



Employment Equity @ Rhodes

Guide for Academic Selection Committees

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the selection process for this post. You have been charged with a serious responsibility to assist the Head of Department or Director with the appointment of a staff member who will make a long-term contribution to the department or institute. The Recruitment and Selection Policy that guides this process requires that you as a member of the Selection Committee ensure that you are familiar with the Recruitment and Selection policy and that you adhere to its requirements. You can find this policy at the following website: <http://www.ru.ac.za/humanresources/policies/policiesandprotocols/selection/> or you can contact the HR generalist handling this process who can also explain any matters.

Employment equity is a critical strategic imperative at Rhodes University.

Within the **Recruitment and Selection Policy for Academic posts**, it is argued that the benefits of a diverse academic staff include:

- Different perspectives when it comes to curriculum review ensuring an appropriate curriculum for students from diverse backgrounds as well as ensuring that appropriate assessment methodologies are used;
- Diversity of language with a greater facility to talk to students in their home language and/or alternative languages to English;
- The ability to create a supportive environment for all students and staff, irrespective of their background with staff who understand their particular cultural, socio-economic and political backgrounds;
- Providing academic role-models for the diversity of students at Rhodes University, with a possible benefit of attracting such students into academia; and
- An active demonstration of the institution's commitment to transformation and to better reflect the demographics of the country.

The University's position on the matter of quality and equity is that these concepts are not mutually exclusive and that diversity strengthens the quality of the institution. The selection of staff will be consistent with the requirements of the Employment Equity Act and the University strategies.

Selection processes involve selecting the "best candidate". Traditional notions of "best" candidate often refer to candidates who are the most qualified and/or the most experienced and/or the most capable. Due to historical inequitable access to educational and experience opportunities the "best" candidate may simply be the person who to date has had opportunities to develop their competencies and knowledge. As such, this traditional notion of "best" does not take into account past disadvantage. Compare for example, a White applicant who has a PhD, and a fair list of publications, acquired in a climate of good opportunities versus a Black applicant who has a first class Masters, has some publications acquired in a climate of adversity and huge personal sacrifice. If we are to transform it is important that we think about our understanding of the best candidate. An alternative notion of "best" is the person who can contribute to the institutions' needs in the current context, someone that can contribute towards both the quality (relative to the requirements for the post) and equity requirements of the institution. The EE Act requires that staff from under-represented designated groups who are suitably qualified are given preferential treatment. At Rhodes, this means selecting the best candidate. Firstly, we ensure that those appointed meet the necessary quality requirements of the institution (as articulated in the job profile) and secondly, that such staff can contribute to the transformation strategic imperatives of the institution.

The entire recruitment and selection process is designed and run to ensure that such a *best candidate* is chosen. This document outlines how the legislative requirements of the EE Act are implemented at each step of the process. However, just as important is ensuring that the needs of the institution and department are met in that a competent person is employed who can make a contribution. These needs are articulated in the role profiles and competencies for the post, used as the basis for each and every appointment process. The competencies/requirements for selection are aligned with the personal promotion criteria for academic staff. Care is taken in the selection process to ensure the valid assessment of these competencies/requirements.

In terms of the legislative requirements, below are the practical implications of this:

1. What particular designated¹ group/s will be given preference in this process at the short-listing and selection decision?

This means that:

1.1 At the strategy (first) meeting of the Selection Committee, before the post is advertised:

- The current demographic profile for the department/division/unit as well as the University will be presented;
- Then focusing on the occupational level of professionally qualified staff (this is where the academics are), a table will show the percentage of African, Coloured, Indian, White, male and female staff relative to the EAP² percentages. This table will show under-representation and over-representation of Rhodes staff in this occupational level relative to the EAP. For example, the table may show that EAP for Coloured people is 11,1% but at Rhodes in this occupational level, our representation is 15%. This means we are over-represented and would not give Coloured applicants preferential treatment for this particular post; An example:

Equity Profile- Professionally Qualified (Academic staff and Grade 14-18 Support staff)				
	EAP	RU	Department	GAP
African	73,6%	13%	18%	60,6%
Coloured	11,1%	8%	4%	3,1%
Indian	3,2%	4%	2%	-0,8%
White	12,1%	75%	82%	-62,9%
Female	45,2%	49%	82%	-3,8%
Internationals	0%	12%	12%	0%
Disabled	3%	1%	0%	2%

White females are over-represented in this occupational level and therefore are not a preferred group.

- Based on these statistics, the Selection Committee will identify the target under-represented designated groups in order of preference. This means that if Africans are listed first and there is a suitably qualified person for the post, then they will be preferred for the appointment. Referring to the table above, priority would be given to the hiring of African men and women as there is a gap of 60,6% between the EAP of 73,6% and RU of 13%.
- Please note that this does not mean that all Black applicants are treated the same in terms of preferential treatment (as required by the EE Act). There have been instances where the Selection Committee believes that the *best Black person* is the one to be recommended for appointment. This is not correct. For example, if the Coloured Female is the strongest candidate but there is an appointable African female candidate, and Africans were listed as the first target under-represented designated group, the African female must be recommended for appointment ahead of the Coloured female because of the degree of under-representation;
- Where the department's profile has met the EAP, consideration will need to be given to the total institutional profile for that occupational category. This is in recognition that in some disciplinary areas it will be easier to appoint because of the availability of people from designated groups;
- The Committee must apply itself to where the University may find individuals from the relevant under-represented designated group/s. The policy requires that significant effort is expended in this regard and in practice this falls to the HoD and members of the Department on the Committee;

¹ Designated groups as per the Employment Equity Act are: African, Coloured, Indian, women and disabled.

² Economically Active Population (EAP) of South Africa which are approximately as follows: African – 73,6%, Coloured -11,1%, Indian-3,2%, Whites-12,1% and Females – 45,2%.

- The Committee also needs to consider *how many times the post will be advertised* in order to find someone suitable from the targeted under-represented designated group/s. This requires consideration of the operational requirements and the department's ability to source temporary staff while the post is vacant relative to the opportunity to transform the department. It is usual that a post is advertised twice unless there are compelling reasons to not do so. The best time to re-advertise is after the short-listing (but before the entire selection process is undertaken) if it is ascertained that there are too few suitable applicants to take onto the next part of the selection process;
- Where the *post is being advertised at multiple levels e.g. SL/AP/P*, the Committee needs to consider the relative importance of the post requirements versus the equity imperative. For example, will the department appoint a White Male (only suitably qualified applicant) for the Professorial post because of the need to drive a research agenda even if there is a Black female (only suitably qualified applicant) at the Senior Lecturer level?

1.2 At the short-listing meeting (this is the meeting where certain candidates are identified for the next phase of the process):

- Members of the targeted under-represented designated groups, if they meet the minimum requirements for the post, must be short-listed. This is what is meant by *preference being given to under-represented designated group/s*. The exception is where there are more individuals from the targeted under-represented designated groups than would be desirable to short-list e.g. if there is one post, and 6 suitably qualified individuals from the targeted under-represented designated group/s, the Committee is unlikely to short-list more than 4 individuals. There must be NO short-listing of candidates that are not deemed as suitably qualified in terms of the documentation used for short-listing. The role profile for the post/s is clear on what the criteria are for the post;
- Consideration should be given to the following issues related to *foreign national (this term is used deliberately here rather than the term international as this is the term used by the Department of Labour) applicants*:
 - Rhodes will not be able to source a work permit for a foreign national prospective staff member unless it can demonstrate to the Department of Home Affairs that firstly, there were no suitable South Africans from under-represented equity groups and secondly, that the foreign national applicant is stronger than other (meaning those from over-represented designated groups or non-designated groups) South African applicants.
 - A foreign national with a work permit and a residence permit gained after 1994 will still be considered a foreign national for statistical purposes. Where a foreign national with a work permit and a residence permit is being considered relative to other applicants, the best candidate should be chosen with due consideration to the diversity (in all its manifestations) that a foreign national may bring to the Rhodes' context.
 - A foreign national with a work permit and a residence permit gained before 1994 is considered as a South African e.g. A Black Zimbabwean with a work permit and a residence permit pre 1994 can be considered as member of the relevant under-represented designated group (African). This is the classification used by the Department of Labour, the rationale being that these individuals in living in South Africa during the apartheid years have experienced discrimination.
- When short-listing, the following should happen:
 - The Committee should *consider ALL applications* irrespective of the demographic group of the applicant/s i.e. white males and international applicants;
 - Applicants from under-represented designated groups are given preference e.g. if there are 4 such applicants, this is sufficient to constitute a short-list for one post. No other applicants would be short-listed. If a decision is taken to re-advertise, other (meaning those from over-represented designated groups or non-designated groups) applicants should be kept on hold;
 - After a second round of advertising and where there are only one or two applications from an under-represented designated group, other applicants can be short-listed including international applicants. The basis for this is that the Employment Equity Act indicates that no absolute barrier may be created to the employment of non-designated groups.

1.3 In making the selection decision:

- All candidates identified as “appointable” i.e. suitably qualified relative to the requirements of the post, should be identified;
- In the case of members of under-represented designated groups, there should be some consideration to the potential of the individual and the ability of the person to realise that potential in a reasonable period of time e.g. period of probation;
- The suitably qualified candidate/s from the targeted under-represented designated group will be given preference for appointment;
- Where there is more than one suitably qualified candidate from the targeted under-represented designated group, the Committee will then need to decide as to the relative merits of the candidates relative to the needs of the post and department; and
- Where there is no suitably qualified candidate from the targeted under-represented designated group, applicants from other designated groups will be considered depending on what was agreed at the strategy meeting;
- Where there are no suitably qualified candidates from any of the identified under-represented designated groups, and provided that the strategy related to recruitment (e.g. if re-advertising was decided on, it needs to take place) other applicants will be considered. The Committee will then need to decide as to the relative merits of the candidates relative to the needs of the post and department and broader diversity considerations.

2. What do I do if I don't think the requirements above are being adhered to?

- It is important that you bring your concerns to the attention of the Chair of the Selection Committee as soon as possible;
- Where your concerns are not addressed, you may follow the process outlined in section 3.1.3 (g) of the R&S Policy for Academic posts: “Should there be any concerns raised by the committee or any person on the committee regarding the fairness of the process at any stage of the process, the process will be stopped and the matter immediately referred to the Director: Human Resources or her/his delegated representative. The Director or representative will then confer with the Chair of the Selection Committee as regards the concern. Where necessary, the Director may need to meet with the entire Selection Committee. The process will be kept on hold until the matter has been resolved. After consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, the Director: Human Resources has the authority to require a Selection Committee to address the relevant concerns.”

3. What information is provided to applicants?

As from 1 July 2011, each website advert will contain the following:

“Please note that this appointment will be made in line with the requirements of the Employment Equity Act of RSA and the University's recruitment and selection policies and equity strategies.”

Also on the website, is information related to what this means within the R+S process.

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