

AI Readiness Checklist For Accelerators

Is your cohort investor-ready on AI? A practical guide for programme managers and portfolio leads.

73%

of VCs say stronger AI governance makes companies more likely to succeed financially*

90% +

of investors see major opportunity in AI that prioritises responsible design*

EU AI Act

enforcement active. Does your cohort know their risk tier?

How to use this checklist

Run this with each cohort company at intake and again at pre-raise. The four stages map to the AI lifecycle. You don't need to complete them all at once. Flag any red items to Acuity Data for a 30-minute triage call.

STAGE 01 COHORT INTAKE - AI CLASSIFICATION

AT PROGRAMME START

Before anything else, understand what each portfolio company is actually building. EU AI Act and investor scrutiny both start here.

- Does the product make automated decisions about people (hiring, lending, scoring)?
- Is the AI system customer-facing or internal only?
- Has the founder identified which regulatory tier their AI falls into?
- Is there a named person responsible for AI ethics / governance?
- Does the team understand the difference between AI as a feature vs. AI as the product?

STAGE 02 GOVERNANCE FOUNDATIONS

WITHIN FIRST 4 WEEKS

Investors increasingly ask for this at Series A. Accelerators that help cohorts get here early create real competitive advantage.

- Is there a documented AI use case rationale (why this AI, why now)?
- Has the team completed a basic data impact assessment?
- Are training data sources documented and legally cleared?
- Is there a model card or equivalent documentation?
- Has the team mapped which decisions require human oversight?

STAGE 03 COMPLIANCE & LEGAL READINESS

BEFORE FUNDRAISE

This is where due diligence gets difficult. Investors and their legal teams will ask these questions. Your cohort should have answers ready.

- Is UK GDPR / PDPL lawful basis documented for all data processing?
- Has a DPIA been completed if processing sensitive personal data?
- Are users informed that AI is involved in decisions affecting them?
- Is there a mechanism for users to challenge AI-assisted decisions?
- Has the team checked sector-specific rules (FCA, CQC, Ofsted)?
- Is there a data retention and deletion policy in place?
- For UAE/GCC companies: is PDPL compliance mapped?

STAGE 04 INVESTOR & EXIT READINESS

SERIES A & BEYOND

The questions VCs ask about AI have shifted. This is what the best-prepared cohort companies have ready when they walk into a data room.

- Can the founder explain AI risk in plain language to a non-technical investor?
- Is there a one-page AI governance summary for the data room?
- Has bias testing been run and documented across key user groups?
- Is there an incident response playbook for AI failures or data breaches?
- Are third-party AI vendors (OpenAI, etc.) covered in data processing agreements?
- Has the team stress-tested their AI narrative against a hostile investor question?

FOUND GAPS? LET'S FIX THEM

Acuity Data works directly with accelerators and their cohorts to close AI governance gaps. Embedded mentorship, implementation sprints, and masterclasses, built around your programme calendar.

