

# GauntletAI Handbook

## About the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is twofold:

1. To help you know what to anticipate and how to best succeed in GauntletAI
2. To help you understand what you agree to by participating in GauntletAI.

Participation in GauntletAI is not for everyone.

There are things that GauntletAI demands of participants that other schools do not. There are ways we do things that will differ from every educational environment you've ever been a part of. We do so intentionally in pursuit of outcomes that other institutions do not often obtain.

Our only ask is that you make a decision.

Should you decide not to participate in GauntletAI, we wish you all the best.

If you decide to participate in GauntletAI, however, we ask that you "go all in."

## GauntletAI Overview

### GauntletAI Mission

The mission of GauntletAI is to train the most sought-after builders in the world.

We will know we have succeeded when GauntletAI graduates are in higher demand than Stanford or MIT graduates.

We do that by taking people with immense intellectual horsepower, who are willing to work extremely hard, and training them to build products in an AI-first manner. We focus on producing graduates who are smarter, faster to learn, and more effective at harnessing AI than anyone else.

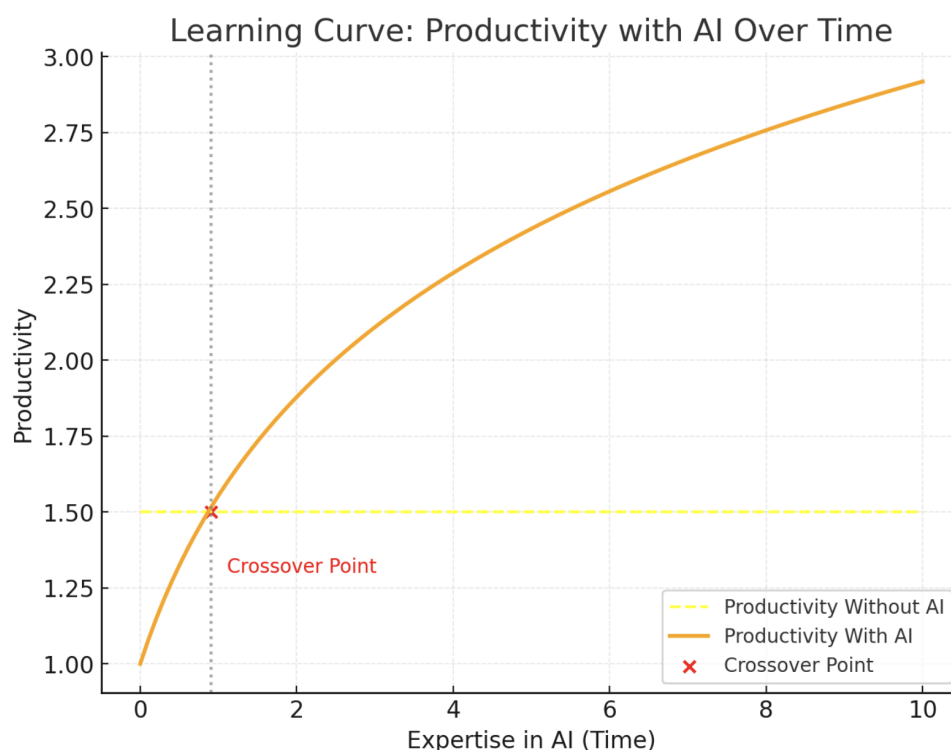
### Building with AI

When we talk about "Building AI-First" or "Building with AI," we mean using the most cutting-edge developments in generative AI to create things. Generally speaking that's software,

but there are other things that need to be made, including sub-components of software, as well as **BrainLifts**, which we'll talk about later.

In every scenario, the goal is to maximize the usage of AI. This means that in everything we do, we reach for AI first, before we do any work ourselves manually. In the early stages, this is frustrating, as we have deeply ingrained habits of doing things manually, and haven't yet built the muscle of using AI. To build AI-first, we must force ourselves to use AI even when it's initially slower than manually building things.

It won't take long, but we have to force ourselves to get to the crossover point as quickly as possible, even if it is initially painful.



## Riding the AI Wave

GauntletAI doesn't focus on groundbreaking AI research, building new foundation models, or using more traditional machine learning or deep learning methods. Our goal is to stay on the cutting edge of AI usage and to build things as quickly, efficiently, and with the highest quality possible.

The rate of change and improvement of generative AI is staggering.

The changes and improvements are so powerful, in fact, that all we need to do to become the most sought-after builders in the world is to *ride that wave*. By staying abreast of the latest techniques, tools, and methods we can achieve a dramatic multiplier of our human efforts.

# Building Products Worth \$100 Million

The ability to create exceptional products lies in mastering two pillars: The ability to learn rapidly (including creating BrainLifts) and AI-first development.

## Learning Rapidly and BrainLifts

To stay at the forefront of AI advancements, you must become a voracious, self-driven learner.

Central to this is the creation and use of a BrainLift—a structured second brain designed specifically to store information we learn in a strategic way. It also serves the purpose of being fed to AI models to alter the way they behave.

### What is a BrainLift?

A BrainLift transforms the general concept of a personal knowledge system into a purpose-driven tool for AI builders. It allows you to:

- **Curate Knowledge:** Collect, categorize, and summarize expert sources to guide learning.
- **Develop Spiky Points of View:** Craft unique, opinionated perspectives that push beyond the boundaries of average knowledge (we'll talk more about these shortly).
- **Guide AI:** Override the generic responses of large language models (LLMs) by embedding your BrainLift into their prompts and context.

### Core Components of a BrainLift:

1. **Purpose:** Defines the scope and goal of the BrainLift, ensuring every piece of information serves a clear objective.
2. **Experts and Sources:** Identifies key individuals, organizations, and materials to follow and learn from.
3. **Knowledge Categories:** Organizes information into a structured tree for clarity and ease of access.
4. **Insights:** Summarizes key findings from your sources in actionable terms.
5. **SpikyPOVs:** Combines insights across domains to form bold, actionable beliefs that drive decision-making and innovation.

## SpikyPOVs: Decision-Making with AI

The output of generative AI models is an approximation of consensus across everything a model has been trained on. Often, that consensus is wrong or otherwise misguided.

A [Spiky Point of View](#) (SpikyPOV) is, most simply, something that is non-consensus but true. These can be instances when we disagree with a generic consensus point of view, but, perhaps

importantly, in GauntletAI, they can also be instances where our knowledge goes against information internalized by AI models.

When generative AI struggles with ambiguity, SpikyPOVs act as the guiding force. These opinionated stances enable AI to produce context-specific, decisive results.

*Examples of SpikyPOVs:*

- **Truth:** *Motivation is more important than IQ for learning speed in K12 education.*
- **Myth:** *Timed testing is inherently bad; in fact, it's critical for automaticity and higher-level reasoning.*

*Examples of SpikyPOVs guiding the creation of GauntletAI:*

- **Truth:** You don't have to be a phenomenal programmer to build phenomenal programs using AI.
- **Truth:** Selection by general intelligence is among the most important aspects of short/intensive programs such as GauntletAI.
- **Myth:** A program like GauntletAI should consist entirely of a curriculum created by the program itself; in fact, the timeliness of information is so important that we should be using every good resource, regardless of origin.
- **Truth:** Learning in public and sharing work is a necessary component of staying at the edge of rapidly evolving fields.
- **Truth:** Rejecting someone who isn't the right fit from a program like GauntletAI is among the most important, valuable, and kind things GauntletAI can do.
- **Truth:** The more likely answering a specific question is to drive a prospective student away from participation in a program like GauntletAI, the more directly you should answer it.
- **Truth:** A tiny minority of people push forward most progress in civilization and companies.

We'll build many BrainLifts, some overarching and some specific to individual projects or techniques. Building and curating your BrainLift daily will give you the expertise and clarity needed to tackle complex challenges and effectively direct AI tools.

At the end of each week, in addition to submitting the *code* we've written, you'll also submit links to the accompanying BrainLifts. These BrainLifts become a critical part of shaping how a product operates and, over time, will become some of the most important aspects of IP a company can have. They become as important in many cases as a code base.

## Learning Rapidly and the Cutting Edge

Building great products by riding the cutting edge of AI requires us to be at the foremost knowledge of our topic areas. Because AI is changing rapidly, we set aside a specific time each day at GauntletAI to learn, stay current, seek out information sources, and add to (or tweak) our BrainLifts.

You may already do this organically; most people do without realizing it, but we're going to become experts at doing so strategically: Finding the best sources of information, storing it in BrainLifts, and feeding everything we're learning to AI.

## QC-First AI

If AI doesn't know the solution to something, it will make an educated guess based on its training data. The incredible part of AI is how often that works. The terrible part of AI is how often it doesn't. And when AI is wrong, it is generally wrong in moderately convincing ways.

As a counter to that, we'll generally practice what we call "Quality-Control-First AI" or "QC-First AI" at Gauntlet; a practice being developed at companies like Trilogy and others that **starts by defining the criteria for success (often with the help of AI) and letting AI fill in those gaps.**

Doing so can be a little bit messy at times. However, we believe that QC-First AI will continue to evolve and dramatically surpass other methods of reigning in AI (such as Fine-Tuning).

Mastering QC-First AI is critical to riding the AI wave, and another example of a practice that is both crucial and in a very nascent stage. It's entirely possible that GauntletAI will help us discover something that will propel the practice forward.

# GauntletAI Logistics

## Enrollment Process

You have already encountered an enrollment process that is the result of many of our SpikyPOVs. We believe that as a result, you'll soon be mingling with brilliant people from all sorts of different backgrounds.

Our selection is made based primarily on "mental horsepower." You'll soon find yourself working with a brilliant group from varying walks of life. We'll have college dropouts and PhDs. You'll meet people with vast experience in software and people who have never had a job before.

## Honesty in the Enrollment Process (and Elsewhere)

Because the enrollment process is so crucial to GauntletAI, you attest by signing this Handbook and enrolling, that you completed each of the enrollment processes, provided information that was completely accurate, and completed all of the required Admissions activities (CCAT and code challenge) entirely independently and without assistance not allowed by those activities.

## Academic Integrity

By signing this handbook and enrolling in GauntletAI, you agree to the following Academic Guidelines:

**Own work:**

Always present your own ideas and efforts on assignments. If you use Open-Source software, it should be noted and properly licensed.

**No cheating:**

While collaboration will be encouraged, avoid any actions that could be considered cheating, including copying directly from others.

**Report violations:**

If you witness potential academic dishonesty, report it to your instructor.

You also acknowledge that violating the Academic Integrity guidelines is grounds for removal from the program.

## Hard Work

Our enrollment process is good at identifying people who are really smart. It doesn't do a very good job of identifying people who are willing to work hard.

We don't subscribe to the notion that humans can only be productive for a few hours per week; everything we've seen in our careers over many years flatly contradicts that. You likely have experience that contradicts that as well.

In fact, we tend to believe that most humans can accomplish dramatically more than the average human does. In an AI-first environment, we think this effect is exaggerated. We think you'll be blown away when you realize just how much can happen when you pour your heart and soul into something and mix in the capabilities of AI.

## Distractions

GauntletAI aims to create an environment free from distractions. We aim to limit administrative work, bureaucracy, and anything that doesn't advance our knowledge and learning.

Opportunities to engage with this focus are rare in life, so please use it wisely. If there's ever a time to tell friends and family you'll be less available for a couple of months, this is it.

There will, however, be a lot of time for learning and research, which we feel is underappreciated in most work environments.

## Working Smart: Goal Setting and Time Management

We'll have many discussions at GauntletAI about one of our SpikyPOVs: humans waste an alarming amount of time. This is a tragedy.

We'll talk a lot about how to plan, manage, and use time. We'll introduce different strategies and practices that will streamline how you use your time as you learn at GauntletAI. We think you'll use these strategies for the rest of your life.

### WorkSmart

For example, one piece of software we'll use is called WorkSmart. Originally, it was designed for freelancers at Crossover (a Trilogy company) to help bill clients more efficiently, but it has now expanded into an entire human productivity suite.

When the WorkSmart software is running, it monitors your computer usage and logs how you're using your time. When it's off, it doesn't monitor anything, and you can delete any of the time logs you want.

The accumulated information that can be tracked via WorkSmart will be valuable to you as a Gauntlet participant. The coaching features will proactively identify opportunities for you to improve your efficiency.

In addition, we will aggregate information to help us improve system-wide learnings, including:

- Which AI tools are most effective in various scenarios
- How using AI as a partner and copilot (whether pair programming, thinking, prototyping, etc.) affects net productivity
- How to generate BrainLifts in the most time-efficient manner

And, of course,

- How effectively students are using their own time

Only the Gauntlet management team and Crossover HR (the tool's creators) will have access to the logs. If you decide to leave Gauntlet at any point, we can delete all of your data.

Data will not be sold, but (of course) we will use AI to help us draw conclusions from the logs.

### Full Streaming

A small number of GauntletAI participants have volunteered to record their screens and stream the entirety of their experience. They are free to livestream or share any portion of the experience to social networks to gain a following, and we will be monitoring those streams (both manually and using AI) to learn as much as we can and make GauntletAI better. Full streaming is entirely optional, but if you're interested in doing so please let us know.

## Learning in Public

Another SpikyPOV at Gauntlet is that it's dramatically more effective to learn to build using AI by "learning in public." The concept was popularized by Internet influencers who made videos of themselves learning to do simple tasks like applying makeup. Sometimes they failed, but when they succeeded, their efforts became part of the public database of knowledge that everyone could benefit from. "Learning in Public" simply means sharing things publicly as we create and build.

We currently use X as our preferred platform for Learning in Public, due to the proliferation of AI content currently shared (and commented on) on the platform.

We currently use the platform in various ways, including using X lists to reach and identify experts. In addition to more obvious use cases, we require participants to share screen recordings of the projects they are working on each week as part of their GauntletAI submissions. All participants will be required to create and use an X account in order to submit work and progress at Gauntlet.

## Talent Release

Due to the nature of public sharing of your work, we'll need your permission to share your likeness and image. This will require a Talent Release. Some legalese incoming:

By participation in GauntletAI (and signing this handbook), you agree to grant BloomTech Inc. and to its licensees, assignees, and other successors-in-interest all rights of every kind and character whatsoever in perpetuity in and to my performance, appearance, name and/or voice and the results thereof (the "Performance." I hereby authorize BloomTech to photograph and record (on film, digital media, or other means), the Performance; to edit same as its discretion and to include it with the performance of others with sound effects, special effects and music; to incorporate the same into Picture or other program, and to use such recordings and photographs in any manner or media whatsoever.

## Curriculum, Evolution, and Self-Study

### The Impossibility of AI Curriculum

One of the most challenging aspects of building GauntletAI has been building the curriculum. We started months in advance building the curriculum for GauntletAI, and by the time Day 1 came around, we had already rewritten pieces multiple times based on new information. We don't anticipate this trend will reverse itself or slow down.

While we always reserve the right to change any curriculum, you should know that this may feel extreme at times.



There may be weeks where we have a lesson planned for Thursday, and something that happens on Tuesday means we have to rewrite it. There may be a lesson we go over on a Monday and it's made far less relevant on Tuesday. There may be a random evening where something so significant happens that everyone drops everything as we learn more about it.

Although the cadence of these changes cannot be predicted, we commit to adjusting as quickly as possible and doing everything we can to provide you with the most accurate and timely information.

### Undiscovered Knowledge

When we first started building AI training programs a year ago, we looked for best practices and a standard curriculum and quickly found that *they did not exist*. OpenAI cannot tell you the best ways to use ChatGPT; these tools are constantly being built and tinkered with, and new methods are constantly being uncovered.

Best practices are being written and rewritten in real time. In building curriculum, there are times when we discover pieces of knowledge only because we talk to a random engineer who has been experimenting with something and isn't aware whether anyone else on the planet has discovered the same thing yet.

While we have teams dedicated entirely to discovering and updating, we aren't naïve enough to think we've discovered everything. This is our challenge and our opportunity. We are among those who have an opportunity to change everything for the better. As such, we ask that if you discover something, you share it with us (and the rest of Gauntlet).

### Intellectual Property

This creates a unique challenge in defining who owns the intellectual property at GauntletAI: If students own the intellectual property of everything they discover, we can't legally share it with anyone else at GauntletAI or build any of the learnings into the curriculum. Our solution is that for everything you do (and learn) at Gauntlet, two licenses exist:

**License 1:** Belongs entirely to you, and you can do whatever you would like with it. That means if you create a project (or part of a project) that is super valuable, you are welcome to sell it, rent it, give it away—whatever you'd like.

**License 2:** Belongs to GauntletAI to the extent we are using information you have discovered to help other people at GauntletAI learn.

We created the second license only because it would be impossible for us to clearly delineate who is learning what and when.

These two licenses exist simultaneously in perpetuity and cannot be revoked.

In the event that you join one of the companies sponsoring GauntletAI, after 100 days of employment, the IP created within gauntlet becomes the property of that company. Again, this is for simplicity's sake, in case something you've learned is shared in a way that becomes valuable at that company. There's no way for us to cleanly pull that apart, and we don't want that to happen if you aren't working at one of the companies, so we felt like 100 days was generous enough that if something is going to happen with the IP, it will happen before that point.

You agree to the section titled "Intellectual Property" by enrolling in GauntletAI and signing this handbook.

## Self-Study

In addition to instruction from GauntletAI instructors, some of the most valuable things you'll discover will be on your own in self-study time. This is by design because it's impossible to have instructors spoon-feed every bit of information and because the agency and ability to become a voracious learner are two of the most important aspects of staying on the cutting edge of AI. We need you to develop or refine your ability to learn independently. Our instructors, section guides, and TAs have been trained to help you *find* information, wherever possible, instead of *giving* you information.

This is very frustrating for some coming from more traditional educational environments, but it is very intentional. Answering, "How do you do x?" with "Have you tried asking Perplexity, ChatGPT, or another AI tool?" is not only acceptable but is often encouraged by our staff. (Of course, in the event that you have, we're more than happy to help.) This is so important that saying, "I'm frustrated I had to learn x *on my own* and not from GauntletAI instructors/TAs directly" is grounds for immediate removal from GauntletAI.

## Projects, Submission, and Grading

### Guidelines for Project Completion

Much of the learning in GauntletAI will happen in the form of building projects, and you will progress in GauntletAI by submitting these projects.

### Submission Protocols and Deadlines

This will be attached to each project individually, but roughly one project will be due per week.

The initial project submission is due by midnight on Friday, with opportunities for reworking or revisions available until midnight on Sunday.

We do this so we can look at a project and recommend any changes that must be made.

There will generally be a panel of graders (trusted AI engineers) who will look at each project and give it a grade in different categories, which will vary to some degree project by project but will be included in each project brief you receive at the beginning of the week.

## Deliverables

Each project will contain at least four deliverables:

1. A link to the BrainLift
2. A link to the (deployed/production-quality) application that was built
3. A link to the GitHub repository where the code is written
4. A link to the post on X, which includes a video walkthrough of the deliverables and finished product

Any product submission missing any of these four things will be considered incomplete and unsubmitted.

## Graduation and Jobs

The companies sponsoring GauntletAI promise that every graduate will be hired for \$200k/yr at one of the participating companies.

Generally speaking, these jobs are in-person in Austin, Texas. They are full-time salaried roles at a \$200k/yr base plus benefits. There are exceptions for a few jobs based in Europe or the UK for the students flying from Europe to participate in GauntletAI. The jobs in Europe are also paid at an equivalent of \$200k USD.

There are three sponsoring companies in the first cohort of GauntletAI.

1. Trilogy (and its many child companies) is aiming to build the AI-first versions of 10,000 SaaS companies. Many GauntletAI grads are going to become individual one-man-bands at Trilogy, trying to build entire companies with AI with a minimal number of people.
2. A portfolio of education companies aims to revolutionize education for 2.5 billion kids. This company operates entire schools and is building suites of learning apps, pushing the boundaries of AI to build next-generation learning software (far beyond simple AI tutors in the market today).
3. (Still in “stealth mode”): A mission-driven video game studio with a global footprint. That’s all we can say about this one for now.

Graduation and obtaining a job at these companies is simple: Completing all the projects each week to a standard and timeline sufficient to pass leads to graduation and a career.

This will not be easy, and while we want you to succeed, there is no guarantee that anyone enrolled in GauntletAI will pass or obtain a job.

We want everyone to succeed, but as a part of enrolling in GauntletAI (and in signing this handbook), you agree that GauntletAI is not responsible for any lost time, lost wages, opportunity cost, or any other tangible or intangible issues that arise as a result of participating in GauntletAI. There's simply no way we can guarantee that everyone will succeed.

Similarly, there is no penalty for not accepting one of the jobs at the end of GauntletAI, though we hope you will. They are phenomenal opportunities.

GauntletAI was designed in collaboration with these companies, so know that each wants to see you build AI first, use BrainLifts, and learn as much as possible to stay on AI's cutting edge.

## Matching

Toward the end of GauntletAI, we will have a “matching” process where GauntletAI students will identify their preferences for which companies they'd like to work for. We'll work with the companies to decide who is the best fit for each position. We can't *guarantee* any specific job to any specific person at the onset of GauntletAI, but we will do our best to make sure you're going somewhere you're excited to work.

## Tools and Compute

GauntletAI will provide access to tools and compute levels not typically granted to non-employees. You agree to be wise stewards of these tools and to use credits, tokens, and API keys to learn and complete your projects.

Trying to do something like using an AWS account to mine cryptocurrency is strictly forbidden and can result in immediate removal from the program or, in extreme cases, civil charges. Please just be responsible.

By enrolling in GauntletAI and signing this handbook, you agree to not use GauntletAI resources for purposes other than those relevant to GauntletAI.

Similarly, you agree to do your best to manage or mitigate any ethical implications of building or using AI and not to break any laws.

Hopefully, this is all straightforward. We won't micromanage compute or resources; just don't abuse them.

## Community Guidelines

Community guidelines are also simple. You agree to be respectful and considerate of those around you.

In community events, you agree to represent yourself and GauntletA thoughtfully.

## Drug Usage

For the purposes of this handbook, the term “drug” includes:

- Controlled substances, as defined in 21 USC 812, which cannot be legally obtained
- Legally obtainable controlled substances that were not legally obtained, including:
  - Prescribed drugs when prescription is no longer valid (e.g., use of medication after a course of treatment is completed);
  - Prescribed drugs used contrary to the prescription;
  - Prescribed drugs issued to another person.

Students, GauntletAI employees, and guests are prohibited from using, possessing, transferring or selling any illegal drug, controlled substance, or related paraphernalia, including hookahs, while on any part of the campus or at GauntletAI sponsored/supported events.

(Also, a reminder for those traveling from other states that marijuana is not currently legal in Texas.)

Any person taking prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication is personally responsible for ensuring that while taking such drugs or medications, he or she is not a safety risk to themselves or others while on College property, while driving a College or privately owned vehicle, or while otherwise engaged in College business. It is illegal to misuse prescription medication, i.e., continue to use medication when the prescription is no longer valid, use prescribed drugs contrary to the prescription, and give or sell prescribed drugs to another person. Misusing prescription drugs can result in conviction with jail time.

## Alcohol

Employees, students, and campus guests, regardless of age, are expected to refrain from the possession, consumption, or transportation of alcoholic beverages while on any part of the campus or at GauntletAI-sponsored/supported events.

The only exception to this Policy is that individuals of legal age may consume alcohol on GauntletAI property in a manner consistent with GauntletAI policy and State of Texas law within the approved designated area of events coordinated by GauntletAI.

## Housing

In order to provide housing to all participants, there are a number of things you need to agree to:

1. Student agrees to conduct him/herself in a manner that promotes a positive environment for students residing in the Residence Halls.

2. The Student is responsible to secure their room/apartment/suite at all times.
3. Student is responsible for any violations that occur in their assigned living space.
4. Student agrees to not damage the room or any other living area and to leave them clean and in their original condition when vacating the rooms. Student agrees that if he/she fails to do this they will be liable for all damages and repair or cleaning costs. Each student agrees that they will be individually liable for all damages that occur to a room unless they show they were not responsible for the damage and who the responsible person is. The studentt agrees to acquire renter's insurance or extended family insurance to cover their belongings. The student acknowledges that GauntletAI is not responsible for the theft, loss, damage, or destruction of the Student's personal belongings.

## Remember the Mission

Everyone at GauntletAI is on the same team, trying to build the best possible outcomes and protect the concept of graduating from GauntletAI as a credential worthy of prestige and demand.

We believe we can do so, and appreciate your help as we push forward our mission to help you all become the most sought-after builders in the world.

Austen Allred,  
Founder, GauntletAI