

Press release

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UniDistance Suisse rethinks its Master's in AI

UniDistance Suisse is rethinking its Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence, Switzerland's first fully online master's program in the field. Designed to be pursued alongside a professional career, the program is open to all applicants who meet the academic admission requirements. UniDistance Suisse, a university institute accredited under the Higher Education Act (HEdA), is responsible for the program and degree. In autumn 2026, 55 students enrolled. UniDistance Suisse is developing the curriculum in close collaboration with the Idiap Research Institute, whose researchers contribute to teaching several modules.

Preparing the next generation of AI specialists

Delivered online in English on a part-time basis, the program comprises 120 ECTS credits over six semesters. It combines a strong theoretical foundation with cutting-edge developments in artificial intelligence, including deep learning, large language models (LLMs), computer vision and agentic AI, equipping students to design, evaluate and deploy AI solutions across a broad range of application areas.

Nicolas Rothen, Rector of UniDistance Suisse, says: "Artificial intelligence is driving profound changes in the economy and society. With its Master's in Artificial Intelligence, offered entirely online and compatible with professional employment, UniDistance Suisse enables specialists to actively contribute to technological transformation, thereby strengthening Switzerland's capacity for innovation and competitiveness."

A close link between research and teaching

The program is designed and managed by the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science at UniDistance Suisse. With its strong expertise in mathematics, which underpins the field of artificial intelligence, the Faculty also conducts research into the mathematical foundations of AI. In the coming years, new professorial chairs will further strengthen its expertise in computer science.

This expertise is complemented by that of the Idiap Research Institute, one of the leading institutes for artificial intelligence research. The Institute contributed to the redesign of the curriculum, and its researchers teach part of the modules, particularly in the fields of machine learning, natural language processing and computer vision. Students also have the opportunity to complete their master's thesis under the supervision of Idiap researchers.

“Idiap has a threefold mission: research, education and technology transfer. Supporting education in Valais is therefore fully part of our role, and it was natural for Idiap to become involved in this master’s program again. Our researchers will contribute to teaching the program, while master’s theses can be completed at our institute, in close proximity to international research projects. This closer connection between education and research is part of a strategic partnership that paves the way for new collaborations between our two institutions,” says Sébastien Marcel, Head of the Identity Security and Privacy Research Group and member of the interim management team at Idiap.

UniDistance Suisse and Idiap Reinforce Valais as an AI Hub

The collaboration brings together UniDistance Suisse’s expertise in university education and Idiap’s expertise in cutting-edge research, thereby strengthening artificial intelligence education in Valais.

Stefan Bumann, President of the Foundation Board of UniDistance Suisse, says: “Together, we combine academic excellence, cutting-edge research and strong regional roots. With this program, we reaffirm our commitment to Valais as a center for education, research and innovation, while training the specialists who will help shape the world of tomorrow.”

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About UniDistance Suisse	About the Idiap Research Institute
UniDistance Suisse occupies a unique position in the Swiss higher education landscape and meets the needs of people seeking flexibility. As a university institute accredited under the Higher Education Act (HEdA), it combines the flexibility of location-independent education with an active and interdisciplinary research culture on its Brig campus. For more than 30 years, its five faculties—law, psychology, economics, history, and mathematics and computer science—have contributed to shaping the teaching, learning and research of tomorrow. Today, UniDistance Suisse has more than 2,700 students and nearly 550 employees.	The Idiap Research Institute, based in Martigny, Switzerland, is a leading research institute in artificial intelligence. Founded in 1991, Idiap has deep expertise in machine learning, human-centered AI, speech and audio processing, energy informatics, health and genomics, digital security, and natural language processing (NLP). The institute collaborates actively with industry and participates in national and international projects to drive innovation in AI.