

# Wholesale & Retail LEADERSHIP CHAIR

## PRESS RELEASE

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### WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING NEEDS SHARPER FOCUS

Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in the retail sector struggle to provide meaningful workplace training for students due to financial and other constraints, even though they have the most potential for creating new jobs.

This is one of the findings of a research paper into work-integrated learning in the retail sector. The study, commissioned by the Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, makes specific recommendations for how SMMEs can make a more meaningful contribution towards work-integrated learning or WIL.

WIL is internationally defined as “career-focused learning that integrates theoretical knowledge with workplace practical application, within a vocationally designed curriculum”. It can play a significant role in how employable a graduate student will be.

According to the WRLC researchers: “While SMME development is a government priority, South Africa still has a record of below-average entrepreneurial and small business development. Small and micro enterprises are mostly survivalist in nature, which impacts on their ability to accommodate student placements.”

“But many SMME owners are well aware of what they themselves gained through workplace experiences, and are keen to make their contribution to society. This study seeks to come up with solutions to this problem.”

The study calls for a national framework that would create credibility for WIL for both employers and students alike. It also suggests a collaborative review that would promote progress towards more effective work-integrated learning within SMMEs.

The study included interviews and questionnaire surveys of samples of SMME retailers, tertiary vocational education staff and students, as well as insights from retail corporates and independent skills development facilitators.

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