

The Unisa RPL Forum

Request for consideration of credits on past studies and work experience

Thank you for taking the time to review my RPL request. My name is Damian Vather and I would like the opportunity to present my knowledge and experience to be awarded credits. On a personal note, I love sports, spending time with family and friends, gaming, and having a black belt in karate. I love a challenge hence my LinkedIn profile says, "Learning to disrupt the market" as I'm looking at new ways to bring positive change and continuously develop for myself and others.

Since completing Matric in 2014, I've been on a journey of self-discovery and I now finally find myself in the field of data. I can say now I truly have found my passion and am on a continuous journey towards building a successful career as a Data Scientist. This was a challenging transition into a field that was fairly new in South Africa, exciting and unknown. On paper, it will show 3 years' experience which may not sound like a lot but the scope and the range of work I have done will hopefully reflect my vast experience in the field

My data science journey started at the EXPLORE academy where I learned the skills of Data Science. From the basic definitions to learning how to work with data on various tools and frameworks to finally developing customer focus products. Showing promise in the academy I was given the opportunity to teach Java with CITI for students who come from underprivileged backgrounds. This was the first glimpse into the world of teaching to bring about positive change in our communities. The change we focus on is teaching the right skills to allow previously disadvantaged students to get a job in the workforce and develop skills in an area where demand is growing. We have had great success as an intuition with a 90% placement rate on our course. The main object and vision that drives us are seeing our students being given an opportunity to build careers and succeed wherever they go.

Over the years I have taught various courses from Java, Data Analytics, and Data Science reaching over 1500 students with the goal to change lives. Apart from imparting knowledge and upskilling fellow students, I have been able to experience personal growth in the field, delivering talks at large events, and directly consulting with some of the biggest companies in SA and the UK. The data science path has opened many doors for me and I look to do the same for others. In my 3 years at Explore data science, I have grown from Student to teacher and I am currently the Head of Part-time delivery. In this division of Explore, we look to upskill the corporate workforce as well as young individuals to give them an opportunity to thrive in the data world.

As much as I have grown, I believe learning is a continuous journey hence my studies at Unisa. This allows me to enhance my knowledge in a field I have become so passionate about. The knowledge I have gained from the modules thus far has immensely improved my skills and I am looking forward to excelling in my chosen field of studies. That being said, there are modules in

the course which I have a lot of experience in, working first hand in business developing data solutions by data modelling, coding, building dashboards, predictive modelling, and prescriptive modelling. Awarding these credits to me will accelerate my studies and allow me to continue my goal of developing others.

I'm looking forward to the modules that are still to come and am eager to expand my knowledge. In terms of personal aspirations and wanting to give back to the youth, I have shared part 1 of 6 sessions in a free to join class for students to learn how to code and work with data, These free sessions are open to anyone who has expressed interest in the field of data. I believe there is a huge demand for local teachers to bring awareness to some of the leading trends and careers that exist out there. Over the recent year, data has proven to be invaluable to organisations that aim to grow their business and understand their customers better. Within our company space, we look to continue growing our reach and positively influence as many lives as possible both in South Africa and the rest of Africa. Our vision is to hopefully expand Internationally.

Given my experience and learnings through my current work at Explore, I'm hoping my application meets with the panel's favourable response.

Thank you

Regards

Damian Vather