BTUAI

AI DEGREE PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The rise of AI degree programs and where Georgia stands

A global scan of dedicated AI degree programs in universities, set against Georgia's own data. Prepared by the academic team of the **Business and Technology University (BTU)** and **BTUAI**, in Tbilisi, Georgia.

01 What this report is about

This report is about one specific thing: **dedicated AI degree programs** - accredited bachelor's and master's degrees built around artificial intelligence. It is **not** about how AI is used across other subjects, and not about students using AI as a study aid. Those are real and important trends, but they are a different story. Here, the degree programs themselves are the subject, in the world and in Georgia.

In just a few years, AI has moved from a corner of computer science to the fastest-growing kind of degree anywhere. Universities that once taught machine learning as one topic inside a general computing course now build entire degrees around it, and applicants are arriving faster than new programs can be opened. The pull is coming from the labor market as much as from the classroom: employers are competing for graduates who can build and deploy AI systems, and that demand has turned a niche specialization into a mainstream credential.

Georgia has joined this race. As of the 2025/26 cycle it has eleven accredited AI programs and roughly 450 students enrolled through the national exams - a small base, but one that is growing quickly. The pages that follow trace the global surge in AI degrees, turn to where Georgia stands within it, and close with what it would take to convert an early start into lasting depth.

The main message

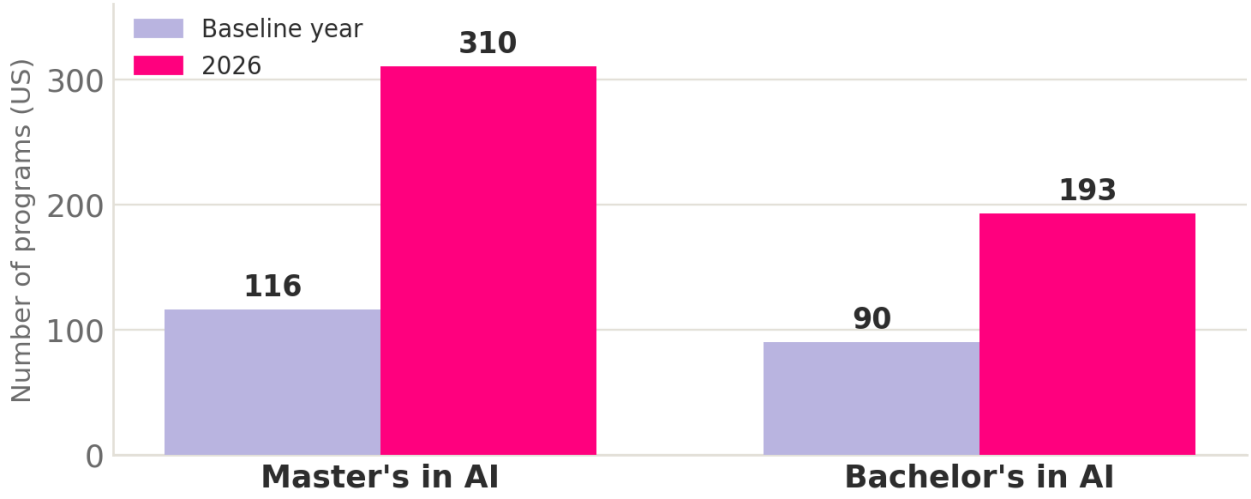
The AI-degree boom is real, fast, and still far short of demand - and Georgia is on the same curve as everyone else, simply earlier and at smaller scale. It has cleared the hardest step, with accredited programs and students already in seats. The task now is less about starting and more about **scaling quality** - faculty capacity, English-taught tracks and links to the employers already hiring locally - before demand outruns supply, as it has elsewhere.

A note on the numbers

> Global program counts come mostly from US and European sources, which count differently — US reports track named AI degrees, while European figures come largely from program directories. Georgia's data are drawn from BTU's *Digital Ecosystem Digest* (Spring 2026), which counts only **accredited AI degree programs** (IT qualifications). Cross-country totals should be read as orders of magnitude, not precise equivalents.

02 The global surge in AI degrees

The clearest signal comes from the United States, where the data are best. Master's programs in AI grew about **2.7-fold between 2022 and 2026**, from 116 to 310. Bachelor's degrees moved even faster off a smaller base - **from 90 programs in 2024 to 193 in 2026**, more than doubling in a single year. By 2026 roughly 304 US institutions offered an AI degree of some kind. The first mover is well known: Carnegie Mellon launched the country's first bachelor's in AI in 2018, and others have rushed to follow, most often by promoting an AI track inside an existing computer-science degree into a standalone program.



Master's baseline = 2022 · Bachelor's baseline = 2024

What makes the boom striking is that it is still small relative to the sector. Only about 1% of US institutions offer an AI master's and 2.5% a bachelor's, so the doubling is happening from a low base - there is a great deal of room left to grow. Traditional computer-science enrollment, meanwhile, is bending toward AI: applicants increasingly choose the AI-branded version of a degree over the general one, and some universities report AI programs growing many times over within a few years while general CS intake flattens.

The pressure behind all of this is demand that dwarfs supply. In the US alone nearly 57 million people say they want to learn AI skills, but only about 8.7 million are actively learning - and only a fraction of those sit in credit-bearing university programs, with the rest served by platforms like Coursera and Udemy. The labor market amplifies the gap: the World Economic Forum projects more than five million unfilled AI-related roles worldwide, and job postings in AI and machine learning have been rising sharply year on year. Universities are, in effect, racing to formalize a field that industry is already hiring for.

Europe: a broad catalog and a domain-flavored curriculum

Europe now lists somewhere between roughly 140 and 350 dedicated AI bachelor's, depending on the directory. JKU Linz bills itself as the continent's first academic AI degree; more recent launches include PSL University's English-taught International BSc in AI in Paris (September 2025) and a joint bachelor's shared across the Universities of Milano-Bicocca, Milano Statale and Pavia. Cross-border Erasmus Mundus master's stitch several countries into a single degree, letting students move between institutions as they specialize.

A recurring European pattern is worth noting, because it shapes what a good program looks like: rather than teaching AI as pure computer science, many universities pair it with a **domain** - AI for business, AI and law, AI and sustainability, AI and data science. The bet is that employers want graduates who can apply AI inside

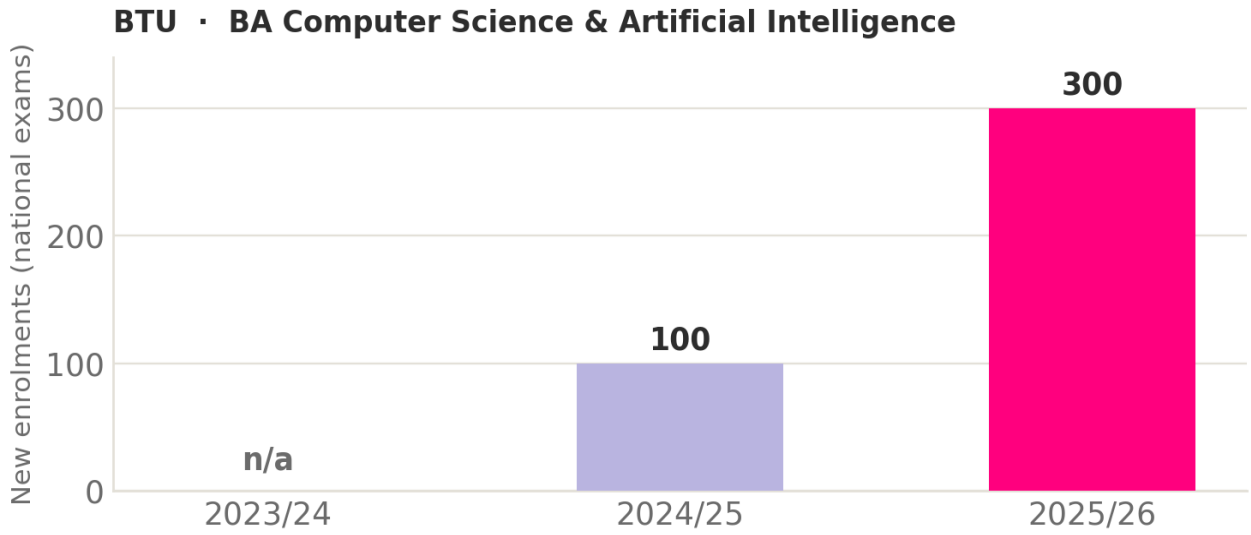
a field, not only build models in the abstract. This domain-pairing is the template most new programs, including Georgia's, are following.

> **What the global picture says**
> The dedicated-degree boom is real, fast, and **still far short of demand**. Universities that move early - and that connect their programs to industry - capture students and talent that competitors then struggle to win back. The single biggest feature of the global market is the gap between how many people want an AI qualification and how few formal seats exist to give them one.

03 Where Georgia stands

Against that backdrop, Georgia has moved decisively for a country of its size. As of the 2025/26 cycle there are **11 accredited AI programs** - counting only IT-qualification degrees in computer science and information technology - with several more in development. Roughly **450 students** have already enrolled through the national exams, a figure that excludes foreign students, mobility transfers and non-exam admissions, so the true total is somewhat higher.

Enrollment is not spread evenly. The clearest momentum is at BTU's BA in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, where national-exam intake **tripled from 100 to 300** between 2024/25 and 2025/26 — the sharpest single-program jump in the sector, and a sign that demand is concentrating on the programs that have built a reputation fastest.



The programs on offer

The catalog is dominated by bachelor's degrees, several of them offered in both Georgian and English, and - echoing the global pattern - most pair AI with a broader field rather than teaching it in isolation: computer science and AI, or data science and AI. A master's layer exists but is still thin, which matters because the research depth and advanced talent a national AI sector needs tend to come from graduate programs.

University	Program (level)	24/25	25/26
Business and Technology University	Computer Science & AI (BA)	100	**300**
Caucasus University	Computer Science & AI, English (BA)	-	17
Georgian National University SEU	Data Science & AI (BA)	22	9
University of Georgia	Artificial Intelligence (BA)	-	-
Alte University	AI & Data Analytics (BA)	-	-
Georgian National University SEU	Artificial Intelligence (MA)	-	-

Selected programs; several also run English-language tracks. "—" indicates no reported national-exam enrollment for that year. Source: BTU, 2026.

Demand for these graduates is being driven in large part by the international technology companies operating in Georgia, which are the main buyers of AI talent locally. EPAM Systems Georgia is the largest such employer, offering hybrid and fully remote work, and firms like it hire across three channels: international companies with local offices, international companies recruiting Georgians remotely, and the fully global remote market. In practice this means a Georgian AI graduate is competing - and can be paid - in an international market without leaving the country, which raises both the appeal of these programs and the stakes of getting them right.

> **Georgia's position**
> Georgia has cleared the hardest first step - it has **accredited degrees and students in seats**, and demand at the flagship program is climbing steeply. The constraints now are the familiar ones for a small system: enrollment concentrated in a few universities, a thin master's and research layer, and the faculty-capacity questions every fast-growing system faces. The foundation is in place; the task is depth.

04 What this means for Georgia

The global evidence points to a short, practical agenda - one aimed at deepening quality rather than simply announcing more programs.

Scale faculty capacity first. Everywhere in the world the binding constraint on AI degrees is not student interest but the supply of qualified teaching staff; a program can enroll 300 students, as BTU now does, only if it can staff the classrooms and supervise the work. **Build the master's and research layer**, not just bachelor's intake, since that is where advanced talent and the research base of a national AI sector are formed. **Lean into English-taught tracks and industry links**, which is how European and US programs turn enrollment into employable graduates - and, in Georgia's case, connect directly to the international tech employers already hiring locally. And **broaden beyond the flagship**, so that capacity and reputation are not concentrated in one or two universities but spread across the system.

> **Final assessment**
> Georgia has genuinely joined the global wave of AI degree programs: it has accredited degrees, real and rising enrollment, and an employer base ready to absorb graduates. Measured against the world, it is **early but on-trend** - the same curve as everyone else, a few years behind and at smaller scale. The decisive question is no longer whether to offer AI degrees, but whether the system can **grow faculty, graduate-level depth and industry links fast enough** to turn a strong start into lasting quality.

05 Sources

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