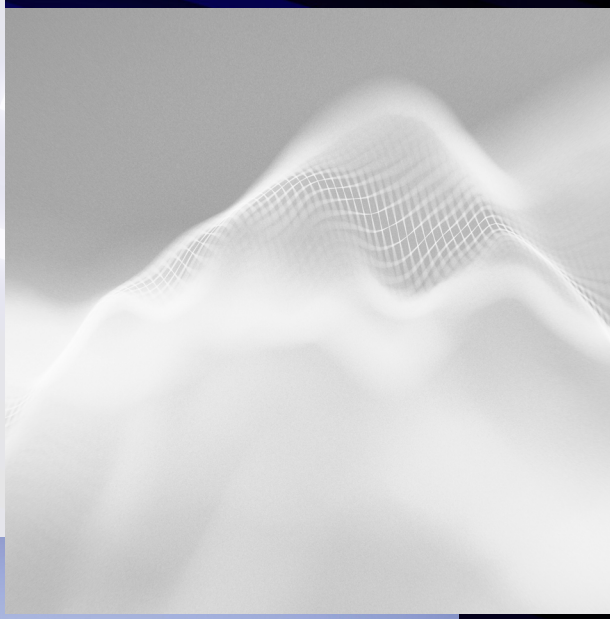
Partner with emerging data talent to solve real challenges and explore complex data problems





The Master of Data Science and Innovation (MDSi) at UTS is a postgraduate degree that prepares graduates to apply data science to complex, real-world challenges.

A defining feature of the MDSi is its focus on applied, industry-engaged learning. Students work on authentic challenges drawn from real organisational contexts, building the skills needed to frame problems, work with ambiguity, and translate data insights into practical outcomes.



Innovation Lab (iLab) Capstone

At its core, iLab is a collaborative innovation platform where partners bring forward an open-ended data based challenge.

iLab provides a structured yet flexible environment for experimentation and enables both students and partners to test ideas, examine hypotheses, and uncover new opportunities within under-utilised or emerging data contexts.

"iLab gave me the opportunity to solve a real business problem, which not only put my technical skills from university into practice but also pushed me to develop a deeper understanding of the business context. This helped me deliver a data science solution that genuinely suited the industry partners most."

– Amy Yang, MDSi graduate (2024).

How does it work?

Students work in small teams to explore and respond to your organisations' data challenge brief. Taking an end-to-end approach, they will:

- Frame and refine the brief through investigation and research
- Explore and integrate new or existing data sources
- Experiment with methods, modelling and visualisation techniques
- Generate insights and identify emerging patterns or opportunities
- Develop recommendations, concepts or prototypes
- Communicate outcomes to both technical and non-technical audiences

Each partner is typically supported by multiple student teams, offering a range of perspectives and approaches to the same challenge.



Why be a partner in iLab?

iLab offers a unique opportunity to collaborate with emerging data talent in a structured, low-risk environment:

- Access fresh perspectives on complex or underexplored challenges
- Explore ideas in a safe-to-experiment environment
- Receive multiple approaches and potential solutions from different teams
- Gain new insights, prototypes and recommendations that can inform future work
- Engage with a pipeline of highly skilled graduates with both technical and transdisciplinary capabilities
- Contribute to shaping industry-ready talent by providing real-world context and feedback

What's required of an iLab partner?

Partners play a critical role in shaping the student experience and ensuring projects are grounded in real-world relevance. Partners are asked to:

- Provide an open-ended data based challenge brief aligned to a real organisational or sector issue
- Supply open (preferred) or synthetic data
- Attend a small number of key sessions and check-ins across the project (see key touchpoints table)
- Key sessions occur in person, on-campus on Wednesday, 6 – 8pm
- Fortnightly check-ins (45 minutes) scheduled collaboratively with your student team and dependent on commitment/availability
- Provide feedback on student work and project outcomes

Challenges should be broad enough to encourage exploration and creativity, allowing students to test ideas, examine a variety of innovative approaches and generate meaningful outcomes.

"What stands out about MDSi students is their ability to combine technical depth with curiosity, initiative and a practical mindset. They ask thoughtful questions, adapt quickly to complex briefs, and can turn data and AI concepts into insights and prototypes that feel relevant to real industry challenges."

– William So, Head of AI and Analytics – Synogize.

Examples of previous project briefs included:

- Using machine learning and spatial data analysis to identify crime patterns and predict high-risk areas to support smarter decision-making.
- Designing and evaluating frameworks to test, measure and improve prompt injection resistance in LLM-based chatbots.
- Developing explainable AI approaches to detect synthetic images, combining multimodal data to improve transparency and trust in digital systems.

Key touchpoints

Innovation Lab happens twice per year in the UTS semester.

Autumn Semester (March 2027 – May 2027) Spring Semester (August 2027 – October 2027)

Activity	Autumn Semester	Spring Semester
Preparing to engage		
EOIs open. Partners can submit their challenge via the UTS Career Hub portal.	16th November 2026	1st June 2027
EOIs close. This is the final date for partners to submit a challenge.	5th February 2027	16th July 2027
Confirmed partners to provide any required data. Data should be open (preferred) or synthetic data.	19th February 2027	30th July 2027
Confirmed partners to provide any legal paperwork. This could include non-disclosure agreements, or Intellectual Property requirements.	19th February 2027	30th July 2027
Subject engagement		
Project leads attend first iLab session with student teams.	3rd March 2027	11th August 2027
Early stage: Project leads to provide feedback on students' preliminary analysis, data understanding and any early insights/proposal.	17th March 2027	25th August 2027
Midpoint validation: Project leads to provide feedback as students present more concrete findings, prototype and model direction.	31st March 2027	8th September 2027
Pre-final: Project leads receive near-final outputs via student presentation and provide feedback.	21st April 2027	29th September 2027
Final showcase and demos with student teams, in person at UTS.	12th May 2027	20th October 2027
Project Leads receive final report from student teams.	21st May 2027	27th October 2027



Intellectual property, confidentiality and data considerations

It is preferred that the data provided for iLab projects is open data with no sharing restrictions, however where this is not feasible, data should be synthetic.

In accordance with the UTS Intellectual Property Policy students own the Intellectual Property (IP) rights in the work they create through their studies, coursework and research during their degrees, unless a specific agreement to the contrary has been signed by them. This includes the IP in the report(s) they create. If the organisation requires a non-disclosure (NDA) or confidentiality agreement to be entered into with the student, please provide a copy of the proposed agreement to TD School Partnerships team prior to the commencement of the subject to be shared with students. Please note UTS is not party to NDA or IP Agreements with partners. These agreements should be drawn up directly between partners and students.

By joining iLab as an industry partner in this subject, the organisation agrees (at a minimum) to acknowledge by name the student/s for their work if they decide to implement or display the ideas or information in any form, and we encourage discussion and agreement with students around such matters before the project commences.

Partners who are keen to further explore students' solutions or continue to work on projects after iLab, are welcome to discuss options with their student team directly and could consider further engagement opportunities such as internships or employment.

If UTS staff and contractors received information from industry partners, they must keep this information confidential in accordance with the agreement between UTS and the industry partner for the subject, and their employment agreement with UTS.

Ready to get involved?

Applications for **Autumn 2027** open on **16 November 2026** and close on **5 February 2027.**

Applications for **Spring 2027** open on **1 June 2027** and close on **16 July 2027.**

Click here to submit an iLab EOI application before the deadline, or get in touch with the TD School Partnerships team at **TDSchoolPartnerships@uts.edu.au**

UTS CRICOS 00099F
UTS TEQSA PRV12060
0077271 Nov 2026