

# DHL GradStar Awards 2022 – “10 of the Finest” winners demonstrate representative approach of GradStar

\*Represented students announced at end of the article and also at [www.gradstar.com](http://www.gradstar.com)



Laura Barker, founder of the GradStar Awards and CEO of BlackBark Productions, with Hennie Heymans, CEO for DHL Express, Sub-Saharan Africa.



The proud winners and runners-up at the seventh DHL GradStar Awards.

**O**n 1 December 2022, the DHL GradStar Awards wowed with the diverse and inclusive stance they take in identifying South Africa's future leaders.

There is no more nationally focussed graduate employment programme in the country. 2022 featured entries from 52 tertiary learning institutions nationally and received almost 8 000 individual student applications. The commitment to the democratisation of access to opportunity in employment for these young learners is what keeps this programme alive, and was clearly demonstrated at this year's event.

GradStar has now completed its seventh year around the sun, and is responsible for promoting and securing the employment of hundreds of South Africa's youth. Unlike university career fairs, GradStar partners with learning institutions from across the country to ensure all tertiary learners receive the opportunity to be profiled in front of the country's top employers. In addition to long-term headline partner DHL, the prominent organisations behind this youth upliftment initiative are Absa, Fasken, Epiroc, Gautrain and BMW. Other key partners include Avis, Imperial and the Golden Key International Honours Society.

Partnering with the FutureFit Academy,

the brainchild of Industrial Psychologist Dr Eric Albertini, GradStar identifies the most employable learners according to the criteria of 15 Future Fit Skills needed in the workplace. These criteria are the result of Dr Albertini's PhD thesis and have been adopted by organisations internationally ([www.futurefitacademy.com](http://www.futurefitacademy.com)).

All candidate applications go through the GradStar App, a new initiative that further demonstrates GradStar's commitment to inclusivity. The candidates complete a self-assessment online to stand a chance of becoming selected for the Top 500. Once selected, the experts at the FutureFit Academy pore for hours over the submissions which comprise a key skills indicator, a complimentary full Future Fit strengths report and a two-minute video presentation from each candidate. Clearly demonstrating their understanding of the market they are dealing with, GradStar requires that the learners not only complete the Future Fit assessment and receive their detailed report, but also complete a personal development plan based on the findings in the report, guaranteeing these young people find the time to analyse their own personal results. A win for all involved.

Once the Top 100 most employable students are identified, GradStar transports all 100 into Johannesburg for a 4-day employment

immersion extravaganza. GradStar and its sponsors carry all the cost for this once again demonstrating their commitment to democratising access to opportunity for all.

The Top 100 students in attendance were striking in both their diversity and their commonality, hailing from all corners of the country, and studying a multitude of courses. They all had a common commitment to employment, for the betterment of their communities and for social justice.

Laura Barker, founder of the GradStar Awards and CEO of BlackBark Productions, observed: "It is critical that employers stay relevant and visible to the workforce of the future. Through the GradStar Programme we have found a way to bridge the gap between the learning institution and the world of work. We are delighted to play a part in the employment of so many young people, who may not otherwise have been recognised."

Master Judge Dr Albertini had the following to say about the 2022 Top 100: "I found the calibre of entries to be extremely high, and the results reflect all the qualities and attributes of a successful future employee."

Paul Clegg from DHL – which has demonstrated its commitment to supporting talent through this programme for the past five years – commented: "We are thrilled to be associated with the GradStar programme,

as we believe there is no better investment to make than in the future leaders of the great country of ours, and it is without question that the top 100 GradStar selected students fit into that category."

During the day on 1 December, the Top 100 Finalists engaged in a full day of workshops, in which all the students had the opportunity to impress the Sponsor Employers and judges. This is how the "10 of the Finest" were chosen and announced at the Gala Dinner that evening, at the Indaba Hotel In Fourways. Many of the Top 100 finalists go on to receive employment opportunities from the partnering companies.

Employers were unanimous in their praise of the Top 10 students selected. These students were selected based on their leadership capabilities, their ability to perform in a team and, most importantly, because they will make great future employees at some of the largest firms in the country.

A big thank you to the GradStar App, its developers and the amazing BlackBark team, all of whom helped to make all this possible. Students can download the GradStar App for free from all app stores.

We are also delighted to announce that DHL will remain the platinum partner for the programme for 2023.

## DHL GRADSTAR 2022 Top 10

- **Eduvous**  
Mosa Seleke, Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Business Management
- **Nelson Mandela University**  
Yonela Peter, Bachelor of Commerce: Financial Planning
- **Stellenbosch University**  
Keaton Harris, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
- **Stellenbosch University**  
Melt Hugo, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery

- **University of Johannesburg**  
Felicia Ndou, Bachelor of Laws
- **University of Johannesburg**  
Yusuf Cassim, Bachelor of Commerce in Industrial Psychology
- **University of KwaZulu-Natal**  
Nathan Pillay, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, and Information Technology
- **University of Pretoria**  
Nolukhanyo Mpisane, Bachelor of Laws

- **University of the Free State**  
Jana de Kluiver, Master of Arts in Governance and Political Transformation
- **University of the Free State**  
Hendrik Steyn, Advanced Certificate in Education (Further Education Biology Education)

### Runners up:

- **Durban University of Technology**  
Zabathembu Mthembu, Bachelor of Technology: Engineering: Civil

- **University of KwaZulu-Natal**  
Mayuri Pillai, Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting

### For media enquiries please feel free to contact

- Laura Barker:**  
CEO [laura@blackbark.co.za](mailto:laura@blackbark.co.za)
- Nina Paulsen:**  
Junior Events Administrator [nina@blackbark.co.za](mailto:nina@blackbark.co.za)