



INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE – MODULE 1, UNIT 1.1

Unit Title: What is Artificial Intelligence and why it matters for SMEs

Target Group: SME owners and managers, particularly 50+

Delivery Mode: Blended (in-person and/or online support)

Duration: 90 minutes

Instructor Profile: VET trainer or adult educator with basic digital competence and interest in AI

STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

1. Welcome & Warm-Up (10 minutes)

- Greet participants and introduce yourself.
- Ask: “When you hear the term Artificial Intelligence, what comes to mind?” (use whiteboard or Padlet).
- Explain today’s goals: understanding AI basics, its categories, and its importance for SMEs.

2. Presentation: Introduction to AI (15 minutes)

- Use slides with key definitions (AI, ML, NLP, etc.)
- Emphasize differences between types of AI
- Present real-world examples in a short video (e.g., YouTube clip on AI in small business)

3. Contextual Insights (10 minutes)

- Present Italian and European SME digitalization trends (reference Unioncamere, Transizione 4.0)
- Discuss challenges older SME owners face and potential AI benefits

4. Group Activity: Case Reflection (15 minutes)

- Form small groups and assign one AI application (e.g., chatbots, sales forecasting)
- Ask: How might this improve your daily operations?

5. Hands-On Quiz & Discussion (20 minutes)

- Administer printed or online quiz
- Review answers with class
- Open discussion: “Where could you see AI helping your business?”

6. Wrap-Up and Reflection (10 minutes)

- Recap key points
- Distribute glossary of AI terms and AI-readiness checklist





- Assign optional homework: identify one AI tool you want to explore this week

FACILITATION TIPS

- Speak slowly, especially when introducing technical vocabulary
- Use plenty of visual examples to clarify abstract terms
- Encourage learners to share fears or skepticism about AI (normalize them)
- Use analogies: e.g., AI is to digital tools what a chef is to ingredients – it processes and adapts.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES – MODULE 1, UNIT 1.1

A. Slides

- “What is AI?” (definition, categories)
- “Why SMEs should care about AI”
- “Examples of AI in logistics, marketing, and customer service”

B. Glossary Handout

- PDF handout with terms like: Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Neural Network, Algorithm, Data Training, Predictive Analytics, NLP, Chatbot, Decision Support System

C. Readings & Links

- Unioncamere report (summary in Italian): “Imprese e AI in Italia 2023”
- European Commission – Digital Skills Indicator 2.0
- OECD AI Policy Observatory: <https://oecd.ai>

D. Optional Extension

- “AI Readiness Self-Check” – a reflection form with 10 yes/no questions (e.g., “Do you use cloud storage?” / “Do you track customer preferences digitally?”)