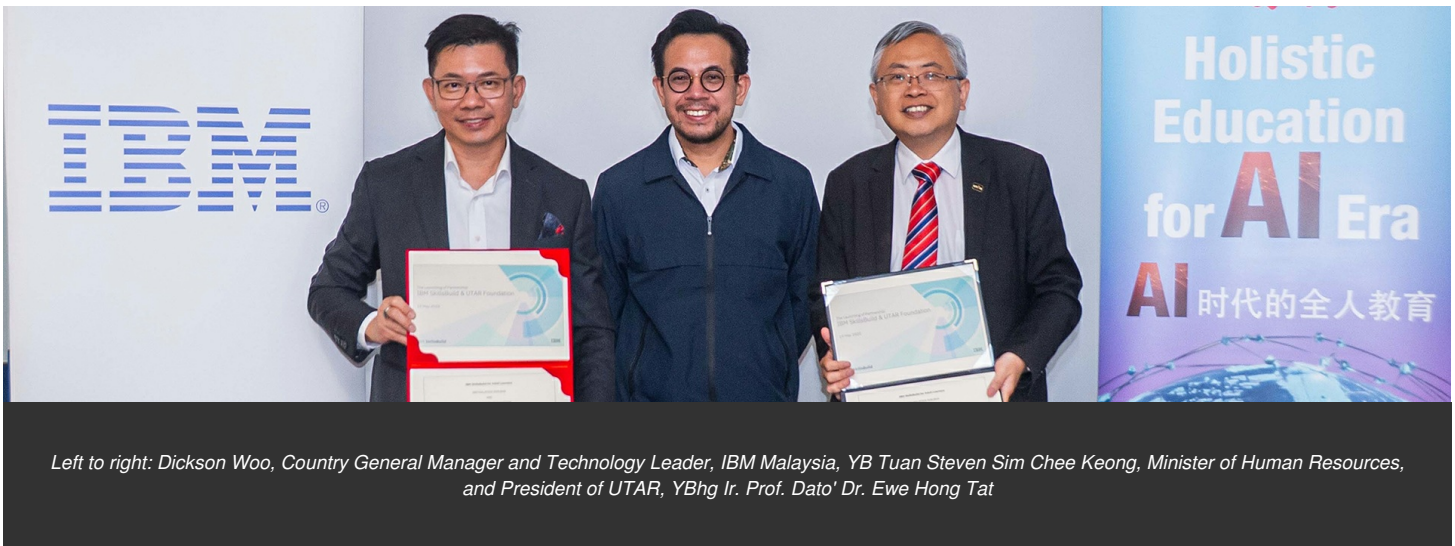


Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman and IBM SkillsBuild Announce New AI-skills Collaboration

- The collaboration focuses on upskilling adult learners in AI, web development, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.
- This collaboration aims to support job seekers who are in their final year of degree program, the alumni of UTAR, and the community members who seek to upskill via UTAR's free executive education programs for the B40 community.



Left to right: Dickson Woo, Country General Manager and Technology Leader, IBM Malaysia, YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources, and President of UTAR, YBhg Ir. Prof. Dato' Dr. Ewe Hong Tat

Kuala Lumpur, 26 May 2025 - Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) and IBM Malaysia today announced a collaboration intended to provide free AI training through [IBM SkillsBuild](#). IBM is looking to provide UTAR with training and customized learning plans in AI, web development, cloud computing, and cybersecurity for job seekers who are in their final year of degree program, the alumni of UTAR and the community members who seek to upskill via UTAR's free executive education programs for the B40 (lower income community) in Malaysia.

The Malaysian government targets a 25.5% digital economy contribution to the GDP by 2025. Despite progress, a skills gap remains. Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) reports 357,414 digital professionals in 2024 — yet demand outpaces supply, with job vacancies surging to 92,324 in Q3.^[1]

“We’re excited for IBM SkillsBuild to join forces with UTAR in providing AI training and career opportunities for adult learners in Malaysia,” said **Dickson Woo, Country General Manager and Technology Leader, IBM Malaysia** “As AI reshapes the workplace, the need for AI literacy is growing fast. From new tools to evolving challenges, building the right skills now is key to staying competitive. Empowering learners with AI knowledge ensures they can adapt, innovate, and lead in a changing digital landscape.”

“We are proud to collaborate with IBM through IBM SkillsBuild to develop tailored training programs that upskill digital talent and enhance workplace readiness. This collaboration reflects our commitment to bridging the gap between academic learning and industry needs, equipping our students and professionals with practical, future-ready skills essential for excelling in today’s digital-driven economy,” said **the President of UTAR, YBhg Ir. Prof. Dato' Dr. Ewe Hong Tat**.

YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources congratulated UTAR and IBM on their collaboration, stating that it enables UTAR students to gain early exposure to a leading global tech company like IBM. “Partnerships like this

help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry needs,” he said.

He also emphasized the importance of having a clear framework to address the ethical and legal aspects of AI, beyond just its technical development. He added that AI should be used to support smarter, data-driven decisions across industries.

UTAR will utilize IBM SkillsBuild to train and upskill youth within its ecosystem, as well as the community, to better prepare for the workforce. With its vast industry network, UTAR is confident that an industry collaboration such as this may empower and improve the chances of youth obtaining employment, especially in the cross-disciplinary field of engineering and technology.

As part of this collaboration, UTAR learners can choose from courses and credentials ranging from fundamentals to more in-depth such as AI/Gen AI, Data Analytics, Cloud Computing & Cybersecurity. In addition, learners can benefit from educational activities such as:

- Customized learning plans tailored to learners’ career goals, and specialized online workshops to help students familiarize themselves with the learning experience with support from IBM volunteers to help engage learners.
- Guided learning experiences, let learners put their skills into practice, including AI prompt engineering, coding with AI, data analysis, and cybersecurity. This includes live virtual sessions with experts, hands-on assignments, self-paced quizzes, and technical support during office hours.
- IBM SkillsBuild Career Conversations with IBM volunteers for adult learners help students develop a real understanding of the potential opportunities and challenges they may face as they pursue a role in technology.

In addition, students may have access to more than 1,000 free courses in IBM SkillsBuild as well as digital credentials, including coursework in AI fundamentals, generative AI, AI ethics, prompt writing, machine learning, AI to help the environment, and improving customer service with AI.

The collaboration that emphasizes IBM SkillsBuild courses and credentials focused on AI and other technical skills. As such, this effort is part of IBM’s global commitment to skill 30 million learners by 2030.

About Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)

UTAR is highly reputed as one of the fastest growing private higher education institutions in the country since its inception in 2002. From only 411 students, the University’s enrolment has now reached about 20,000 students with campuses located in Kampar, Perak and Bandar Sungai Long, Selangor. UTAR has graduated over 89,000 students since its inaugural convocation in 2005. The University currently offers more than 140 academic programmes from Foundation Studies to Bachelor’s, Master’s, and PhD degrees in the fields of Accounting, Business and Economics, Actuarial Science, Mathematics and Process Management, Agriculture and Food Science, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, Creative Industries and Design, Engineering and Built Environment, Information and Communication Technology, Life and Physical Sciences, and Medicine and Health Sciences. For more information, visit www.utar.edu.my or call 05-468 8888 (Kampar Campus), 03-9086 0288 (Sungai Long Campus).

About IBM SkillsBuild

IBM SkillsBuild is a free education program aimed at increasing access to technology education. Through the program, IBM supports adult learners, and high school and university students and faculty, to develop valuable new skills and access career opportunities. The program includes an online platform that is complemented by customized practical learning experiences

delivered in collaboration with a global network of partners.

The open version of IBM SkillsBuild is an online platform offering over 1,000 courses in 20 languages on AI, sustainability, cybersecurity, data analysis, cloud computing, and many other technical disciplines — as well as in workplace skills such as design thinking. Participants can earn IBM-branded digital credentials that are recognized by the market.

The enhanced version of IBM SkillsBuild may also include workshops, expert conversations with IBM coaches and mentors, project-based learning, access to IBM software, specialized support from partners through the learning process, and connection to career opportunities. Visit skillsbuild.org to learn more.

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[1] Source: Digital Talent Snapshot in Malaysia, MDEC, 2024

<https://asean.newsroom.ibm.com/2025-05-26-Universiti-Tunku-Abdul-Rahman-and-IBM-SkillsBuild-Announce-New-AI-skills-Collaboration>