

# UTHealth Houston AI Accelerator (AIA) Charter

## Purpose

The AI Accelerator (AIA), under auspices the of the Center for Digital Healthcare Innovation (CDHI), serves as the institution's innovation incubator for artificial intelligence (AI) enabled solutions, supporting the development, validation, and maturation of internally generated ideas into scalable, enterprise-ready applications. While the AIA's focus is clinical innovations, the AIA will also provide guidance for research and educational AI solutions that are internally developed.

Operating under the Center for Digital Healthcare Innovation (CDHI) and aligned with Digital Health Governance Committee (and its related subcommittees), the AIA provides a structured, multidisciplinary environment for translating concepts into integrated, operationally viable, and compliant solutions.

The AIA fosters collaboration between faculty, developers, and institutional stakeholders to ensure that all innovations align with UTHealth Houston's priorities for clinical excellence, operational efficiency, education, and research advancement.

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## Scope

The AIA is responsible for:

- Supporting early-stage ideation, incubation, and iterative development of internally developed AI-driven innovation concepts;
- Providing a governed intake and review process for concepts;
- Ensuring proposals align with institutional standards and applicable workflows, may include EHR integration; and research and education standards;
- Preparing validated solutions for transition from proposal to pilot and enterprise pathways through appropriate governance structures; and
- Operating as the front-end innovation engine within the broader governance ecosystem, under CDHI's innovation strategy and the Portfolio Integrity Committee (PIC) for downstream execution.

### Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the AIA are:

- Innovation with Discipline: Encourage AI innovation while adhering to institutional guardrails for compliance, privacy, and security;
- Integrated Design: Prioritize solutions that integrate with existing systems, including the electronic health record and clinical workflows;
- Multidisciplinary Collaboration: Leverage expertise across technical, clinical, operational, and regulatory domains;
- Iterative Development: Support continuous refinement through staged feedback and validation; and
- Transparency & Accountability: Maintain clear documentation, review checkpoints, and decision-making processes.

### Membership & Committee Composition

The AIA is composed of a multidisciplinary committee of subject matter experts (SMEs) representing key institutional domains. Membership will represent these areas of the enterprise:

- Legal
- Compliance & Privacy
- Information Technology (IT) Security
- AI Developers / Data Science
- Clinical Technology
- Clinical Faculty
- Office of Technology Management (OTM)
- Marketing and Communications
- Revenue Cycle Management
- Office of Sponsored Projects

Other members of the AIA committee shall include

- University CMIO
- UTP CMIO
- Vice Dean for Clinical Technology
- Associate VP/Lead for Medical AI

AIA leadership may include a program manager and designated project managers responsible for coordination, intake management, and applicant engagement.

Additional subject matter experts or ad hoc participants may be invited as needed to support specific projects or domains, consistent with CDHI's collaborative model.

The CDHI Steering Committee shall select two AIA Chairs:

- Clinical innovation leader (senior clinician with credibility across schools, has deep understanding of workflows, care delivery and adoption risks)
- Technical/operational leader (senior leader with experience in AI, informatics and digital platforms; has strong grasp of feasibility, architecture and governance pathways)

The AIA Chairs will select the members of the AIA committee. The AIA Chairs will set procedures for decision-making, including the required quorum.

### *Intake & Innovation Development Process*

The AIA will maintain a checklist of operational sign-offs as each concept progresses through the development process. The goal of this process is the development of a mature solution ready for enterprise deployment; however, it is expected that not all concepts will become enterprise ready. For those concepts deemed necessary for enterprise deployment, the AIA will present a checklist of sign-off of relevant internal stakeholders (compliance, legal, privacy, etc.).

The AIA maintains a structured, stage-gated intake and development process:

#### 1. Initial Submission

- Innovation requests enter through the ServiceNow intake form: [go.uth.edu/aia](https://go.uth.edu/aia)
- Submissions capture initial concept, stakeholders, and intended outcomes

#### 2. Intake Review & Interview

- AIA project management may conduct an initial review and brief interview with the applicant
- The purpose of the intake review and interview is to:
  - Clarify the problem statement
  - Verify that the concept is appropriate for the AIA review
  - Identify required stakeholders and dependencies

### 3. Concept Development

- Applicants complete the AIA Concept Idea Request presentation template and present at an AIA meeting for review and initial approval by the AIA as a whole
- The AIA Concept Idea Request presentation includes:
  - Problem definition
  - Proposed solution
  - Workflow and system considerations (including EHR where applicable)
  - Expected value (ROI/VOI)
  - Risks and dependencies

### 4. Iterative Engagement

- Applicants continue to refine and mature their concept with AIA guidance
- Projects return to AIA at defined intervals for:
  - Feedback
  - validation checkpoints (including, for example, Chatbot Content QA Scoring rubrics as applicable)
  - incremental sign-offs (including DIR's AI System Facts standardized notice)
- Defined intervals:
  - Initiation
  - End of User Acceptance Testing
  - Major feature changes

This iterative model is designed to align with CDHI's role in use case development, validation, and early-stage pipeline management.

#### 5. Environment & Data Access Determination

- Needs for access to EHR environments (such as Epic TST/INN) are evaluated during the initial application stage
- Decisions are based on:
  - Project maturity
  - technical feasibility
  - compliance and security considerations

#### 6. Transition to Pilot & Enterprise Pathways

- Mature clinical solutions may be advanced to the Portfolio Integrity Committee (PIC) through the Innovation Connection pathway for:
  - Pilot consideration
  - resource allocation
  - enterprise deployment planning
- Mature non-clinical (i.e., research and education-related) solutions shall be reviewed by the appropriate university governance structures prior to enterprise deployment and operational pilots.

#### Innovation Connection

Under the auspices of the Center for Digital Healthcare Innovation, the AIA is responsible for the oversight and coordination of “homegrown” AI applications development. AIA functions as an innovation incubator with the stated aim of producing fully vetted software solutions ready for enterprise-level deployment. After initial development of these homegrown applications, PIC assists AIA with initial pilot development and ushers successful pilot applications through enterprise deployment. The AIA shall connect to PIC via the Innovation Connection, which will have two crucial functions:

- For preliminary pilots, the AIA will submit a pilot project request to PIC for consideration. PIC will perform routine project intake/discovery and then evaluate the request at its monthly meeting.
- For complete enterprise deployment, the AIA will make a formal presentation to PIC. Prior to presentation at PIC, PIC will share all proposal information with the

Operations Council (OC) and the Clinical Operations & Technology Dyads Committee (Dyads) for informational purposes. PIC shall solicit input from OC and Dyads and all other relevant subject matter experts for PIC's review during the project intake process before presentation and prioritization at PIC

### Responsibilities

The AIA is responsible for:

- Managing the innovation intake pipeline for AI-related initiatives
  - Facilitating multidisciplinary review and collaboration
  - Supporting use case definition, validation, and feasibility assessment
  - Ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, privacy, and security requirements
  - Guiding projects toward pilot readiness and enterprise scalability
  - Maintaining documentation of decisions, feedback, and project progression
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### Governance & Reporting

- The AIA operates under the CDHI Steering Committee and contributes to the broader innovation pipeline
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### Meetings & Cadence

- The AIA meets weekly to review submissions and project updates

Additional ad hoc sessions may be convened.

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### Boundary Statement

The AIA:

- Does not allocate enterprise resources or prioritize institutional project sequencing
- Does not set enterprise digital strategy or approve major investments (Digital Health Governance Committee responsibility)
- Focuses exclusively on early-stage innovation, incubation, and readiness

### Review Cycle

The CDHI Steering Committee shall review this charge each September to ensure that it remains aligned with institutional priorities and governance needs.

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