



Academic staff posts: Guidelines for Chairs of Selection Committees

1. At the first meeting of the Selection Committee

1.1 Confirmation of reading of Policy document:

- Confirm that members of the Selection Committee have read the R&S Policy for Academic posts
- Clarify whether the policy has been understood or whether any points need clarification
- Remind the Committee of their responsibilities

1.2 Consider Equity requirements

- Look at the diversity profile of the department
- Consider employment equity targets and implications for this process

1.3 Requirements/competencies for the post

- Confirm requirements for the post in line with the level of appointment
- Ensure that competencies have not been over-stated
- Ensure that those competencies that can be developed are stated in this manner e.g. Masters degree is desirable but must be acquired within the first three years of appointment.

1.4 Recruitment Strategy:

- Confirm the strategy to be followed in filling the post, considering the input of the Head of Department
- If screening of a current staff member is to take place, consideration must be given to the equity considerations
- Pay close attention to what may need to be done to search for members of designated groups including whether a Search Committee is required
- Confirm the recruitment strategy to be pursued including time frames for the placing of the advert and closing date for application

1.5 Advert & Selection Strategy:

- Consider and confirm the advert to be placed by the HR Division
- Confirm the selection strategy including
 - (i) Whether a screening of applicants who do not meet minimum educational qualification will take place;
 - (ii) Whether a lecturer/seminar will be given by each applicant (remember that internal candidates must also do this);
 - (iii) Whether a teaching portfolio will be required;
 - (iv) Whether a research portfolio will be required;
 - (v) Whether referee's reports will be accessed, when this will be done (eg. After short-listing) and how the information will be used by members of the Committee;
 - (vi) What competencies the interview question will need to address;
 - (vii) What other techniques may be used.

1.6 Further Particulars:

- If relevant, check that the further particulars for the post are available for comment and approval and confirm who will provide HR with this information
- Such particulars may include: the job profile, information about the University, department/division/section/unit, information about Grahamstown if applicants are likely to be from outside of Grahamstown, information about service conditions attached to that post, and any unusual elements of the selection process.

1.7 Dates of meetings:

- Confirm with the members of the selection committee as to the dates for further meetings of the Committee. These dates are provided to applicants for the post.

1.8 Reminders:

Inform members of the selection committee of their responsibilities namely that:

- If they are aware of any relatives, friends, business associates applying for this post, they should indicate this to the committee so that the committee can decide if the person should recuse themselves from the process
- The individual applications are to be kept confidential i.e., no member of the committee may discuss with someone outside of this committee the names of those who has applied or the details of such applications.
- Members of the selection committee are expected to participate meaningfully in this process by ensuring that they have read the necessary documentation, that they are aware of the requirements of the job, that they are familiar with the requirements of the policy for academic staff and adhere to these requirements, and that they attend relevant meetings as determined by the selection committee
- Reading the documentation as regards what is “best contribution” within the context of the committee.

2. At the short-listing meeting of the Selection Committee

2.1 Declare any relationship to applicants:

- Ask whether there is anyone on the Committee who has a relationship with an applicant or is related to one of the applicants.
- If someone on the Committee indicates this, the Committee should decide how best to proceed to ensure fairness to all applicants.

2.2 Policy Checks:

Check that members of the selection committees have short-listed as follows:

- The competencies/requirements identified for the post have been used
- The suitability (i.e. whether they are worthy of appointment) of each candidate has been assessed relative to the competencies/job requirements identified

2.3 Restrict Prior Knowledge:

Remind the members of the selection committee that any prior knowledge of the candidates may not be introduced until after the short-listing process for interviews has taken place.

2.4

2.5 Consideration of Demographics of Applicants:

- Consider the equity profile of the applications received
- Discuss with the committee whether they are satisfied with this demographic profile and if relevant, with the search process undertaken
- If the selection committee is of the opinion that a further search or re-advertisement of post is needed, you are required to bring this to the attention of the Manager of Recruitment and Selection. At this point in time, you may wish to reconvene the selection committee at a later date. Please remember that the Vice-Chancellor can refuse to approve an appointment if there is a poor number of applicants from the designated groups AND insufficient effort was shown to search for such applicants.

2.6 Making the Short-Listing Decision:

- Remember that the committee must short-list those from designated groups who meet the minimum criteria for the post.
- The committee is encouraged to short-list no more than 3 people per post.
- If there are applicants who are foreign nationals, please only short-list if there are insufficient South Africans. Rhodes will have to demonstrate to the Department of Home Affairs that the appointment of a foreign national is necessary because there are no suitable SAs.

2.7 Introduction of Prior Knowledge:

- Once short-listing for the interview has taken place, ask the committee members whether anyone has any information about any of the candidates which needs to be brought to the attention of the rest of the committee.
- Remind the committee that only RELEVANT information should be introduced and that this means: information about the potential work habits and behaviours of an individual, comments about the person's competence to do the job, any information that would make the employment of individual a high risk for the institution. Emphasise that information relating to moral judgements (e.g. someone is having an affair with someone) should not be raised.
- Should any information be introduced, guide discussion on how to deal with this information to ensure (i) fairness to other applicants and (ii) fairness to the individual concerned, i.e. will similar information be accessed from other applicants and if so how, and how will the issue be raised with the individual? and (iii) fairness to the institution.

2.8 Confirm Next Stage of Process:

Confirm what will happen next in the selection process e.g.

1. Collection of referee's reports: who will do this, what issues will be explored;
2. Conducting of reference/verification checks of qualifications: who will do this, when will this be done;
3. Presentation/seminar given by short-listed candidates: when will then be done, who will attend (e.g. students, other members of the department), against what competencies/criteria will the candidates be assessed, how will this feedback into the selection process. Where all applicants are internal candidates, this selection method may be deemed unnecessary;
4. Reading of portfolios submitted: who will do this, when will this be done and how will this evaluation be feedback into the selection process;
5. Interview: Consider the questions prepared and confirm what questions will be asked and who on the selection committee will ask what questions.

3. At the Selection Interview

1.1 Policy Checks:

Check that members of the selection committees have:

- Read any relevant documentation e.g. where referee's reports or reference checks have been Conducted or where all members of the committee were required to read portfolios

1.2 Reminders:

Remind the members of the selection committee that:

- Questions asked must be related to the relevant job competencies
- The same KEY questions must be asked of each candidate. Even where a member of the selection committee feels that his/her question has been addressed, the question must still be asked.
- Probing is possible and necessary if an incomplete answer is provided. Remember that the committee needs to be able to assess the candidates on the competencies identified and thus needs sufficient information to do so.
- As Chair, you have the right to veto any questions that are unfair (i.e. blatantly discriminatory, irrelevant, or which represent an invasion of privacy which is not permissible in terms of the job requirements)
- Check whether any information arising from the referee's reports/reference checks needs to be pursued with a candidate and discuss how to deal with this information to ensure (i) fairness to other applicants and (ii) fairness to the individual concerned.
- The interview is also an opportunity for the candidates to select the University as an employer. It is therefore, important that each member of the selection committee conduct him/herself appropriately to enhance the image of the University.
- Remember to explore any concerns related to prior knowledge fairly.

1.3 Ensure that sufficient information is available:

- It is your responsibility as Chair to ensure that sufficient information is available in order for the selection committee to make an informed decision.
- Therefore, if a question is asked and not sufficiently explored by one of the members of the selection committee, it is your responsibility to probe further. Also, before making the final selection decision, confirm with the committee that it has sufficient information about each candidate in order to make an informed decision.

1.4 Feedback:

- Remember that as Chair, you will be required to give feedback to internal and external candidates should they request such feedback and should they contest the process and decision taken.
- Remember that internal candidates will be informed as soon as possible of the recommendation of the committee (both successful and unsuccessful candidates) and the committee should confirm who will do that. The Chair is responsible for doing this, unless otherwise decided by the Selection Committee.

1.5 Making the Selection Decision:

- Remember to look at all the evidence collected for each candidate – be careful of making a
- decision only based on the interview data. The discussion should focus on who is suitably qualified for the post.
- Other data from other selection techniques e.g. presentation, portfolios, referee's reports etc should be presented
- Ensure that accurate records of this discussion are kept so that accurate feedback can be given to candidates.
- Remember to consider equity issues as outlined in the policy. If a member of designated group is suitably qualified, s/he must be given preference for the post.
- In the case of a strong contender for appointment who is a foreign national, remember that the University will have to report to the Department of Home Affairs in good faith that no suitable national exists for this post.

1.6 *Fairness Check and Minute of the Selection Committee:*

Once the final selection decision has been taken, the Chair must check that the Committee is satisfied that the process was fair and the minute should be completed and signed by the relevant parties. Any concerns with the process must be documented.