

EA-008: AI Delivery & Lifecycle Management Assessment™

Can Your Enterprise Deliver, Operate, and Improve AI Solutions Reliably Across Their Full Lifecycle?

Purpose

A practical executive assessment for evaluating whether AI opportunities are selected, designed, built, tested, deployed, operated, monitored, improved, and retired through a disciplined enterprise lifecycle that balances value, quality, risk, speed, and accountability.

Educational Executive Self-Assessment | Version 1.0

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About This Assessment

AI lifecycle capability is the enterprise discipline to move AI solutions from opportunity through design, development, validation, deployment, operations, improvement, and retirement with clear accountability and evidence-based controls. This assessment helps leaders determine whether AI delivery is managed as a dependable end-to-end system or as a series of disconnected pilots and technical handoffs.

How to Complete It

1. Rate each statement

Use the 1-5 scale based on current, observable enterprise practice - not future intent, isolated pilots, or vendor assurances.
2. Score each domain

Add the five ratings in each domain. Every domain score ranges from 5 to 25.
3. Calculate the total

Add all eight domain scores. The overall AI delivery and lifecycle score ranges from 40 to 200.
4. Interpret the pattern

Review the total and the distribution. Any domain below 15 represents a material lifecycle dependency that may limit value, quality, control, resilience, or sustainable operation.
5. Select 90-day actions

Choose a limited number of executive actions that strengthen lifecycle ownership, evidence, quality, control, operational readiness, or continuous improvement.

Rating Scale

1 Strongly Disagree	Practice is absent or contradicted by current evidence.
2 Disagree	Practice is inconsistent, informal, or limited to isolated areas.
3 Partly Agree	Practice exists in several areas but is not yet enterprise-wide.
4 Agree	Practice is generally reliable, measured, and consistently applied.
5 Strongly Agree	Practice is integrated, evidence-driven, and continuously improved.

Recommended use: Complete individually first, then compare results as an executive team. Differences in ratings are evidence of lifecycle, ownership, quality, risk, or operational misalignment and should be discussed before averaging scores.

Domain 1: Opportunity Intake & Portfolio Prioritization

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

AI opportunities enter through a defined intake process that captures the business problem, intended users, expected value, constraints, risks, dependencies, and accountable owner.					
Use cases are prioritized using consistent criteria that balance strategic value, feasibility, data readiness, risk, cost, operational impact, and time to measurable benefit.					
Portfolio decisions distinguish experimentation, production candidates, mandatory capabilities, and ideas that should be deferred or rejected.					
Duplicate or overlapping AI initiatives are identified early and consolidated where shared capabilities, data, platforms, or controls provide greater enterprise value.					
Leadership periodically reviews the AI portfolio to stop low-value work, redirect resources, and confirm that active initiatives remain aligned to enterprise priorities.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 2: Requirements, Outcomes & Stakeholder Alignment

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

Every AI initiative has clear business, user, functional, data, quality, risk, compliance, and operational requirements before material development begins.					
Success measures include expected outcomes, acceptable error or uncertainty, service levels, adoption expectations, control thresholds, and conditions that would make the solution unacceptable.					
Business owners, end users, subject-matter experts, technology teams, data teams, risk functions, and operators participate in requirements discovery and validation.					
Assumptions, limitations, exclusions, human-decision boundaries, and unresolved questions are documented and traceable throughout the lifecycle.					
Requirement changes are evaluated for downstream effects on data, design, testing, controls, deployment, operations, cost, schedule, and expected value.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 3: Solution Design & Architecture

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

AI solutions are designed within an approved enterprise architecture that addresses integration, interoperability, scalability, security, privacy, resilience, observability, and maintainability.					
Design decisions explicitly determine where rules, analytics, machine learning, generative AI, automation, and human judgment are appropriate or unnecessary.					
Architecture reviews evaluate model and vendor dependencies, data flows, interfaces, failure modes, fallback behavior, technical debt, and long-term operating ownership.					
Reusable services, patterns, controls, and platforms are preferred when they reduce duplication without creating excessive complexity or concentration risk.					
Material design decisions and tradeoffs are documented so they can be reviewed, tested, maintained, and explained after implementation.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 4: Data, Model & Product Development

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

Development practices provide version control and traceability for data, prompts, features, code, configurations, models, evaluation sets, dependencies, and approvals.					
Teams use controlled environments and repeatable pipelines that separate experimentation, development, testing, staging, and production activities.					
Data preparation and model-development decisions are documented, peer reviewed, and linked to approved requirements, risks, and intended use.					
Technical teams manage third-party models, libraries, services, and open-source components through defined selection, security, licensing, update, and dependency controls.					
Development progress is measured through usable evidence and working increments rather than activity volume, demonstrations, or optimistic completion percentages.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 5: Validation, Testing & Independent Challenge

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

AI solutions are tested against functional, data, model, security, privacy, performance, reliability, fairness, usability, explainability, and operational requirements appropriate to the use case.					
Evaluation datasets and test scenarios represent expected conditions, edge cases, misuse, adversarial behavior, degraded inputs, and foreseeable changes in the operating environment.					
Acceptance criteria and release thresholds are defined before final testing and cannot be waived without documented risk acceptance by authorized leaders.					
Independent reviewers can challenge assumptions, evidence, limitations, controls, and readiness for high-impact or high-risk AI solutions.					
Defects, evaluation gaps, residual risks, and unresolved limitations are documented, prioritized, retested, and communicated to decision-makers before release.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 6: Deployment, Release & Change Readiness

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

Production deployment requires documented approval confirming business readiness, technical readiness, control readiness, user readiness, support readiness, and rollback capability.					
Release plans define ownership, sequence, dependencies, communications, training, access, change windows, contingency actions, and success measures.					
Pilot and phased-release decisions are based on risk and learning objectives, with explicit criteria for expansion, pause, rollback, or termination.					
Production configurations, models, prompts, data connections, permissions, and dependencies are verified against approved release artifacts.					
A post-deployment review confirms whether the solution operates as intended and whether early user, performance, control, or support issues require corrective action.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 7: Operations, Monitoring & Incident Response

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

Every production AI solution has named operational owners, support procedures, service expectations, escalation paths, and documented maintenance responsibilities.					
Monitoring covers data quality, model or response performance, drift, availability, latency, cost, security, control effectiveness, user behavior, overrides, and business outcomes.					
Alert thresholds and response procedures distinguish routine variance, degraded service, control failure, harmful output, security events, and conditions requiring suspension.					
AI incidents and near misses are logged, investigated, contained, communicated, and resolved through coordinated technical, business, risk, legal, security, and operational response.					
Operational evidence is retained at a level appropriate to accountability, auditability, troubleshooting, learning, and regulatory or contractual obligations.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Domain 8: Lifecycle Review, Improvement & Retirement

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Base the rating on repeatable enterprise behavior and current evidence.

Production AI solutions are periodically reassessed for continued value, performance, risk, control effectiveness, technical health, user need, and alignment with current requirements.					
Changes to models, prompts, data, vendors, policies, integrations, or operating conditions trigger proportionate impact analysis, validation, approval, and communication.					
Lessons from monitoring, incidents, user feedback, overrides, defects, cost variance, and business outcomes are incorporated into product, process, control, and training improvements.					
Retirement criteria and plans address user transition, data retention, access removal, contract closure, dependency cleanup, record preservation, and replacement capabilities.					
Lifecycle metrics are reviewed across the portfolio to identify systemic bottlenecks, recurring defects, weak handoffs, control gaps, and opportunities for enterprise-wide improvement.					

Domain score: _____ / 25

Evidence or observations:

Scoring & Lifecycle Capability Interpretation

Record each domain score. Treat any domain below 15 as a priority dependency even when the overall score is higher.

1. Opportunity Intake & Portfolio Prioritization	____ / 25
2. Requirements, Outcomes & Stakeholder Alignment	____ / 25
3. Solution Design & Architecture	____ / 25
4. Data, Model & Product Development	____ / 25
5. Validation, Testing & Independent Challenge	____ / 25
6. Deployment, Release & Change Readiness	____ / 25
7. Operations, Monitoring & Incident Response	____ / 25
8. Lifecycle Review, Improvement & Retirement	____ / 25
Total AI delivery and lifecycle score	____ / 200

Overall Lifecycle Capability Levels

180-200	Lifecycle-Optimized Enterprise	AI opportunities, engineering, validation, release, operations, monitoring, improvement, and retirement operate as one integrated enterprise capability.
150-179	Well Aligned	Strong lifecycle foundations support most priorities, with targeted delivery, evidence, operational, or control gaps to resolve before broader scaling.
110-149	Developing	Important lifecycle practices exist, but intake, requirements, engineering, testing, deployment, monitoring, or retirement remains uneven.
70-109	Fragmented	AI activity is constrained by fragmented handoffs, weak evidence, inconsistent engineering, limited operational readiness, or unclear lifecycle ownership.
40-69	Not Ready	Foundational delivery, validation, deployment, monitoring, and lifecycle-control mechanisms are insufficient for reliable enterprise AI use.

Important: This assessment is a discussion and prioritization tool, not a certification. Lifecycle capability should be validated using current evidence, delivery artifacts, requirements, architecture decisions, test results, release records, operational metrics, incident history, monitoring data, and use-case-specific risk requirements.

Executive Reflection & 90-Day Action Plan

Use the capability pattern to identify the few leadership actions that will most improve delivery reliability, lifecycle accountability, operational control, and sustainable AI value.

Lifecycle strengths

Which intake, requirements, design, engineering, validation, deployment, operational, or improvement practices already support reliable AI at scale?

Critical constraints

Which weaknesses in handoffs, evidence, quality, controls, operational readiness, monitoring, or retirement most limit AI outcomes?

Decisions required from leadership

What portfolio, architecture, quality, release, operational, investment, sourcing, or risk-tolerance decisions cannot be delegated?

90-Day Priority Actions

Executive commitment: We will review progress by _____ and reassess affected domains using current evidence.

Continue Your AI Delivery Journey

AI creates sustainable enterprise value when opportunity selection, Process Intelligence, requirements, architecture, engineering, quality, governance, deployment, operations, monitoring, and continuous improvement operate as one connected lifecycle.

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