

# AI for Digital Finance: Swiss-MENA Research Network Launch

Workshop Program  
April 21-23, 2026  
American University of Sharjah, UAE

## Workshop Overview

This three-day international workshop brings together 80-100 researchers and practitioners to explore AI applications in digital finance and launch a sustainable Swiss-MENA research network.

## Day 1: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

*Theme: Academic Foundations and Research Frontiers*

Time	Session
08:30-09:00	<b>Registration and Welcome Coffee</b>
09:00-09:30	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> Welcome: Prof. Stephen Chan (AUS) Opening Remarks: Prof. Joerg Osterrieder (FHGR) Strategic Vision: AUS Leadership
09:30-10:30	<b>Keynote 1: Large Language Models in Finance</b> “Transforming Financial Analysis with LLMs” Speaker: Distinguished International Expert
10:30-11:00	<i>Coffee Break and Networking</i>
11:00-12:30	<b>Session 1: AI Methods for Financial Markets</b> Paper 1: Deep Learning for Market Prediction Paper 2: Reinforcement Learning in Algorithmic Trading Paper 3: Neural Networks for Risk Assessment Chair: Prof. Stephen Chan
12:30-14:00	<i>Lunch and Poster Session</i>
14:00-15:30	<b>Session 2: Blockchain Security and Fraud Detection</b> Paper 1: ML Methods for Blockchain Fraud Detection (Osterrieder/Chan) Paper 2: Anomaly Detection in DeFi Protocols Paper 3: Smart Contract Vulnerability Analysis Chair: Prof. Joerg Osterrieder
15:30-16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:00-17:00	<b>Panel Discussion: Research Priorities in AI Finance</b> Panelists from Switzerland, UAE, and international institutions Moderator: Senior Academic Leader
17:30-19:00	<b>Welcome Reception</b> Location: AUS Campus Venue

## Day 2: Wednesday, April 22, 2026

*Theme: Industry Applications and Real-World Implementation*

Time	Session
09:00-10:00	<b>Keynote 2: AI in UAE Financial Sector</b> “Digital Transformation in Gulf Banking” Speaker: Senior Executive, Emirates NBD or FAB
10:00-10:30	<i>Coffee Break and Networking</i>
10:30-12:00	<b>Session 3: Explainable AI for Regulatory Compliance</b> Presentation 1: FINMA Perspectives on AI Governance Presentation 2: DIFC Regulatory Sandbox Experiences Presentation 3: Interpretable Models for Risk Management Chair: Industry Representative
12:00-13:30	<i>Lunch and Industry Networking</i>
13:30-15:00	<b>Session 4: Digital Banking Innovation</b> Case Study 1: AI-Powered Customer Experience (UAE Bank) Case Study 2: Robo-Advisory Services in Wealth Management Case Study 3: Financial Inclusion through AI Chair: ADGM Representative
15:00-15:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15:30-17:00	<b>Industry Roundtable: Bridging Research and Practice</b> Theme: From Lab to Market - Implementing AI Solutions Participants: Banks, Fintech, Regulators, Academics Facilitator: Senior Industry Leader
17:00-17:30	<b>Day 2 Wrap-up and Announcements</b>

## Day 3: Thursday, April 23, 2026

*Theme: Capacity Building and Network Launch*

Time	Session
09:00-10:30	<b>MSCA Doctoral Training Workshop</b> Tutorial: Advanced ML Techniques for Finance Hands-on Session: Python Tools for Financial AI Instructor: Expert from MSCA Network
10:30-11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00-12:30	<b>Session 5: Doctoral Research Presentations</b> Selected PhD presentations from MSCA network Feedback from senior researchers and industry experts Best Paper Award Announcement
12:30-14:00	<i>Lunch and Career Fair</i>
14:00-15:30	<b>Strategic Planning Session</b> Working Groups Formation: - WG1: LLMs and NLP in Finance - WG2: Blockchain and Digital Assets - WG3: Risk Management and Compliance - WG4: Financial Inclusion and Sustainability
15:30-16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:00-17:00	<b>Network Launch Ceremony</b> Presentation: 5-Year Research Roadmap Signing: Memorandum of Understanding Announcement: Next Steps and Funding Opportunities
17:00-17:30	<b>Closing Remarks and Farewell</b> Summary: Prof. Joerg Osterrieder and Prof. Stephen Chan Vote of Thanks: Organizing Committee

## Additional Information

- **Venue:** American University of Sharjah, Conference Center
- **Format:** Hybrid (in-person with online streaming)
- **Registration:** CHF 100 (includes materials, coffee breaks, lunches)
- **Contact:** lhmena@hes-so.ch
- **Website:** To be announced

## Expected Outputs

- Workshop Proceedings (open access)
- White Paper on AI in Swiss-MENA Finance
- 5-Year Research Agenda
- Online Resource Repository