

RetenaAI



COHORT 2 TRAINEE HANDBOOK

2025

Welcome to RetenaAI

Congratulations and welcome to **RetenaAI Academy** — an immersive and future-focused **Generative AI Engineering program**. This journey is designed not only to elevate your technical and creative skills, but also to set you on a path toward building scalable AI systems, launching innovations, and making global impact.

You are now part of a new generation of African technologists — **engineers of intelligent workflows, creators of AI-powered agents, and builders of digital products that shape the future of work.**

At RetenaAI Academy, we believe talent exists everywhere, but opportunity must be created intentionally. That's why our program is designed to **break financial barriers, accelerate your learning, and equip you with hands-on engineering skills** that allow you to thrive as a high-impact professional or entrepreneur in the AI space.

This will be one of the most **challenging and transformative journeys** of your life — and remember, you're not doing it alone.

The Vision We're Building Together

RetenaAI Academy was created with a bold vision: **to empower Africa's next generation of AI engineers and system builders**. The future belongs to those who can design intelligent workflows, program AI models into real solutions, and develop products that deliver measurable results.

This program is not about abstract theory — it's about **mastering generative AI, prompt engineering, workflow automation, and scalable system design**, then applying those skills in real-world contexts.

The capabilities you're about to develop — from **workflow mapping and API integration to agent design and product development** — are not just globally in demand; they are urgently needed across Africa as industries adapt to the AI era.

By joining RetenaAI, you are stepping into a growing network of **engineers, builders, and innovators** who are shaping how businesses and industries leverage AI for transformation. This is more than training — **it's your launchpad to engineer, deploy, and lead in the global AI economy.**

Our Mission & Vision

Mission:

To equip African builders with **practical engineering, automation, and system integration skills** to create real-world AI solutions and launch meaningful businesses or careers in just 3–6 months.

Vision:

To create a new generation of African **AI engineers and product innovators** — equipped with mastery, empathy, and responsibility — to shape the global future of work, technology, and human-AI collaboration.



Our Core Values

1. **Responsibility** – We take ownership of the systems we build and their impact.
2. **Empowerment** – We provide tools, access, and confidence to launch careers.
3. **Technical Excellence** – We emphasise deep mastery, not superficial learning.
4. **Empathy** – Every system should solve real, human problems.
5. **Nimbleness** – We adapt, learn fast, and move forward with clarity.
6. **Authenticity** – We stay true to who we are as African builders and leaders.

Program Structure

The **Generative AI Engineering Bootcamp** is a 12-week immersive journey designed to take you from foundational AI literacy to advanced system building and deployment. The program is structured into three key phases:

1. Fusion Phase (Weeks 1–4)

This is your launchpad — a mix of guided sessions, self-paced practice, and collaborative challenges. During this phase, you'll build the **core technical and conceptual skills** needed to engineer intelligent systems.

You will:

- Explore the fundamentals of **Generative AI, Prompt Engineering, and AI literacy**
- Learn **workflow and systems thinking** to map how AI fits into business operations
- Experiment with **automation tools and APIs** through hands-on demos
- Preview all **five specialisations** (Integration, Consulting, Agents, Programming, Product Dev) via mini-projects
- Engage in peer collaborations, live workshops, and feedback cycles

Why it matters: This phase ensures that every participant, regardless of background, gains the **confidence and technical fluency** to design and communicate AI-powered workflows.

2. Specialisation Phase (Weeks 5–8)

This is where **depth meets application**. You'll choose a specialisation and work on progressively complex challenges, guided by our **CADA challenge framework (Competency → Application → Deployment → Advancement)**.

You will:

- Dive deep into your chosen specialisation (Integration, Consulting, Agents, Programming, or Product Dev)
- Solve three escalating **CADA challenges** to sharpen your applied engineering skills
- Learn frameworks, tools, and coding practices tailored to your track
- Collaborate with mentors and peers to refine your builds
- Begin preparing for your **capstone project**

Why it matters: This phase transforms you from a generalist into a **specialist**, giving you demonstrable expertise and applied portfolio projects in your chosen area.

3. Capstone Phase (Weeks 9–12)

This is your final test — where all your skills, frameworks, and creativity come together. You'll design, build, and present a **capstone project** that proves your ability to deliver end-to-end AI systems.

You will:

- Define a project scope aligned with a real-world business need
- Build and test your solution with mentor support and peer reviews
- Develop a polished portfolio entry with full documentation
- Present your solution at **Demo Day** to mentors, peers, and industry experts

Why it matters: This phase doesn't just show what you've learned — it proves what you can build. Graduating with a working capstone project ensures you're **industry-ready**, with a portfolio that speaks louder than a CV.

4. Post-Training Pathways

Your learning doesn't end when the sessions stop — this is the bridge to your next level.

You can choose to:

- **Accelerate:** Launch your own consulting practice, SaaS product, or AI-powered service
- **Join the Job Placement Pool:** Get matched with opportunities for **freelance, internship, or full-time consulting roles**
- **Stay Connected:** Contribute as a mentor, facilitator, or community leader within the RetenaAI network

Why it matters: This phase ensures you **transition smoothly from learning to real-world execution**, with support, mentorship, and opportunities to grow in your chosen direction.

Career Placement Income Sharing Agreement

If you secure a job opportunity through our **career placement services**, you'll enter into a **light income-sharing agreement (ISA)** with RetenaAI. This means you'll contribute a small percentage of your **first few months' earnings** as a way to give back and support the growth of the program for future cohorts.

The **specific terms and conditions** of this agreement will be **clearly explained and discussed during the placement phase**, ensuring transparency and alignment before you sign anything.

Why it matters: This arrangement allows us to **continue creating opportunities** for future students while celebrating your success in landing a role in the AI strategy and consulting space.



Learning Experience

RetenaAI Academy isn't a school. It's not a coding bootcamp. It's an *applied innovation lab*. Here's what to expect:



Daily and Weekly Rhythm:

- **Morning Standups** – short syncs to plan your day
- **Evening Deep Work Blocks** – live or peer-led sessions
- **Weekly Reviews** – feedback on tasks, projects, and mindset
- **Assessments** – every module concludes with a challenge
- **Sprint Presentations** – share your work and learn from others

You will be pushed, challenged, and supported.



Program Delivery



Agile Methodology

The program structure and execution are inspired by Agile principles to keep learning adaptive, iterative, and participant-driven. Here's how it works:

- Sprints (1–2 weeks): Each learning or project module is delivered in focused "sprints" with specific goals.
- Stand-ups & Check-ins: Regular short meetings or updates to track progress, address blockers, and maintain accountability
- Iterative Feedback: Mentors and peers provide continuous feedback for improvement throughout each phase
- Backlog Prioritisation: Learners can choose tasks or mini-projects based on skill goals or niche focus.



Result-Oriented Learning

By combining PBL and Agile, RETENAAI ensures participants:

- Learn by doing, not just watching
- Develop a growth mindset and professional work ethic
- Build a portfolio that showcases real, working solutions
- Are you ready to deliver value, whether joining teams or starting your own AI ventures?



Program support and delivery

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Oversees the design, planning, delivery, and validation of all learning activities.

PROGRAM MANAGER

Responsible for managing learning processes and Methodologies across tracks

PROGRAM ASSOCIATES

Leads Agile Curriculum planning, implementation, delivery, and validation.

PRODUCT MANAGER (Projects)

Oversees the execution of live simulated projects across all tracks.

PLACEMENT & RECRUITING

Manages all placement and recruitment-related activities.

Performance Tracker

At RetenaAI Academy, each phase of the program is a critical building block that contributes directly to your growth and readiness as a **Generative AI Engineer**. Learning isn't just about theory — it's about demonstrating what you can build, how you think, and how you solve problems.

Each phase includes:

- **CADA Challenges (Competency → Application → Deployment → Advancement)** that measure your ability to progress step by step
- **Hands-on tasks** that simulate real-world engineering and system integration scenarios
- **Soft skills and presentation practice** to strengthen how you communicate your work and defend your solutions

Performance is evaluated comprehensively and determines how you move forward in the program. For example, you must demonstrate proficiency in **Generative AI foundations** and **Prompt Engineering** before advancing to **specialisation-level CADA challenges** or your **capstone project**.

Fellows are expected to treat each phase with full commitment, as your cumulative performance not only determines your progression through the program but also your readiness for **post-training opportunities** like job placement, accelerator programs, or client-facing projects.

Score Range	Performance Rating
90–100%	Excellent
71–89%	Good
61–70%	Average
46–60%	Fair
0–45%	Poor

Fusion Phase Module Deliverables & Timeline

Daily & Weekly Engagements

- **Daily Stand-Up:** Minimum of 15 minutes each day.
- **Interactive Sessions:** 4 hours per week, including discussions, walkthroughs, and peer interactions.

Assessment Components

Component	Type
Module assessment	Tests
CADA	Practical Tasks

Assessment Timeline

- **Module Assessment:** Thursday *of the final week* of the module.



Weekly Schedule – Weeks 1–4



Daily Stand-Up

- Time: **8:00 AM – 8:15 AM** (Monday to Wednesday)
- Details: Daily team sync led by the Scrum Master to share reports and unblock progress.

Day	Activity	Time	Notes
Monday	Daily Stand-Up	9:00 AM – 9:15 AM	Led by Scrum Master
	Module Interactive Session	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Instructor-led learning session
Tuesday	Daily Stand-Up	9:00 AM – 9:15 AM	
	Module Interactive Session	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	

Wednesday

Daily Stand-Up

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM

**Peer-to-Peer
Unblocking + Free
Collaboration**

Flexible

**Team support,
collaboration, and
troubleshooting**

Thursday

**Module
Assessments**

4:00 PM – 6:15 PM

**Graded assessment
components**

Friday

**Soft Skills & Career
Mentorship
Workshop**

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**Mentorship,
communication, and
career readiness
development**

Guidance Session

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

**Overview and
preparation for the next
module**

Saturday

**Independent
Learning**

Flexible

**Time allocated for
completing tasks,
studying, and reviewing
work**

Specialization Phase — Deliverables & Timeline (Weeks 5–8)

The **Specialization Phase** is where learners move from core foundations into **track-specific expertise**. Each participant selects one of the five tracks (Systems Integration & Automation, AI Strategy, AI Agent Development, Generative AI Programming, or AI Product Development) and builds applied skills through structured **module tasks** and the **CADA progression system**.

By the end of this phase, learners will have a **portfolio-ready set of deliverables** that demonstrate their technical and strategic growth in their chosen specialization.

Daily & Weekly Engagements

- **Daily Stand-Ups (Mon–Fri, ~15 min):** Quick alignment on goals, blockers, and progress.
- **Peer Labs (Mon–Fri, 1 hr):** Collaborative sessions for review, feedback, and shared problem-solving within tracks.
- **Interactive Workshops (Wed & Thu, ~4 hrs/wk):** Track-specific deep dives (e.g., automation builds, strategy playbooks, agent frameworks, RAG pipelines, SaaS design).
- **Responsible AI & Governance Session (Final Week of Phase, Fri 5–7 PM):** Cross-track workshop on ethics, compliance, and stakeholder trust.

Assessment Components

Component	Type	Description
Module Assessments	Examination	Each module across the program (Fusion, Specialisation) includes a formal assessment. These are structured tests designed to evaluate comprehension of concepts taught in that module before progression.
CADA Progression (Levels 4 → 2)	Progressive Challenges	Weekly applied challenges that increase in complexity — moving learners from guided tasks to near real-world scenarios.
Professional Reflection (Ethics & Communication)	Written Task	A short reflection on responsible AI, risk, fairness, and stakeholder communication (submitted in Week 8).



Submission & Timeline

- **Module Deliverables:**

- Submitted at the **end of each specialisation module (Weeks 5–8)**.
- Showcase applied skills within the chosen track.

- **Professional Reflection:**

- Assigned during the **Responsible AI & Governance Workshop (Week 8)**.
- Due on the final **Saturday of Week 8**.

Community & Culture

You're not just joining a program. You're joining a movement.

At Retena, we believe:

- **You belong here** regardless of your background or starting point.
- **We rise by lifting others.** Collaboration is not optional.
- **Ownership is everything.** Excuses don't build products. Action does.
- **Diversity matters.** Gender, ethnicity, and voice enrich our learning.
- **Learning is messy.** You're expected to fail and grow—publicly and proudly.

This community will become your squad, your sounding board, and your future professional network.

Income Sharing Details

The **Income Sharing Agreement (ISA)** applies **only to students who secure job opportunities through RetenaAI's career placement services**.

- **No upfront changes:** Your tuition is fully paid before or during the program; the ISA only activates if our placement services successfully connect you to a qualifying role.
- **Post-placement payment:** A small, fixed percentage of your **first few months' earnings** will be contributed back to RetenaAI.
- **Earnings threshold:** You won't make any payments if your income remains below the agreed threshold.
- **Transparency and support:** The agreement is **fully explained** during the career placement phase, including a **financial planning session, Q&A, and contract review support** to ensure you understand every term clearly.

Why it matters: This approach ensures you get access to **career support and opportunities** while allowing us to **reinvest in the program** for future cohorts.

Accelerator Equity Details

If you opt into the **Accelerator Phase**:

- You'll receive dedicated coaching, feedback, and business tooling
- Once you reach the **profit or investment stage**, you sign a lightweight **equity-sharing agreement** with Retena
- The purpose is to support your growth and fund future entrepreneurs in the program

This phase begins in **Month 5** and culminates in a final **Demo Day**.

Expectations & Responsibilities

Retena Learner Manifesto:

- **I will show up.** Even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard.
- **I will ask questions.** Confusion is not weakness—silence is.
- **I will give feedback.** To help others and help Retena improve.
- **I will build.** Not just talk about ideas—ship projects.
- **I will take ownership.** Of my time, my learning, and my outcomes.

If you uphold this standard, there is no limit to what you can achieve.



Rules & Regulations

At Retena AI, we operate a **high-performance, high-integrity learning environment**. These guidelines ensure consistency, respect, safety, and fairness for all members of the community.



Participation & Attendance

- Learners are expected to **attend all mandatory live sessions**, team meetings, and assessments.
- **Daily standups** are compulsory unless prior notice is given.
- Absences exceeding 3 days in a module without explanation may lead to **disciplinary review**.



Deadlines & Submissions

- All tasks, projects, and assessments must be submitted by the assigned deadlines.
- Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. health or family emergencies) with documented proof.
- Consistent failure to meet deadlines without cause may lead to suspension from specialised tracks or project work.

Team Behaviour

- Learners must participate fully in group projects, sprints, and peer feedback.
- **Freeloading**, conflict avoidance, or project abandonment will result in intervention.
- Respect teammates' time and contributions.

Communication

- Slack is the official communication platform. Important notices, sprint updates, and feedback will be shared here.
- Learners are expected to **check Slack daily**, respond to mentors, and flag blockers.

Code of Conduct

Retena maintains a zero-tolerance policy on the following:

- **Harassment**, discrimination, or bullying (based on race, gender, ability, religion, or background)
- **Plagiarism**, AI-cheating, or uncredited work in submissions
- **Disruptive behaviour** in meetings, Slack threads, or collaborative sessions
- **Unprofessional language** in communications

Intellectual Property

- Code, tools, and assets you build as part of the program are **yours to keep**.
- For joint projects, ownership should be clearly agreed upon in writing.
- Accelerator projects involving Retena resources are subject to the **Equity Agreement** (see above).

Terms & Agreement

Participation in the Retena AI program requires agreement to the following legal and ethical terms:

1. Income Sharing Agreement (ISA)

The **Income Sharing Agreement (ISA)** applies **only if you secure a qualifying job through RetenaAI's career placement services**.

- **Tuition is fully paid upfront** — the ISA is not a substitute for program fees.
- **Activation only after placement:** The ISA begins only once you are successfully placed in a job through our network.
- **Percentage-based repayment:** A small, fixed percentage of your **first few months' earnings** is contributed back to RetenaAI.
- **Income threshold:** No payment is required if your salary is below the agreed minimum threshold.
- **Transparency and support:** Before signing, you'll receive **a clear breakdown of terms**, along with a **Q&A session** and **optional legal review** to ensure you fully understand your agreement.

Why it matters: This ensures that career support remains accessible to you, while your contribution helps fund opportunities for future cohorts.

2. Accelerator Equity Agreement

This is signed in the **final month** if you participate in the accelerator.

- If your startup or service becomes profitable or receives investment, Retena AI is entitled to a **minor equity stake** or a **small revenue share**.
- This enables the program to continue supporting new builders.
- Terms are lightweight, founder-friendly, and negotiable based on the stage and structure of your venture.

3. Confidentiality

- You agree not to share internal materials, learning assets, or client case studies without explicit permission.
- Similarly, Retena commits to protecting your personal data and project materials.

4. Performance-Based Continuation

- Retena AI reserves the right to **dismiss students** who fail to meet engagement or ethical standards.
- Dismissal does not void ISA obligations if learning milestones were completed.

5. Media Release (Optional)

- You may be asked to opt in for Retena to use your testimonial, photo, or project in public marketing materials.
- This is entirely voluntary.

Final Words

You are joining **RetenaAI** Academy at a crucial time—not just for the industry, but for the continent. This is not just about learning to code or using AI. It's about shaping the next chapter of Africa's contribution to global innovation.

We believe in your ability to lead this change. That's why you're here.

So show up fully. Build relentlessly. Be audacious.

Because the future is not written—it's built.

And **Retena is yours. You are Retena.**