 **HUMAN RESOURCES**

**INDUCTION REPORT**

**Reporting period February 2013 to January 2014**

**INDUCTION INTERVIEW REPORT**

The report includes responses from new staff members who started their employment with Rhodes University between 1 February 2013 and 31 January 2014.

New members are asked to complete a questionnaire that was sent to them by HR, six months after joining Rhodes University as part of the induction programme (this was changed to 6 months during 2013 to allow for a larger reflection period as a method of gaining more valid data, as opposed to that which falls within the general ‘honeymoon phase of their employment’). During this period, 19 members took part. Appendix 1 indicates the nature of the questions asked.

**General conclusions from the questionnaires submitted:**

1. Some concerns were directed towards the delay in the actual verbal offer being made and the formal letter received. This delay nearly prompted one member to accept an alternative offer. These cases might be isolated incidents and will be discussed with the HR Generalist.
2. Interim accommodation provided by the University is observed as expensive in comparison to areas outside of Grahamstown. More support in terms of the cost of accommodation (including University accommodation) was expected in view of how remote the University is in terms of its geographical location. A staff member suggested that information regarding accommodation occupied by previous new/joining staff members during the initial phases of their relocation to the University be shared amongst new staff going forward.
3. The pre-arrival conversations/arrangements with Human Resources members were regarded as highly professional and informative. The relative HR Generalist was further praised for their friendly approach during the initial welcome and completion of documentations.
4. According to the questionnaires, new members were welcomed by their Departments and their workspace (where applicable) was prepared for them.
5. Feedback from the questionnaires reveal that most members feel that they are fitting well into the University environment and no specific issues were noted. The diverse University environment, Grahamstown culture and networking/developing friendships, were all referred to in a positive light. The VC’s New Staff Party was regarded as an effective means of meeting new and existing staff members.
6. The recruitment process was perceived as being organised and members dealing with the process were available to provide input where necessary. HR was regarded as helpful and transparent, while the competency assessment process was referred to by staff members as being well organised. One staff member did note an occurrence of a miscommunication related to transport arrangements concerning her interview, but this has since been corrected.
7. The academic induction programme was regarded as highly beneficial, with specific reference being made to the beneficial discussions amongst staff surrounding their personal experiences. This allowed for the sharing of personal information not formally presented in the new staff pack or brochures.
8. Concern was noted with regard to reimbursement of relocation costs incurred. The staff member expressed concern around the amount which he was reimbursed and noted his dissatisfaction regarding this. Investigation into the matter revealed that the staff member was expecting the University to cover his costs to relocate from abroad. During this time, the staff member was consulted with and it was revealed that the applicable application form was incorrectly filled in, whereby South Africa, instead of the foreign country, was referred to as the members ‘place of residence’.
9. Specific issues were raised regarding the lack of adequate schooling. The observation was made that the level of affordable English schools lack the standards required. This will force parents to consider private schools and/or expensive schools, which they cannot afford. The problem was highlighted by by the fact that one respondent is/was a single parent, who is solely accountable for high costs referred to. Another concern raised in relation to schooling was the lack of space for children of staff members who relocate to Grahamstown, especially when joining later in the year. In this case, the staff member’s child had to “downgrade” due to size limitations on the relevant grade.
10. Difficulty caused by the lack of access to drinking water was raised.
11. Great difficulty was previously experienced in getting the induction questionnaires back on time. It was perceived by new staff members as lengthy and taking time to complete. A planned initiative is to distribute questionnaires in an electronic format through the use of our online qualtrics survey programme. This online programme will allow for questionnaires to be sent to staff members through the form of an email inviting them to complete the online questionnaire by following a direct link, which will mostly consist of selective questions. The staff member will have the option of completing the questionnaire anonymously, which is envisioned to result in an increased response rate.

This electronic questionnaire process will allow for automated reporting and tracking. This will serve to enhance this feedback process as it will allow for time saving, less administrative input, response tracking, automated generation of reports to respondents, and automated report writing and analysis. A manual questionnaire will still be made available for new staff who do not have electronic access.

**Adjustments recommended to the Induction programme based on questionnaire comments**

1. Although no major issues were raised in the questionnaires regarding additional information around retirement fund options and medical aid conditions, this matter will be monitored further. One staff member referred to difficulty in understanding the principles and options available to him, and suggested more detailed information be provided on a basic comprehension level to allow for increased understanding.

**Matters raised by new members that require a longer-term exploration and possible solutions. Some are similar**

1. Transit housing for a single member, which will be cheaper than family orientated accommodation, if even for a short period of time. The Director: HR has already explored this with the Executive Director Infrastructure and Operations and this will be considered in infrastructure deliberations.
2. A suggestion was that transit housing is provided free of charge during an initial period to offset any accommodation hassles.
3. A further suggestion related to transit housing was proposed by a new staff member. He explained that some universities provide a rental deposit in order for new staff to secure accommodation during the relocation process. This was expressed as a helpful form of assistance in relocating staff having to pay a rental deposit, rent and costs related to transit housing.
4. It was proposed that one investigates the boundaries as to what extend the University can get involved with in assisting new members with information regarding schools. Currently new members are only referred to the various school websites.
5. A new staff member raised concern around RUMed not offering a optional savings plan, which in the staff member’s case, resulted in a loss of a substantial amount of savings with his previous medical aid.
6. A suggestion was made for a formal induction to be held for all new staff at interval periods, for example every few months. It was suggested that this be carried out in the form of a workshop so that the induction is not done in isolation. This could include discussion of policies, procedures, etc. of Rhodes in its entirety.

Appendix 1:

A summary of the interview questions:

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| **QUESTIONS** |
| Did you receive sufficient general information before arrival? |
| Please describe your experience of the recruitment process. |
| Describe your experience of relocating to Grahamstown (If applicable) |
| What could the HR Division do to ease this transition? |
| Were you welcomed upon arrival at Rhodes University? |
| Were you adequately welcomed in your Department? |
| Were your job profile and responsibilities explained to you? |
| Was your workspace/area prepared for you (desk, stationery etc.) |
| Were the Standard Operating procedures explained to you? |
| Did you obtain your staff card within the first week? |
| Were you given a campus tour? |
| Any comments regarding your medical aid and pension/provident fund enrolment? |
| Is your payslip (remuneration) a true reflection of what was discussed during the recruitment process? |
| Do you consider yourself incorporated into Rhodes University? What are you enjoying about Rhodes? What are you finding difficult? |
| What were the most informative and the least useful parts of your induction program? |
| Are there any areas where you feel that the induction process disappointed you in any way? How could it be improved? |
| Are there any general comments or suggestions you would like to make? |

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