MIT Global Startup Labs South Africa Winter 2019 Application
1 message

Thanks for filling out MIT Global Startup Labs South Africa Winter 2019 Application

Here's what we got from you:

MIT Global Startup Labs South Africa Winter 2019 Application

Thank you for your interest in MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)'s Global Startup Labs South Africa program! The program is run with the help of the University of Witwatersrand, Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct, and IBM. This year's program will last from June 18 to July 12. Classes will be held Monday - Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM.

The purpose of our program is to give students the design and entrepreneurship skills necessary to start their own technology-focused company. This class aims to be very hands on and interactive: the main assignment in the class is developing a product demo and market strategy with a team of fellow students. While this class will feature tutorials, our goal is to give you as much time as possible to gain practical experience in developing your project with your team.

We're looking for students with a strong desire to think out of the box and develop something new. This program is expected to be somewhat intense (it is only four weeks), so we're looking for people who are up to the challenge.

If you're looking to innovate and make a change, we strongly encourage you to apply!

If you have any questions regarding this program or the application, feel free to reach out to the staff at gsl-sa-2019-staff@mit.edu. You can also visit our website at http://gsl.mit.edu/program/south-africa-summer-2019/.

Email address *

nthabimabetlela@gmail.com

First Name *

Nthabiseng

Last Name *

Mabetlela

School/Company *

Please list the school you currently attend or the company you currently work for. If you are in school and working, please list both.

University of the Witwatersrand

Expected Graduation Year (If In School)

2021

Gender *

○ Female

○ Male

○ Prefer not to say

○ Other:

Phone Number *

0616958290

GSL Program Interest

We're looking for driven students who are ready to put in significant time to this program. Tell us a little bit about why this program interests you.

Why would you like to be part of this program? *

The world is moving at a faster pace than we expected and data is all around us; it's immense. Without machine learning and artificial intelligence we cannot transform big data into useful information in order to change this country and the continent at large. I would very much love to get a head start into these two fields and a program like this will play that integral role in taking the leap.
I want to grasp as much knowledge, learn many new skills and become a golden leader in this age of disruption.

What are you hoping to get out of this program? *

I hope to be better acquainted with these two lucrative fields so as to prepare me for my further years as a student and more. My engagement will allow me to sharpen my focus and help me adjust any startup ideas I have thought of. Lastly, I hope this program will move me from being interested in machine learning and artificial intelligence to me driving the next Fortune Global 500 tech company. It will teach me adaptability and improve my current skills to advance these two technologies in South Africa.

What are you long term career and educational interests? *

I intend to complete a Masters in Data Science after getting a fundamental bachelor degree in Computer Science.
I would like to venture into the entrepreneurial space and hopefully be considered as one of the top Industrialists in this world, dethroning Elon Musk.
Lastly, one of my big ambitious goals is to lead South Africa in the colonization of Mars using AI and machine learning among other things. As you can see I cannot stick to one professional field because a career is not a ladder but rather a set of monkey bars.

Design Background and Interests

This course involves a heavy design component. We'd like to know a little more about your design background and interests to find the best fit for you.

Have you taken any product design related classes? If so, what were they and what did they entail? *

Yes I have. I attended a Science and Engineering high school and thus product design was incorporated in two of my classes : Electrical Technology as well as Engineering, Graphics and Design. The first gave scenarios and required us to solder different circuits on electrical boards and contain them in perspex-built boxes as part of a yearly project. The second dealt with construction and drawing mechanical objects at a high technical level. I believe both are foundations to industrial design, for instances.

Have you worked on any design projects before? If so, describe them. *

I have worked on school-related projects in the Electrical Technology class. One of them was a sound-to- light circuit similar to a disco ball, for example. We used a sensor to receive the sound (of a voice or clapping of hands) then capacitors, LDRs and resistors transfer all that sound-turned-to-current energy to the leads connected to three light bulbs. Then there was light!

Tell us about some group design experience you've had. *

I have had a problem with group projects when it comes to the delegation of tasks. The stress of completing the work and handing it in on time ends up with me doing most of the work. However I have been getting better in splitting the work load and MIT Global Startup Labs can provide additional assistance. Nevertheless, working with bright minds in creating something awesome is a wonderful thing to experience and thoroughly enjoy. The community and friendships forged that shortly form after completing said project can connect individuals for many years to come.

What would you like to get out of the design component of this course? *

Most of my acquired experience on product design is derived from working on physical projects therefore I'd like to get experience in working on the software aspect of product design. Be it coding different components that make up a larger program or coming up with calculations on how to optimize a machine learning design in order to get better results.

(Optional) If you have a portfolio, send us a link or indicate that you've emailed it to us!

Technology Background and Interests

This course involves a heavy technology component as well. We'd like to hear more about your background and interests to make the best fit.

Have you taken any computer science/technology courses? If so, what did they entail? *

Yes I did. In high school, I took IT classes from grade 8 as it was required that we have a technical background. It entailed the basic knowledge of operating systems, software and using Microsoft products such as Excel and Word. Moreover we would do researches on the next big thing in tech, for instances in 2013 there was a lot 'hype' about 3D printing so each student will get assigned something like that to research on and do a presentation.
At the moment I am studying towards a degree in Computer Science and that is pretty much covering creating codes of various levels of difficulty. We once coded a stack calculator which is a fancy calculator used by Actuarial Science students.

Have you worked on a technology/software/computer science-heavy project before? If so, describe it. *

No I haven't, yet.

What would you like to get out of the technology component of this course? *

I would love to better my skills as a coder (solving problems that are not straight from the textbook) and possibly try to learn another programming language. As seen in the previous question, I haven't dealt with heavy software design before, therefore it will be interesting to get involved with that. Lastly, I would like to know how to connect the business part of a startup with the technical part in an effective way in order to create the next unicorn startup.

Availability

We're seeking students who are willing to dedicate time to this intense but rewarding four week program. The program runs from June 17-July 12, Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM. Tell us a little about your availability.

What is your availability during the class period? *

I am available to attend from 8am until 4pm as my parents do not approve of me staying out later than that especially in winter as it gets darker quickly also because I am a girl and it's not safe after 5pm.

Do you have any events/conflicts that we should be aware of? *

On the 28th of June I have to attend a Forbes 30 under 30 meet up at the Houghton Hotel. Lastly, on the 29th of June I am sitting in on a meeting with a insurance fintech startup created by graduate students.

Do you have any final exams during the week of June 17-June 21? If so, when? *

Yes I do. On the 19th and 21st of June I have exams that I write from 2pm onwards.

Rate your experience in the following tools and skills

Be honest about what you know and don't know. It is totally OK if you haven't done a lot of this before!

Developing Android application

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	◉	○	○	○	○	Expert

Developing IOS application

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	◉	○	○	○	○	Expert

Developing web application

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	○	◉	○	○	○	Expert

Database management

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	◉	○	○	○	○	Expert

Developing machine learning/ AI system

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	◉	○	○	○	○	Expert

Computer Aided Design (CAD)

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	◉	○	○	○	○	Expert

Designing and building electronic circuits

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	○	○	○	◉	○	Expert

Rapid prototyping (3D printers, lasercutting, etc.)

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	◉	○	○	○	○	Expert

Hand tools / machine shop

	1	2	3	4	5	
I've never done this	○	○	○	◉	○	Expert

Additional Information

This is your opportunity to provide us with any additional information you'd like! This section is optional.

Additional Information

I am enthusiastic about the applications of Computer Science especially Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence but I lack knowledge and skills in becoming an expert in those fields. I would like to build a system that takes big data from underdeveloped nations and turn that into useful information. Moreover, aggregate that useful information (through AI) to everyone who has access to the internet, which is similar to the Chinese app Toutiao. By doing so countries like ours will finally lessen the huge unemployment rate in less than 10 years and create an economic miracle because startups, companies and government organizations will know what to invest in or how to rise the GDP, all because of said useful information.
I believe that with this program I can reach my full potential and when this is all done I can officially call myself a Maker.
My whole life was planned in such a way that I land up in a STEM-related field at university and I will be forever grateful to my parents for forging this path for me. I have been preparing for such a challenging and rigorous course such as this, MIT Startup Lab and I would be eternal grateful to be selected as one of the participants.
I appreciate the time you took to read my application.