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The SME Standard opens to train credentialed professionals for AI's expert-data economy

A new professional school teaches lawyers, accountants, physicians and PhDs the craft behind AI training data — the skill set platforms screen for and no one teaches. First cohort opens 6 October 2026.

BOSTON, Massachusetts — 3 September 2026 — The SME Standard, a professional school for subject-matter experts entering AI training-data work, opened enrolment today for its founding cohort and released its self-paced curriculum.

Frontier AI laboratories now spend heavily on expert human judgment — the prompts, grading rubrics, reference answers and audits that teach and measure advanced models. The people qualified to supply that judgment are credentialed professionals: practising attorneys, CPAs, chartered analysts, physicians and doctoral researchers. Yet platforms reject the large majority of the credentialed professionals who apply.

The reason is rarely expertise. It is craft. A subject-matter expert can be the most qualified person in the room and still fail an assessment because no one ever taught them the form the work takes: a rubric criterion that stands on its own, a prompt hard enough to expose a model's limits but with an answer practitioners agree on, a reference answer with verifiable citations, a review that survives a second reviewer.

"The industry keeps hiring for expertise and then grading for something else entirely," said Wasim Amin, founder of The SME Standard. "I watched extremely good lawyers get sent back over structural problems nobody had ever explained to them. That gap is completely teachable, and until now nobody was teaching it."

The school launches with two programs. **Foundations**, a 59-page self-paced curriculum covering seven modules from evaluation fundamentals to sustaining a career in remote expert work, is available immediately at a founding price of \$395. **Cohort 01**, a four-week live program with Legal and Finance tracks, runs 6–29 October 2026 with eight live labs and four graded artifacts returned with written feedback.

The market context is unusual. The AI training-dataset sector was valued at \$3.2 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach \$16.3 billion by 2034, a compound annual growth rate of 20.5 percent, according to Global Market Insights. Bloomberg reported roughly 100,000 expert-tier AI trainers working as of February 2026. Despite that, no vendor or laboratory currently operates a genuine education program for the experts it depends on.

The school is deliberately vendor-neutral. It teaches transferable craft rather than platform-specific tactics, and its published Integrity Code commits it never to reproduce any platform's confidential material or coach candidates to game a specific assessment.

The SME Standard has not yet run a cohort and therefore publishes no student outcome data. The school has committed to publishing those results when they exist, including unfavourable ones.

Enrolment and full program details are at smestandard.com.

About The SME Standard

The SME Standard is a professional school that teaches credentialed subject-matter experts the craft of AI training and evaluation work — prompt design, rubric construction, reference answers, annotation and quality auditing. It serves individual professionals entering the field and organizations that need a trained, quality-consistent expert workforce. It is vendor-neutral and operates under a published Integrity Code.

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Note to editors: an earnings figure cited in the school's materials refers to one founding instructor's documented result and is not typical or expected. Full disclosure at smestandard.com/disclaimer.html.