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MEDIA STATEMENT

30 March 2026

Department of Higher Education and Training and Google sign a landmark MoU to empower youth with AI and digital skills

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Mimmy Gondwe, is pleased to announce a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on AI and digital skills development between the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Google South Africa.

This represents a fourth successful public-private partnership for student and youth skills development, finalised by Deputy Minister Gondwe's office in collaboration with other units and branches within DHET.

The Google MoU seeks to enhance digital skills, incorporate AI in higher education, and promote workforce development in South Africa. It will offer access to training programmes for public universities, TVET colleges, and CET colleges, including an initial **10 000 Google Career Certificate scholarships**.

Deputy Minister Gondwe, along with Google Country Director Mr Kabelo Makwane, officiated the MoU signing ceremony at Google South Africa's headquarters in Johannesburg on Monday, 30 March 2026.

"I'm very excited to see this MoU with Google come to fruition. It will significantly boost digital skills development across our universities, TVETs, and CET colleges through Google's Career Certificates, Generative AI for Educators, train-the-trainer model, and the full range of digital and AI programmes. Digital and AI skills are vital for navigating the modern world and securing future employment opportunities. It is essential that our students, especially those in remote and township areas, are prepared for the job market once they leave our sector and possess the right skills for employability, including self-employment and entrepreneurship," said Deputy Minister Gondwe.

Google has emphasised that its commitment to Higher Education and South Africa overall is deeply rooted in capacity building.

"AI has moved from theory to everyday reality. Our research shows digital technology is a massive catalyst for South Africa, with Google tools alone contributing R118 billion to the economy in 2023. AI is set to add another R172 billion, creating new skills and unlocking growth opportunities for all citizens. To capture this value, we must close the skills gap and empower our youth to innovate for Africa's unique context.



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Inclusivity is key; when South Africans build with tools that understand their environment and languages, technology becomes a true driver of growth," said Google South Africa Country Director, Mr Kabelo Makwane.

The MoU focuses on these key areas of cooperation:

- **Skills Training:** Offering access to training programmes, including ten thousand (10 000) Google Career Certificate scholarships in fields such as AI Essentials, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and more, aimed at students, educators, and IT staff in selected public universities, TVETs, and CET colleges, with an emphasis on rural and township areas.
- **AI teacher training:** Google will deliver AI training for educators through programmes like Generative AI for Educators and collaborate on a train-the-trainer model to promote wider skills sharing.
- **Curriculum & Product support:** Providing relevant Google AI products to public institutions, including curriculum development, where Google will facilitate access to AI and technology curricula, co-create localised content, and assist with integration at institutions.
- **Device Support:** Google will provide device support by deploying ChromeOS Flex to revitalise existing hardware, offering strategic hardware advice, and empowering IT teams through advanced training.
- **AI Policy:** The MoU will also include collaboration on policy and governance, sharing expertise on AI policy development and the use of AI in public institutions.

The MoU will be executed and carried out over a period of two years.

Issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Training

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