

Mathematics Olympiad Training Programme open to learners

Whilst high school learners have just registered for the first round of the South African Mathematics Olympiad (SAMO) that takes place on 14 March 2013, teachers now have the opportunity to enlist those learners for the Olympiad Training Programme. The South African Mathematics Olympiad Training Programme is a free distance-learning course in mathematical problem-solving that can be completed online or via correspondence.



Thomas Hagspohl, director of mathematics of St Andrew's College (last year's top participating school in the SAMO Training Programme with Prof Johann Engelbrecht, executive director of SAMF (right).

"It is aimed at developing the mathematical ability of promising learners whilst improving the overall results of participants in the Mathematics Olympiad," says Prof Johann Engelbrecht, executive director of the South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF). "Furthermore it is also used to find talented youngsters to represent South Africa at the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO), which is the 'World Cup' of mathematical competitions and will be taking place in South Africa in 2014."

Preparing for university entrance exams

Through participating in the Olympiad Training Programme learners not only improve their performance in the Mathematics Olympiad but also prepare for university entrance exams, especially since these look more like math competition papers than school exams.

"Having taken part in the Mathematics Olympiad and its training programme is also something that can be added to your CV," says Nwabisa Mphakalasi, project director: Marketing of the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) who is a co-sponsor of the Olympiad. "This could potentially improve your chances of a bursary."

There are seven sections to the training programme: Junior Round One, Junior Round Two; Senior Round One, Senior Round Two; Junior Round Three ; Senior Round Three and a Talent Search.

Learners who participate in the Olympiad Training Programme are also considered for awards at the annual gala event. There are different awards including new incentives for schools, namely an award to the top participating school, top participating African school and previously disadvantaged schools that will enter for the first time.

Harmony Gold on the lookout for talent

"Companies such as Harmony Gold Mining are also always on the look-out for talented and motivated youngsters who could one day work in fields such as science and engineering," says Mashego Mashego, executive director from Harmony Gold Mining, a sponsor of the Olympiad. "Because learners who take part in the Mathematics Olympiad gain experience in problem-solving, which is crucial to these fields, we watch the performance of the learners throughout the Mathematics Olympiad closely."

With strong government focus on education, and mathematics education in particular, the South African Mathematics Foundation encourages teachers to enrol their learners in this training programme. Applications forms for the training programme can be downloaded from www.samf.ac.za. For more information eail info@samf.ac.za or call the South African Mathematics Foundation at +27 (0)12 392 9362.

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