

# Epson introduces graduate programme to boost STEM skills in SA

Epson, the technology provider, has launched a two-year graduate programme open to South Africans who have recently qualified in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines, namely computer science and business administration qualifications. The programme will provide candidates with a two-year in-house placement at Epson's local offices, and the opportunity to kickstart their careers in a niche technology environment.



Image supplied

Kiara Bridglall, human resource manager at Epson South Africa, says that given South Africa's high rate of graduate unemployment, as well as the need to grow the technology talent pool, the programme focuses on building both hard and soft skills, the latter of which is often lacking at tertiary education level.

"For candidates coming straight out of university with no work experience or the soft skills necessary to navigate today's workplace, Epson's graduate programme provides an opportunity for them to develop their skills from a holistic standpoint, while gaining on-the-job experience," she says. "A variety of modules will be covered during the graduate programme, including career development, effective communication skills, and time and project management."

The development of skills for the youth remains a priority in an emerging country such as South Africa. According to recent Stats SA unemployment statistics, South Africa's graduate unemployment rate has nearly doubled in the last 10 years, from 5.5% recorded in the first quarter of 2013 to 10.6% in the first quarter of 2023.

"As an original equipment manufacturer and technology specialist, Epson South Africa intends to take strides to bridge the skills gap in the ICT sector, and how this impacts unemployment figures and the South African economy at large," says

Bridglall. “Our objective with this programme is to develop a diverse talent pool for technical expertise and in the process, open doors for the youth of South Africa.

“This graduate programme is one of the many steps in our transformation journey and Epson is committed to creating and maintaining a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture, demonstrating our commitment to broad-based black economic empowerment,” she continues.

“The goal of the programme is to grow individuals through the business, so that after the two years they become part of the future talent pool, which opens them up to local and international career development opportunities, while supporting the business to future-proof technical skills- focused roles,” adds Bridglall.

Qualifying candidates can apply at <https://ow.ly/R9mh50OJQt2>.

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