# UK exam board launches world’s first International GCSE and A Level qualifications in AI



A UK-based exam board has made a significant leap in educational standards by becoming the first globally to introduce formal qualifications in Artificial Intelligence (AI) at International GCSE and A Level. This groundbreaking initiative, led by the Learning Resource Network (LRN), aims to provide structured AI education for students aged 14 to 19, making it accessible through approved schools and centres worldwide.

The qualifications are designed to equip students with a robust understanding of AI concepts, practical applications, and ethical considerations. LRN asserts that these qualifications will hold the same academic weight as traditional subjects such as Mathematics or Physics and are geared toward international use, aligning with global educational standards. Dr Muhammad Zohaib Tariq, the Chief Executive of LRN, expressed pride in Britain's leadership in AI education, stating, “By launching the world's first full school qualification in Artificial Intelligence, we're setting a global standard — and giving students everywhere the chance to build strong academic foundations for the AI-powered future.”

This initiative comes at a time when the urgency of addressing a worldwide digital skills shortage is becoming increasingly apparent. Recent research from both the UK government and industry highlights a rapidly growing demand for professionals with AI expertise, outpacing the current supply. Professor David B. Tann, Vice Provost for Technology at the University of East London, praised the move, asserting that developing International A-level AI will not only equip students with essential tech skills but also improve access for underrepresented groups. He noted, “These qualifications could enhance employability and prepare students for university-level study.”

Experts in the field have noted the relevance of this development in equipping students for a rapidly-evolving job market. Professor Joe Jize Yan from the University of Southampton highlighted the accessibility and practicality of an AI-focused A-level, stating that it introduces essential concepts without overcomplicating the content with excessive mathematics. He remarked that while the course suits those interested in applied AI, it may be supportive for students looking to pursue university-level AI or computer science, advising them to supplement their studies with more programming and mathematics.

Additionally, the introduction of AI qualifications directly links to broader academic trends, such as ongoing evaluations by Ofqual. The exam regulator in England is actively exploring how AI technologies can supplement traditional assessment methods, including ensuring the fairness and validity of qualifications amid rising concerns about AI tools like ChatGPT. This regulatory context may enhance the credibility of the new AI qualifications, providing a framework that balances innovation with integrity in educational assessments.

The qualifications are already gaining traction globally, with schools in regions such as Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa adopting them. Dr Tariq highlighted the importance of this initiative: “By offering a full qualification, not just a module, the UK is setting a new precedent in school-level AI education.” As schools implement these courses, they not only prepare students for future careers but also contribute to a more inclusive educational landscape.

In a world increasingly shaped by technological advancements, the introduction of AI qualifications represents a crucial step in ensuring that the next generation is equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in an AI-driven landscape. As professionals like Professor Chris Imafidon of Yale University have pointed out, this initiative is timely and essential, emphasising the need to prepare students with the tools of the future today.

In summary, LRN's pioneering move to formalise AI education at the school level could represent a significant turning point in educational practices. The collective insights from various educational leaders affirm that such qualifications are essential not only for meeting current industry demands but also for fostering a diverse and capable workforce for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html), [[3]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html), [[2]](https://www.lrnschools.org/), [[5]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/exams-how-ofqual-plans-cope-ai)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html), [[4]](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/chatgpt-exam-boards-publish-ai-guidance-for-schools/), [[6]](https://inews.co.uk/news/education/exam-regulator-ai-ofqual-mark-gcses-a-levels-383654)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html), [[5]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/exams-how-ofqual-plans-cope-ai), [[7]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/gcses-2024-exam-board-trial-ai-summer-exams)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html), [[3]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html), [[2]](https://www.lrnschools.org/), [[3]](https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.lrnschools.org/> - The Learning Resource Network (LRN) is a UK-based exam board operating in over 58 countries, offering general and vocational qualifications across a range of subjects. Their website provides information on various qualifications, including International GCSEs and A Levels, and details about their global recognition and partnerships.
3. <https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/business/2025/05/24/dcm6-learning-resource-network.html> - This article reports that the Learning Resource Network (LRN) has become the first UK-based exam board to introduce general qualifications in Artificial Intelligence (AI) at both International GCSE and A Level. The initiative aims to equip students aged 14–19 with an understanding of AI concepts, applications, and ethical considerations, aligning with global academic standards.
4. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/chatgpt-exam-boards-publish-ai-guidance-for-schools/> - The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has published guidance for schools on protecting the integrity of qualifications amid concerns about AI tools like ChatGPT. The guidance emphasizes the importance of independent work, appropriate use of AI, and the need for coursework to be completed under direct supervision to prevent misuse.
5. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/exams-how-ofqual-plans-cope-ai> - Ofqual, the exam regulator in England, has outlined its approach to managing the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in assessments. The plan aims to ensure fairness, maintain the validity of qualifications, and support innovation, including exploring the potential for AI to complement human marking processes.
6. <https://inews.co.uk/news/education/exam-regulator-ai-ofqual-mark-gcses-a-levels-383654> - Ofqual is exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in marking GCSEs and A Levels. The regulator has launched a competition to determine if AI can mark a GCSE English Language essay to the same standard as human examiners, with the winning developer receiving a financial reward.
7. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/gcses-2024-exam-board-trial-ai-summer-exams> - AQA, England's largest exam board, plans to trial the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to provide quality assurance for human marking in the upcoming summer exams. The initiative aims to identify and correct any inconsistencies in marking by comparing AI-generated marks with those of senior examiners.