



The poster for the National AI Hackathon features a dark purple background. On the left, there is a circular inset showing a fantastical landscape with a glowing river, a computer monitor, and a full moon. Below this, a group of diverse young people are gathered around a table, working on tablets and papers. The top left corner has the TechWays logo. The top center features the IEB logo with the tagline 'assessment matters'. To the right of the IEB logo, it says 'In partnership with' followed by the TechWays logo. The main title 'National AI Hackathon' is written in large, white, glowing letters. Below the title, a line of text encourages signing up. The date 'Wednesday, 20 May 2026' is displayed next to a calendar icon. The location 'At your school campus' and 'Become a Hackathon Hub' are shown next to a location pin icon. A website URL is provided at the bottom right, along with icons for WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

 In partnership with 

National AI Hackathon

Sign up your brightest young minds across all SA schools to create AI solutions that tackle social issues and stand to win some amazing prizes!

 Wednesday, 20 May 2026

 At your school campus
Become a Hackathon Hub

www.techways.online/ai-hackathon

    

Information Pack Contents

This Info Pack will include the following key pieces of information:

1. Brief description of the event
2. Key dates and briefing sessions
3. Expectations from schools
4. Expectations from Techways and IEB
5. Schedule of the Hackathon

Overall Description - AI Hackathon Powered by TechWays & IEB

Now in its 4th year, the annual AI Hackathon will be a 1-day event hosted on **Wednesday 20 May 2026** where participating learner teams come together to learn about AI while developing an AI concept or solution that addresses a specific societal problem. The thematic areas for societal problems will be broad - **youth unemployment, water management, urbanisation and education access**. More details on the thematic areas will be provided closer to the time.

Participating learner teams of 2–4 would be given access to TechWays' AI Hackathon course to complete Module 1–4 online prior to the event. Module 5 is optional as it will be projected during the Live event. The course covers:

Module 1: Introduction to AI (~30mins - 1hr)

- What is AI? Understanding the basic concepts and definitions
- Historical overview of AI development and its impact on society
- Different branches of AI: Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing, Computer Vision, etc.
- AI in various industries and its potential future implications

Module 2: AI and Ethics and Cyber Security (~15 mins)

- Ethical considerations and challenges in AI - including bias, fairness and transparency in AI algorithms
- Cyber Security, privacy and data protection in the age of AI

Module 3: Templates to be downloaded for the event (~1hr)

- Prompting AI tips
 - Case studies for the AI hackathon
- Problem Identification Brainstorming worksheet and AI solution Flowchart worksheet
- Slide templates and tips on presentations and voice recording tools
- Task 1: to customise your slide templates
- Task 2: to discuss a problem your team would like to solve and fill out the Problem Identification worksheet
- Other resources
 - Worksheets to guide the Hackathon Day
 - Scoring rubric



Module 4: Prototype Planning and Tools

This module introduces students to AI prototyping through a guided demo of an AI medical diagnostic tool.

- **Hands-on Python Coding:** Modify and run AI code blocks.
- **AI Concepts:** Learn about machine learning, computer vision, and decision-making.
- **Guided Demo:** Build an AI tool that scans medical images and suggests diagnoses.
- **Hackathon Prep:** Access additional code snippets to create their own AI solutions.

Students gain practical AI experience, preparing them to build their own prototypes on hackathon day.

Module 5: Videos to support the Event

- Briefing video: introducing the day's expectations
- Part 1: Picking and understanding a problem - including tips like adding infographics and videos
- Part 2: Describing your AI concept or solution
- Part 3: Building your prototype
- Part 4: Thinking through AI ethics and cyber security
- Part 5: Finalising your presentation

The online course will consist of videos, interactive assessment activities, and quiz exercises.

Schools will need:

- A projector with sound for learner teams to watch videos and the National Awards Ceremony of Top 10 teams
- Internet connectivity with 20mbps or more speed (with back-up generator to power internet and PCs/laptops)
- A room for all learner teams to gather
- At least 1 laptop or PC per learner team
- 1-5+ mentors who will be on hand throughout the day to support learner teams with questions
- 1-5+ judges who will be on hand during breaks to score the team submissions. These "local judges" will be responsible for submitting the top 1 team from each school to the National Judges. (Judges and mentors can be the same people)
- Each learner team should consist of at least 2, but maximum 4 learners.

Hackathon Event: the event will flow as follows on the day
Set-up of tables and chairs, along with equipment should take place the day before.

National AI Awards:

On 27 May - we'll be hosting a live-streamed National AI Awards at 8am showcasing the Top 10 teams for both the Grade 6-8 and Grade 9-12 categories.

Our National AI Judges are:

- Greg Desilla from [Melio.ai](#)
- Junaid Desai from e4
- Glenda Miles from Microsoft
- Doug McCusker from Investec Innovation team
- Steffy Naiker from IOCO

Prizes will be awarded to the Top 3 teams. Prizes are still being confirmed, but will likely be a mix of vouchers, bursaries and products.

Wednesday 20 May - AI Hackathon Day:

8–8:30am:	Briefing video and instructions
8:30–9:00am:	<i>Part 1 – Creating slides for your problem identified in the AI course</i>
9:00–10:30am:	<i>Part 2 – Fleshing out your AI concept</i>
10:30–12:00pm:	<i>Part 3 – Building your prototype</i>
12:00–12:30pm:	Lunch break
12:30–13:00:	<i>Part 3 continued – Finalising your prototype</i>
13:00–13:30:	<i>Part 4 – Thinking through the ethics and cyber security of your solution</i>
1:30–3pm:	<i>Part 5 – Final Touches and Recording by the teams</i>
3–3:45pm:	Judging (and QA)
4pm:	Announcement of Top Team submitted to National Awards Panel and handing out certificates for participation and award certificates

Over 21-24 May:

National Judges to score and select Top 10 teams across Southern Africa

Wednesday morning assembly (27 May) (TBC) 8–8:15am:

National Awards Ceremony of Top 10 Teams via Zoom (projected locally). **Prizes** for Top 3 overall national teams will be sourced from partner companies.

We propose that the teacher Mentors and Judges also browse through the TechWays AI Hackathon course as preparation for the Event.

Our key dates

Deadline to sign up: EXTENDED TO FRIDAY 24 April 2026

Briefing Information Session options to attend:

These live webinar sessions will provide answers to questions and more details on the event.

- Wednesday 1 April 2:30–3:30pm
- Wednesday 22 April 2:30–3:30pm

Zoom URL to join Info Sessions:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81742937995?pwd=YkNzS3BTNGJKRzZZOHB2ZXFtdFIYdzO9>

Meeting ID: 817 4293 7995

Passcode: 6rF3Nq

For signed-up schools - Compulsory Briefing Webinars (must attend at least 1)

These sessions are for registered schools, Zoom details will be emailed out directly to signed up schools.

- **Teachers: Wed 6 May (2 weeks prior) 2:30–3:30pm**
- **Learners: Wed 6 May (2 weeks prior) 5:30–6:30pm**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5224039000?pwd=NWJkdllmeGZNUUw3enpGZU9iUVdiZzO9>

Meeting ID: 522 403 9000

Passcode: 8thfVW

For signed-up schools - Check-in prior to Hackathon Day

These sessions are for registered schools to check that all is in order

- **Teachers: Monday 18 May 2:30–3:30pm**
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5224039000?pwd=NWJkdllmeGZNUUw3enpGZU9iUVdiZz09>

Meeting ID: 522 403 9000
Passcode: 8thfVW

Additional key dates for participating schools

- 22 April – 20 May: Learners start working through AI course (given 4 weeks)
- Wed 20 May, 8am – 3:45pm: IEB-TechWays AI Hackathon event
- 27 May, 8am: National IEB AI Awards Ceremony for top 10 schools from Southern Africa

Expectations from participating schools

Schools will need:

1. **To select 1–5** (depends on # of learner teams) **mentors and 1–5 local judges** from their team of staff to be the on-campus-support for the AI Hackathon event. ***Mentors and Local judges may be the same person.***

a. Mentors role

Mentors will be supporting the learner teams throughout the Hackathon event on 20 May 2026 (8–3:45pm) by providing coaching, tips and support. Mentors will receive direct support from TechWays via whatsapp throughout the day and prior to the event.

Mentors will be expected to have browsed through the AI course in order to understand expectations and attend at least one Briefing Webinar.

b. Local Judges role

The Local Judges will be expected to judge the learner teams from **3–3:45pm on Wednesday 20 May**. Mentors can also play the role of judges.

Each learner team would have created a **2 minute video recording** of their slides with narration. The judges will show the video (audience/learner teams encouraged to watch) of each team, and then have a few minutes for QA before moving onto the next team. Each judge will have a scoring rubric to add their scores to.

2. Setting up a room for the Hackathon event

The room should contain:

- A projector with sound for learner teams to watch videos

- Internet connectivity with 20mbps or more speed (with back-up generator to power internet and PCs/laptops)
- Tables and chairs for all the learner teams to gather, with sufficient space to walk between teams
- At least 1 laptop or PC per learner team

3. Selecting Learner Teams, with 2–4 members each

Participating Schools must send the list of learners to the IEB using the **IEB's Learner Registration Form (link to be sent)**. For each learner, the school must provide their first name, surname, email address, grade, ID# and their Team Name.

Schools can select the learner teams as they wish.

4. Learner teams to have:

- A laptop or PC per team (on the day). Specs of the laptops for purposes of building the prototype in Visual Studio:
 - Processor:
 - Minimum: 1.8 GHz or faster
 - Recommended: Quad-core or better
 - RAM:
 - Minimum: 8 GB
 - Recommended: 16 GB
 - Explanation: More RAM is crucial for handling large codebases, multiple Visual Studio instances, and other development tools.
 - Storage:
 - Type: Solid State Drive (SSD)
 - Minimum: 512 GB
- headphones (to watch the videos again should they choose to)
- pens/pencils and blank paper to brainstorm solutions
- Completed their 2 pre-hackathon tasks:
 - Task 1: selected and customised their slide template for the day
 - Task 2: discussed and identified a problem in the problem categories and filled out the Problem Identification Worksheet

5. Join the National IEB AI Awards via Zoom on 27 May at 8–8:15am

Ideally schools join via their assembly hall, and project the Zoom event to their assembly.

6. Hub Schools

If you've volunteered for your school to be a "Hub School" - we will connect you via whatsapp and email with the lead mentor/judge at neighbouring schools who would like to attend the Hackathon at your campus. The teacher mentors from those neighbouring schools will transport their learners to your campus and back home again. The teacher mentors from those neighbouring schools will also

attend the Hackathon Day at your campus and **support you** in delivering and judging the AI Hackathon.

Expectations from TechWays and IEB

1. Info sessions – for schools wanting to find out more before registering

TechWays will run multiple live Info sessions for those with FAQs. Please refer to the Key dates for the date/time and Zoom URL to join.

2. Briefing Webinar & Pre-event Briefing – for registered schools

These live webinars will provide more details on the event, the roles of mentor and local judges and provide resources to participating schools like – scoring rubric, AI course materials, certificate of completions etc.

3. Circulation of support materials

All participating schools will receive a package of support that includes:

- Scoring rubric for judges and mentors
- Hackathon overview and expectations
- AI Hackathon course, with videos and briefing materials to support learner teams

4. Whatsapp support group

Live whatsapp support for all participating mentors and local judges where they can ask questions and get live support.

5. National IEB Awards

TechWays and the IEB will convene a panel of recognised judges in the AI/technology industries to score the Top Team submitted from each participating school. They will be expected to create the Leaderboard of the Top 10 teams for announcement at the National IEB AI Awards on 27 May 2026 at 8am. Prizes will be sourced for the top 3 teams across Southern Africa.

Schedule of the Hackathon

Below is a summary schedule. If you'd like to see the [detailed schedule](#) please click [heFre](#).

Summary Schedule of the Hackathon Day

- ☐ 8-8:30am: Introduction & login (30 mins)
- ☐ 8:30-9:00: Confirm Problem Definition and Develop Problem Slides (30 mins)
- ☐ 9:00-10:30: Solution Brainstorming & Design (1.5 hours)
- ☐ 10:30-12:00: Building your prototype (1.5hrs)
- ☐ 12:00-12:30: Break & Refreshments (30 mins)
- ☐ 12:30-13:00: Finalising your prototype (30 mins)
- ☐ 13:00-13:30: AI ethics and cyber security (30 mins)
- ☐ 13:30-15:00 Slide Deck Creation & Recording (1.5hours)
- ☐ 15:00-16:00: Presentations & Judging (60 mins)
- ☐ 16:30: Top #1 team for each school submitted to IEB/TechWays