

Profile

PROFESSOR ABEJIDE ADE-IBIJOLA

Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Applications

Founder and Chairman: GRIT Lab Africa

Founder and President: Machines With Minds

THEORY | PRACTICE | AI PRODUCTS | COMMERCIALISATION | SOCIETAL IMPACT | AI & AFRICA

Background

Professor Abejide Ade-Ibijola holds a PhD in Computer Science (Artificial Intelligence — program comprehension) from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in 2016.

Prior, he had bagged a Bachelor's Honours degree (with First Class Honours) in Computer Science, and a Master's in Computer Science (with Distinction in Research) — Serious Games and Artificial Intelligence.

He is currently a Full Professor of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Applications (appointed as a full professor at the age of 36, with a professorial inauguration ceremony at the age of 38) at the Johannesburg Business School (JBS), University of Johannesburg (UJ), South Africa — becoming the first professor to be inaugurated at the JBS.

In his 18+ years of experience, he has conducted research in AI and applications, taught several modules at all

levels, and supervised 19 honours, 22 master's and seven doctoral candidates to completion.

Outside of academia, Abejide has worked in the software industry (across domains such as financial markets, serious games in public health and education, technology consulting, and innovations for entrepreneurship), developed AI strategies for inter-governmental and multi-national organisations, and created several innovations for the government of South Africa, and several stakeholders/industries across Africa.

Google search for the **Top AI professors in Africa returns Abejide's profile as the first result**, on the first page — his work spans theory to practice, products development, commercialisation, and societal impact.

Highlights

2-Time Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Award Winner

100+ Awards & Recognitions

90+ Original Research Publications

R405M+ Secured in Research, Innovation, and Skills Development Funds/Value

NRF-Rated: Established Researcher, with **2600+** Google Citations

12-Time Africa Continental Award Recipient



Research

Abejide has published 90+ articles in recognised, DHET-accredited and scopus-indexed outlets on AI algorithms, and innovations for solving real-world problems. His research work has attracted 2,600+ Google citations with h-index of 16, and i10-index of 27. His interests are as follows:

- **Rule-based Artificial Intelligence Algorithms:** Design of new production rules (with formal grammars of varying re-writing strengths) for tasks such as synthetic data generation, procedural content generation, text generation, language recognition, program comprehension, problems and solutions generation, etc, across several application domains.
- **Applied Artificial Intelligence:** Application of existing AI tools (such as trained machine learning models, conversational AI models/platforms, etc.) to solve real-life problems, and creating new innovations from these while producing recognised research outputs.
- **Game Artificial Intelligence and Serious Games:** Design and evaluation of serious games (from gamified quizzes, to 3D immersive video games, simulations, virtual reality experiences and augmented reality, often with embedded Game Artificial Intelligence algorithms) to support the teaching/training of several topics across sectors.
- **New Algorithms and Applications:** Design of new computational algorithms such as machine learning models, applied graph algorithms to solve problems across diverse domains.

Abejide's research has produced several innovations for the industry, academia, and government. His work has earned him a C2-rating from the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa — certifying him as an Established Researcher with international recognition for the quality and impact of his research outputs.

Teaching & Learning

Abejide's teaching and learning philosophy is rooted in discipline, accessibility, mentorship, and deeply personalised student development. He believes in preparing the student's mind before teaching begins, understanding the socio-cultural context of learners, and treating each student as a blank slate ("Tabula Rasa") capable of excellence. His philosophy extends beyond the classroom, creating environments where students feel like family and are empowered to say "I do not understand" without fear. He drives a "military mind" discipline, reinforcing hard work, consistency, and purpose-driven learning.

Over the past decade, he has taught across undergraduate and postgraduate levels, blending academic rigor with 4IR technologies to engage digital-native students. His pedagogical innovations include the development of serious games, virtual reality classrooms, and AI-driven educational tools. Abejide has secured over R1.7 million in teaching innovation grants, including funds for simulation software (SATLAB), plagiarism education games (Plagi-warfare), automated teaching evaluation platforms, and chatbots for postgraduate programmes. Notably, his Teaching and Module Evaluation Web App now saves the University of Johannesburg over R2 million annually in license fees.

He is a recipient of multiple teaching excellence awards, including the Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Teacher of the Year (2020) and the Dean's Top Senior Lecturer Award (2018). He is a member of the UJ Academy of Distinguished Teachers, serves on the University's Teaching Portfolio Assessment Committee (TPAC) — responsible for the promotion of all academic staff, and the VC's Teaching and Learning Adjudication Panel.



Teaching & Learning

He is currently the Chairperson of the JBS Teaching and Learning Committee. Abejide has also led efforts that distributed 10,000 Coursera licenses, valued at over \$1.5 billion USD, to UJ staff and students — one of the largest digital learning interventions at a South African university.

His student mentorship record includes over

3000 direct mentees, with numerous student research projects accepted into Scopus-indexed journals, and national recognition for hackathons and academic competitions.

His work ensures that learning is not only transformative but also tailored to produce commercialisable AI tools, and graduates that are employable, entrepreneurial, and innovative.

Excellence Awards, Grants, and Funding



Abejide has won 65 major teaching, research and innovation awards and secured/contributed over R405+ Million Rands (or \$22+ million US Dollars) in funding towards research, innovation, and social development value contributions (training of youth technopreneurs, skilling entrepreneurs with Artificial Intelligence tool, and training of unemployed graduates).

He is the winner of the UJ CBE Dean's Top Senior Lecturer Award 2018 (in a faculty of 338 academics), a Two-time Winner of the UJ Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Awards for the Innovation of the year 2019 (Valued at R500,000.00), and Teacher Excellence 2020 (Valued at R150,000.00).

Abejide is also a winner at the South Africa's Department of Public Service (DPSA) Ignite Hack Innovation Award 2018, the winner of SA Department of Communications Living 4IR Hackathon Overall Best Innovation of 2019,

and the winner of Two South Africa's State IT Agency (SITA) Public Service Innovation Awards at GovTech in 2019.

In 2020, he secured software licenses for the entire UJ community, worth over \$1.5 Billion US Dollars. In May 2023, he was named twice as a finalist of the: Africa Tech Leader of the Year Award and his social project (GRIT Lab Africa), for the Africa Educational Technology Award at the Africa Tech Week Awards in Cape Town, South Africa.

Abejide also received the Africa Impact Award at the Deep Learning IndabaX Nigeria for the same social project (GRIT Lab Africa) in June 2023. In October 2023, Abejide won an award for the Overall Academic Excellence in South Africa at the Nigerian Community Excellence Awards in Pretoria, South Africa.

In March 2024, he was nominated for the NSTF (The South African National Science and Technology Forum) award for an outstanding contribution to science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation in South Africa.

He is a 3-time finalist (out 2000+ nominations) of the Africa Startup Ecosystem Builders Awards (held in Accra Ghana from 2nd to 4th October 2024);



Awards (Contd)

winning two continental awards, namely: African Innovation Hub of the Year 2024 (with GRIT Lab Africa), and African Startup Ecosystem Builder Champion of the Year 2024.

In November 2024, Abejide won the African Tech Innovation of the Year Award (Artificial Intelligence Category) — awarded by Business Tech Africa for the Virtual Reality Courtroom Innovation — an immersive VR experience for legal education. In December 2024, Abejide was invited by the Nigerian government under the Nigerians in Diaspora initiative to Abuja to receive an Excellence Award, and he was inducted into the prestigious NIDO Africa Hall of Fame in acknowledgment of his remarkable contributions to society.

Abejide's career is decorated with over 100 awards and recognitions.

Academic Leadership

At the JBS, Abejide is the Founder and Lead of the Research Group on Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Innovations for Digital Transformation, and the Chairperson of the Centre for Entrepreneurship's Advisory Board (2022 to 2025).

He is also the Founder and the Head of the JBS Innovation Lab (a subset of his research group), known to produce immersive experiences (VR/AR, video games), mobile/web applications, and a range of algorithmic AI solutions. At UJ, he is a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, he serves on the Teaching Portfolio Assessment Committee (TPAC), and he is also a member of the Senate's Teaching and Learning Committee.

Abejide is the Former Academic Director of all academic programmes (PGDips, MBAs, and DPhils) in 2022, and the Former Director of the Postgraduate Diploma Programme at the JBS (2022 to 2023).



He has previously held the following positions at the University of Johannesburg: General Chair (and Editor) of the International Conference on Cyber-security and Information Systems (2017), Pioneer Head of the Technopreneurship Centre (Writer of the Charter to Senate, 2018 to 2019),

Deputy Head of Department for Teaching and Learning of the Department of Applied Information Systems (2017 to 2018), Acting Head of Department of Applied Information Systems (2018), Member of Programme Committee (curriculum development) 2017 to 2019, Member of the Departmental Higher Degrees Committee (2017 till 2022), Member of the JBS Ethics Committee (2022 till date), Member of the Faculty Board (2017 till date across two faculties), Member of Faculty Research Committee 2019 to 2022, Member of JBS Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (2022 till date), Member of the University Senate (2019 till date), Member of NRF Review Committee (2021), Member of the Adjudication Committee for the Vice-chancellor's Distinguished Awards for Teaching and Learning (2021 till date), and so on.





Intellectual Properties and Commercialisation



Learn and Earn Mobile App

This App allows students to sell products for three companies (Tupperware, Table Charm and Avon Justine). In the 2019 academic year, 390 students used this App, generating a turnover of R3 million.

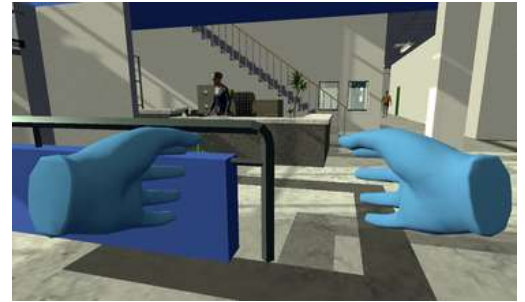
This resulted in R750 000 paid out to the students in the form of commission. This App has made more returns year-on-year thereafter.



Teaching & Module Evaluation App

This App saves the University of Johannesburg exactly R2 million rands annually in software license that was previously paid to a company in the Netherlands.

The App facilitates the teaching and module evaluation for the entire UJ community, 50,000 students and about 10,000 staff members use this App.



There's More!

- Abejide has authored over 150 proprietary technological tools, with some currently undergoing commercialisation.

A showroom of Abejide's recent innovations can be explored using the QR Code below:



VR (Virtual Reality) Courtroom

In 2024, I led the development of the VR Courtroom; an immersive virtual reality platform that transforms legal education by enabling students to participate in realistic courtroom simulations and apply legal theory in practice. By integrating AI, gamification, and experiential learning, it strengthens critical thinking and legal reasoning.

Beyond academia, it has strong commercialisation potential as a scalable solution for universities, law firms, and judicial training institutions across Africa and globally.



Innovations for the Government of South Africa

In 2022, Abejide upskilled 150 unemployed graduates in computer programming for the Education, Training and Development Programme (ETDP) — Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA). In 2023, Abejide held a consulting position at the Chemical Industries Education & Training Authority (CHIETA), where he trained 30+ students in software development while he created two robust software applications for: the disbursement of CHIETA's yearly grants and online assessments operations of CHIETA's examination. Still in 2023, Abejide led the Hackathon team for the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP) where he delivered 12 AI-driven technological innovations for service delivery — for the improvement of service delivery.

In October 2023, he accepted a project from the Gauteng Provincial Government of South Africa to train 70 small businesses on how to use Artificial Intelligence and other digital tools to improve their businesses. This cohort graduated in April 2024, with technological skills estimated at R27, 685, 000.00 (≈R28 million rands) in monthly supposed spending for these businesses, making R332, 220, 000.00 (≈R332 million rands) in contribution of a year's scarce skills South African market worth — noting that the worth of commercialisation of these skills by these small businesses cannot be estimated.

In May 2024, Abejide led the GRIT Lab Africa team that supported the technical planning (in collaboration with the Centre of Emerging Researchers) and launch of the South Africa National Youth Service Institute (SANSI) at CSIR, Pretoria; and he hosted the Director General of Higher Education and Training of South Africa at the JBS Innovation Lab on the 3rd of April 2024, to establish a collaboration to solve challenges in Higher Education in South Africa and Africa at large.

In July 2024, he started a project to develop AI-embedded curricula for teaching robotics and coding across 99 schools in the Gauteng province of South Africa, via the Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance. In September 2024, he accepted a project from the Office of the Deputy Minister of Higher Education of South Africa, Dr Mimmy Gondwe, to create an AI-powered Helpdesk for the ministry — this project has produced two tool — one of which is a digital human that answers all frequently asked questions.

In March 2025, he was formally acknowledged by the City of Johannesburg's Department of Economic Development for his insightful contributions to the Economic Growth Strategy Development process, reinforcing his relevance in policy and planning linked to AI-driven development.

Abejide trained 21 senior managers of the Engineering Team at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) in February 2026 on how they can leverage Artificial Intelligence as part of their future strategy for revenue administration in a three-day workshop in Pretoria, South Africa. He ran a similar workshop (on a gentle but practical introduction to AI) for 147 staff members at Government Employee Medical Scheme (GEMS) in March 2026, organised by the Knowledge Management team at GEMS.





Footprints in Africa and Intergovernmental Organisations

In April 2025, Abejide was invited by the ECOWAS Commission to create a framework for handling big data and generating insights from these large datasets using Artificial Intelligence techniques in Lome, Togo — sponsored by the World Bank. In March 2024, he spoke on Artificial Intelligence Ethics at the Global Entrepreneurship Congress Africa (GEC+ Africa), Cape Town, South Africa. He has contributed to the Kenya's Presidential Digi-talent programme (2021), and also supervised at PhD level for Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Nairobi, Kenya (2018 till date).

In Botswana, he has examined several master's and doctoral candidates, and given international keynote addresses at the University of Botswana and BOTHO University, Gaborone, Botswana. In September 2024, he was well received by the Vice-chancellor of the Accra Technical University (ATU), Ghana and concluded a collaboration agreement between ATU and GRIT Lab Africa.

In 2017, he was the General Chair of the 2nd International Conference on the Internet, Cyber-security and Information Systems (a collaboration with the University of Botswana, Gaborone). He is a co-organiser of the International Conference on Information Systems and Emerging Technologies, Windhoek, Namibia (2022 till date), and in April 2024, Abejide accepted to host (as the General Chair) this conference at the JBS Innovation Lab, Johannesburg Business School (JBS).

In Nigeria (his country of birth), he is supporting the government of Ekiti State by serving as an adviser in Artificial Intelligence to the Ekiti State Innovation, Science, and Technology Research Advisory Council (starting from April 2025). He has also supported the Nigerian Computer Society on a ministerial panel (with the Nigerian Minister for Innovation and the Minister for Education) on a workshop on Artificial Intelligence and Applications in Education.

He has given talks at Covenant University, Nasarawa State University, and mentored undergraduate students in grit and programming at twelve Nigerian universities, including University of Ibadan, Pan-Atlantic University, University of Lagos, University of Ilorin, and so on. Abejide currently has a three year memorandum of understanding with Thomas Adewumi University, Kwara State, Nigeria for student exchanges.

In October 2024, he was invited by Aare Afe Babalola, a Nigerian billionaire and philanthropist to discuss the Artificial Intelligence, the society and collaboration. He has a footprint of mentoring young Africans across 26 African countries.

Abejide serves as an Advisor (Artificial Intelligence) on the Ekiti State Innovation, Science, and Technology Research Advisory Council (EKISTRAC), a portfolio of the Commissioner for Innovation, Science, and Digital Economy of the Government of Ekiti State, Nigeria





Consulting for Corporate Multinationals

Abejide has worked with a diverse range of multinational companies to solve complex problems in Artificial Intelligence and its applications across sectors. He has delivered strategic talks and masterclasses on AI to top executives and audiences at OpenText, Standard Bank Group, MTN, SARS, GEMS, and ABSA Africa, conducted advanced text mining on large datasets of tweets for Telkom to identify customer pain points, predict future trends, and trained the executive leadership of PPC Africa on AI applications.

Recently in February 2026, Abejide facilitated a three-day workshop for top executives at the South African Revenue Service on AI and the future of taxation. Through his societal impact project, GRIT Lab Africa, he has secured sponsorships from major corporations such as Colgate (Colpal), Wabtec, and IHS. His collaboration with Standard Bank South Africa focused on financial planning tools for young people and AI Tools for Corporate and Investment Banking (CIB). He has also featured in thought leadership on AI through national and international media outlets such as the London School of Economics (LSE) on AI and Africa, Business Day, eNCA News, and Phoenix TV China — a global satellite television network with over 360 million viewers world-wide, where he was recently featured for his pioneering work at the intersection of AI and societal impact.

In April 2025, Abejide gave the keynote address at the Huawei Cloud TechWave in Woodmead Johannesburg on AI-Driven Industry Transformation in South Africa.

In October and November of 2025, Abejide represented Meta as a Judge at the Llama Impact Start-up Accelerator in Johannesburg and as a delegate in Dubai, UAE at the Meta AI Summit, November 2025.





International Positions and Activities

Abejide is a Distinguished Visiting Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the School of Business, Woxsen University, Hyderabad, India (also an advisory board member of the AI Research Centre at Woxsen), and holds several academic, consulting, and advisory positions around the world. He manages a blockchain node for Bloxberg, Munich, Germany, and he is a member of the Bloxberg's Token Financial Model Advisory Board.

Recently, Abejide has given invited talks at University of Oxford, United Kingdom, Cornell University, New York, USA and at National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Washington DC, USA on Artificial Intelligence and Applications. He is the partner on the Dreamship — Dreamathon Project, initiated by the Computational Design Institute (CDI), Silicon Valley, USA (2020 till date).

Abejide is an external examiner at the School of Computing, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu Tiedepuisto, Finland; and an external reviewer on AI-related research at the National Institute of Health and Care Research, University of Southampton, United Kingdom.

In December 2024, Abejide became a Distinguished Juror for the prestigious Aegis Graham Bell Awards in the "AGBA Generative AI Innovation Series" — supported by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi and Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, and Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade).

In March 2026, he presented an African perspective on the AI technologies developed on the African continent at the London School of Economics (LSE)'s Africa AI Summit in Houghton, London, United Kingdom.

Global Mentoring of Academics in Artificial Intelligence

In recent years, Abejide has coached younger academics to success within several programmes such as the South African nGap (New Generation of Academics Programmes).

In March 2024, Abejide launched a project called the JBS GRIT Lab Research Hackathon that brings 100+ researchers together — across disciplines and the spectrum of research seniority from Junior Lecturers to Postdoctoral Research Fellows, Senior Lecturers, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Full Professors, Industry Researchers, Government Researchers, and Private Investigators) — to co-ideate, co-create, and co-publish in the applications of Artificial Intelligence to solve sustainable development goals across disciplines.

This project has researchers from around the world in countries such as (but not limited to): Australia, Canada, China, Finland, France, Ghana, Guyana, India, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Zimbabwe.





GRIT Lab Africa: Societal Impact Project

Abejide is the Founder and Chairman of GRIT Lab Africa (a societal impact project for training young Africans in Grit and programming). At GRIT Lab Africa, Abejide mentors 116 young people across 38 higher institutions of learning in 11 African countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). At the University of Johannesburg (UJ), he currently mentors 500+ students, and has directly mentored 3000+ students in the last seven years.

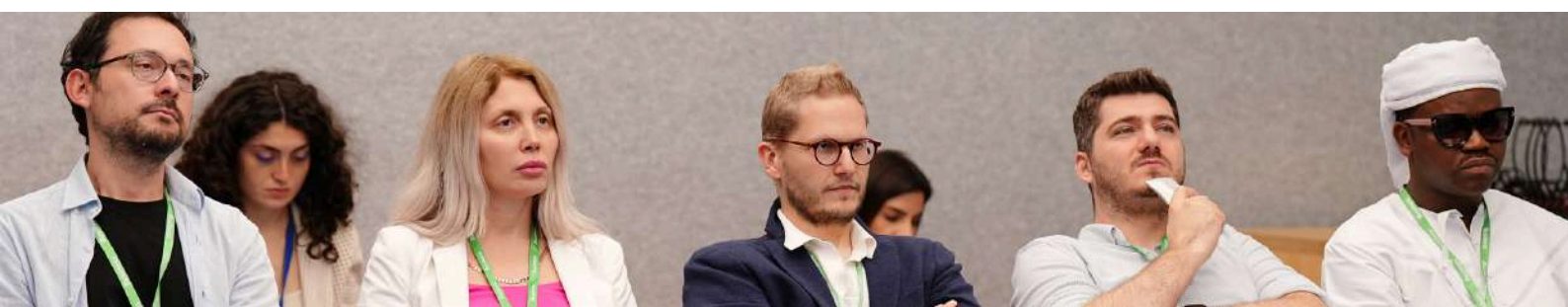
In 2022, he paid out R1, 111, 587.38 in wages to 33 students for work-integrated learning, while training these students to become software engineers across diverse range of technologies. This number increased to R1, 580, 953.30 in 2023 and to R2,782,128.68 in 2024. In July 2023, Abejide launched a free programming bootcamp for undergraduate students at UJ across all faculties/disciplines and this received 598 applications. He accepted and trained 477 students on this programme — contributing an estimated R22, 896, 000.00 and an extra R5, 568, 000.00 for 116 undergraduates across 10 other African countries (South Africa is the 11th country) in market value to the University of Johannesburg and 37 other universities across Africa for these scarce skills. This bootcamp trained 570 students in 2024, contributing a total value of R27, 360, 000.00. In January 2026, Abejide secured R500, 000.00 in funding for GRIT Lab Africa.

GRIT Lab Africa has an historical reach of alumni from 26 African countries. Abejide is the editor and publisher of The Kingsman Academic Magazine, a publication that showcases the technological innovation of his mentees; and he is also the publisher of GRIT Lab Africa Opinion Series.

Machines with Minds: The African Innovation Kitchen

Abejide is the Founder and President of Machines with Minds, also known as the The African Innovation Kitchen, or the “The Kitchen” for short. The Kitchen is a private technology incubation hub that is positioned to serve the entire African continent. The Kitchen allows young innovators across Africa (trained by the GRIT Lab Africa social project) to: access internships, incubate technology start-ups companies, create new technologies to solve problems in their local communities, commercialise their solutions, create AI solutions for the government and private sectors, and develop state/private-sponsored social innovations to solve African problems.

The Kitchen also creates new training programmes/masterclasses to respond to the rapid changes triggered by advances in Artificial Intelligence and other fourth industrial revolution technologies. The Kitchen responds with solutions to the pain-points of governments and the private sector across Africa, most of which there are currently no institutional structures in education/industry or customised, Afro-centric solutions/contents to address them at the moment. The Kitchen is a job creation entity for GRIT Lab Africa alumni.



Abejide's Recent Partners, Collaborators, and Clients





Let's Connect!

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