

New tech academy launches to address IT skills gap and unemployment

The Academy of Accelerated Technology Education (AATE) has launched, which is a new initiative that aims to address two prolific challenges that currently afflict South Africa - record unemployment and a persistent skills shortage, particularly in the ICT sector.



Source: [Fixabay](#)

More specifically, the AATE programme aims to quickly grow the pool of available cloud-certified technology skills to support the need for relevant skills in the broader corporate market while also helping to manage the ever-increasing cost of these in-demand skills.

As an early-stage supporter of the initiative, Investec has provided seed capital to support the initial launch phase of the AATE programme.

“The vision for AATE is to create a substantial pool of quality technically-skilled people in South Africa, who are equipped to lead in the continuously evolving technology environment while also contributing in a meaningful way to resolving South Africa's massive unemployment problem,” explains Stephen Koseff, former Investec Group CEO.

“Achieving this vision will solve the technology skills shortage that the banking and broader corporate sectors currently face and will enable South Africa to export our technology skills and provide services internationally,” adds Malcolm Laing, founder of AATE and former Investec Group CIO.

Modelled on YES programme

The project is modelled on the highly successful Youth Employment Service (YES) programme, a national joint initiative by the private sector and government that helps to address the youth unemployment crisis by offering skills development programmes coupled with work experience placements.

Applications for the AATE programme are open to any student with an undergraduate university degree. All applicants will complete an aptitude test to assess their suitability as a technologist.

Successful applicants can enrol in one of three accelerated learning tracks, including software engineer, security engineer, and data scientist.

“The AATE programme is ideal for degreed technology professionals who are looking to accelerate their careers or qualified professionals in other fields who want to break into the tech world,” states Laing.

The different phases

Each accelerated learning track comprises two phases. The first phase consists of three months of intensive full-time training. Students will receive a three-month stipend after successfully completing this phase to cover costs such as transport and provide a basic income.

The initial intensive three-month learning phase will equip students with a working knowledge of the latest cloud-based applications and tools offered by AATE programme technology partner, Microsoft.

The second phase entails a nine-month paid internship, combined with part-time learning modules, which are supported by a mentor.

“During the year, students will build critical skills in the latest technologies used within their chosen field and will then apply this learning in a real-world setting, working with some of South Africa’s most respected companies,” explains Laing.

After the 12-month programme, students will take the Institute of Chartered Information Technology Professionals (ICITP) board exam, which will provide them with a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)-recognised qualification in their chosen specialisation.

Further assistance

Graduates will also receive assistance to find full-time employment or gig work, either with the company where they interned or elsewhere within the burgeoning tech job market.

“The AATE will serve as a vital stepping stone on the journey to bridging the tech talent gap in South Africa, where corporates across every sector are struggling to fill software developer, data analysts and security engineer roles,” concludes Koseff.

The AATE programme is also aligned with the Workplace Skills Plan and Implementation report and will enable employers to earn Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) points in the areas of supplier development, skills development spend, and YES recognition for upliftment.

For more information, click [here](#).

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