

# Stay Relevant, get Yourself a Design-Led Mindset

Issued by [Hasso Plattner d-school Afrika](#)

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Applications now open for Foundation Programme in Design Thinking at the d-school Afrika.

COVID-19 has left its mark on the future of work and for tomorrow's graduates this demands a whole new approach to career planning.

According to Richard Perez, founding director of the Hasso Plattner School of Design Thinking Afrika (d-school) at UCT, while the past century has emphasised the importance of skill stability – you trained for a particular job and then stuck with that for most of your career – those days are long gone. “Now, with digitisation and the democratisation of work trends supercharged by the pandemic, tomorrow's graduates need more than skills, they need a design-led mindset to carry them through the turbulence,” he says.

The d-school, a member of the Global Design Thinking Alliance, was established just six years ago at UCT and is the only dedicated academic institution offering training and capacity-building in design thinking in Africa that is affordable and accessible and that students can do as an add-on to their existing studies.

Perez explains, “We’ve been running the Design Thinking Foundation Programme for the past six years. It’s our core focus and the most intensive and impactful of our programmes. It offers students a deep dive into the mindset that is Design-led Thinking. Students gain life-long skills for the future world of work and increase their likelihood of employment as we enable them to create human-centred solutions to real world problems.”

Perez continues, explaining that “the Foundation Programme enhances critical thinking skills as students work in diverse, multidisciplinary teams, while simultaneously developing an empathetic approach to problem solving.”

Students from any higher education learning institution who graduated in 2020 and 2021 as well as current final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students are encouraged to apply for the 2022 programme, which will run online from 14 March to 20 May 2022 and costs just R950 per student. The deadline for all applications to be submitted is 22 February 2022 and interested students can apply on the [d-school Afrika website page](#).

The d-school has established itself within the UCT ecosystem over the past half a decade and this year will make its home in a purpose-built [new building](#) on UCT's middle campus. The building is part of the d-school's strategic vision to become an African centre of excellence in design-led thinking.

“Over the past six years we’ve seen how design thinking can unleash graduates’ potential to lead within diverse contexts, work across disciplines and tap into their creativity to respond to real-world challenges,” says Perez.

## START YOUR DESIGN-LED JOURNEY AND APPLY

### The following criteria applies:

- Applicants must be **registered students at any institution of higher learning in South Africa**.
- Only undergraduate students in their final year of study or currently enrolled post-graduate students may apply.
- Students who graduated in 2021 (undergraduate or postgraduate) will also be eligible to apply.
- Applicants must be aged between 18 to 35 years old.
- All programme sessions will be conducted online and in English.
- Applicants will need to submit a motivation letter as part of their application.

## When?

The semester-long programmes in Design Thinking take place twice a year, in the first and second semesters. ***The first intake for 2022 runs from 14 March - 20 May 2022 for half days from 09:00 until 13:00.***

## What are the benefits of completing this programme:

- Gain critical thinking skills
- Learn to work in and across multidisciplinary teams
- Develop a keen sense of understanding and empathy for the creation of human-centred solutions
- Learn how to approach complex challenges from a design-led perspective.
- Discover digital co-creation and collaborative tools.
- Build your natural creative confidence.
- *\*All UCT students will receive UCT Plus Gold Active Learning Leadership certification. (NOTE: the programme is open to all post-grad students from Higher Learning Institutions)*

For more information, please contact or visit [www.dschoolafrica.org/student](http://www.dschoolafrica.org/student)

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The Hasso Plattner d-school Afrika at the University of Cape Town are the leaders of excellence in design-led thinking on the continent. We offer courses in design-led thinking with a focus on solving real-world problems for students, professionals and organisations.

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