



**Research**  
(embedded in:  
**Businesses/Corporations/  
Government Entities/ Non-Profits)**

## **Chattanooga Region Talent Dividend Initiative (CRTDI) and Research**

The CRTDI focuses on the development of a sustainable quality workforce that ensures individual and organizational effectiveness and efficiency as well as economic growth that minimizes increased taxation while increasing revenue.

Graduate students at universities are an excellent resource to perform research that is central to the focus of CRTDI. Research performed by graduate students is an invaluable resource that is beneficial and cost effective. Beneficial to business organizations as important questions are addressed that meet needs. Cost effective as students perform work for credit rather than money as they meet degree requirements. The ideal arrangement is to engage an employee who is working toward degree requirements to perform research that is integral to the employees' actual job responsibilities and/or business needs.

After deciding on the research topic, the graduate student considers the options about different ways the topic can be investigated. This is the research design that includes refining the topic into a research question. Generally, the most appropriate research design regarding the CRTDI focus is the qualitative design. This includes potential observations, interviews and/or focus groups accompanied by questionnaires. Experimental or interventional approaches are usually not fitting as time is a limiting variable. A descriptive study is usually the most appropriate. The mechanics of such an approach are not addressed in this description as they are left to the student (employee) and supervising professor.

Research ideas applicable to the CRTDI focus might include, for example, the following:

- A. Address the organizational culture relative to supplying continuous learning of employees
- B. Policies and procedures to access advisement and tuition reimbursement offered by employer
- C. Identification, definition and development of soft skills, i.e. teamwork, collaboration, communication, and problem solving, etc.
- D. Examining the application of Prior Learning Assessments connected with employer training programs or job responsibilities, etc.
- E. -Connecting and collaborating between business professionals and university partners through a research project that creates a meaningful learning and leadership experience that is mutually beneficial to the business and graduate student
- F. Examine employee job satisfaction or health and work performance within context of enhanced education
- G. Determine return on investment (ROI) relative to tuition reimbursement.

An example of a collaborative research study was conducted by Dr. John Dorris (doctoral candidate at the time) involved the identification of critical workforce skills. The focus of the study was to review surveys, both national and local area. The national findings formed a frame of reference for understanding a survey conducted of members of the workforce in the Chattanooga area. Such research illustrated the strength of evidence that can be obtained from a properly conducted study that was beneficial to both the student and the business enterprise.

## Survey of Skills for Business/Industry

Skill	Ranking National	Ranking Chattanooga Area
Active Listening	1	7
Customer Orientation	2	3
Critical/Analytical Thinking	3	8
Oral Communication	4	4
Time Management	5	10
Written Communication	6	11
Teamwork/Collaboration	7	2
Prioritization/Focus	8	5
Decision Making	9	6
Leadership	10	9
Execution		7
Data Analysis		12
Change Management		1