



# **BURSARY AND GRADUATE PLACEMENT STRATEGY 2022/23-2026/2027**

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### List of Acronyms

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
4IR	4 <sup>TH</sup> Industrial Revolution
APP	Annual Performance Plan
BBC	Black Business Council
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
B&P	Bursaries and Placement
CET	Community Education Training
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CGCSA	Consumer Goods Council of South Africa
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EMOSA	Enterprise Mentorship South Africa
ERRP	Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan
FRA	Fuel Retailers Association
HET	Higher Education and Training
HRDS	Human Resources Development Strategy
HTFVs	Hard to Fill Vacancies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCRF	National Clothing Retail Federation
NCV	National Certificate Vocation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PESTEH	Political, Economic, Social, Technology and Health
PIVOTAL	Professional Vocational, Technical, and Academic Learning Programmes.
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupation
RMI	Retail Motor Industry
ROI	Return on Investment
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMME	Small Medium and Micro Enterprises
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TVETC	Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges
WBLP	Work Based Learning Programme
WSP	Work Skills Plan
W&R	Wholesale and Retail
W&RSETA	Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority
YES	Youth Employment Services

## Definitions and concepts

1	Candidacy Programme	Candidacy programme is a structured solution designed to provide sufficient mentoring and guidance to unemployed and employed qualified persons to become registered professionals within the W&R sector.
2	Employed Bursary	The Employed Bursary Scheme addressing the scarce and critical skills/ Hard To Fill Vacancies needs as identified in the W&RSETA's SSP. The Employed Bursary Scheme is aimed at promoting the Developmental and Transformational Imperatives of NSDP 2030 as well as increasing the professionalism of the sector
3	Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	Work integrated learning is an essential part of training and development. The practical experience allows the learner to become skilled, knowledgeable, ethical and confident through the skills acquired, before they graduate from the HET and TVET institutions.

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The wholesale and retail sector employed 2.155 million people by December of 2020, which is about 15% of the total number of employed people. In 2017, there were 2.206 million employees compared to 2.155 million employees in 2020 in the sector which represents a decrease of 51 000 (2%) of employees. Employment declined in the fourth quarter of 2020, by a net decrease of 1.4 million in total employment. The biggest proportions contributing to this decrease include losses in Finance (256 000), Community and social services (241 000), Manufacturing (230 000), Wholesale and retail trade (186 000) and Construction (184 000) industries. The informal sector employment increased by 65 000 people in the fourth quarter of 2020, 17 000 of those people were absorbed into the Wholesale and retail trade.

The Minister of Higher Education and Training mandated the SETAs to offer bursaries to learners within their respective sectors. This has led to the decision by the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) Board to approve a bursary scheme that was implemented as a pilot project in 2011. The W&RSETA's Bursary Scheme was established that provide financial support to students studying Wholesale and Retail Qualifications identified by the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) as hard to find skills in the sector. The bursary scheme was established as one of the initiatives to further the transformation agenda of the W&RSETA by assisting students to develop their capabilities, skills and competencies, thereby enhancing the sector's workforce. The W&RSETA Bursary Scheme offer bursaries to both employed and unemployed learners registered with Higher Education Training (HET) Institutions and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions.

Since its inception, the Bursary Scheme has evolved through sector consultations and has further developed to include various student support initiatives such as:

- Graduate Placements;
- Postgraduate Bursary offerings (Honours, Masters and PhD);
- The Bursary Scheme has been extended to include beneficiaries in Private Institutions offering qualifications in the Wholesale and Retail Space; and
- The Bursary Scheme also offer financial support to students enrolled in NCV Programmes (Level 2 to 4) including CET qualifications.

The above-mentioned changes led to the Bursary Scheme being renamed to '*The Bursary and Graduate Placement Scheme*'. The Wholesale and Retail sector is a dynamic sector impacted by imminent changes in its environment, economy, political climate, social-ecological landscape, culture, Information technology and pandemic etc. These are driving forces that necessitate the constant review of the strategies aimed at the implementation of an impactful and efficient Bursary and Graduate Placement Scheme.

## **2. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND PRESCRIPTS**

### **2.1 Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 (as amended)**

The Skills Development Act aims to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce. The Act focus on developing the skills of the South African workforce - (i) to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility; (ii) to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers; (iii) to promote self-employment; and (iv) improve the delivery of social services (Source: Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998).

The Act also aims to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market. In addition, the Skills Development Act has an objective to improve the return on investment as well as encouraging employers to (i) use the workplace as an active learning environment; (ii) to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills; (iii) to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience; and (iv) to employ persons who find it difficult to be employed (Source: Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998).

### **2.3 National Development Plan (Vision 2030)**

The NDP calls for an improvement in the quality of education and training to enhance the capabilities of the people of South Africa to ensure that they can become active participants in developing the potential of the country. Chapter 9 of the NDP sets a range of numerical objectives to be met by 2030 including the following:

- Improve the throughput rate to 80 per cent by 2030;
- Increase enrolment at universities by at least 70 percent by 2030 so that enrolments increase to about 1.62 million from 950 000 in 2010;

- Increase the percentage of PhD qualified staff in the higher education sector from the current 34 per cent to over 75 per cent by 2030; and
- Produce more than 100 doctoral graduates per million per year by 2030. This implies an increase from 1420 in 2010 to well over 5000 a year.

## **2.4 The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP)**

The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) was developed to ensure that South Africa's workforce has suitable, high-quality skills that will add value to the economic growth, creation of employment and social development by improving basic and technical skills provided through the education system (DHET, 2019). The NSDP envisions "*an Educated, Skilled and Capable Workforce for South Africa*". The purpose of the NSDP is to ensure that South Africa has adequate, appropriate and high-quality skills that contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development (source: NSDP, 2019).

Outcome 4.2 of the NSDP focuses on "*Linking education and the workplace*". This outcome is based on the fact that improving the relationship between education and training and work is key, and recognises the importance of workplace-based learning. The SETAs play a role of being intermediary bodies, which is a key factor in linking the world of work and education.

## **2.5 W&RSETA Skills Development Grant Policy**

The Skills Development Grants Policy ensures that the financial resources set towards skills development grants, for initiatives such as PIVOTAL Programmes, are used appropriately and transparently towards the targets, as prescribed by Section 2 of the Skills Development Act and the criteria put in place in the SETA Grant Regulation of 2012 (W&RSETA, 2019).

The policy looks at the management and disbursement of grants, the apportioning of skills levies received, the disbursement of mandatory and discretionary grants and provides a costing model that is aligned to the APP targets of the W&RSETA (W&RSETA, 2019).

### **3 W&RSETA MANDATE, VISION AND MISSION**

#### **3.1 Mandate**

The Wholesale and Retail SETA (W&RSETA) is a schedule 3A public entity and derives its mandate from the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (as amended). The SETA is responsible for supporting skills development in the wholesale and retail sector in South Africa, through the disbursement of grants to facilitate the implementation of learning Programmes and monitoring of education and training (as outlined in the Act), in accompanying regulations and the National Skills Development Plan.

#### **3.2 Vision**

To be the leader in skills development in the country

#### **3.3 Mission**

To develop a skilled, capable, competent, and professional workforce to transform the Wholesale and Retail sector.

### **4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The W&RSETA has employed several methods of implementing the B&P Programmes. From 2011 until 2019, the application process required students to apply directly to the SETA for bursaries. This process required the SETA to evaluate all applications and proceed to award the applicants who satisfied the application requirements. Due to lack of capacity within the W&RSETA (Bursaries and Placements Unit) and an overwhelming response from students, this process was often delayed which led to a review in the application process.

The B&P Policy was amended to redirect applications to HET, TVET and CET, which requires students to apply via these institutions. The new application process proved to be effective as the HET and TVET Colleges were already geared up for recruitment and selection of students (along with dedicated divisions handling bursary administration). The W&RSETA facilitated the process of contracting with the HET or TVET Colleges depending on the number and budget allocated per



Institution. The W&RSETA was responsible for the management of the bursaries contracts, performance management, monitoring, and evaluation. The B&P Unit at the W&RSETA Head Office mainly handled these processes with minimal involvement from regions except to collect the required documents from stakeholders and register the awarded students on the SETA management system. In the 2019/20 financial year, the W&RSETA went through a restructuring process, which supported the implementation of a decentralisation Model. This model required regions (Provincial Offices) to be responsible for service delivery in an end-to-end manner, which is fully functional.

#### **4.2 Factors Affecting Skills Demand and Supply<sup>1</sup> (The COVID-19 pandemic)**

The Bursary and Placement strategy must take into consideration the factors that affect the skills demand and supply within the W&R Sector. In the 2020/21 financial year, the country experienced a lockdown due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19 that had a major impact on processes in place for the management of Bursaries and Graduate Placement. This era was characterised by job losses, decreased economic activity, school closures and other related challenges that led to a review of the various policies and strategies. COVID-19 is an unprecedented public health emergency, which rapidly transformed the way in which social and economic activities were conducted. COVID-19 also mandated significant changes to retail and commerce, while it also brought humanitarian and social uncertainty.

COVID-19 had implications on skills planning including slowing down of business activities, decline in revenue, increased demand for e-commerce, prioritising reskilling and retraining to minimise job losses, and higher health and safety risk of customers, employers, employees and partners. Skills planning also had to include transitioning to e-learning and/or blended learning to provide training for employees and learners.

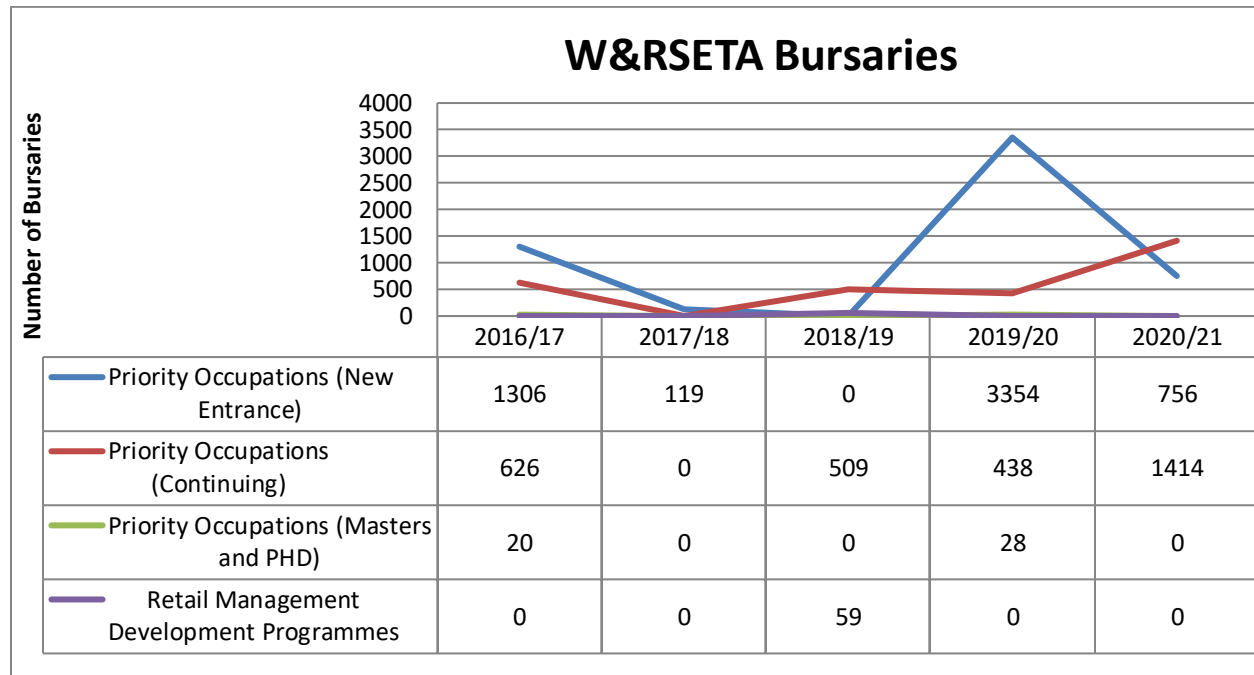
#### **4.3 Key achievements for Bursaries and Placements Support by the W&RSETA**

Between the 2016/17 and 2020/21 Financial Years, the W&RSETA provided bursaries to employed and unemployed beneficiaries for priority occupations. This is broken down to a five year total of 5 535 bursaries for new entrance, 2 987 for continuing students, 48 for Masters and

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from the W&R SETA Strategic Plan (2020/21 to 2024/25)

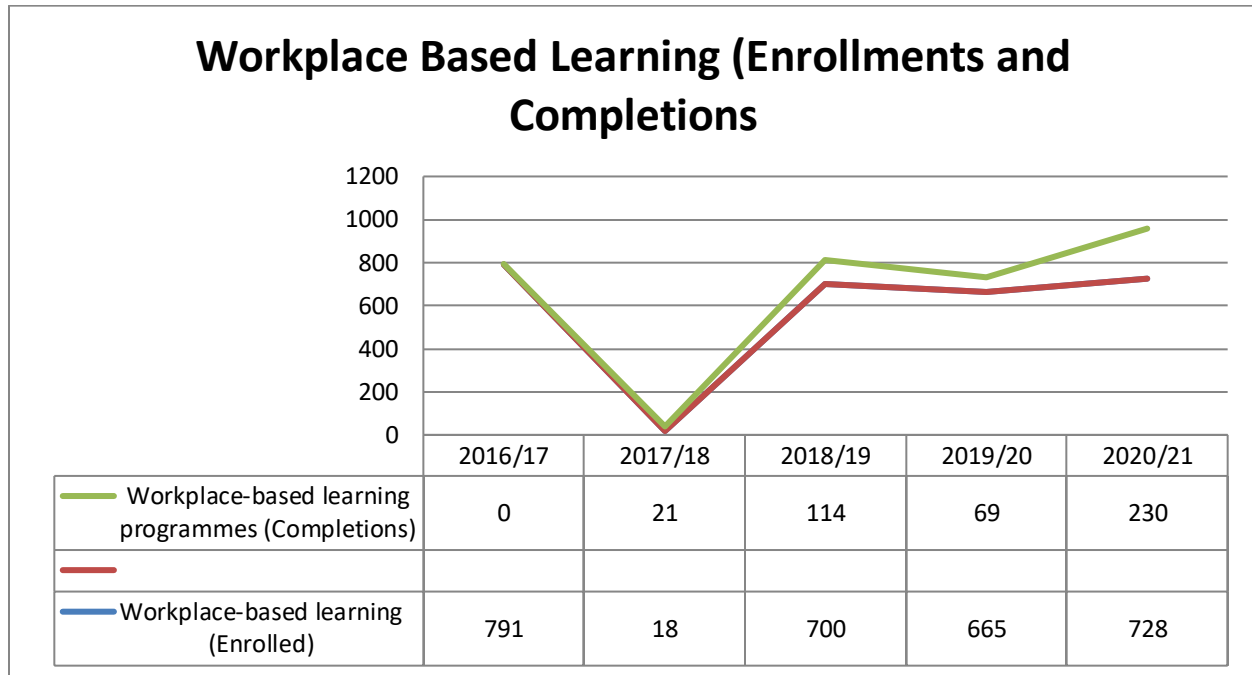
PhD beneficiaries, and 59 bursaries for Retail Management Development Programmes. The breakdown of bursaries offered per financial year is shown in the figure below.



**Source: W&RSETA Annual Reports**

The trend for graduate placements has demonstrated a fluctuating trend, with a total number of graduate placements decreasing from 791 in 2016/17 to 728 in 2020/21. The number of completions has been recorded to be very low, showing an increase from 21 in 2017/18 to 230 in 2020/21, which is quite low compared to the placements. The table below shows the details in terms of the WBLP placements and completions, supported by the graph.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of learners from TVET colleges and HETs are placed in workplace-based learning programmes annually	N/A	N/A	N/A	1746	1388
Number of learners enrolled and completing workplace-based learning programmes for graduate internships addressing wholesale and retail HTFVs as identified in the SSP annually ( <i>Enrolled</i> )	791	18	700	665	728
Number of learners enrolled and completing workplace-based learning programmes for graduate internships addressing wholesale and retail HTFVs as identified in the SSP annually ( <i>Completions</i> )	0	21	114	69	230



**Source: W&RSETA Annual Reports**

#### **4.4 Major challenges experienced by the W&RSETA in implementing Bursaries and Placements**

4.4.1 During the SSP Provincial Stakeholder Consultation and B&P Briefing in 2019, it was recommended by stakeholders to review the B&P Policy and processes. The following were areas of concern raised by stakeholders in almost all Provinces:

4.4.1.1 The process of bursary allocation is too long and cumbersome; it will benefit the W&RSETA to revise the processes making them shorter and easy to participate in.

4.4.1.2 Lack of IT Systems delays the project kick-off.

4.4.1.3 The new contract is not inclusive of factors affecting HET, TVET and CET.

4.4.1.4 Misalignment of accounting periods, financial year-end of an educational institution is December while SETAs close their year in March which directly affects planning, implementation, DHET Target reporting, completion and project closures.

4.4.1.5 The process of continuing student’s yearly payment requires an Addendums every year regardless of a 3-year Contract signed between the two institutions causing huge delays in effecting payment. This blocks the student registration process leading to strikes and tension on campuses.

4.4.1.6 Lack of communication from the W&RSETA on Bursary matters.

4.4.1.7 Employed bursaries are not paid in full upfront like the Unemployed bursaries, which put employers at a disadvantage due to delays in payments.

4.4.2 Since the W&RSETA invests a large portion of its budget on Bursaries and Placements, it is important to track the return on investment. The following have been areas of concerns, which require the SETA to keep a close eye on:

#### 4.4.2.1 Completion rate

Although the SETA has an indicator that tracks completions on bursaries, the completion rate has remained low. The table below shows the trend on bursaries awarded versus completions.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of new entries and continuing students awarded bursaries annually for studies in priority occupations resulting in demand driven qualifications	1932	119	509	3792	2170
Number of W&RSETA bursars completing priority occupation qualifications annually	279	0	540	418	101

The table above depicts a low completion rate by the W&R bursars. It is important that the SETA investigates the root causes of a low completion rate versus the enrollments and the funds being spent on bursaries. It also needs to be clear whether there is a correlation between the low levels of completion and the dropout rate. The possibility of whether the W&RSETA bursars potentially take up other bursaries and drop out of the SETA’s one should also be explored. A solution might also be on improving the tracking system of the W&RSETA’s bursary holders. A study will be conducted on the root causes of high dropout rate on the bursaries programme, which will provide recommendations on how improvements can be ensured. In addition, the mentorship and coaching programme will be established.

#### **4.4.2.2 Return on Investment**

As the W&RSETA continues to spend a large portion of its budget on Bursaries and Placements, it is key that the return on investment is visible. The low levels of completion on both bursaries and placements as reported in the Annual Reports of the SETA raises questions on whether there are good stories to tell that corresponds with the spending patterns. The implementation of the Bursaries and Placements Strategy must enable the tracking of the return on investment, which will ensure continuous improvement on the B&P model and implementation procedures.

#### **4.4.2.3 Dropout rate**

A study conducted by Moodley & Singh (2015) suggested that factors that cause students to drop out of their studies are finances, poor academic performance, lack of family or social/emotional encouragement, and difficult personal adjustment may cause students to drop out. The W&RSETA conducted a study on the W&RSETA Strategic Framework for Career Guidance Delivery (SFCGD), which found that the dropout rate of W&RSETA bursary students is 40%, which reflects an unacceptable level of financial loss (estimated at R90 million per annum for the W&RSETA alone).

The completion rate recorded in table 4.4.2.1 above shows that majority of W&RSETA's bursary holders are not completing their studies or they are taking longer to complete. In the table, a total number of bursaries offered in a six-year period, from 2016/17 to 2020/21 financial years amounted to 8 522 while only 1338 (15.7%) completions were recorded in the same period (W&RSETA Annual Reports). This is concerning, considering that the SETA loses due to paying bursaries that do not yield an impact or return on investment.

### **4.5 The role of technology (Embracing the 4th industrial revolution)**

The world is beginning to see a growing digital transformation, especially because of COVID-19, which brought restrictions in movement and travel globally, and the introduction of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which is building further on the Third Industrial Revolution with elements such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), for example. However, with such changes come the challenges of ensuring that the change takes place progressively across the world, not leaving behind minority groups, particularly the estimated more than one billion persons with disabilities across the globe (ILO, 2021).

The workplace has also seen changes with the movement towards digital transformation, through people working remotely and having to adapt to new online and technological ways of conducting businesses. Similar to other sectors, the Wholesale and Retail Sector has had to adapt embrace the adoption of 4IR enabling technology, as well as a focus on eCommerce and digitisation towards reaching their ‘socially distant’ marketplaces. Socially, consumers have reduced their “touchpoints” and frequency of attending closed and crowded brick and mortar locations. Their consumption patterns and the way in which the W&R sector interacts with their customers (new channel and omni-channel integration) have also changed. It has been noted that while different generations use technology differently, they expect their retailer to be using it effectively to understand their needs and deliver the right experience; if their expectations are not met, they will move right along – and they rarely give a second chance (Bizcommunity, 2020). When considering the impact of 4IR on Bursaries and Placements, the following should be noted:

- Unemployed bursars may now require additional support with regard to the tools (including laptops and data) required for online schooling, which has now become a norm regardless of the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations. More support will be required in rural beneficiaries, as infrastructure and connectivity also remains a matter of concern.
- As it was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, Institutions of Higher Learning moved to online teaching and assessments. Some students could not adapt to this new way of learning which may contribute to an increasing dropout rate. Additional support would therefore be required for bursars in a form of mentorship and coaching.

#### **4.6 Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan Skills strategy**

The government has developed an economic reconstruction and recovery plan (ERRP) as part of its response to the devastating impact of COVID -19 global health pandemic on the economy and its effects on deepening current levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. The skills strategy was developed in response to the ERRP with the aim to identify the skills implications of the ERRP. The skills strategy also outlines the ways in which the post school education and training system, together with other key role players, will ensure that skills that are required to implement the plan are available (DHET, 2021). The skills strategy entails ten (10) interventions as follows:

- Intervention 1: expand the provisioning of short skills programmes (both accredited and non-accredited) to respond to skills gaps identified in this strategy.

- Intervention 2: enable the provisioning of short skills programmes (both accredited and non-accredited) that responds to skills gaps identified in this strategy.
- Intervention 3: expand the provisioning of workplace-based learning (WBL) programmes to respond to occupational shortages and skills gaps identified in the skills strategy.
- Intervention 4: increase enrolments in qualification-based programmes that respond to occupational shortages identified in the strategy.
- Intervention 5: review and revise education and training programmes to respond to occupational shortages and skills gaps identified in this strategy.
- Intervention 6: update the draft Critical Skills List and associated regulatory mechanisms.
- Intervention 7: strengthen entrepreneurship development programmes.
- Intervention 8: embed skills planning into economic planning processes and vice versa.
- Intervention 9: facilitate the use of the National Pathway Management Network (PMN) in the PSET system.
- Intervention 10: strengthen the post school education and training (PSET) system.

The B&P Strategy is in support of interventions 3 and 4 of the ERRP Skills Strategy, which ensures that workplace-based learning (WBL) programmes that respond to occupational shortages and skills gaps identified in the skills strategy are provided. In addition, as informed by Intervention 4 of the skills strategy, the provision of bursaries will ensure an increase in enrolments in qualification-based programmes that respond to occupational shortages identified in the skills strategy.

## 5. OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Provision of Bursaries and Graduate Placement initiatives within the Wholesale and Retail sector has the following identified opportunities and threats which may influence the process of achieving success.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National legislation mandates all corporate organisations to participate and pay levies.</li> <li>2. The new SETA landscape that has renewed SETA operations up to 2030 provides growth opportunities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Worldwide Pandemics that might affect the implementation of the B&amp;P Strategy e.g. COVID-19.</li> <li>2. The movement of W&amp;RSETA stakeholders to other SETAs might reduce the levy income.</li> </ol>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. High youth unemployment is an opportunity to expand training programmes and funding towards best-fit qualifications for the sector.</li> <li>4. Opportunity to capitalise on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). This enables the W&amp;RSETA to gear funding towards qualifications that support 4IR.</li> <li>5. Opportunities to enhance partnerships with Private and Public HET and TVETC Institutions, local and international organisations, Bursary and Placement Management agencies and other SETAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Overall poor performance of the economy which decreases levies obtained by the W&amp;RSETA</li> <li>4. Impact of the external environment e.g. fraud and corruption.</li> <li>5. Misalignment of the reporting timelines for key role players like HET &amp; TVETC affects the planning and delivery of Bursary and Graduate Placement projects.</li> <li>6. Lack of capacity in HET &amp; TVETC too effectively implement B&amp;P Projects.</li> <li>7. Extremely High termination rate by bursary beneficiaries and graduates participating in Workplace experiences programmes.</li> </ul>

## 6. INTENDED IMPACT AND OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGY

### 6.1 Impact

The B&P Strategy aims to provide direction to the W&RSETA and the Sector on the implementation of the Bursary and Graduate Placement programmes. The strategy contributes W&RSETA’s mission, which is embodied in the Strategic Plan as follows: *“To develop a skilled, capable, competent and professional workforce to transform the wholesale and retail sector”*.

In line with the mission of the W&RSETA, the B&P Strategy aims to *“develop a skilled, competent and professional workforce in the Wholesale and Retail sector through the provision of Bursaries and facilitating impactful and sustainable placements to employed and unemployed beneficiaries within the W&R sector”*.

### 6.2 Outcomes

The Bursaries and Placement strategy is founded on the Outcomes of the NSDP and the W&RSETA identified in the Strategic Plan 2020/25 as follows:



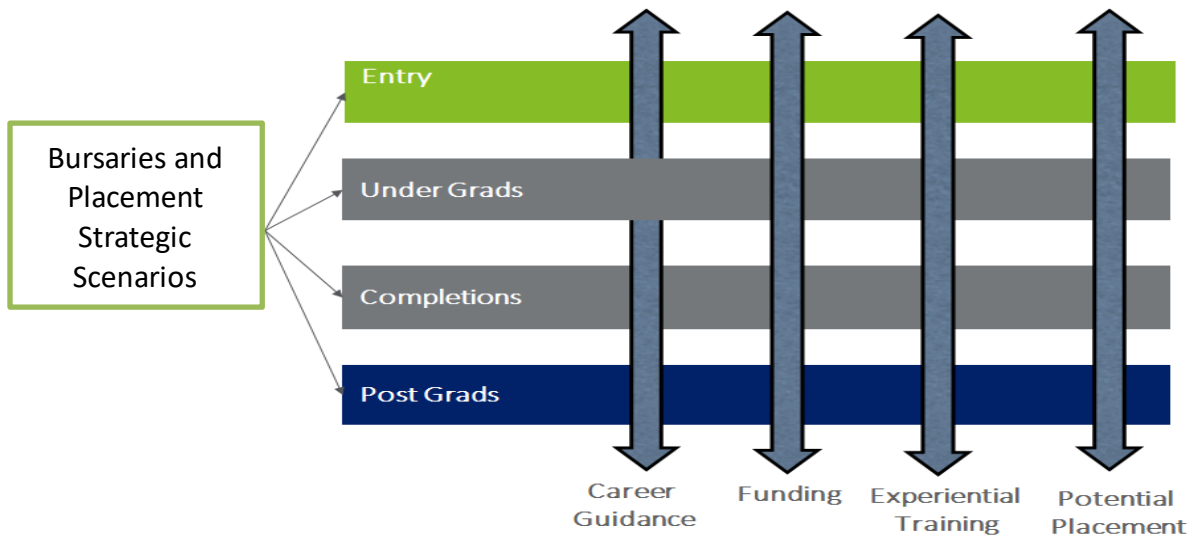
NSDP Outcomes	W&RSETA Outcomes
<p><b>Outcome 4.2:</b> Linking education and the workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Indicator:</b> Number of workplace based learning experiences made available for graduate/internships.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 8:</b> An appropriately skilled, agile and responsive workforce and skills pool able to meet the W&amp;R sector current and emerging skills needs</p> <p><b>Output 13:</b> A skilled, competent and professional workforce in the wholesale and retail sector through provision of Bursaries to W&amp;RSETA employed and unemployed beneficiaries</p>

## 7. B&P STRATEGY VALUE PROPOSITION

### 7.1 Strategic Scenarios: Towards a lifelong learning approach

B&P is not only about the provision of bursaries and facilitating graduate placements for a predetermined period. Career Guidance should still be provided to both bursars and graduates who are placed through the SETA funded projects, which include the provision of mentorship and buddy programmes. The completion rate for both bursary beneficiaries and graduates has been identified as an areas concern, as the dropout rate continue to increase. In a study conducted by Redflank on behalf of the W&RSETA in 2021/22, it was found that a high dropout rate has been associated with a lack of awareness and understanding of the career path and progression within the W&R Sector.

In addition, the B&P programmes must ensure that there is an envisioned progression and articulation in terms of learners who are offered W&RSETA bursaries, so that they can be placed in the sector for graduate opportunities on completion of the qualification and possible absorption. That is, majority of the W&RSETA's bursary holders must be absorbed into the sector on completion of their qualifications. The SETA should also be able to assist those who require experiential learning as part of their qualification requirement by facilitating placement. The diagram below demonstrates the strategic scenarios for B&P.



**Figure 1: Strategic Scenarios**

The above strategic scenarios depict a B&P model that promotes long term and sustainable support for learners who chooses the W&R sector as a sector and employer of choice. Thus, beneficiaries of the SETA's programmes should be supported until they can self-sustain. Beneficiaries should ideally benefit from career guidance, bursaries and mentorship support as well as placement or entrepreneurial support.

## 7.2 Strategic Inter-linkages

The B&P Strategy must remain interwoven in other related strategies that form a traceable value chain in providing support to a beneficiary in full. Figure 2 below clearly depicts an interdependent relationship and alignment between the B&P Strategy, Career Guidance Strategy, Disability Development Strategy as well as SMMEs and Entrepreneurship Strategy, which all together ultimately culminates in a skilled workforce within the sector. The key strategies outlined above are interwoven and implemented alongside each other to provide a full cycle offering to a beneficiary from the basic education phase to post-school and ultimately workplace. It is only then that the W&R SETA will be assured that beneficiaries have been fully supported to become employable and contribute to the South African economy.

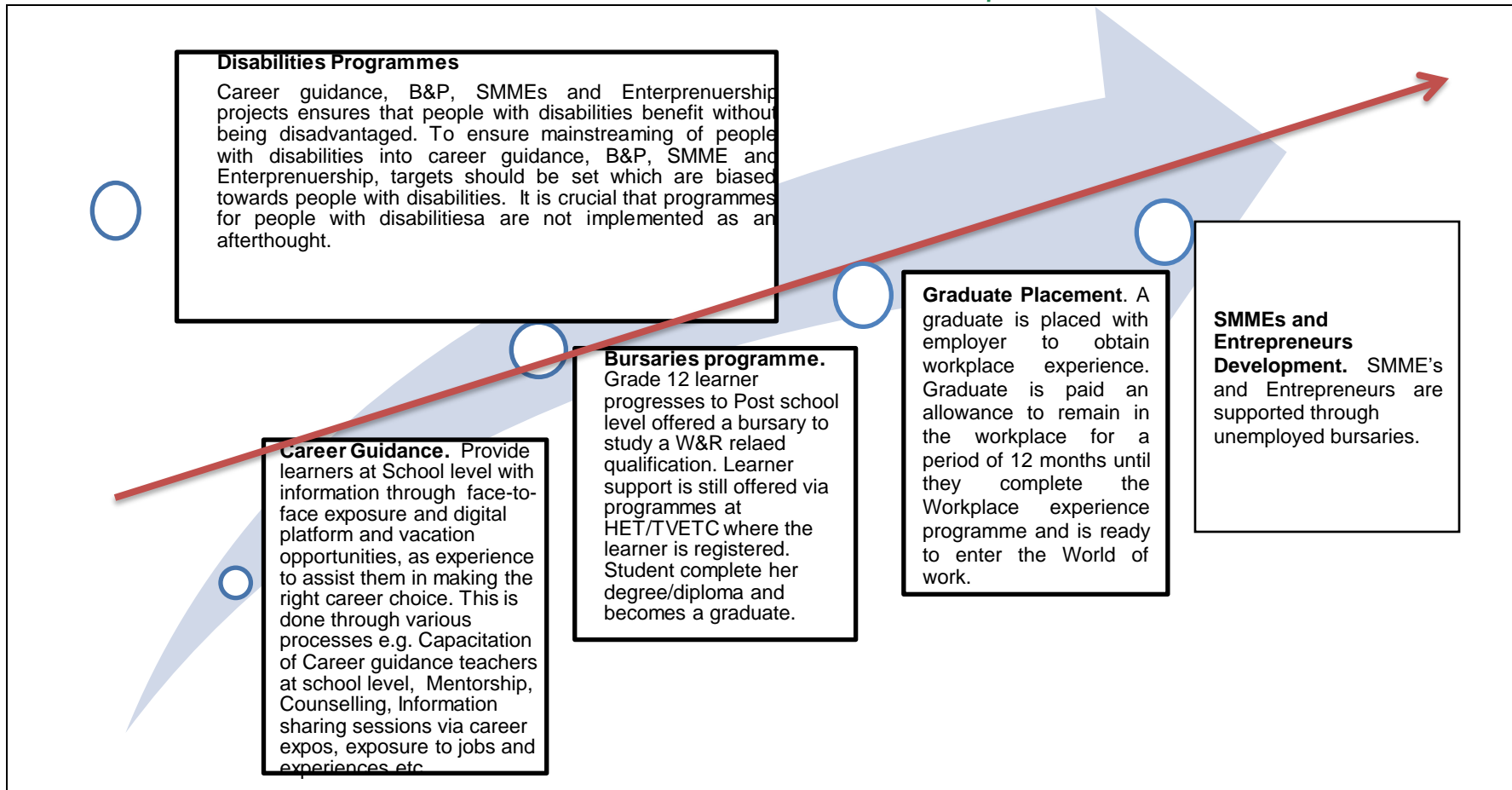


Figure 2: Inter-linkages between the Career Guidance, B&P, Disabilities and SMMEs & Entrepreneurship Programmes.

### **7.2.1 Integrated Career Guidance Strategy**

Theme 3 of the career development strategy focuses on “*improving the matching and placement of sector entrants*”. According to the W&R SETA Integrated Career Development Strategy 2019, the practice of matching people to positions is founded in career guidance theory. The problem of high turnover of entry-level staff, the low rate of conversion from Learnership to full-time employment, and the very high rate of bursary dropouts remains a concern. The cost of workplace training is high, as is the cost of tertiary education dropouts. The cost of bursary dropouts to the W&RSETA in 2018 was estimated to be more than R27 million per annum which is concerning. Accurate selection and placement of workplace entrants as bursary applicants therefore becomes a very important priority for the sector because the impact thereof has many benefits.

Accurate selection and placement must be informed by research because the traits and factors that best determine retention and success are still unknown. The interdependency in this regard between the bursaries and placement strategy and career development strategy is self-evident.

### **7.2.2 Disability Development Strategy**

People with Disabilities are the least represented across the South African workforce, despite the commitment by companies to comply with the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA). The EEA serves two key purposes, one of which is ‘*implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupation categories and levels in the workforce*’ (Department of Labour, 2004).

The figures in the 20th Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report for 2019/20 show that the representation of People with Disabilities is extremely low, with an average representation percentage of 1% across the workforce since 2015 (CEE, 2019/20). This illustrates that the action taken towards transformation and equity in the workplace is taking place at a much slower pace than it should. The figures for the W&R sector were not much different either, as the sector only had slightly less than 1,2% employees that represent People with Disabilities (W&RSETA APP, 2021/22 - 2023/24). This is concerning considering that People with Disabilities should be prioritised as depicted in the priority areas of the W&RSETA’s SSP.

The W&RSETA's strategy highlights the challenges faced by People with Disabilities and is geared towards highlighting this to the W&R sector, to assist in accelerating developmental programmes to alleviate the statistics alluded to. A challenge with the transformation interventions set for People with Disabilities, and other individuals in marginalised groups, is that although the interventions are targeted, the impact imparted does not always translate as well in employment as it does in academics and training. There is still a highly visible margin in the representation of Persons with Disabilities and able-bodied people.<sup>2</sup>

The B&P programmes must demonstrate how mainstreaming of people with disabilities will be ensured in all B&P projects and processes. The implementation plan of the strategy must be inclusive of targets/ allocations per participating institutions or partnerships institution. The B&P strategy implementation will furthermore make provision for Special Disability Bursary projects as per need.

### **7.2.3 SMMEs and Entrepreneurship Development through unemployed Bursaries Programme**

The SETA provides bursaries for employed and unemployment beneficiaries for qualifications that aligns with the W&R sector. It would be important for the SETA to consider in future, including bursaries for unemployed youth or those who are in the informal economy who wants to obtain formal qualifications that can enable them access to wholesale and retail entrepreneurial opportunities.

## **8. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT**

The SSP of the W&RSETA encourages partnerships within the sector or related in order to enhance the successful implementation of strategies for the sector. Partnerships are key in bringing together key role players identified to each contribute towards the sectors value chain or related.

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<sup>2</sup> Extract from the W&R SETA 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan

The B&P Strategy promotes the establishment of partnerships with key role players to optimise its implementation.

## 8.1 Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	STAKEHOLDERS	ROLES AND AREAS OF EXPERTISE
Educational Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public and Private HET, TVET, CET Institutions</li> <li>• Retail Chairs.</li> <li>• Further Education and Training Committee.</li> <li>• Higher Education and Training Committee. Association of Private Providers of Education Training and Development.</li> <li>• Southern African Society for Cooperative Education.</li> <li>• Universities; TVET Colleges; Private Training Providers; Community Colleges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a teaching and learning environment, which enables the students to obtain qualifications.</li> <li>• Prepare the student for the World of Work.</li> <li>• Participate in the B&amp;P Strategy by facilitating the bursary awarding process.</li> <li>• Provide a database of students ready to participate in the Workplace Experience Programme.</li> <li>• Provide access to a database of private and public HET or TVETC who participate in the B&amp;P Strategy.</li> <li>• Represent interests of training providers, both public and private.</li> <li>• Contribute to education and training, quality assurance, curriculum development.</li> </ul>
Organised Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retailers Association (RA).</li> <li>• Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA).</li> <li>• National Clothing Retail Federation (NCRF).</li> <li>• Black Business Council (BBC).</li> <li>• Enterprise Mentorship of South Africa (EMOSA).</li> <li>• Business Unity South Africa (BUSA).</li> <li>• Fuel Retailers Association (FRA).</li> <li>• South African Petroleum Retailers Association (SAPRA).</li> <li>• Retail Motor Industry (RMI) Organisation.</li> <li>• Wholesale and Retail enterprises (small, medium and large).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an opportunity for Workplace Integrated Learning (WIL).</li> <li>• Represented equally on the committees of the W&amp;RSETA.</li> <li>• Represent and articulate employer (small, medium and large) interests.</li> <li>• Contribute to education and training, negotiations, marketing, finance, human resources and legal.</li> </ul>
Community	South African Community at large.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure inclusivity of Communities in the marketing and advocacy of strategies for knowledge development and stakeholder buy-in.</li> <li>• Represent interests of communities and co-operatives.</li> </ul>

STAKEHOLDER CATERGORY	STAKEHOLDERS	ROLES AND AREAS OF EXPERTISE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to education and training, and youth development.</li> </ul>
Forums	Public Skills Development Forums Learners (employed and unemployed).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the variety of opportunities for funding of learners and students in the sector.</li> <li>Represent interests of consumers and the public.</li> <li>Contribute to education and training, consumer rights and legal.</li> </ul>
Organs of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Higher Education and Training.</li> <li>Department of Trade and Industry.</li> <li>Provincial Economic Development Departments.</li> <li>Department of Basic Education</li> <li>The government-led initiatives to support Youth development such as YES, JOB SUMMIT, TSHEPO 500, THE JOB STIMULUS, etcetera.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership opportunities.</li> <li>Provide workplaces for WIL initiatives thereby supporting the B&amp;P Strategy.</li> <li>Represent interests of the state.</li> <li>Contribute to education and training, trade and industry and provincial growth.</li> </ul>
Other SETAs	Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inseta</li> <li>FM&amp;PSETA</li> <li>FoodBevSETA</li> <li>AgriSETA</li> <li>MICTSETA</li> <li>Services SETA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships on implementing B&amp;P programmes</li> </ul>

## 8.2 Stakeholders Management

Stakeholder engagement is one of the key priorities embodied in the W&RSETA's Strategic plan 2020-2025. It is important to ensure stakeholder participation in the various W&RSETA initiatives by maximising stakeholder consultation; this will cement buy-in from the sector. The W&RSETA through the B&P Unit will conduct stakeholder consultations and briefings to achieve the following:

- 8.2.1 Open channels of communication between the W&RSETA and the stakeholders.
- 8.2.2 Building stakeholder trust through provision of information on strategic direction, obtaining input from them and giving feedback via consultations.
- 8.2.3 Understanding the changes that impacts on the daily operations of stakeholders will enable the SETA to come up with strategies to address the impact of these factors.

- 8.2.4 Stakeholder reassurance about the W&RSETA's commitments and planned actions to ensure crisis management.
- 8.2.5 Establish stakeholder needs about the bursary and graduate placement and solicit input.
- 8.2.6 Solicit inputs on the B&P Policy review.

## **9. THE B&P STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

The W&RSETA has in recent years gone through a redesign of the organisational structure in an attempt to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery as aforementioned. This process also included a decentralisation process converting the provincial office into full end-to-end service delivery points. Consequently, the Bursary and Graduate Placement Strategy implementation will be the responsibility of the W&RSETA Provinces. The above significantly altered the W&RSETA's daily operations, which warranted a review of the Policy, Processes and the development of a B&P Strategy, which thus change the B&P Delivery Model.

## **10. THE BURSARY AND GRADUATE PLACEMENT DELIVERY MODEL**

The provision for bursaries and graduate placement programmes are approved and determined annually through the factors mentioned below:

- Availability of funds;
- W&RSETA Board key priorities and approval;
- National Priorities inclusive of Transformational Goals;
- Need for bursaries and placements as per approved W&RSETA strategy and approved targets for bursaries and placements as per approved APP;
- National and Provincial Hard to Fill Vacancies as determined by the W&RSETA Sector Skills Plan through the hard to fill vacancy list;
- Hard To Fill Vacancies as determined by the W&RSETA Sector Skills Plan through the Sector Priority Occupations Skills list demanded by stakeholders via the WSP Process;
- Related Qualifications directly contributing to the W&R Sector;
- Qualifications and skills sets identified to be responding to the skills gap caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic captured in the ERRP for the Wholesale and Retail Sector, as well as disasters that impacts the W&R sector; and



- Qualifications linked to the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution and its role in the W&R sector.

The Bursary and Graduate Placement Delivery Model is comprised of two sub-strategies, i.e. the Bursary Model and the Graduate Placement Model.

## **11 The Bursary Model**

The Bursary Scheme funds both the employed and unemployed students registered in Public or Private HET, TVET and CET. The funding model for unemployed bursaries will prioritise the missing middle who fall under the NEET (Not in Employment, not in Education and not in training). This delivery model will adopt a multifaceted approach encompassing various modes of delivery outlined below:

### **11.1 Public and Private HET, TVET and CET Institutions**

These institutions will apply to the W&RSETA Bursary Scheme for funding based on the number of students registered in W&R and related qualifications.

### **11.2 Bursaries awarded through Employers Bursary Scheme for unemployed persons**

The W&RSETA will also offer bursaries to employers for unemployed persons who will be studying for qualifications that are in line with the priority qualifications of the W&RSETA. This bursary scheme should be linked with placement, as bursars will get an opportunity for Work Integrated Learning, Graduate Programmes and ultimately get absorbed within the sector. The Bursary Policy and Standard Operating Procedure shall provide details of implementation model.

### **11.3 Bursaries awarded through the Retail Leadership Chair (RLC) partnerships**

The W&RSETA established the Wholesale and Retail Leadership Chairs at three institutions, which are the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Durban University of Technology and University of Johannesburg. The objective of the Retail Leadership Chair is to contribute towards research and the development of W&R qualifications from NQF 5 -10 through collaboration between the Sector, labour and institutions of higher learning. The collaboration between the key role players will ensure a pool with suitably qualified and experienced entrants for the Sector and that the skills levels of the current workforce

are improved. Bursaries promoting retail as a career of choice will be awarded through Retail Leadership Chairs for both employed and unemployed beneficiaries. It is also expected that the Leadership Chairs should form partnerships with Previously Disadvantaged Institutions so that they may also benefit from the RLC initiatives.

#### **11.4 Government Central Based Bursary Portal**

The Department of Higher Education and Training has launched a bursary portal where students can register when in need of a bursary and registration at an institution. These students will be referred to the W&RSETA based on the selected qualifications if they are in line with qualifications funded by the W&R SETA.

#### **11.5 Bursaries awarded through Partnerships with Employers, Associations and Government/Private Agencies established to provide funding for the Youth**

The government has introduced various agencies responsible for the implementation of its youth development focused initiatives. The W&RSETA will also establish partnerships in order to maximise support for development.

#### **11.6 NSFAS**

Ten (10%) of the approved W&RSETA budget for bursaries is allocated to NSFAS in order to award students based on their internal criteria. The 10% is for qualifications relating to the W&R Sector.

#### **11.7 International Leadership Development Programme (ILDP)**

The International Leadership Development Programme (ILDP) is one of the flagship and transformative projects of the W&R SETA which is aimed at increasing the talent pipeline of highly promotable, historically disadvantaged leaders within the Wholesale and Retail Sector who have been earmarked for senior or executive positions in their companies. The Wholesale and Retail SETA ILDP was launched in 2010 as a response to the skills gaps within the Retail Leadership Management within the Sector. The ILDP exposes delegates to best practice in wholesale and retail locally and internationally through crafted immersions and interaction with global thought leaders. The programme equips delegates with prerequisite skills to become effective Leaders and prepares delegates to further growth and eligibility to occupy higher Leadership positions.

### **11.8 Retail Management Development Programme (RMDP)**

The Wholesale and Retail SETA Retail Management Development Programme (RMDP) was launched in 2012 as a response to the skills gaps within the middle management complement in the Sector and to create a pool of skilled middle managers as identified through the SETA's Sector Skills Plan. The programme equips delegates with prerequisite skills to become effective managers and prepares graduates to further their learning with a career path into the ILDP.

### **11.9. Employed Bursary scheme as per funding windows advertised.**

Funding window grants will apply to the implementation of Bursaries in support of Hard to Fill Vacancies for qualifying employers in line with the Regulations. The W&R SETA will open a funding window on an annual basis inviting applications for bursaries that are in line with the SSP and supporting the APP targets.

## **12. Bursary Eligibility Principles**

### **12.1 Employed bursars**

The W&RSETA provide employees within the W&R sector with bursaries for qualifications that are focused on addressing Hard to fill Vacancies, thus narrowing the gap between skills supply and demand in the Sector. Taking into consideration the impact that the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution may have on the jobs within the W&R Sector, it is important that workers are supported through bursaries for qualifications that will support re-skilling into occupations that are in demand and relevant in the digital era. The W&RSETA will determine on an annual basis the number of employed bursaries available depending on the availability of funding.

## **12.2 Learning Institutions**

Bursary funding will be considered for programmes that are delivered through South African Public Education and Training institutions, public TVET institutions, Higher Education institutions or DHET approved community and private colleges. Funding will be provided for learners who will be registered at both Public and Private Institutions. The allocation criteria between Private and Public Institutions will be at the discretion of the W&RSETA's Executive Committee and the IPEC taking into consideration qualifications that meet the SETA's scarce and critical skills and industry required programmes for hard to fill vacancies needs.

## **13. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- 13.1 Strategic Priority 1** – To develop a new bursary and graduate placement module as part of the career development platform that will enable the beneficiaries to gain access to funding, and graduates to easily access workplaces for workplace experience.
- 13.2 Strategic Priority 2** – Establish a B&P online system that will incorporate key components that will enhance the management of the B&P projects, optimise reporting process, automate finances and actualise M&E.
- 13.3 Strategic Priority 3** – Establish and implement a Bursary and Graduate Placement Research agenda.
- 13.4 Strategic Priority 4** - Identify, prioritise and form partnerships to address funding for priority occupations.
- 13.5 Strategic Priority 5** – Promote strategic linkages between career guidance, bursaries and placements, disabilities development, SMMEs and Entrepreneurship Skills Development.

## 14. Bursaries initiatives

Focus area	Baseline/ current status (2021/22)	Medium term initiatives (2024/25)	Long term initiatives (2026/27)
1. Intensify the research agenda relating to Bursaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact study on bursaries conducted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct studies on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Return on Investment for funding spent by the W&amp;R SETA on Bursaries</li> <li>Root causes of high dropout rate on the bursaries programme</li> <li>Sustainability of the current Bursaries model within the W&amp;R sector</li> <li>Research concerning improving throughput rates of bursary recipients</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct an impact study on the ILDP and RMDP</li> <li>Conduct an evaluation study on the entry requirements for ILDP and proposals for improvement</li> </ul>
2. Professionalization of the Retail qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes for professionalization of the retail qualifications have commenced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritisation of bursaries for occupational qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased funding for occupational qualifications</li> </ul>
3. Upskilling and reskilling for a digital era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 IR digital related bursaries awarded in 2020/21.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise funding/ bursaries for qualifications relating to the digitalisation of the W&amp;R Sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise funding/ bursaries for qualifications relating to the digitalisation of the W&amp;R Sector</li> </ul>
4. Implement new bursaries for continuing learners who were previously not funded by the W&RSETA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No baseline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund continuing learners who were previously not funded by the W&amp;RSETA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund continuing learners who were previously not funded by the W&amp;RSETA</li> </ul>
5. Increase in the number of graduates completing studies through the W&R SETA bursaries placed in the Graduate Placement programmes of the W&R SETA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No baseline as absorption rate is currently not being monitored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an Unemployed Bursary Scheme for Employers</li> <li>Pilot the “take a child to work programme in partnership with Employers”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an Unemployed Bursary Scheme for Employers</li> <li>Implement a take a child to work programme in partnership with employers</li> </ul>

Focus area	Baseline/ current status (2021/22)	Medium term initiatives (2024/25)	Long term initiatives (2026/27)
6. Implement the RMDP Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RMDP is implemented as a flagship programme within the office of the CEO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamline the RMDP Entrance Process to ensure that programme objectives are clearly met which include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training provider should be directly involved in the selection of beneficiaries</li> <li>Minimise/ reduce the time lag between acceptance of beneficiaries into the RMDP and commencement of training.</li> <li>Enhance Content and Delivery</li> <li>Develop a bridging programme between the accredited RMDP and ILDP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Conduct impact evaluation, monitor, evaluate and improve
7. Implement the ILDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ILDP is implemented as a flagship programme within the office of the CEO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a quota system to ensure fair representation of women, people with disability and other provinces in the programme.</li> <li>Review Programme Material to reflect the dynamic and constantly changing work and sector environment.</li> <li>Improve communication strategies from inception to completion of the programme.</li> </ul>	Conduct impact evaluation, monitor, evaluate and improve
8. Implement a Mentorship and Coaching Programme for Bursaries Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No baseline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and Launch Bursaries Alumni programme</li> <li>Pilot the Bursaries Alumni programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Bursaries Alumni programme</li> </ul>

## **15. THE GRADUATE PLACEMENT DELIVERY MODEL**

The W&RSETA is cognisant of the plight of unemployed graduates, which is largely attributed to the skills mismatch of the graduates and the needs of industry. To this end, the W&RSETA is committed to support the Sector to implement graduate placement and internship programmes to ensure that students obtain the necessary work experience to prepare them for the world of work. The W&RSETA Graduate Placements and Internships Programmes objectives are:

- To enable companies to address the shortage of scarce and critical skills identified in the Hard To Fill Vacancies in the Wholesale and Retail Sector;
- To create a pool of skilled workers with formal tertiary qualifications;
- To promote Wholesale and Retail as a career of choice;
- To assist in meeting the strategic staffing needs of companies in the Wholesale and Retail Sector by providing practical and accelerated work experience programmes that expose graduates to specific Wholesale and Retail occupations;
- To provide unemployed graduates with valuable work experience and skills to enhance their employability;
- To provide students that have N6 certificates and similar with the necessary workplace experience that they need to enable them to obtain their Diplomas; and
- To enable W&R sector to recruit and place graduates in their workplaces.

### **15.1 The Graduate Placement Delivery Model will adopt a multifaceted approach with various stakeholders' participation as per the outline below:**

15.1.1 Applications for Graduate Placements and Internships will be through an approved application method such as:

- 15.1.1.1 Funding Windows;
- 15.1.1.2 Sector Partnerships;
- 15.1.1.3 Special Projects;
- 15.1.1.4 Retail Chairs; and
- 15.1.1.5 Through Government Agencies

- 15.1.2 The W&RSETA will make provision for Graduate Placements and Internships as per the Annual Performance Plan (APP).
- 15.1.3 The W&RSETA will allocate to Stakeholders within the retail sector; Private and Public HET Institutions and TVET Colleges and or other government agencies or structures as per determined need.
- 15.1.4 The candidacy programme - The W&RSETA Candidacy Programme aims to support candidates who must meet academic requirements in order to attain professional registration. The W&RSETA should develop partnerships with Professional bodies operating in the Wholesale and Retail sector such as SAICA, SAIPA, IITPSA, HPCSA etc to ensure a successful implementation of the Candidacy programme.
- 15.1.5 Expressions of interest may be accepted via Provincial Offices if there are still shortfalls against the APP Targets
- 15.1.6 International funding proposals will be accepted as part of the funding model and this will be made available at the discretion of the W&RSETA Board.

## 15.2 Graduate Placement medium-term initiatives

Focus area	Baseline/ current status (2021/22)	Medium term initiatives (2024/25)	Long term initiatives (2026/27)
1. Intensify research on Graduate Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of Graduate Placement research conducted in 2019.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct study on the Return on Investment for funding spent by the W&amp;R SETA on Graduate Placement Programmes</li> <li>Benchmark study on the Graduate Placement Models of other sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability of the current Graduate Placement model within the W&amp;R sector</li> </ul>
2. Form meaningful partnerships with Government/private agencies established to provide funding for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration with YES initiative and possible partnership with agencies like NYDA, Harambee, etcetera.</li> <li>Partnership with SETA in the WRSETA cluster (Foodbev, Agri and FMP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration with the value chain SETA's on placement opportunities</li> </ul>



Focus area	Baseline/ current status (2021/22)	Medium term initiatives (2024/25)	Long term initiatives (2026/27)
the Youth and other SETAs.			
3. Candidacy programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidacy Programme implemented within the W&amp;RSETA. APP targets currently not achieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop partnerships with stakeholders who implements the candidacy programme</li> <li>Develop partnership with SAICA</li> <li>Target W&amp;RSETA bursaries graduates for the candidacy programme, in partnership with Employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the target for candidacy programme</li> </ul>
4. Implement a Mentorship and Coaching Programme for Graduate Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No baseline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and Launch Graduate Alumni programme</li> <li>Pilot the Graduate Alumni programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Graduate Alumni programme</li> </ul>

## 16. STRATEGIC ENABLERS (RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE BURSARY AND GRADUATE PLACEMENT STRATEGY)

### 16.1 Resources

The successful implementation of the strategy is dependent on the resources allocated and this will determine the success or failure of the strategy. The following are identified as resources critical in the successful implementation of the strategy:

15.1 A fully capacitated Provincial team with technical knowledge.

15.2 Stakeholder Buy-in. Stakeholders support the priorities outlined in the strategy by participating in the rollout of the strategy.

15.3 Budget

15.4 Careers Platform (with linked B&P module)

The W&RSETA Board approves the budget for the Bursary and Graduate Placement strategy and is subject to change on the discretion of the Board. The amount for employed learners will be determined by EXCOM or the delegated authority as and when the adverts are published.

## **16.2 Students and Graduate Support Initiatives**

The dropout rate for both bursaries and placements beneficiaries has been raised as a major concern, which has an impact on the return on investment. The W&RSETA Bursaries and Placement Programme need to integrate support programmes such as mentorship and coaching, which should be compulsory. The Bursary Standard Operating Procedure must provide for a clear student support plan highlighting the various services provided as support to participating students such as academic support, study plans, counselling and extra lessons for struggling students. Graduate Placement needs a precise plan on how Graduates will be supported in the workplace, and this can be done through Career Guidance initiatives. The programme will also assist the SETA to be aware of the conditions within which the Graduates work under.

The W&RSETA should also launch an alumni programme that will foster dialogues between the former beneficiaries of the W&RSETA's bursaries and placement programmes and the new beneficiaries. The alumni's will serve as mentors for the current bursars and graduates.

## **16.3 Improve operational efficiencies in bursaries and placement administration to ensure value for money**

One of the main challenges identified with regard to the implementation of the B&P Programmes is the administrative burden, and the inefficiencies in the implementation. It is important that processes are put into place to reduce operational inefficiencies that will in turn ensure that there is value for money used by the SETA in these programmes. These can be achieved by conducting verification of reported data, development and implementation of the Learner Management System as well as implementation of the B&P programmes through the Learner Management System.

One of the important interventions to ensure operational efficiencies in the B&P programmes will be the effective monitoring and verification of working conditions of placed graduates and the living conditions of the W&RSETA's bursars. The integration of the B&P processes into the Career Development Platform, will also aid in improving operational efficiencies.

## 17. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE B&P STRATEGY

The Monitoring and Evaluation of the B&P Strategy is encompassed within the W&R SETA Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. The following additional monitoring controls will be ensured:

- Where pre-payments have occurred, verification of funds utilisation for the previous period must be ensured before signing a new contract or paying for the new invoice. Thus, no payment will be made if the Institution cannot account for any funds not utilised.
- Announced and unannounced monitoring visits should be conducted to assess the conditions within which graduates are working.
- Programme reporting should be improved. Thus, reporting should not only focus on APP targets, but on the programme implementation and achievements. For example, reports on the funds provided to NSFAS should be submitted on a monthly basis as this will also improve accountability.

The Monitoring and Evaluation questions of focus will be as follows amongst others:

- What is the return on investment made by the W&RSETA with regards to the B&P programmes?
- What are the implementation gaps on B&P processes?
- Is there a risk of fraud on both bursaries and placements? If so, what measures are put in place to create awareness and combat fraud?

## 18. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Risk Management section of the strategy outlines what could go wrong with regards to the implementation of the strategy and how the identified risks can be mitigated in order to ensure minimum or no impact to the achievement of the targets set in the strategy.

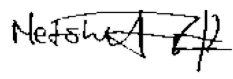

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Root causes</b>	<b>Risk Impact</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation strategies</b>
1	Increased dropout rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of interest due to rising unemployment rate amongst the youth</li> </ul>	Wasteful expenditure (No return on investment on the funds already spent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of success stories with registered learners</li> <li>• Establish and implement a W&amp;R SETA alumni programme</li> </ul>

	Risk	Root causes	Risk Impact	Risk Mitigation strategies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of support programmes for registered learners</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a mentorship programme for registered learners</li> </ul>
2	Misrepresentation of submitted invoices	Institutions aiming to claim the maximum amount indicated in the contract (dishonesty)	Loss of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct verification of invoices before payment</li> <li>Put controls into place during contracting stage to avoid misrepresentation of claimed amounts.</li> </ul>
3	Extended period of study for qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners failing some causes</li> <li>Learners taking fewer modules than required</li> </ul>	Increase in costs for the W&R SETA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include conditions in the contract that will indicate non-payment for extended period of study</li> </ul>
4	Inefficiencies in the administration of bursaries and graduate placement programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of IT systems</li> <li>Poor Business Process Management</li> <li>Lack of understanding of B&amp;P processes</li> </ul>	No return on investment for funds spent on Bursaries and Graduate Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out and implementation of the Bursary and Graduate Placement Management System, which optimises automation of the application process, Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Learner Data Management.</li> <li>Conduct B&amp;P Business Process Management and value chain analysis and implement improvements</li> <li>Conduct continuous capacitation on the B&amp;P policy and Standard Operating Procedure.</li> </ul>
5	Lack of coherence on reporting periods between the SETA and Employers	The SETA reports in a financial year while Employers uses a calendar year.	Impact on the target achievement and potential for incorrect reporting.	Assess the possibility to amend the commencement period of internships to start at the beginning of the year with a clear reporting system.
6	Negative impact of Pandemics e.g. COVID 19	Worldwide or country-wide pandemics	Disruption of project implementation	COVID 19 plan be part of all project-planning processes.

## 19. CONCLUSION

The achievement of the interventions and priorities identified in this strategy is dependent on collaborative efforts of all role players within the SETA and the sector. The W&RSETA has the responsibility to ensure that the skills development gaps are addressed in line with the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) and other government priorities. The advent of the global pandemic, COVID-19 which started in South Africa from March 2020 has changed the way in which education is provided, and many jobs were lost, increasing the unemployment rate, especially amongst the youth. It is crucial that this strategy is implemented with the aim of reducing the imbalance between skills and availability workplace opportunities. The W&R sector suffered a great loss due to COVID-19 which has been a cause for concern, and brought with it uncertainties and changes in skills demand and supply.

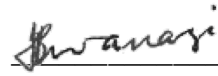
**STRATEGY APPROVAL & SIGN-OFF**

<b>Strategy Name</b>	<b>Bursaries and Placements Strategy</b>	
<b>Effective Date of Current Version</b>	20 July 2022 (Date approved by the Governance and Strategy committee)	
<b>Department</b>	SPPE	
<b>Strategy Owner</b>		
<b>Designation</b>	<b>Signature</b>	
Senior Manager: Strategic Planning Dr Edzisani Netshiozwi		
<b>Strategy Recommendation</b>		
<b>Designation</b>	<b>Signature</b>	
SPPE Executive Deborah Machard		

**APPROVAL BY W&RSETA ACCOUNTING OFFICER**

Approved                       Not Approved

Comments.....  
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**TOM MKHWANAZI**  
**W&RSETA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

16/08/2022  
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**Date**