



RHODES UNIVERSITY

EMPLOYMENT PROTOCOL FOR SUPPORT STAFF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Purpose and Intent

Rhodes University strives to be an outstanding internationally-respected academic institution which proudly affirms its African identity (Vision Statement, 2000). The University believes that this will be achieved through the employment of a diverse staff of the highest calibre who over a period of time can and will make a contribution to the accomplishments and reputation of the University (Employment Equity Policy, 2001).

The University in its Employment Equity Policy (2001) makes a commitment to provide appropriate corrective measures to redress past imbalances. One such measure is the provision of development posts as part of an internship programme for support staff (non-academic staff at different levels in the University).

Aimed at members of designated groups (as defined by the Employment Equity Act), the purpose of this internship programme is to provide individuals with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills and to gain critical experience so that they are better placed to compete successfully for higher level posts within the institution. As an equity initiative, this internship programme provides a “stepping stone” for individuals who are under-utilised in their current jobs, and/or those who have the potential to advance but are who are unable to gain the critical experience needed to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. The intended outcome of this internship programme is the advancement of these individuals within the University.

In this way the University will attend to the goals of equity and excellence, enhancing the diversity of staff as well as assuring quality in its endeavours.

Eligibility of Applicants

Specifically for members of designated groups (African, Coloured and Indian/Asian, women and the disabled), this internship programme is primarily for staff (full-time, part-time, permanent or on contract of three months or more) of the University. However, should the institution be unable to find suitable candidates from amongst its staff members, it may elect to open this programme to applicants outside of the University. Individuals participating in this programme shall be called interns.

Nature of Internship Posts

These internship posts, on grades 6 to 10, shall usually be one (1) year contract posts. These internship posts are development posts and therefore will usually be based on a relevant development programme (where possible, leading to a formal qualification) linked to related work experience. The nature of these development programmes will be dictated by the actual job (e.g. if internship post is for a secretary) and the needs and skills of the individual in meeting the requirements of the job in the period of the contract. Where possible, these internship posts should be linked to learnerships as defined by the Skills Development Act (as proposed in the University’s Employment Equity Policy, 2001) so that the University can qualify for any rebate on its skills levy.

The Human Resources Division shall be responsible for the identification of suitable posts using the following guidelines:

- To maximize the likelihood of an individual in an internship post competing successfully for a job at the same level as that of the internship post, jobs which have a higher staff turnover e.g. circulation assistant in the library, secretary/ administrative assistant or housekeeper should be considered;
- Heads of Departments/Divisions (hereafter referred to as heads) can also motivate for such internship posts in their department/division e.g. on the basis of a shortage of skills in the market place and therefore, the need to train staff in these skills; and
- The placement of these development posts is conditional on the relevant department/division being able and willing to meet the development requirements of the individual as well as the requirements of this protocol.

The University will endeavour to provide up to 5 (five) one-year internship posts on an annual basis. Different strategies could be used in providing these posts i.e., the posts could be five different posts in different areas of the University or could be in one Division/department, using the ripple effect of one post being created e.g. in the catering department, a caterer takes up an internship post at supervisor level, an assistant caterer then fills in the caterer's position as the second internship post, a senior cook then takes up the position of the third internship post at caterer level and so forth. Whilst more taxing on a division/department (and only feasible with larger departments), the latter is more cost effective for the University. A combination of these two strategies could also be utilized.

Policy Update

On an annual basis, prior to the start of this process, the following Committee will review this policy and if necessary, revise it:

- Vice-Principal (as Chair);
- Manager: Human Resources Development;
- Representative of the Recruitment and Selection Section;
- A representative of NEHAWU;
- A representative of NTESU.

Commitment and Education

The success of this internship programme rests on the commitment of all role-players:

- The University in providing the necessary resources;
- Human Resources in terms of managing and evaluating the programme;
- Managers in terms of identifying suitable staff and in hosting interns; and
- Staff in terms of maximizing their involvement in the programme and being realistic about their own prospects within the University.

To maximise management and staff commitment to this programme, it is important that they are aware of why this programme has been initiated, how it can benefit the institution as well as individual departments/divisions, what the programme entails, the responsibilities of the different players and how they can contribute to the success of the programme. This must be done through a detailed education programme before starting the programme and ongoing evaluation and support during the programme.

Unrealistic staff expectations can threaten the success of this programme as can poor identification of suitable candidates by managers and poor management of interns on the programme. Education of staff

and management at the outset of the programme, will seek to minimise the likelihood of this happening.

Recruitment

The Recruitment and Selection Section and the Human Resources Development (HRD) Office will be jointly responsible for the effective recruitment and selection of staff for this programme.

In recruiting members of staff for this programme, a wide range of initiatives will be used:

- A general meeting for interested staff will be held where the programme (including this protocol) will be fully explained and any questions staff have, addressed. This will be the responsibility of the HRD Office;
- A circular advertising the development posts will be distributed to all departments/divisions/institutes. This circular will also be placed on the notice-board outside of the Recruitment and Selection Section and placed on the section's web-page. This will be the responsibility of the Recruitment and Selection Section;
- Managers will be asked to identify and recommend any suitable candidates. Clear guidelines for doing so will be provided. This will be the responsibility of the HRD Office;
- Once there is a formal performance appraisal system in place, this will also allow for the identification of suitable candidates;
- Where an individual from a designated group has been unsuccessful in applying for a post in the University and where the Selection Committee deems such an individual to have potential, the Selection Committee may recommend that such an individual be considered for an internship programme (assuming that similar post is available within the internship programme). This is consistent with the University's Recruitment and Selection Policy for Support Staff posts. On the Selection Committee's recommendation, the Recruitment and Selection Section will keep a list of these individuals who will be contacted and encouraged to apply for the development posts as and when the internship programme is run; and
- Staff of the HRD Office through interacting with staff on training programmes, will also identify possible suitable staff.

Where individuals are encouraged to apply, there is no guarantee that these individuals will be selected to participate in the internship programme.

In the event of there being no suitable candidates from amongst the staff of the University, the usual methods of recruitment may be used to advertise the programme to outside applicants.

Given the resources invested in this programme, the accurate identification of individual potential is critical. Accordingly, Managers will be encouraged to identify suitable candidates rather than choose one or two specific individuals to participate in the programme. Thereafter, rigorous assessments, able to measure potential, will be used.

Selection of Interns

In the selection of candidates, two separate processes will take place. In the first instance, any candidate applying for these development posts must:

- have a sound performance record in their current job (i.e. is executing current job responsibilities to the required standards). This also means that the applicant may have no current formal documented verbal or written disciplinary record;
- display sound work behaviours (i.e. is reliable, self-disciplined, takes responsibility and can work independently, is diligent and punctual);

- be co-operative (i.e. is able to work effectively in a team, is willing to assist others, take on additional responsibility when necessary);
- display a commitment to his/her own development (i.e., is or has engaged in education, training or development activities in the past few years, is open to feedback including criticism, is flexible and willing to change).

In assessing the above, two referee's reports will be sought: one of whom will be the current manager of the applicant and one of whom will be an internal customer who interacts with the applicant (chosen by the Recruitment and Selection Office).

Applicants who meet the above criteria will then be assessed against the competency profile (knowledge, skills and personal attributes) for the particular internship post for which they are applying. This competency profile will be the basis for the selection of candidates with equal attention being paid to the potential as well as the proven merit of candidates. Consideration will be given to using alternative selection techniques (e.g. practical tasks, psychological tests, assessment centres) that provide candidates with the chance to demonstrate their potential.

Where there are more suitable applicants than internship posts available, the final selection decision will be taken on the following bases:

- applicant/s who are the most suitable in terms of the competency profile for the post and therefore, in the near future, more likely to successfully compete for a permanent post at the level of the internship post;
- applicant/s who will make the most of the opportunity provided to them contingent on their current skills level and personal commitment; and
- the current demographic profile of staff in that category of job (e.g. secretary, housekeeper) and the need to enhance diversity.

The Selection Committee shall consist of:

- Manager: Human Resources Development (as Chair);
- Manager of the Section/Department/Unit where internship post is placed;
- Likely mentor for the intern;
- Representative of the Recruitment and Selection Section;
- A representative of NEHAWU;
- A representative of NTESU.

Conditions of Placement

The success of this programme is critical to the long-term equity plans of the University. It is important to maximize the likelihood that a staff member in this programme is considered eligible for a permanent position at the end of the internship period. The following are regarded as integral to ensuring success of the programme:

- The direct manager/supervisor (hereafter referred to as supervisor) or an appointed mentor shall be required to take on a mentoring role with this individual;
- A development plan for the new staff member shall be drawn up involving the individual, his/her mentor, and someone from the HRD Office;
- The mentor shall monitor the progress of the staff member towards meeting the objectives set out in the development plan;
- The submission of at least three reports on the staff member's progress: two in the first six months and the third and final one at the end of the internship period where the period is one

year. These reports are first to be discussed with the staff member and then signed by him/her. The reports shall be sent to the Head of Department/Division for his/her signature before being forwarded to the Vice-Principal via the HRD Office. The Vice-Principal together with the HRD Manager will address any problems identified by referring them to the appropriate individuals in the institution;

- The mentor shall ensure that the new staff member meets the requirements of the contract post;
- The Human Resources Development (HRD) Office shall assess the effectiveness of the placement, particularly whether there are any problems. This will be done through conducting interviews with the staff member and the mentor, once after six months and the second time at the end of the contract.

Mentor's Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the mentor are as follows:

- Participation in the selection process of the individuals likely to be placed in the mentor's department;
- Attendance at training and meetings for mentors in the internship programme;
- Working with the intern in drawing up a feasible development plan that takes the needs of the intern and the demands of the host department into account and submitting this timeously to the HRD Office;
- Meeting with the intern at least once a month, reviewing progress against the development plan, providing feedback on his/her performance and identifying focus areas of development for the next month;
- Supporting the intern within the work environment, making sure that s/he is being exposed to the necessary development opportunities and ensuring that s/he is not sidetracked by others' demands;
- Ensuring the provision of a work environment that is conducive to the development of the intern;
- Assisting the intern with his/her training courses including ensuring that s/he is released timeously to attend these, monitoring the timeous completion of assignments by the intern, ensuring that the intern receives the necessary assistance with his/her assignments and following up on the progress made by the intern in these courses;
- Writing up of the requisite mentor reports, reporting accurately on the performance of the intern, consulting appropriately with the intern before submitting this report timeously to the HRD Office;
- Addressing any performance or work conduct problems with the intern timeously;
- Bringing any problems that have the potential to undermine the effectiveness of the individual's internship or the internship programme to the timeous attention of the HRD Manager;
- Assisting the HRD Office with the evaluation of the internship programme.

Conditions of Service for the Staff Member

In the case of a staff member taking up an internship post, his/her permanent job will be filled on a contract basis for the period of the internship. Should the individual be unable to secure a permanent post at the same level of the internship post, s/he will return to their original job.

Whilst in the internship post, the staff member shall continue to receive the same salary prior to taking up the post and will receive an internship responsibility allowance commensurate with the level of appointment on the internship programme.

The intern may apply for other posts during his/her internship period. Should s/he be successful in a job application, the employment contract for the internship programme will be terminated but the individual's involvement in the development aspect of the programme would be negotiable. As regards the employee who took up the intern's permanent job on a contract basis (at the time of the intern taking up the internship post) and provided that the full recruitment and selection process was followed in the filling of that contract post, consideration will be given to making a permanent appointment of that contract employee. In this instance, a screening committee will be convened to consider making a permanent appointment.

In the event the individual returns to his/her original job, the onus is on him/her to find alternative employment and to ensure that his/her skills are maintained. However, the HRD Office will pursue suitable strategies of employing these staff in similar temporary posts. For example, a staff member who was previously in an intern secretarial position could be used to fill a similar temporary vacancy in a department e.g. in the event of someone needing to take maternity leave, or a lengthy period of sick or annual leave. In pursuing such a strategy, the HRD Office will take into account the potential disruption to the job and department in which the staff member is permanently employed. Any absence of the individual would need to be discussed with and agreed to by his/her supervisor/manager/head of department.

Costs of Internship Posts

The costs of these development posts will be budgeted for in the employment equity budget. This costs covers the hiring of additional personnel to replace staff who are on internship posts e.g. if a cleaner is in a secretarial internship post, a replacement will have to be hired for this period.

Each mentor, with the exception of managers on grade 12 and above, will receive financial remuneration for his/her services as a mentor, provided that s/he has executed his/her mentoring responsibilities for the full period of the internship. The value of the mentoring responsibility allowance will be an annual notch increment at the midpoint of a grade 9 post, paid at the end of the internship period or at the end of each year in the case of internships that are longer than one year.

The policy committee, in January of each year, is tasked with determining whether the mentor has executed his/her mentoring responsibilities and therefore, whether full or partial or no payment is due to the mentor. The HRD Manager shall be responsible for collating a report on the mentor's performance and such a report will include feedback from the interns on their mentor's performance. This report will serve as a basis for the Committee's decision.

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