



Work Integrated Learning and Graduate Employability

SUMMIT: SEASON V

**HOTEL SKY,
SANDTON —
JOHANNESBURG**

6-7 AUGUST, 2026

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS



Rachel Heyes

Associate Director:
Employer Engagement &
Placements – Nottingham
Trent University, UK



Bahri Toper

Executive Member of the World
Association for Co-operative and
Work-Integrated Education
(WACE), and Career Centre Director
– Bahçeşehir University, Turkey



Dr Juliet Joseph

Shared Services Lead: Centre for
Psychological Services and
Career Development (PsyCaD) –
University of Johannesburg



Stafford Bomester

Director: Career Services –
University of Cape Town
(UCT)



Shalin Ledwaba

Head of Talent Acquisition
– Bowmans



Prof Samson Mashele

Deputy Vice Chancellor:
Research, Innovation &
Engagement



Michelle Constant

Chief Executive Officer –
The American Chamber of
Commerce South Africa



Dr Henri Jacobs

Director: Work Integrated
Learning & Industry Liaison
– Central University of
Technology (CUT)



Prof Ajay Jivan

Head: Research and
Assurance – SA Board for
People Practices (SABPP)



Shanita Roopnarain

Chief Executive Officer:
Swiss-South African
Cooperation Initiative
(SSACI)



Kyle Wesemann

Transformation Executive -
Labournet



Jacqui Ford

Regional Representative
Africa – World Employment
Confederation

SUMMIT SYNOPSIS

As industries continue to evolve faster than higher education curriculums, the need for meaningful workplace learning, future-focused skills, and stronger university- industry partnerships has become impossible to ignore. From internships and apprenticeships to digital skills, AI readiness, entrepreneurship, and authentic assessment, this summit explores how institutions can produce graduates who are not only employable, but adaptable, resilient, and ready to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Through thought-provoking discussions, delegates will unpack the reality that WIL has since left the “nice-to-have” building, and entered an era to prepare graduates for jobs that don’t yet exist, workplaces that are more tech-enabled, and employers who want experience for “entry-level” roles. The summit will also spotlight innovative models of Work-Integrated Learning that bridge theory and practice, helping students convert academic knowledge into workplace confidence.

Whether you are an educator, employer, policymaker, or student success champion, this event offers fresh insights, collaborative solutions, and perhaps a little reassurance that employability is more than just holding qualifications with fancy titles. After all, the future of work belongs to those who can learn, unlearn, relearn — and with a limited risk of “we didn’t learn that in school”.

Expect bold reflections, uncomfortable truths, fresh ideas, and enough networking to finally answer the age-old graduate question: “Are we designing learning experiences that move beyond the lecture halls to meeting employer expectations”



WHY ATTEND THIS ANNUAL EVENT?

Because “the future of work” is no longer the future. It arrived early, brought AI with it, and expects everyone to adapt immediately. Degrees are great... but employers still ask, “Can they actually do the job?”

01

Learn from industry experts and academic nerds who've been there, done that and cracked codes

02

Participate in interactive sessions on skills gaps, workforce realities, and how WIL models have evolved from “nice-to-have academic add-ons” into powerful engines for economic inclusion and innovation.

03

Access exclusive resources and templates for WIL design, implementation and assessment

04

Learn practical strategies for WIL, internships, employability, curriculum alignment and surviving endless meetings about them.

05

Discover how to prepare graduates for jobs that don't even exist yet — reassuring and terrifying at the same time.

06

Build partnerships that could lead to internships, research collaborations, funding opportunities, and fewer unanswered emails.

07

Get a sneak peek into digital skills, soft skills, power skills, and whatever skills that will trend soon.

08

Explore how AI is changing recruitment faster than students can update their LinkedIn profiles.

09

Hear success stories and cautionary tales in some international case studies on WIL programmes and industry partnerships

TARGET AUDIENCE

This event invites the full pipeline — the people teaching, hiring, placing, and funding. Think everyone who touches a student between lecture halls and their first paycheck.

Higher education institutions



University & TVET leadership:

VCs, DVCs Academic, Deans, Heads of Department



WIL coordinators & career services:

Directors of Co-operative Education, Internship Managers, Career Centre staff



Academic staff:

Lecturers running WIL modules, service-learning, or industry engagement projects



Quality Assurance & curriculum design:

People responsible for accreditation and embedding employability outcomes

Industry & employers



HR & talent acquisition:

Graduate recruiters, Learning & development managers, Talent pipeline leads



Host employers:

Companies already taking WIL students — engineering firms, banks, hospitals, NGOs



Industry bodies, SETAs and Professional Councils

- Government & policy
- Intermediaries & support