ISSUE #39

OCTOBER 2026



CAREER SPOTLIGHT

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CYBERSECURITY EXPERT

CAMPUS CONNECT

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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

SASOL ENERGY INNOVATION CHALLENGE

GOOD LUCK MATRIC 2026

CAREER GUIDANCE MAGAZINE

CREATING YOUR OWN PALETTE







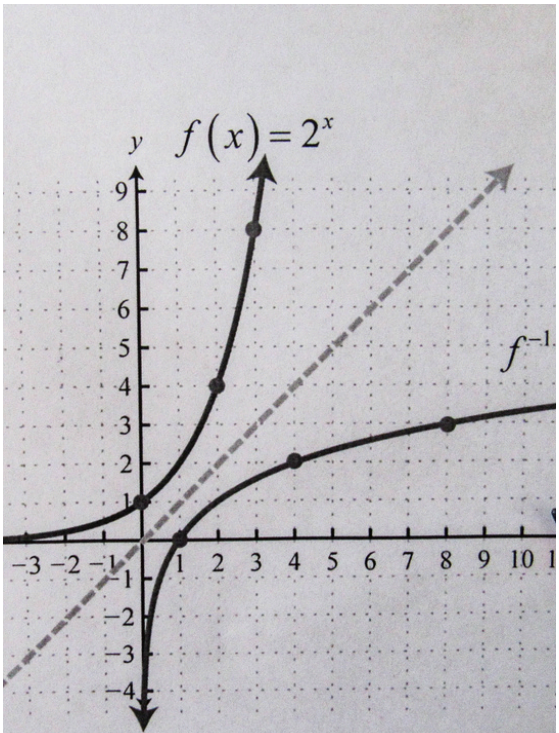


#IAMANEDUCATIONCHAMPION MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2026









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By:Lwazi Feni

The atmosphere at the University of the Free State (UFS) Education Auditorium was electric as students, industry leaders, and proud Kovsie alumni gathered for the recent UFS Alumni Career Connect gathering. Organized by the UFS Alumni Relations Office, this flagship engagement series continues to redefine how higher education bridges the gap between academic study and professional excellence.

UFS





Alumni Connect Gathering

Inspiring the Next Generation

Designed around the transformative journey from graduate, to good, to great, the event served as an empowering platform for actionable career guidance. Former Kovsies returned to campus to share firsthand experiences, candid advice, and industry trends shaping South Africa's evolving economic landscape.

Key Discussion Centered On:

Personal Branding & Career Positioning: Navigating competitive job markets with confidence.

Mentorship & Networking: Building meaningful relationships between current students and established alumni.

Adaptability in the Workforce: Developing soft skills, resilience, and lifelong learning habits required for modern workplaces.





Connections That Count

Beyond the panel sessions, the event buzzed with lively discussions during speed-networking moments and informal Q&A exchanges. Students had the rare opportunity to engage directly with professionals across various fields—gaining practical insights on entry-level expectations, internship opportunities, and entrepreneurial pathways.

Responsible Social Media Conduct In Schools

As smartphones become an extension of every classroom and playground, modern students are navigating a high-stakes digital universe long before they even step out into the professional world. From cyberbullying to hidden privacy pitfalls, how can schools and educators keep pace with a digital landscape that evolves by the minute?
In this special tech news feature, we sit down with Lerato Ntwampe, an admitted attorney and visionary Founder of Legal Plug Consulting, to discuss the legalities, risks, and practical solutions shaping responsible online conduct in our schools today.



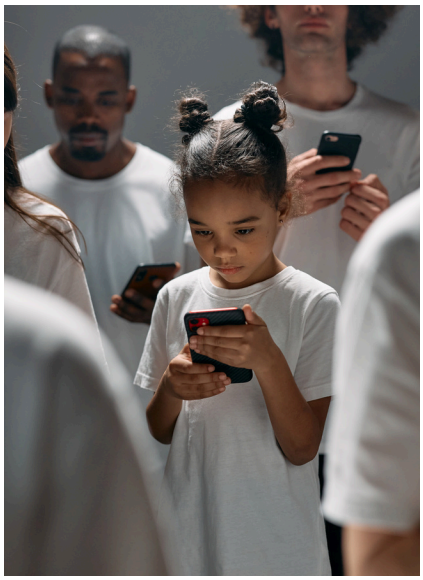




r schools today.
Thulisa Mangcotywa:How do you bridge the gap between complex social media legislation and practical, everyday understanding for school-aged learners and educators?
Le

Lerato Ntwampe: Social media law and child protection are a big passion of mine, and I find inspiration in everyday social media – whether good, bad, or ugly and apply the law in those scenarios. I also draw inspiration from real life case law and incorporate it in my presentations and workshops. I am also very fortunate to have four younger siblings – two in varsity, one in high school and one in primary school - who know what I do for a living and keep me on track with what's trending amongst their peers and on social media, GenZ lingo, the latest Tik Tok trends and so on.





Thulisa Mangcotywa: What inspired Legal Plug Consulting to focus specifically on delivering legally grounded digital safety workshops for educational institutions?

Lerato Ntwampe: I started doing digital safety workshops for educational institutions after a successful Back to School campaign coined #HideYourBadge in 2018 where I warned parents and legal guardians about the privacy and safety risks of posting their children in their school uniform with a lot of personal information on their social media posts. The campaign offered parents some safety guidelines on how to post safely without





putting their children's personal information including their full names, location, grade, home address etc. I got a lot of inquires from schools for me to assist their schools with drafting their social media policies and how they could handle social media pages and posting school learners on their social media pages while being cognisant of their privacy, safety and acquiring consent from their parents. The rise of smartphones in the classroom was also a huge part of it which led to speaking to school learners and teaching them about using social media safety and concepts like digital footprint, freedom of expression, hate speech, cyberbullying and how to report and block content online that is harmful and inappropriate for their age and consumption.

after a successful Back to School campaign

The Art of Socials

Thulisa Mangcotywa: In your experience, what is the most common legal pitfall young people encounter on social media, and how can schools proactively address it?

Lerato Ntwampe: Cyberbullying and the creation, possession and distribution of CSAM – child sexual abuse material commonly known as child pornography in South Africa. A lot of young people do not know that cyberbullying and CSAM are illegal in South Africa and often linked to grooming and sexual exploitation and that sending a "nude" to a boyfriend, or friend could often lead to a sexual exploitation, non-consensual distribution of explicit/ intimate images and sometime extortion – where someone threatens to share the intimate/explicit images/videos on lie unless they pay a certain amount, provide more intimate images or provide a sexual favour and in most instances young people do not have the tools to handle these situations because of the shame and embarrassment that comes with having to tell their parents or an adult. I think it is important for schools to be proactive in having digital safety workshops for their learners and teachers to be aware of these pitfalls, how to address them and how to empower their learners in these kids of situations. Often, these incidents' happen outside of school premises but the digital drama and after effect often has an adverse impact for their school; learners and school's reputation especially when a learner is identified to be from the specific school. I have often found that even when some of these topics are addressed in the curriculum whether in Life Orientation or Life Skills, learners are more open and willing to engage with an external person/presenter a lot more than with their teachers with the reassurance that they do not have to ever see me again or judge them from the questions they sometimes pose to me.



Thulisa Mangcotywa: How do your collaborative safety initiatives with platforms like Meta and Google shape the practical advice you share inside the classroom?



Lerato Ntwampe: Working on safety initiatives with platforms like Meta and Google gives me an extra edge in that I understand how online safety works beyond the headlines, it has shown me where the risks arise, how quickly online incidents can escalate, and what tools and reporting mechanisms are available. I bring that experience into schools by turning complex online safety issues into simple, practical advise learners can use everyday; from protecting their privacy online and recognising harmful content to understanding what to do when something goes wrong. My focus is not to frightening young people about social media or the internet but giving them the knowledge and confidence to navigate it safely, responsibly and resiliently.

Thulisa Mangcotywa: What key strategy should schools implement today to build a culture of responsible online conduct and long-term digital resilience among students?

Lerato Ntwampe: I believe that schools need to move beyond simply policing social media and focus on teaching students how to use technology responsibly. This means creating clear rules around online behaviour

privacy, cyberbullying and the sharing of photos or personal information, while ensuring learners



understand the consequence of their digital actions. Schools should also teach practical digital skills, including how to respond to cyberbullying, how to report CSAM, block and report online predators, how to identify misinformation, protect personal information and use AI re

ponsibly. Teachers, staff support and parents need to have similar guidance so that everyone knows how to respond when problems.

UNDERSTANDING SUN ALLERGIES



Understanding, Managing, and Preventing Sun Allergies

We know that peak academic and extracurricular performance relies on overall well-being. Outdoor campus activities, sports days, and career expos mean more time spent under the African sun. Skin protection is an essential pillar of health education. Drawing on expert guidelines from NIVEA South Africa, this article unpacks what sun allergies are, how to spot them, and practical steps young people can take to stay safe and comfortable.

Explaining Sun Allergies

When someone experiences discomfort after spending time outdoors, standard sunburn is usually the primary suspect. However, as skincare specialists point out, a sun allergy is a distinct physiological reaction. Unlike a typical UV burn that results from prolonged exposure, a sun allergy is an immune system response. When ultraviolet rays interact with susceptible skin types, the body can trigger a defensive reaction—often releasing histamines—resulting in unexpected redness, inflammation, and itching even after minimal time in the sun.





Recognizing the Warning Signs

Identifying a sun allergy early helps you manage symptoms before they disrupt focus or daily routines:

Itchy, Red Spots & Inflammation: Skin that becomes immediately irritated, warm, and uncomfortable upon sun exposure.

Bumps, Rashes, & Rough Textures: Unusual localized bumps or dry patches that can spread across exposed areas like the arms, neck, and face.

Burning & Stinging Sensations: Persistent discomfort or a sharp sting on the skin, which can occur independently of visible redness.

Dehydration & Flakiness: A tight, dry, or flaky texture resulting from moisture loss following outdoor exposure.

Practical Management and Relief Strategies

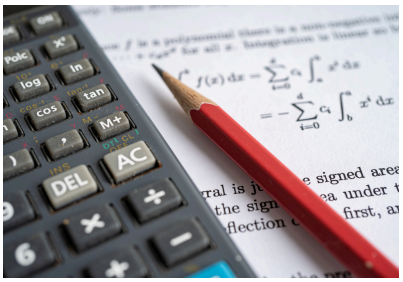
While symptoms generally subside naturally within a few days once UV exposure is halted, managing the discomfort is essential.

Maths Matters

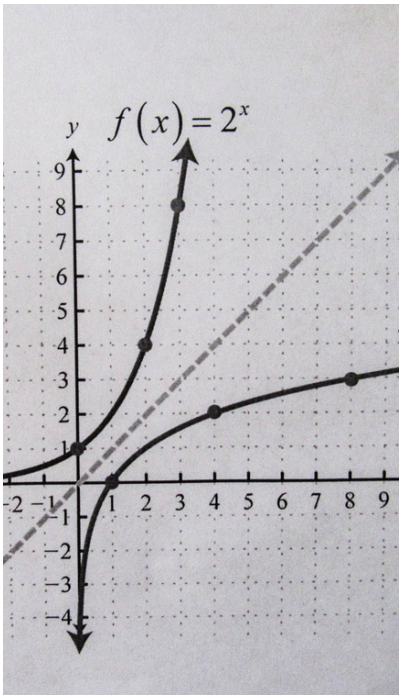
WRITTEN BY :DR MZAMO MASITO (PHD)

I like Prof Adrian Saville. He is one of those rare economists who can make a spreadsheet feel like a sermon. If I were ever president of Mzansi, he'd be in my Cabinet, or at the very least, permanently on speed-dial to the Presidency. He recently co-wrote a piece with Isaah Mhlanga, Chief Economist at RMB, and Dr Sizwe Nxasana, my role model, founder of Future Nation Schools and Sifiso Learning Group, arguing that South Africa's weak maths pipeline isn't only an education story. It's an economic one.

Their point, stripped down: we treat mathematics as a school subject when we should be treating it as national infrastructure. Countries that invest seriously in mathematical sciences see it show up in GDP, in productivity, in jobs. South Africa, by contrast, quietly steers children away from mathematics and calls it a kindness.



Maths Lit can seem like a safe relief but it's long-term effect is dangerous



It isn't. It's a slow bleed on the economy, and on the individual futures inside it.

Reading it, I found myself back in a Khayelitsha classroom.

A Bantu education school, and a strange kind of grace

I went to Luhlaza Senior Secondary in Khayelitsha, a Bantu Education school that was, at the time, the best black school in the Western Cape. Good teachers, oddly enough under a principal named Mr de Klerk, a strict white Afrikaner who somehow kept standards high. Rumour had it that a few of our teachers doubled as National Party intelligence officers, sent to watch us as much as teach us. If they were spies, they were at least competent ones, they taught their subjects properly.

We were pushed toward Mathematics, Higher Grade or Standard Grade, never Mathematical Literacy. I passed with a C. Not a star pupil. Just good enough, and mostly lazy about it.

Then I got to UCT to study commerce, and two things happened that changed the trajectory of my life.

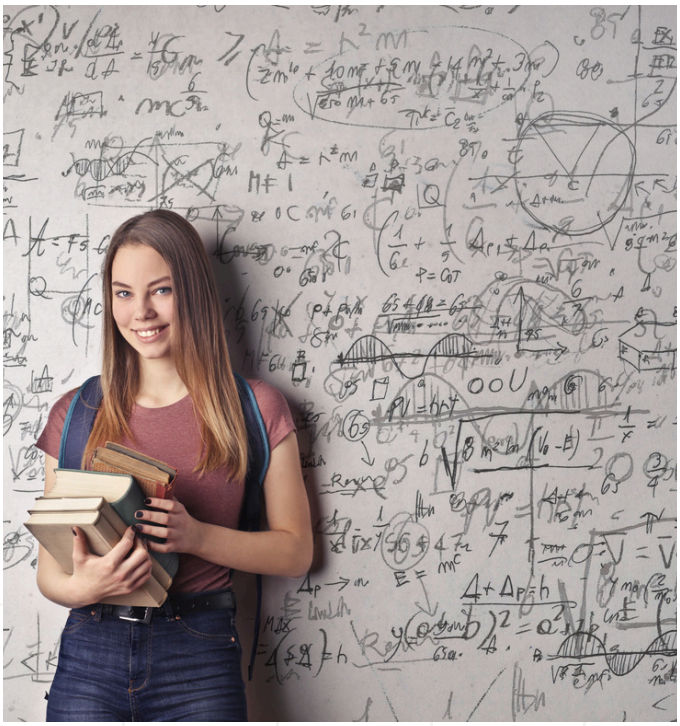
Two men, one subject, and the moment everything shifted

The first was my Maths 1 lecturer, a Black statistician, engineer and mathematician, Professor Mbulaheni Nthangeni, in 2004 he was elected President of the South African Statistical Association (SASA), making him the first black president of the association in its 50 years of existence. He was the only one across all my modules that year, who loved the subject so openly, it was contagious. I hadn't known, until I sat in his lectures, that someone who looked like me could stand at the front of a UCT theatre and command a room with pure competence. He absorbed the racism thrown at him by white students and parents with a patience I still think about. He would say to me "yes you can", long before Obama used it as his election slogan.



Source:www.mzamomasito.com

MathsMyth



Watching him work made me want to work harder. Representation isn't an abstraction, it is a very literal permission slip.

The second was Prof Tim Dunne, teaching Statistics 101F, soft spoken, silver-bearded, who looked like he moonlighted as a priest. On day one he told us Chapters 1 to 8 were "high school revision" and wouldn't be covered, except our first two assignments were built entirely on them. My school had never touched those chapters. Only the Model C and private school kids had. I found the courage to tell him. And instead of shrugging, he offered me an hour with him every morning before lectures, for as long as it took, on one condition: I show up, do the work, and commit to majoring in the subject. He taught me the same concept five or six different ways until it landed. He refused to let me memorise formulas, he made me understand them.

Two men, teaching numbers subjects, quietly decided I was worth the extra hour, extra effort, extra belief. Without them, I do not believe I would have majored in Numbers.

I left UCT with a degree that opened doors most people around me didn't even know existed, data analytics, quantitative research, market research. Doors that are, frankly, still understaffed today.

Why this isn't an argument against the Humanities

I want to be precise here, because it would be easy to hear this as maths-supremacy. It isn't. Law, psychology, anthropology, sociology, musicology, design, education, the arts, these disciplines carry the moral imagination, the storytelling, the meaning-making that a country needs just as much as it needs engineers. My most memorable course at varsity was Philosophy, Introduction to Logic. Humanities graduates are not the problem. A society that produced only actuaries and computer scientists who cannot philosophise, would be a fairly grim place to live. The issue is narrower and more specific: many children are being moved out of Pure Mathematics into Mathematical Literacy for the wrong reasons, not because their gifts genuinely point toward the humanities, but because Pure Maths feels hard and Maths Lit feels like relief. That decision, made at fifteen or sixteen, quietly closes doors the child doesn't yet know exist.

The one-way valve nobody tells parents about

Here is the part of the system that deserves far more attention than it gets: dropping from Pure Maths to Maths Lit is easy, almost administrative. Going the other way is close to impossible. A child can move down in Grade 11 without much friction. Almost nobody moves back up.

That asymmetry means the decision isn't really "which subject suits my child", it's "which faculties, jobs, will still be open to my child at eighteen." Maths Lit is a respectable, legitimate route into Law, the Arts, Education, and parts of Business. But it closes the gate on Engineering, Medicine, Physics, Actuarial Science, Computer Science, and Chartered Accountancy, permanently, before



the child is old enough to know if that's a door they'd have wanted.

The labour market backs this up starkly.

Graduates from Pure Maths-dependent fields face near-zero structural unemployment, earning a premium that is 2 to 3x more than humanities, with corporates recruiting them before final year is even done. Meanwhile, general humanities and business graduates face an unemployment rate hovering around 10%, competing against a genuine oversupply for a shrinking pool of entry-level roles. Both paths can lead to good lives. But one path currently has far more insurance built into it. If you grew up poor, the insurance is worth more than gold.

The Myths we need to retire: " eg. some kids just don't have a maths brain, iMaths inzima – Maths is difficult. Yho! I am scared of Maths".

🧠 The "Maths Brain" Myth:

Myth: People are born with a natural talent for maths, and if you do not have it, you will never be good at it.

The Reality: Brains are highly adaptable. Mathematical skill grows through practice, effective strategy, and effort, not genetics.

♀️ The Gender Myth:

Myth: Boys are naturally better at maths and science, while girls excel at languages and art.

The Reality: Decades of research show no innate difference in mathematical ability between genders. Performance differences stem from societal expectations and stereotypes.

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We have a growing audience of young people who are eager to learn and grow in their chosen career fields waiting to hear from YOU



INSIDE THE SASOL ENERGY INNOVATION CHALLENGE *2026*

When young learners are given a platform to tinker, invent, and dream big, the future of South Africa's STEM landscape shines brighter than ever. Sasol Energy Innovation Challenge is a premier biennial platform driven by the Sasol Foundation that is actively transforming how school-aged children engage with science, engineering, and sustainable energy solutions.





Cultivating Future Innovators

Held every two years in tandem with the acclaimed Sasol Solar Challenge, this dynamic competition invites school learners from Grades 4 through 11 to conceptualize, design, and showcase creative energy-related innovations. Spanning three key regional hubs—Secunda, Sasolburg, and Gauteng North—the challenge creates an immersive arena where young minds from diverse backgrounds can step into the shoes of inventors, problem-solvers, and green-economy pioneers.

Why It Matters for Career Guidance?

For educators, parents, and youth, initiatives like the Sasol Energy Innovation Challenge are vital building blocks. They bridge the gap between abstract classroom theories and tangible, real-world application.

The official feature of the food enthusiast



Compiled by: Lwazi Feni



only



make



good



food



You don't need a silver fork to eat good food.

Paul Prudhomme





the grilled subs

the rise of bed n' breakfast



BOOK REVIEW

Compiled by
Rato Masilela



Where :UFS Bloemfontein Campus
When : 10 October 2026

In a modern professional landscape often defined by systemic barriers and self-imposed limits, finding a clear roadmap to career excellence is crucial. In "From Boundaries to Brilliance: Turning Barriers into Purpose, Impact and Leadership", Dr. Pulane Modiha—a distinguished academic, thought leader, and banking executive—offers a transformative guide to help emerging leaders step confidently into executive roles.

Tailored for students, young professionals, and mid-career educators, Dr. Modiha dismantles the idea that professional obstacles are permanent dead ends. Instead, she reframes workplace challenges as strategic growth points. Drawing from her journey across academia, consulting, and corporate banking, she provides actionable frameworks on agile leadership, digital literacy, and personal branding. She proves that your starting point never dictates your ultimate destination.

How To Order

To order your copy of "From Boundaries to Brilliance" for personal development, student coaching, or institutional libraries, use the order details below:
Email Orders: admin.brillianceco@gmail.com
Phone / WhatsApp: +27 (0)62 353 5586

By:Neo Morokane

Who Prepares Graduates for SA's Economy?



The perennial question of graduate employability demands a collaborative national approach. Higher education institutions cannot work in silos if young professionals are to thrive. Bridging this critical divide requires active participation from multiple societal pillars.

Academic ecosystems need a profound strategic shift toward practical readiness. Dr Mandi Joubert, chief academic officer at Eduvos, highlights the shared responsibility of helping graduates enter the local economy and how stakeholders can build an ecosystem that supports economic growth.

Curricula must anticipate real-world market demands rather than just theoretical milestones. Educational design remains the foundational anchor for successful career transitions.

Corporate partners hold an equally vital stake in talent cultivation. Industry leaders must step beyond traditional hiring to co-create training paths and mentorship models. Work-integrated learning ensures students face fewer shocks upon entering the professional world. Industry engagement transforms raw academic potential into measurable workplace productivity. Government policy acts as the overarching



framework enabling this economic integration. Regulatory structures must incentivize public-private partnerships that fund targeted skills development. Strategic alignment between national growth sectors and educational outputs is non-negotiable. Public leadership sets the ultimate stage for sustainable youth employment.

Empowering the next generation is a collective duty demanding unity across all sectors. True economic resilience emerges when universities, enterprises, and policymakers pull in the exact same direction. Building this robust future starts with shared accountability today.

A CAREER IN CYBERSECURITY



HOW CYBERSECURITY WORK

As society becomes increasingly connected, our reliance on digital infrastructure leaves systems vulnerable to sophisticated threats. October marks National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, bringing attention to a growing global issue: the demand of skilled professionals equipped to defend sensitive data, national infrastructure, and financial systems against cyber threats.

In South Africa, the demand for cybersecurity talent is at an all-time high. Driven by compliance regulations like the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), digital banking growth, and a rise in phishing and ransomware attacks, public and private organizations are actively recruiting trained security experts. For students, school leavers, and career changers, the field of cybersecurity offers a future-proof, impactful, and financially rewarding career path.

Qualifications to Pursue
Entering the cybersecurity field typically requires a foundation in Computer Science, Information Technology, or Information Systems, followed by specialized security training. Key qualifications to pursue include:

Higher Certificate in Information Technology (NQF Level 5): An ideal entry point for school leavers with basic subject requirements, providing foundational computer literacy, networking, and support skills.
Diploma in Information Technology or ICT (NQF Level 6): Focuses on practical technical skills, systems administration, network management, and database fundamentals.
Bachelor of Computer Science / Bachelor of Information Technology / Bachelor of Science in Information Systems (NQF Level 7): Comprehensive three-year degrees that cover deep theoretical computer science, software development, data structures, and advanced network security architecture.

Postgraduate Qualifications
Postgraduate Diploma in Cybersecurity or Information Security (NQF Level 8): Designed for graduates seeking specialized expertise in ethical hacking, digital forensics, and security governance.

Industry Certifications
Academic qualifications provide foundational theory, but industry-recognized certifications validate practical skills to employers. Key entry-to-intermediate certifications include:
CompTIA Security+ Vendor-neutral baseline for foundational security concepts
Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) Focuses on penetration testing and offensive security techniques
Cisco Certified CyberOps Associate Ideal for Security Operations Centre roles
ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Implementer / Auditor Focuses on security governance, risk management, and regulatory compliance

Launching Your Career
You don't need a decade of experience to enter the industry. Typical entry-level positions in South Africa include:

Junior SOC Analyst (Level 1) Monitors SIEM alerts, investigates basic security threats, and escalates incidents.
Junior Security Analyst Assesses software vulnerabilities, assists with patches, and tracks security risks.
Junior Penetration Tester Conducts basic simulated cyberattacks under supervision to
Ethical Hacker identify system vulnerabilities.
Security Compliance Assistant Helps ensure company policies align with data regulations like POPIA and ISO frameworks.
IT Support / Desktop Engineer Manages endpoint security tools, firewalls, and user access with Security Duties permissions.

Salary Expectations in South Africa

The cybersecurity sector offers competitive compensation across experience levels. According to South African tech recruitment and salary reports (StartCareer SA, iFundi, and ShiftMate):
Entry-Level (0–2 years experience): Monthly: R18,000 – R30,000
Annual: R216,000 – R360,000

Mid-Level (2–5 years experience):
Monthly:R30,000 – R55,000
Annual: R360,000 – R660,000

Computer Science in the Digital Age

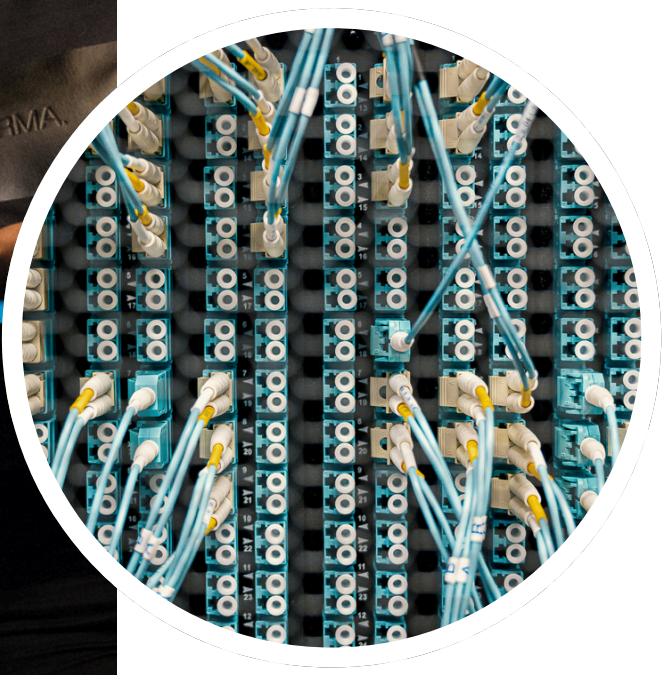


Mid-Level (2–5 years experience):
Monthly:R30,000 – R55,000
Annual: R360,000 – R660,000

Senior Level (5+ years experience / Specialists / Security Architects):
Monthly: R55,000 – R90,000+
Annual: R660,000 – R1,080,000+

Executive / CISO Roles:
Monthly: R100,000 – R180,000+

To get started on your path:
Focus on STEM subjects: Strong mathematics, logic, and analytical skills form the baseline for IT degrees.
Build a practical home lab: Practice networking, Linux command-line skills, and security concepts using platforms like TryHackMe or Hack The Box.
Pursue continuous learning: The threat landscape changes daily; staying curious and adaptable is key to long-term success.



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