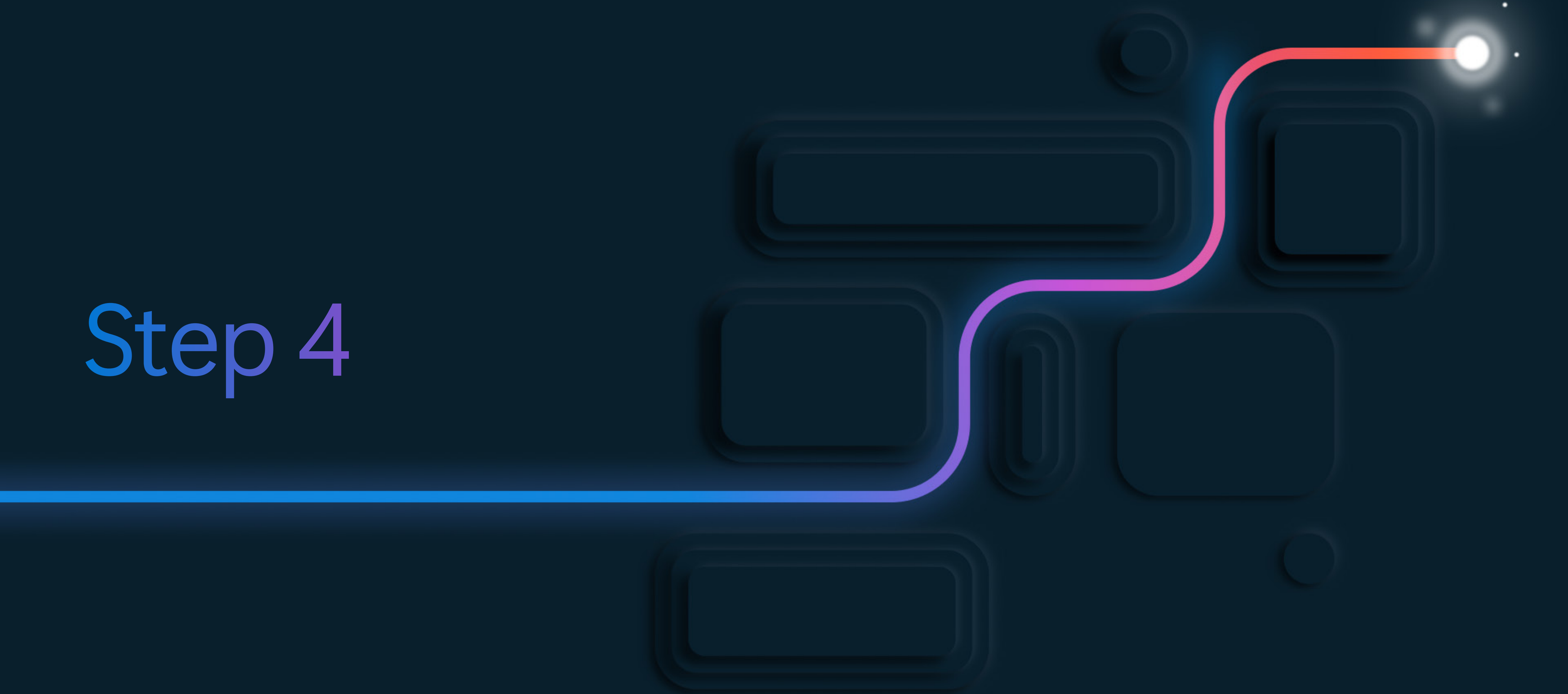
You can also [design your own Plans](#) to fill the skills gaps in areas unique to your organization. Here are some of the training options and learning resources available to include in your customized Plans. You can find all the details in the [appendix](#).

- [AI learning hub](#)
- [Security learning hub](#)
- [Microsoft Collections](#)
- [Microsoft Credentials](#)
- [Course videos on Microsoft Shows](#)
- [Microsoft Events](#)
- [Microsoft Virtual Training Days](#)
- [Shows on Microsoft Learn](#)
- [Documentation](#)
- [Code Samples](#)

Support team learning with course videos on Shows

Equip your team with [free, on-demand videos](#) to complement courses, reinforce concepts, and allow them the flexibility to learn at their own pace. Delivered by a Microsoft Certified Trainer, these recorded sessions cover key topics across AI, security, cloud infrastructure, and more. As a supplementary resource, they provide expert insights and guidance to deepen understanding and enhance learning.

Step 4



Step 4

Track and report skilling progress

In the end, your skilling initiatives must encompass more than assessments, classes, and training. You must be able to show a measurable return on investment (ROI), which can include everything from client services to employee satisfaction.

Microsoft Learn Organizational Reporting: One stop for a skill level overview

Use the [Microsoft Learn Organizational Reporting](#) service to view team and individual Microsoft Learn skilling progress and certifications. The service uses [Azure Data Share](#) to extract, transform, and load user progress data (e.g., ETL, SQL db, Synapse, etc.) into data sets, which can then be processed further or displayed in visualization tools such as Power BI.

This is an important tool not only for your own information, but also for reporting to leadership on the progress you're making from your skilling investment.

Microsoft Learn Catalog API

To create a seamless experience for your internal teams, you can customize your skilling apps or learning management system (LMS) with the free [Microsoft Learn Catalog API](#) (application programming interface). The API includes a continually updated range of modules, units, pre-made learning paths, instructor-led courses, exams, and certifications that you can integrate into your programs.

There's no cost and no authentication needed, so you can use your choice of API calling methods. [The documentation](#) gives you a good jumping-off point to develop functionality that returns details about the available skilling content and certification exams such as titles, products covered, levels, links to skilling, and other metadata in a JSON-encoded response with the information.

Track learner progress with Plans on Microsoft Learn

Once you've created a Plan, you can invite individual learners or groups of learners to the Plan and [track their progress](#) through in-built reporting. This includes a summary of learners and a detailed report available for download.



Keep the skill development going

Training and development are not a “one and done” proposition; skills need to be continually updated to address new tech, shrinking budgets, hiring freezes, and the mandate to “do more with less.” Sometimes we need refresher training, other times we need to learn entirely new skills to ensure our organizations remain competitive and efficient. Individual skilling might make sense in one scenario, while another calls for team training to enhance productivity and innovation.

Celebrate every milestone

Don’t forget that each new skill is a big accomplishment that should be acknowledged. Congratulations go a long way to boost motivation and build your culture of continuous learning. Encourage those who earn new Microsoft-verified credentials to celebrate their success and [share their new skills](#) on social platforms like [LinkedIn](#). This gives them the opportunity to showcase their new credentials and skills to their professional network, managers, and colleagues and get some well-deserved attention.

Where to find help

If designing and implementing your own training and skilling program sounds like a big project, you have help. Microsoft Training Services Partners (TSP) can help you establish goals and skilling plans based on organizational, team, or individual needs. Then they can help you plan, execute, measure, and optimize your skilling strategy. [Find a Training Services Partner](#).

We hope the tools and methods we’ve shared in this playbook will jumpstart your team training efforts, so your employees can stay happily ahead of the skills curve and your organization is poised to meet the future with the employee-driven capacity to innovate, compete, and thrive.

Discover more at Microsoft Learn for Organizations

> aka.ms/LearnForOrgs



Appendix

This appendix provides a list of the available training options and learning resources.

Plans on Microsoft Learn

Help your teams to learn how to use new technologies and get project-ready efficiently with [Plans on Microsoft Learn](#). A Plan is a set of curated content that can include documentation, code samples, modules, learning paths, and more. Plans allow the creator to monitor learner progress and feature **built-in milestones, sharing capabilities, automated reminders** and **reporting** to help individuals and teams to achieve their learning outcomes.

Microsoft Collections

[Microsoft Collections](#) let you gather and share content from Microsoft Learn in customizable lists—**without attaching milestones**. Combine self-paced learning paths, modules, course videos, live events like Virtual Training Days, gamified learning, code samples, and more. You can also include instructor-led training (ILT) from Microsoft-certified Training Services Partner (TSP) to support different learning styles.

AI learning hub

Designed specifically for AI skilling, the [AI learning hub](#) is a great place to start. There you'll find guidance, tools, and resources to move from a technical overview to a solid vision for your organization's AI learning journey.

Copilot learning hub

The [Copilot learning hub](#) helps users and organizations get the most out of Microsoft Copilot. Explore resources, tips, and training to boost productivity with AI-powered tools—and learn how to integrate Copilot into everyday workflows and unlock new efficiencies across roles and departments.

Security hub

The [Security hub](#) is your central resource for building security skills across Microsoft technologies. Access curated learning paths, best practices, and expert guidance to strengthen your organization's security posture—from foundational knowledge to advanced threat protection.

Course videos on Shows

Personalize your learning journeys with our [Course videos on Shows](#). Each module spans 15 to 30 minutes, empowering you to navigate the course content at your own pace. Ideal for those seeking quick, flexible, and video-based instruction, this series allows you to tailor your experience by accessing specific modules or topics at your convenience, giving you full control over your learning experience.

Shows on Microsoft Learn

Discover thousands of hours of fun, authentic, and informative original programming from Microsoft technical experts with [Shows on Microsoft Learn](#). This flexible, on-demand, instructor-led training enables learners to control when and how they watch the videos.

Microsoft Events

Whether you're seeking training for developers, IT professionals, or business professionals, we have a wealth of [Microsoft events](#) to support your team's growth. Explore special events and learning opportunities designed to help your team enhance their expertise, learn new skills, and nurture a sense of community.

Microsoft Virtual Training Days

[Microsoft Virtual Training Days](#) are free, in-depth, virtual training events designed to build skills, prepare for certifications, and accelerate understanding of new concepts and technologies.

Appendix cont.

Prepare for Microsoft Certification exams

As your employees approach Microsoft Certification exams, remind them that they have plenty of support to prepare. The [official Practice Assessments for Microsoft Certifications](#) provide an opportunity to assess your knowledge to better prepare you for your exam. And in the [Exam Readiness Zone](#), learners can find free expert tips, tricks, and strategies to prepare for a Microsoft Certification exam.

Microsoft Credentials

At Microsoft, we value people, their skills, and the impact they make. We take a skills-first approach to employee development, and we encourage you to do the same as your organization embraces the growth opportunities presented by cloud and AI.

That's why we've evolved Microsoft Credentials to give you both the flexibility to grow the skills needed for critical roles with Microsoft Certifications and the agility to expand the skills needed for real-world technical projects with Microsoft Applied Skills. The quick "this-or-that" interface of the [credential chooser](#) makes it easy to match learning outcomes to business needs—supporting team readiness and technical credibility across roles.

Whether you're planning a major skills upgrade through certification, scheduling targeted applied skills sessions for an upcoming project, or enabling quick, proficiency-based updates that can take less than a week—or even a single day—Microsoft Credentials offer the right fit for your skilling strategy.

Microsoft Applied Skills

[Microsoft Applied Skills](#) is the most recent addition to our credentials portfolio. It helps validate specific skill sets related to real-world, critical business problems and is earned through interactive, lab-based assessments on Microsoft Learn. Employees can earn credentials at their own pace, aligning with project timelines.

Microsoft Certifications

[Microsoft's industry-recognized certifications](#) are the most trusted way to upskill your workforce and help build organizational productivity by keeping your employees current on the latest technology. We offer free annual certification renewal to help your employees stay up to date on technology and keep their certifications current. Learn more about [certification renewals](#).

Documentation

Learners can search for in-depth technical articles on Microsoft developer tools and technologies, and easily access all [Microsoft technical documentation](#), including quick starts, how-to guides, and architectural guidance and frameworks created by Microsoft engineering teams.

Code Samples

Access a rich repository of relevant [code samples](#) to help your team get started and discover what they can build, no matter which Microsoft product or service they're using.

See you on the journey



Drive success and innovate with AI by boosting your team's technical skills. Microsoft Learn for Organizations provides access to curated Microsoft Learn offerings to jump-start your team training and propel your business forward.

**For more, visit Microsoft Learn for Organizations.
aka.ms/LearnForOrgs**

Endnotes

¹ The State of the Workforce Skills Gap 2024, Springboard for Business, 2024. <https://www.springboard.com/blog/business/skills-gap-trends-2024/>

² IDC, Toward Skilling Excellence: The IDC 2022 Global IT Skills Survey, :# US49776022, Nov 2022

³ "Workplace Learning Report 2024," LinkedIn Learning, <https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report>

⁴ Randstad. 2025. Work-Life Balance Tops Pay: Randstad's Workmonitor Reveals New Workplace Baseline. <https://www.randstad.com/press/2025/work-life-balance-tops-pay-randstads-workmonitor-reveals>