

**Centralisation of cleaning services**

1. **Background**

The centralisation of cleaning services is a strategic project undertaken between the Central Cleaning Services (CCS) under the leadership of Dr Iain L’Ange in partnership with the Human Resources Division. CCS structure falls under the responsibility of the Manager: Housekeeping.

The mandate for this project has come from the Institutional Planning Committee Staffing Committee. The reason for pursuing this strategy includes the following:

* Focusing on the removal of administrative tasks for the academic Head of Department (HoDs), allowing them to concentrate on the academic project of their departments. A number of HoDs over the past few years have relayed their frustration at the time spent dealing with cleaning matters in their department and dealing with the related staffing problems;
* The need to ensure that an efficient and effective staff resourcing model is followed. The allocation of a dedicated cleaner to a department or division is often not an effective or efficient model where there is either under-utilisation or over-utilisation of the staff member;
* Effective supervision of cleaning staff which benefits individual staff members. These are detailed in section 2 below. In the case of administrators or technical staff supervising cleaners, they have multiple other responsibilities and this often results in a “default model” of supervision i.e. supervising when there are problems. This can be very demoralising for the cleaner;
* The requirements for cleaning within the institution have become more stringent over the years. This particular cleaning expertise typically rests within Housekeeping section of the University. The Manager: Housekeeping and supervisory staff are aware of appropriate benchmarks for cleaning in terms of type of cleaning required, frequency of such cleaning depending on the use of the room and the time needed for cleaning depending on the size of the room. In contrast, it is unusual for administrators or technical staff in academic departments or some support divisions, to whom the cleaners typically report, to have this experience or expertise. This makes scheduling of cleaning work, providing cleaning training, monitoring of the implementation of cleaning standards is problematic and dealing with complaints related to cleaning standards can be problematic.

This project has already been operating for a number of years with the move of cleaning posts from the following areas to CCS: Estates Division, Alumni Relations and Development, Campus Protection, Library, Linguistics, Barratt lecture theatre, Drama, Human Resources and the Finance Divisions.

This project has also involved the appointment of additional Supervisors as previously CCS only had one Supervisor post. With the expansion of the number of staff reporting into this structure and to ensure an appropriate supervisor to cleaning staff ratio (it has been agreed that this should be 1: 8, one supervisor per 8 cleaners), additional Supervisor posts have been established. As at 1 April 2013, there are 5 such posts. The supervisory posts are a result of efficiencies achieved (i.e. less cleaner posts are needed) and where cleaner posts are “banked” and then upgraded, as authorised by the Job Evaluation Committee.

This project has been discussed at length with NEHAWU who has raised concerns that management is attempting to outsource the cleaning function. A memorandum signed by the Vice-Chancellor, the then Director: Residential Operations and Director: Human Resources has noted the institution’s commitment to not outsource under the current leadership of Dr Badat. Furthermore, a commitment has been made that the centralisation of cleaning services will not result in retrenchments. While redeployments may be necessary (this has not been the case to date), no retrenchments will result from the centralisation of cleaning posts from the departments. All prospective centralisation of current cleaners involves NEHAWU. Where a post does not have a current job incumbent and there is no need to fill that post because current cleaners in CCS can fulfil the department’s cleaning needs, that cleaning post will not be filled. This freezing of the post is distinct from the issue of the retrenchment or the redeployment of current staff. NEHAWU will not be consulted in these circumstances.

1. **Benefits to the individual staff members**

For the staff, the following benefits exist:

* Fair distribution of the work-load, ensuring that each and every cleaner is productive. Situations of over-utilisation and under-utilisation of staff are unfair;
* Proper training and induction of cleaning requirements make sure that the staff are well-trained in this area. The training frequently results in certification. Staff are kept up to date with new developments as the training is conducted by the service provider of the University’s cleaning materials;
* Ensuring the provision of suitable equipment, protective clothing and proper use of industrial chemicals. This ensures appropriate safety and wellness measures are taken to protect the staff member;
* Hands-on supervision by the CCS supervisors results in each Supervisor being aware of the contribution of the staff member. Feedback can be given where there are concerns or areas for development leading to the staff member being able to grow and development. Excellent contribution can be identified for the purposes of nominating the staff member for a merit award;
* There are more opportunities for team leadership and supervision in the absence of a Supervisor in CCS;
* There are more opportunities for advancement as talented staff can be considered for promotion in a range of cleaning type positions e.g. Senior Room Attendants, Housekeepers and Supervisor positions. Staff in turn, have been appropriately trained in the cleaning competencies needed for these posts.

1. **Benefits to the department and institution**

The following benefits exist at either the department or institution level:

* Heads of Departments and managers do not have the additional responsibility for managing a Cleaner and dealing with performance or misconduct problems. Instead, CCS contracts with the department for a particular cleaning service. If the HoD/manager is unhappy and with the service, complaints are directed to the Supervisor who is responsible for addressing these problems;
* CCS is responsible for providing a continuous service to the department. If a Cleaner(s) is ill, away or on leave, it is CCS’ responsibility to ensure that the service is still provided. As such the department no longer has to make alternative arrangements or seek to hire a casual employee;
* The administrator or technical person in the department is relieved of the day to day supervision of a staff member and will have more time to focus on other work required in the department. No supervision such as considering leave, considering merit award applications etc have to be undertaken by administrative and technical staff within the department;
* The CCS Staff members report maintenance matters, health and safety concerns to their supervisors for attention. The Supervisors will follow up and escalate maintenance issues with the departments.
* Institutional cost savings by ensuring the correct chemicals and equipment are used to clean and not damage surfaces. The monitoring of chemical consumption, paper products and reduction of waste will have a positive impact on budgets and life span of building.
* Situations of over-utilisation i.e. where staff have too much work to do, are addressed through the more efficient use of all staff. This is a fair model of work allocation for staff;
* Reasonable norms and benchmarks are used for work allocation for Cleaners. In this regard, industry cleaning standards and norms are considered and then adapted for the Rhodes’ context;
* Economics of scale are achieved where there is current under-utilisation of staff. This has already resulted in cost savings of cleaner posts.

1. **The process**

In the event of a vacancy of the cleaner type post, the HR Division will contact the manager or HoD to explore the centralisation of the post to CCS. The department can also request that consideration be given to the move of their current cleaner to CCS. In both situations, the following process takes place:

* 1. The Manager: Housekeeping will explore with the department their cleaning, tea and/or messengering needs to ensure that the centralisation can address the department’s needs. A questionnaire is sent to the manager/HoD (see Appendix 1).
  2. Once this is received together with a floor plan or sketch of the department (indicating what each room is (e.g. office, conference room), meters squared per area, floor type e.g. carpet, vinyl or tiles per area, the relevant job profile and daily cleaning schedule if available) and in the case of current staff, a list of all cleaning staff with their staff numbers, the Manager: Housekeeping will conduct an inspection of the areas to see what is viable.
  3. The Manager: Housekeeping will then meet with the Manager/HoD to discuss what needs can or cannot be met and the proposed role-out plan. Where the role-out plan includes current staff, there needs to be consultation with the relevant staff and union. In the event of a vacancy, the relevant union will be advised of the move of the post. Once you are ready to start talking to current staff, you are advised to work with HR on this matter as they can support you in the consultation process and advise you on the employee’s rights and the employer rights in this situation.

It should be noted that the following practicalities and mandate from the IPC Staffing Committee guide decisions taken:

* The services required in terms of messengering, cleaning and tea facilities will still be provided albeit in a more streamlined fashion. This will require departments and divisions to plan and be organised in terms of the utilisation of these services e.g. if a messengering service comes twice a day to the department, these areas are expected to ensure that mail is ready for these collection times. Where urgent letters need to be delivered on an ad hoc basis, the expectation is that this is done by appropriate staff in the department or that alternative methodologies e.g. scanning and email, are utilised. Departments/divisions cannot expect to retain posts in the interests of having these services “on tap” as this is not a good use of resources and does not outweigh the benefit of the centralisation of these posts;
* The cleaning of tea cups will take place at specific intervals during the day, where required, but staff in departments will be asked to organise their own tea through the provision of a central tea station. The expectation is that departmental staff will keep this area tidy and clean;
* Where departments can show that their reasonable cleaning and/or messengering needs are not met with the proposed centralised model, departments will not be compelled to centralise their cleaning posts;
* Where specialised cleaning services are required e.g. in the laboratories, cleaning staff will be retained by the departments for the provision of this service. However, where these staff only provide the cleaning of laboratories during specific months of the year e.g. during the term time when student practicals are run, the HoD will be asked to explore releasing these staff for large scale and ad hoc cleaning jobs e.g. deep cleaning of floors;
* No individual offices are regarded as containing highly confidential information such that cleaners cannot have access to these offices. In terms of good governance, all confidential documentation should be kept under lock and key;
* Departments/Divisions may not retain cleaner/messenger posts for other un-related purposes/posts. If the department/division requires additional posts, a motivation must be made to the IPC Staffing Committee. This is important as some areas with under-utilisation of cleaning staff will be used to compensate for those areas where insufficient staff cleaning capacity exists. The retention of cleaning posts for unrelated purposes undermines this more effective use of cleaning posts and means that overall savings in terms of the University budget cannot be achieved.

1. **Frequently asked questions**

* *What happens if the current staff member refuses to move?* The current staff member must be consulted with once a HoD/manager has determined that moving the cleaner post to CCS is viable. The reasons for the proposed move must be outlined to the staff member who must be given an opportunity to raise any concerns or offer alternatives. If the staff member indicates that they are not supportive of the change, reasonable reasons for this must be provided and viable alternatives presented. Consultation implies that the management has listened to legitimate objections and reasonable alternatives by the staff member before making a final decision. Consultation does not mean consensus. HoDs/managers are advised to involve HR in this process.
* *What happens if the department does not want to lose its messenger/cleaner post?* This is an institutional project that seeks to benefit departments and divisions. It is argued that the benefits of having a cleaning service provided, far outweighs the inconvenience of not having a cleaner “on-tap”. A number of departments have successfully made this transition. Where departments can show that there reasonable needs are not met with the proposed centralised model, departments will not be compelled to centralise their cleaning posts. A motivation needs to be made to the Director: HR or his/her designate.
* *What about the messengering that the current Cleaner does?* The messengering service will also be centralised, pending the departments volume of internal mail will determine if the departments can be serviced by Housekeeping Services or the staff of the mailroom. Mail Services will come to the department twice a day to collect and deliver mail. We do encourage adopting working towards reducing the need for this service and either make use of scanning documents or email.
* *What about making of tea etc?* The department will no longer have a person that makes tea on a daily basis. Staff will need to take responsibility for this themselves. CCS staff will however clean tea cups either once or twice a day, pending size of department or the department’s needs.
* *What about departmental tea functions?* These can be organised through the Functions Kitchen.
* *What about the transportation of large scale items e.g. course material for each term from the Print Unit?* You will need to liaise with the Janitoring services to assist in this regard. Alternatively, if your department employs staff as laboratory assistants etc, these staff can be asked to do these ad hoc jobs.
* *What is the down-side to this strategy?* The department does lose having an “on-tap” messengering and tea service. However, with forward planning, the needs of the department should not be compromised. Many departments already function this way. If the cleaner is the only person supervised by the administrator, the removal of the cleaner post will result in the downgrading of the administrator post grade. The person’s remuneration will not however change in the short-term.

1. **Contacts**

If you are wishing to discuss this further, please contact:

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| --- | --- |
| Mrs Janine Harris, Manager: Housekeeping Services at [j.harris@ru.ac.za](mailto:j.harris@ru.ac.za). | Your HR Generalist. |

**Written: Director, HR with input from Executive Director: Infrastructure, Operations and Finance, Deputy Director: HR, Manager: Housekeeping Services**

**Last updated: 20 March 2013**

Appendix 1:

**Cleaning Questionnaire for Departments Requesting**

**Central Cleaning Services**

Please fill out this form, the information we require is vital to establish what cleaning services your department requires and to establish the correct staffing in order to achieve them.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Person who currently supervisors the cleaning of the department:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. May we have permission to contact this person, if we require additional information regarding the cleaning services you require? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your current staff compliment?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Staff name** | **Staff number** | **Job Profile** | **Basic duties** |
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4. Do the current staff have the following facilities in your department?

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| 1. Staff Rest Room? |  |  |
| 1. Does the staff have access to water, kettles and a microwave to make their breakfast/tea? |  |  |
| 1. Lockable storage area for their chemicals and equipment? |  |  |
| 1. Lockable are for their personal items? |  |  |

1. Cleaning Equipment.

Please can you list the current cleaning equipment that your cleaners have? This will assist us with working out budgets and daily working schedules? E.g. Vacuum cleaners, mop buckets, wet floor signs, mops etc.

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1. What additional services does the current cleaner provide the department over and above the basic cleaning on the building?

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1. In order to work out cleaning schedules please can you provide a detailed list of all the offices, lecture venues, Laboratories, Ablutions etc and their cleaning frequencies and requirements . A standard within Housekeeping Services is the follows. A standard office will be cleaned once a week pending the office size but on average 15-20 min a week. In this time period all detail cleaning and polishing, vacuuming etc will be done. All the refuse in the department will be removed from all the bins on a daily basis. Ablutions are cleaned once a day and spot cleaned or checked in the afternoon, unless a department requests differently. In a reception area or in high traffic areas we may clean that area daily or twice a week, pending the department’s needs. Please ensure all areas are included with the exact cleaning requirements. This is crucial to work out the staffing required to provide your department with the standard of services and cleaning specific to your department.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Frequency or specific cleaning requirements** | **If possible allocated time and day of the week.** |
| e.g. Seminar room 1 ground floor | Once Daily | 11:00 to 12h00 free or lunch period |
| Office room 21 first floor | Once a week, pls don’t clean desk and computer | Wednesday am or Friday any time |
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Please note that we cannot guarantee each and every request but we will try to meet your department’s requests as much as possible.

Thank you for your input, the CCS team will be in contact with you in due course.

Regards,

Janine Harris

Manager: Housekeeping Services