

Work-Integrated Learning South Africa (WILSA)

Whilst the concept of Cooperative and Work Integrated Education (CWIE) has mostly been practiced by the Universities of Technology (UoT), Comprehensive Universities and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges particularly in the training of artisans and technicians, the concept extends to other areas such as medical school, law, accounting, etc., although it is not referred as cooperative education.

According to the Council on Higher Education's Good Practice Guide for WIL, what distinguishes WIL from more narrow conceptions of learning-for-work is the emphasis on the integrative aspects of such learning. WIL includes a whole range of educationally-driven modalities such as work based learning, problem based learning, project based learning, work-directed theoretical learning and simulated learning.

The importance of Cooperative and Work Integrated Education (CWIE) is based on its critical need for employability and its significance is underpinned by the creation of the Directorate for WIL by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in South Africa; it also features prominently in the White Paper on Post School Education. The broader objectives of THENSA in respect of CWIE have changed substantially, and therefore the need to establish WILSA.

We are delighted to announce the launch of WIL South Africa (WILSA) at the THENSA International Conference entitled UNIVERSITY- BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE 4th Industrial Revolution.

Our Vision and Objectives with our local and global partners are as follows:

Work-integrated Learning South Africa (WILSA) is a Network of Excellence (NoE) for WIL that is research focused and is established under the auspice of Technology Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA). The aim of WILSA is to promote research, training capacity building and practice of WIL in the country and the continent by doing the following:

- Bringing networks of excellence together for benchmarking and strategic intervention design and implementation – to benefit the sector as a whole.
- Evaluating and designing WIL curricula that are fit for purpose through applied research.
- Tapping into existing expertise and platforms locally and internationally to benefit our members and the broader sector to gain international recognition.
- Informing WIL policy design and driving implementation around the development and application of WIL as an effective pedagogy.
- Designing, facilitating and gaining access for members to
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- Extending the benefits of WIL to other HE and industry sectors that could benefit from its innate values and the establishment of a rotational WIL satellite office for Africa linked to WACE.

Dr Henri Jacobs (chair of WILSA) and Prof Roelien Brink (partner) are currently steering the WILSA project. This conference will bring together Universities, Business, Industry and Government stakeholders in the form of debates and roundtables to identify solutions and innovations in teaching, learning and research in the 4IR. WIL is a core module for all qualifications at THENSA member Institutions will be the thread discussed across all the sessions.

We have lined up local and international experts/ business and policy makers who bring new knowledge, experience and opportunities to expand our network across the globe.

THENSA is now also a member of the World Association for Co-operative Education.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Anshu Padayachee
CEO: Technological Higher Education Network of South African (THENSA)