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ASABA
Association of South African Black Actuarial Professionals




**Mentorship, Coaching and the Journey to Qualification**

This piece is a deeply personal one.

It speaks to numbers that are far from where we want them to be and to the transformation we must collectively drive. In its 2026 Integrated Annual Report, ASSA highlighted that transformation within the profession, particularly in qualifying Black actuaries, has been slower than expected. Today, Black fellows make up just 10% of the profession - that's less than 1% increase over the past year!

That statistic stopped me in my tracks. It made me reflect on a simple but urgent question: **how do we close the gap?**

ASSA has invested significantly in initiatives to support students - through tuition, study support, and access to resources. These are critical. But we must ask

For me, one of the most impactful forms of support has been **mentorship** - the people who listened, who guided and who held my hand through difficult moments. To each of you who have played that role in my life, I am deeply grateful.

But this reflection led me to another question: **what does mentorship really mean - and is it enough?**

A few years ago, I had the privilege of participating in the **ASABA x Adrian Gore Mentorship Programme**. That experience was a turning point. It helped me realise that while mentorship is powerful, it is **only one piece of the puzzle**.

To truly transform our profession, we need more.

- We need **coaches** - people who help us develop specific skills, challenge our thinking and hold us accountable to our goals.
- We need **sponsors** - people who advocate for us in rooms we are not in, who open doors and who actively create opportunities.

Without coaches, mentorship can feel like navigating without map. Without sponsors, many doors remain firmly closed.

This insight shaped the vision behind our **Actuaries in the Arena** webinar series. Our first session, which welcomed around 60 attendees, reaffirmed a powerful truth:**we all have a role to play.**

Whether you are just starting your journey or have already qualified, you are in the arena. And with that comes responsibility. We must recognise our power and use it.

If•you have a seat at the table, use your voice.
If•you have navigated the journey, reach back and guide someone else.
If•you see a gap, step in and help fill it.

As **ASABA**, we are committed to building structures that go beyond traditional mentorship. **Group coaching** is just the beginning. Our goal is to ensure that every ASABA member has access not only to mentors, but also to coaches - so that whatever challenges you face, you are supported to stay in the qualification arena and succeed.

But this journey is not just about personal success. It is about collective elevation. It is about ensuring that as we **lift others as we rise**.

Transformation will not happen in isolation. It will happen through community, through intentional action and through each of us choosing to play our part.

Let us step boldly into the arena - together.

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# ASABA x Old Mutual Webinar







**What a session!**

Thank you for joining us for the launch of our new webinar series. Your energy and engagement made it everything we hoped for and more.

A huge thank you to our featured guests, **Fred van der Vyver** and **Marvin Nair**, for sharing how they've mastered their respective arenas.

We've attached the presentation so you can revisit the key insights in your own time.

This is just the beginning. We've got more industry leaders, more insights, and more conversations lined up to help you rewrite your own playbook on career success and balance.

Keep an eye on your inbox for the next session. You don't want to miss it!

PRESENTATION

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# Quest in Collaboration with ASABA

Discovery once again demonstrated its commitment to developing future actuarial talent by hosting the fourth Discovery Actuarial Quest (DAQ) in January 2026. This flagship initiative, delivered in collaboration with the Association for Black Actuaries South Africa (ASABA), continues to provide high-potential actuarial students with valuable exposure to the professional working environment.

Held from 19th to 23rd January 2026 at Discovery's head office in Sandton, the five-day programme brought together students from top universities across South Africa. The DAQ was designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and the practical demands of an actuarial career.

Throughout the week, participants engaged in a dynamic and immersive programme that combined technical, professional and interpersonal development. Highlights included:

- Real-world actuarial project work, allowing students to apply their academic knowledge in a practical business context
- Exposure to various actuarial functions across Discovery's business units, offering a holistic view of the profession
- Networking opportunities with Discovery actuaries and fellow ASABA students from across the country
- Career guidance sessions with Discovery's People team, including tips on personal branding and transitioning into the workplace
- Collaborative learning experiences, fostering teamwork and problem-solving skills

The structured programme ensured that students not only deepened their technical understanding but also gained clarity on the diverse career paths available within the actuarial field.

Feedback from participants highlighted the significant impact of the programme. Students described the experience as invaluable, noting that it provided meaningful insight into the day-to-day realities of working as an actuary. The opportunity to engage directly with professionals and tackle real-life problems helped demystify the transition from university to the workplace.

Importantly, the DAQ reinforced ASABA's mission of empowering and supporting black actuarial students by equipping them with the tools, confidence and exposure needed to succeed in their careers.

between Discovery and ASABA. By working together, the organisations continue to create platforms that nurture talent, broaden access, and accelerate transformation within the actuarial profession in South Africa.

Following the success of the 2026 programme, Discovery and ASABA are already preparing for the next instalment. The fifth Discovery Actuarial Quest is scheduled to take place in January 2027.

Students are encouraged to keep an eye out for application details, which will be shared soon. The programme remains a highly sought-after opportunity for those looking to gain early exposure to the actuarial working world and take a significant step forward in their professional journey.





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# Calling All Short-Term Insurance Students! We Need Your Feedback.

The Association of South African Black Actuarial Professionals (ASABA) and the Short-Term Insurance Committee (STIC) are **investigating the low F203 pass rates.** We want to understand these results both on a standalone basis and compared to other fellowship exams.

Your insights are crucial to helping us build a targeted plan to address these challenges. If you are currently sitting for or have recently attempted F203, please take time to answer these 5 questions, share your experience and shape the future of ASSA student support.

Click Here to Take the Survey

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