

## **Finding a Work-integrated Learning Strategy that Enhances the Employability of Graduates of South African Universities of Technology: A Research Agenda**

**Henry Jacobs<sup>1</sup> and D.Y. Dzansi<sup>2\*</sup>**

*Central University of Technology (CUT), Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa*

**KEYWORDS** Cooperative Education. Industry-engaged Learning. Internships. Apprenticeships. Experiential Learning. Work Ready. South Africa

**ABSTRACT** A strategy refers to a plan to achieve a major goal. An important goal of South Africa's Department of Higher Education (DHET) is to ensure that higher education institutions (HEIs) produce a steady flow of 'ready for employment' or 'work-ready' graduates. Universities of Technology (UoTs) offer a vocation-oriented curriculum. To prepare work-ready graduates, UoTs include a compulsory work-integrated learning (WIL) component in the curriculum. The expectation is that through WIL, learners will acquire the necessary practical experience to become 'work-ready' thereby enhancing the likelihood that they will be employed when they graduate. WIL is, therefore, a strategy for enhancing the learners' employability graduation. WIL can be financially and non-financially demanding, therefore, UoTs have been searching for innovative ways to implement curricula in a cost-effective manner without compromising quality and effectiveness. In this paper, the researchers outline a research agenda that can be used by South African UoTs to identify a sustainable WIL strategy.