**To: Professor Teresa Duval**

**From: Alfred Acquaye, Cyse368**

**Subject: Reflection Paper 1**

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As I approach the 50-hour mark of my apprenticeship at Evolva LLC, I navigate a fascinating landscape where theoretical knowledge from textbooks intersects with the pragmatic dynamics of the cybersecurity world. Every day at Evolva has been a lesson in adopting a proactive stance toward cybersecurity, continually anticipating potential threats, and developing intrusion-resistant systems. One of my primary learning objectives has been to gain a more in-depth comprehension of the practical implementations of Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA), a topic I had previously studied theoretically. At Evolva, I have had the hands-on opportunity to observe and contribute to the iterative process of improving ZTA-based security protocols. I have begun a journey to understand the technological aspects and the philosophical foundations of a "never trust, always verify" philosophy. The projects I have completed thus far have outlined the intricate dance between trust and verification and how this relationship shapes the cybersecurity landscape. Despite the steep learning curve and initial obstacles, such as familiarizing myself with Evolva's bespoke systems and comprehending each project's unique security requirements, I am steadily evolving each day. My mentors' guidance and the collaborative environment have been instrumental in mitigating these challenges, providing solutions, and imparting learning that is complex, multidimensional, and grounded in real-world experiences. Moreover, the sense of community and the collective aim of safeguarding information has fostered a work culture as focused on people as technology. I find the synchronicity between learning and practice, securing and facilitating, and individual development and collective protection in this setting. As I envision the next steps of my journey, I am anxious to delve deeper, make greater contributions, and forge a path where my learning objectives seamlessly merge with Evolva's mission. The aim is to emerge with a nuanced comprehension of the vitality and responsibility that a role in cybersecurity entails, in addition to a technical skill set.