

CAREER ROADMAP

Chief Audit Executive Career Guide: AI Audit Edition

A practical career roadmap for internal audit leaders in the AI era: the modern CAE's responsibilities, the skills and certifications that matter, the career path, and a 90-day learning plan.

IN THIS ROADMAP

- What Does an AI-Ready Chief Audit Executive Do?
- Core Responsibilities
- Skills That Separate Top CAEs
- Technical Knowledge Worth Learning
- Certifications That Build Credibility
- AI Audit Topics Every CAE Should Know

A free career roadmap from GRC Careers · AGJ, the AI governance job board

Read the latest version, and browse live AI Audit jobs, at ai-governance-jobs.com/ai-governance-career-guides/chief-audit-executive-ai-audit-career-guide

Artificial intelligence is changing what boards expect from internal audit. The modern Chief Audit Executive is no longer responsible only for financial controls, operational risk, and regulatory compliance. Today's CAE must also provide independent assurance over AI governance, model risk, cybersecurity, data quality, privacy, and the ethical use of AI.

Organizations are deploying AI faster than governance frameworks can mature. That creates an enormous opportunity for audit leaders who understand both traditional assurance and emerging AI risks.

WHAT DOES AN AI-READY CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE DO?

An AI-focused CAE helps the organization answer questions such as:

- Is our AI governance framework effective?
- Are AI systems producing reliable and explainable results?
- Are regulatory requirements being met?
- Are AI vendors introducing unacceptable risks?
- Can executives trust AI-generated business decisions?
- Are controls keeping pace with rapidly changing technology?

Rather than replacing traditional audit work, AI expands the scope of assurance.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Governance

- Audit AI governance programs
- Review AI policies and standards
- Evaluate oversight structures
- Assess board reporting

Risk Management

- Review AI risk assessments
- Evaluate model risk
- Assess third-party AI providers
- Review emerging technology risks

Controls

- Test AI-related internal controls
- Review automated decision making
- Evaluate monitoring processes
- Verify documentation

Regulatory Readiness

Prepare organizations for requirements involving AI governance, privacy, cybersecurity, consumer protection, and industry regulations.

SKILLS THAT SEPARATE TOP CAES

Traditional Leadership

- Enterprise Risk Management
- Internal Controls

- Financial Reporting
- Operational Auditing
- SOX
- Board Communications

AI Leadership

- AI Governance
- AI Risk Management
- Responsible AI
- Model Validation
- Prompt Governance
- AI Vendor Risk
- Data Governance
- Cybersecurity

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE WORTH LEARNING

You do not need to become a data scientist. You should understand generative AI, large language models (LLMs), machine learning fundamentals, the AI model lifecycle, AI documentation, AI monitoring, data quality, bias testing, explainability, and human oversight.

CERTIFICATIONS THAT BUILD CREDIBILITY

Internal Audit

- Certified Internal Auditor (CIA)
- Certification in Risk Management Assurance (CRMA)

Governance and Risk

- Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC)
- Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)

AI Governance

- Artificial Intelligence Governance Professional (AIGP)

Security

- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)

AI AUDIT TOPICS EVERY CAE SHOULD KNOW

- AI Governance Frameworks
- AI Risk Registers
- AI Inventory Management
- Human Oversight Controls
- AI Acceptable Use Policies
- Model Validation
- AI Procurement Reviews
- Third-Party AI Risk
- Prompt Management
- AI Incident Response
- Responsible AI Principles

- AI Monitoring and Continuous Assurance

INDUSTRIES HIRING AI-SAVVY CAES

- Financial Services
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Government
- Higher Education
- Manufacturing
- Technology
- Energy
- Life Sciences
- Nonprofits
- Retail
- Defense Contractors

TYPICAL CAREER PATH

1. Senior Auditor
2. Audit Manager
3. Director of Internal Audit
4. Vice President of Internal Audit
5. Chief Audit Executive
6. Chief Risk Officer
7. Chief Compliance Officer
8. Board Audit Committee Advisor

SALARY OUTLOOK

Compensation varies by industry, geography, organization size, and AI expertise, but experienced Chief Audit Executives remain among the highest-paid leaders in governance, risk, and compliance. Organizations increasingly place a premium on executives who can oversee AI risk and provide independent assurance over emerging technologies.

BUILD YOUR AI AUDIT TOOLKIT

Develop familiarity with Microsoft Copilot, Claude, ChatGPT, Perplexity, AI governance platforms, GRC platforms, data analytics tools, and continuous auditing solutions.

YOUR 90-DAY LEARNING PLAN

Month 1

- Learn AI fundamentals
- Study AI governance frameworks
- Read current AI regulations

Month 2

- Audit an existing AI use case
- Review AI vendor contracts
- Build an AI risk inventory

Month 3

- Develop AI audit procedures
- Present AI risks to leadership
- Create an AI assurance roadmap

FINAL THOUGHT

The future Chief Audit Executive will not simply audit financial controls. They will provide independent assurance over how organizations build, govern, and trust artificial intelligence. Those who combine deep audit expertise with AI governance knowledge will be exceptionally well positioned for executive leadership over the next decade.

Ready to make the move? Browse current [internal audit and AI audit roles](#), and read our companion piece, [10 Questions Every Chief Audit Executive Should Ask About AI Risk](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does an AI-ready Chief Audit Executive do?

An AI-ready CAE provides independent assurance over AI governance, model risk, cybersecurity, data quality, privacy, and the ethical use of AI, in addition to traditional financial controls, operational risk, and regulatory compliance. AI expands the scope of assurance rather than replacing traditional audit work.

What certifications does a Chief Audit Executive need?

Core credentials include the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) and Certification in Risk Management Assurance (CRMA), plus CRISC and CISA for governance and risk, the Artificial Intelligence Governance Professional (AIGP) for AI governance, and CISSP for security.

What is the typical career path to Chief Audit Executive?

The common ladder runs Senior Auditor, Audit Manager, Director of Internal Audit, Vice President of Internal Audit, and then Chief Audit Executive, often advancing to Chief Risk Officer, Chief Compliance Officer, or a board audit committee advisory role.

Which industries hire AI-savvy Chief Audit Executives?

Financial services, healthcare, insurance, government, higher education, manufacturing, technology, energy, life sciences, nonprofits, retail, and defense contractors are all hiring audit leaders who can oversee AI risk and provide assurance over emerging technologies.

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