SaclAI-School

Artificial intelligence for everyone at Université Paris-Saclay

Led by the DATAIA Institute of Université Paris-Saclay, the SaclAI-School project aims to draw up a broad, ambitious and innovative education programme in artificial intelligence (AI). Since 2021, SaclAI-School has brought in several new courses and modules, as well as introducing student scholarships and tutoring.

"Artificial intelligence has come on leaps and bounds in recent years. It's everywhere now, in our society, our daily lives, our phones. So there's a real need to understand the advantages and challenges, and also the risks and limitations," explains Frédéric Pascal, Director of the DATAIA Institute, the artificial intelligence (AI) institute at Université Paris-Saclay. Training everyone in AI is the mission of the SaclAI-School program run by the Institute. Funded to the tune of 11.4 million euros, this programme is one of the winners of the *Compétences et métiers d'avenir* (CMA, meaning Skills and Professions of the Future) call, launched at the end of 2021 by the French National Research Agency.

"SaclAI-School aims to train the general public in artificial intelligence, in the core disciplines of AI, computer science and mathematics, and also in interdisciplinarity, by coupling AI with other disciplines in which it plays a transformative role," explains Sarah Cohen-Boulakia, co-head of the SaclAI-School project and deputy director of education at the DATAIA Institute.

The strength of the project lies in the fact that it draws on all the skills of Université Paris-Saclay and the unique ecosystem of the DATAIA Institute, which brings together 46 different research laboratories and over a thousand researchers in the field of AI and its applications.

Some sixty courses from 1-year higher education diplomas to PhD

Since its launch, the programme has significantly increased the number of university students trained in AI, from first-year university students to Master's degrees and PhDs. Four new Master's courses have started, as well as two thematic courses within the Mathematics, Vision and Learning (MVA in French) Master's programme at ENS Paris-Saclay, two international courses at Centrale-Supélec and a specialised Master's degree in trusted AI, in collaboration with the SystemX Institute for Technological Research (IRT in French). Numerous innovative teaching modules have been designed, thanks in particular to the recruitment of some fifty associate professors from the socio-economic world.

In addition to developing the range of courses on offer, *"our aim is to provide the best possible support for students involved in AI-related courses,"* explains Cristina Porlon, the SaclAI-School project manager. It is with this in mind that MixtAI scholarships are awarded each year to candidates from first-year university students to those on Master's degrees. A peer tutoring programme - TutorIA - is also in place to provide support in the IT and mathematics programmes.

Short courses accessible to all, at any age

SaclAI-School's mission is not only to train AI experts within the University, but also to get as many people as possible familiar with the current challenges of AI. This is where the BrevetAI comes in, based on the learning-by-doing method which ensures discovery of AI in the form of activities adapted to all levels.

The challenges of AI are also numerous in lifelong learning. In collaboration with the CentraleSupélec Exed ongoing education centre, *"we provide a wide selection of courses covering the main areas of AI,"* explains Meryem Kafnemer, SaclAI-School's ongoing education project manager. From short adaptation and awareness courses (complete introduction to AI, ChatGPT, digital twins, AI and the environment, ethical and legal issues of artificial intelligence, etc.) to longer, more in-depth courses, there's something for every level. The catalogue doesn't stop there, as customised training courses are also put together for companies. *"The idea is to understand their needs and provide them with training based on real-life cases adapted to their own business sectors,"* continues Meryem Kafnemer.

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Since its launch at the start of the academic year in 2022, SaclAI-School has trained over 1,200 students in AI, and a further 1,300 have undergone adaptation. Other initiatives are under development, with the arrival of two interactive online courses, as well as the launch of several teaching support platforms. The idea is that AI shouldn't hold (almost) any secrets for anyone.

https://www.dataia.eu/en/formations/saclai-school