

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

**Proposed Staff Management and Leadership Development Programme**

1. **Background and introduction**

In previous years and under the old HR structure, the Human Resources Development Office ran a HoD induction programme for new heads of academic departments as well as a management development programme. With staffing difficulties and the implementation of the new HR structure and therefore a lack of capacity, these programmes were not run. With the employment of the OD Specialist and an almost full HR staff complement, the Division now has the capacity to revisit the conceptualisation and implementation of these programmes. In the last few months, the HR Division has been meeting with a consultant for the design of these programmes.

1. **The Need**

The need to implement an effective management and leadership development strategy relates to the institutional and staff challenges. Effective managers and Heads of Departments with the necessary competencies (knowledge, skills and personal attributes) are needed to:

* Support the academic project, responding to the needs thereof in a creative and flexible manner
* Ensure effective management at multiple levels of the institution particularly given an environment increasing in complexity with limited resources
* Drive modernisation
* Ensure continued sound fiscal management
* Ensure an inclusive institutional culture supportive of employment equity
* Conceptualise and implement strategies to support the attraction and retention of staff.

This project is also linked to identifying prospective managers and will be supportive of employment equity initiatives in that regard.

1. **The proposed programme**

A three part programme is proposed:

* Middle management development programme
* Head of Department[[1]](#footnote-1) transition programme
* Leadership development programme

 The learning paradigm to be followed is consistent with the six breakthrough learning disciplines of:

* Define outcomes (link program to institutional objectives, articulate what participants will do differently)
* Design a complete learning experience (include all 4 phases of learning, plan and manage learning transfer process)
* Deliver for application (ensure relevant to own work, provide time for practice with feedback, use methods that make learning memorable)
* Drive learning transfer (put in place systems and processes to support transfer)
* Deploy performance support (engage participants’ managers, provide job aids and performance support systems, ensure availability of feedback and coaching)
* Document results (use insights to drive continuous improvement, assess learners, market results)

(Reference: Wick. C, Pollock. R, Jefferson. A. (2010). The Six Disciplines of Breakthrough Learning. How to turn training and development into business results. San Francisco: Pfeiffer)

In line with the learning paradigm described above, within the middle management and leadership development programmes, the following is planned:

1. Preparation of learners to embrace their learning needs;
2. Identification of specific needs and outcomes within the various threads of the learning curriculum already identified;
3. Development of necessary materials to support the proposed blended learning interventions;
4. Development of guides for critical conversations in order to facilitate transfer of learning and ensure that current managers/Deans take ownership for the development of their staff;
5. Development of job aids to support use of skills on the job;
6. Assessment of skills gained;
7. Train the trainer guides;
8. Actual execution of the development programme. This will be done by HR practitioners and senior staff in the institution.

In the case of the Head of Department transition programme, individuals, already full-time academics, serve as a part-time HoD for a period of three years. The programme is intended to ensure a smooth transition from academic to HoD. The following is planned:

1. Development of self-study resource guides which can be accessed before the academic starts as HoD or once on the job if a particular challenge needs to be managed;
2. Further development of a web-based resource HoD guide. This guide has already been developed in terms of institutional support that is available to HoDs but needs further development in terms of the role of HoD, challenges facing HoD, effective strategies as HoD. The proposal is to include think pieces or resource guides on these and other relevant issues;
3. Development of the mentoring programme and/or resource guides for those acting as mentors for HoDs. While a mentoring system has just been implemented, for HoDs, currently there is no support or training programme for these mentors;
4. Development of coaching and application activities for the new HoDs.

In the case of all three of these projects and programmes, an ‘empowerment model’ is being proposed to develop the necessary internal capability to deliver the learning within the institution i.e. the training itself will be done through Rhodes University’s own leaders, managers and facilitators. In summary, the key element of this proposal is for the external provider to develop the necessary materials and work with capacitating an internal team of facilitators.

1. **Implementation programme**

The consultant will be doing the necessary design work. HR will be identifying the future facilitators. Training of the “trainers” took place in November 2012. A pilot site will also be identified in the next few months. Further roll-put will depend on whether or not SETA funding is available.

**Written: Director, HR**

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1. This refers to Heads of academic departments. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)