IBM Z Xplore is a learning experience available year-round to individuals interested in developing in-demand IBM Z skills, earning industry-recognized digital badges and redeeming rewards. It includes an entry level mobile gaming application, an interactive learning platform with IBM Z system access, as well as a sponsored student contest.

The learning platform, open to individuals ages 18 years and older, takes learners through guided educational paths and code challenges in three progressive levels:

- Fundamentals ~8 hours
- Concepts ~2 hours (with option to complete the IBM Z Practitioner Badge; additional ~40 hours)
- Advanced ~10-20 hours with content continuously being added

Two digital badges are offered within the learning platform. The first badge is be issued after the completion of Concepts -- the 2021 IBM Z Xplore Concepts Badge. The second badge is issued upon completion of the Advanced level -- the 2021 IBM Z Xplore Advanced Badge. Both badges will automatically be rewarded via Credly.

IBM will also sponsor a student contest hosted and run by HackerEarth, an industry leader in hackathons with a community of over 6 million developers and 450 universities. The month-long competition will kick off in mid-October and will be powered by IBM Z Xplore integrating core challenges to help students complete the contest. To be eligible, participants must 18 years or older and a student at an accredited school. Participants will have 30 days to complete their submission.

Although not required, it is strongly encouraged that students participating complete the Fundamentals and Concepts levels in the Learning Platform prior to starting the contest. The knowledge gained in the learning platform will only help their ability to complete the contest.

Student will be able to preregister for the October contest on the HackerEarth website in September.
To our valued educators,

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in bringing IBM Z, z/OS, and applications skills into your classroom. Many of your past students make up today’s talent at our clients and partners.

For 16 years Master the Mainframe has introduced thousands of students and learners to IBM Z and enterprise computing. Taking the best of the past and reimagining it for the future, the IBM Z® community will be sunsetting Master the Mainframe to make way for a new learning experience—IBM Z Xplore.

IBM Z Xplore will fully launch this September and will be available globally to anyone interested in developing valuable, in demand IBM Z enterprise computing skills while earning industry-recognized digital badges and earning rewards.

Along with the IBM Z Xplore learning platform, and an entry level gaming application, IBM will also sponsor a student contest hosted and run by HackerEarth, an industry leader in hackathons with a global community of over 6 million developers and 450 universities. The month-long competition will kick off in mid-October and will be powered by IBM Z Xplore, integrating core challenges to help students complete the contest.

We want to reassure you that IBM Z Xplore will provide the same level of learning and skills from our previous Master the Mainframe program -- and more.

Also, in order to not interrupt in progress learning, the 2020 Master the Mainframe system will remain available to active accounts until January 2022.

Your IBM Z Academic Initiative Team
OVERVIEW

The IBM Z Xplore learning platform is a no-charge educational experience that is available year-round to reskillers, students—18 years or older and educators—with content continuously being added throughout the year.

The platform has three levels; fundamentals, concepts, and advanced. Learners will need to complete the challenges within each level in order to progress. Each level features a variety of education styles including videos, quizzes, reading materials, and hands-on exercises.

The platform will also automatically issue Credily badges to learners once they have completed the Concepts and Advanced levels.

FUNDAMENTALS
Introduction to coding languages such as JCL, Python and USS. Learning about Data Sets and VS Code filters. 
Approximately ~8 hours to complete

CONCEPTS
A deeper look into subsystems such as Db2 and RACF. Expanding knowledge on security, uptime, and enterprise scalability. 
Approximately ~2 hours to complete
Opportunity to complete the IBM Z Practitioner Badge if interested ~40 hours

ADVANCED
Hands-on learning around REXX, COBOL, Linux, VSAM, REGEX, JCL, Python, Db2 and more.
Approximately ~10 to 20 hours to complete
OVERVIEW

The month-long competition will kick off on October 15 and run through November 15. It is recommended that students complete all fundamental and concepts challenges within the learning platform prior to starting the contest; however, it is not required. To be eligible, participants must be 18 years or older and a student at an accredited school. The contest will have five stages. Below are the skills required to complete each stage:

STAGE ONE
Analyze zOS datasets and libraries to uncover target parts needed to assemble the Z escape vehicle.
Skills needed: REXX & JCL

STAGE TWO
Navigate through ZFS filesystems to uncover hidden codes.
Skills needed: Python & Bash

STAGE THREE
Extract identity portfolios from database systems and implement code to unpack fields that point to escape vehicle location.
Skills needed: SQL, COBOL, JCL

STAGE FOUR
Convert location into geocoded positions and generate a map plotting display.
Skills needed: API, ZCX, PYTHON, JCL, Javascript

STAGE FIVE
Create a pipeline to generate the output based on current information of vehicle parts and location. Assemble your vehicle and zoom out of the digital city!
Skills needed: Using all skills from steps 1-4
LEARNING PLATFORM FAQS

WILL BADGES BE OFFERED AND AFTER WHAT SECTIONS?
Two badges will be offered within the learning platform. The first badge will be issued after the completion of concepts – the 2021 IBM Z Xplore Concepts Badge. The second badge will be issued after the completion of the advanced - the 2021 IBM Z Xplore Advanced Badge. Both badges will be automatically rewarded via Credly.

WHERE CAN STUDENTS SIGN UP FOR THE IBM Z XPLORE LEARNING PLATFORM?
The learning platform is now live and open to individuals 18 years and older.

CONTEST FAQS

ARE THERE ANY PREREQUISITES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDENT CONTEST?
Although not required, it is strongly encouraged that students complete the Fundamentals and Concepts levels in the learning platform prior to the contest. This will only help their ability to complete the contest.

WHERE CAN STUDENTS SIGN UP FOR THE IBM Z XPLORE STUDENT CONTEST?
Coming soon! Students will be able to preregister for the October contest on HackerEarth's website starting in September. To be eligible, participants must 18 years or older and a student at an accredited school.
SOCIAL IMAGES

IBM Z Xplore

FUNDAMENTALS

CONCEPTS

ADVANCED
SOCIAL IMAGES

Get Started

Concepts

Fundamentals

Advanced

Challenges continuously added...

IBM Z Student Challenge
October 2021