



Support 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 appendices of R&S Policy for Support Staff posts
- Clarity whether the policy has been understood or whether any points need clarification
- Remind the Committee of their responsibilities

1.2 Job Profile:

- Check that the job profile and that the selection committee is satisfied with the detail of this profile
- Please remember that the Selection Committee has no authority to change the job profile (except for minor typographical changes)
- If the key responsibility areas or the job requirements need alteration, the profile must be returned to the relevant section of the HR Division as such a change may impact the grading and therefore, salary of the job.
- Ensure that the members of the selection committee understand the nature and demands of the job

1.3 Employment Equity Considerations

- Look at the demographic profile for the department where the post is situated
- Look at the demographic profile for the occupational category of staff
- Discuss the employment equity target for this particular post
- Discuss how employment equity will impact on the recruitment and selection process

1.4 Recruitment Strategy:

- Consider the proposals of the HR representative and/or Manager/Head as regards the recruitment strategy for this post
- In the case of a proposal for advertising internally only, screening or positioning the post as a development opportunity, and if relevant, clarify what the Manager/Head has done as regards alerting current staff to the opportunity. HR to provide some input on “feeder” posts i.e. posts for which the vacant post provides an opportunity for advancement
- 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 applications.

1.5 Advert & Selection Strategy:

- Consider and confirm the advert to be placed by the HR Division
- Consider the proposals of the HR representative as regards the selection process to be followed inter, alia discussing whether multiple screenings will take place and who will do this, who on the selection committee will be involved in what stages of the selection process
- Remember to consider the use of alternative methods of selection
- Confirm the selection strategy, bearing in mind that for certain jobs, a standardised process is required.

1.6 Further Particulars:

- If relevant, check if further particulars will be provided. If so, confirm who will do this and by when HR needs the 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 Support Staff and adhere to these requirements, and that they attend relevant meetings as determined by the selection 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 personal or social 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.
- Should it come to the attention of the HR representative on this Committee that the Chair has a personal relationship or is related to one of the applicants, then alternative arrangements for a Chair should be made.

2.2 Policy Checks:

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

- The competencies identified for short-listing have been used
- The suitability (i.e. whether they are worthy of appointment) of each candidate has been assessed relative to the competencies identified
- Employment equity considerations have been taken into account.
- The reasons for ratings can be provided.

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 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 is needed, this must be undertaken.

2.5 Making the Short-Listing Decision:

- Remind the committee of those who have been excluded on the basis of ineligibility or to have had poor test results for similar jobs in the last 6 months
- Together with the selection committee and contingent on the selection process, decide on who will go through to the next round of the selection process
- Remember that the committee must give preference to members of designated groups who meet the requirements for the post
- If the next stage of the selection process is an interview, remember that the committee is encouraged to short-list no more than three people.
- If there are applicants who are foreign nationals, a decision needs to be taken as to how quickly the post needs to be filled and whether having a vacant post pending the approval of a work permit for a foreign national is viable given the work and demands of the department. Unless there is only one suitable South African, foreign national candidates should not be short-listed in the first round of applications. Furthermore, if the post has not been advertised at the national level, foreign nationals cannot be considered for these posts as this is a requirement of the Department of Home Affairs. Consideration must be given as to whether the Selection Committee, on behalf of the institution, can in good faith argue to the Department of Home Affairs that there were no suitable applicants who are South Africans.

2.6 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 unless these impact directly on the work environment.
- Emphasise that should a candidate challenge a selection decision, that the onus would be on the Selection Committee to provide evidence of why the person was not chosen.
- 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.

2.7 Confirm Next Stage of Process:

Confirm what will happen next in the selection process e.g. collection of referee's reports, conducting of reference checks, conducting of practical test, interview and who will be responsible for the different processes.

2.8 Confirmation of Interview Questions:

Where an interview is the next step in the selection process, consider the questions prepared and confirm what questions will be asked and who on the selection committee will ask what questions. Ensure that all members of the committee understand the questions.

2.9 Disability Issues

In addition, where the University is aware of an applicant's impairment as stated on the application form, it must be noted that the University's Disability Policy for Staff indicates that :

- (i) Reasonable accommodation will be made within the appointment process
- (ii) The impact of the impairment will be explored with the candidate to ascertain his/her specific needs. This will in no way impact the final selection decision but may impact whether or not an offer is made to the individual;
- (iii) The University may request that a further medical or functional testing take place to determine the applicant's actual or potential ability to perform the essential functions of a specific job. Such tests will only take place after the suitability of the person for the job has been determined.

3. At the Selection Interview

3.1 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
- Prepared their interview questions and fully understand what needs to be asked and what appropriate answers will be.

3.2 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 e.g. " I think you have answered this question but you may like to add something so I am going to ask it anyway. {pose question}."
- 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 candidate's CV, 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.
- That the Selection Committee may not make any commitments to the applicants as regards Conditions of Service. Candidates should be requested to reserve these questions for the HR staff should they be offered the appointment.

3.3 Ensure the 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.

3.4 Feedback:

- Remember that as Chair, you will be required to give feedback to (i) internal candidates should they request such feedback and (ii) to external candidates 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.

3.5 Making the Selection Decision:

- All the evidence collected for each candidate – be careful of making a decision only based on the interview data, other data from other selection techniques should be presented
- Discuss each candidate along each criteria using the information gathered.
- Ensure that accurate records of this discussion are kept so that accurate feedback can be given to candidates.
- The decision should focus on whether or not candidates are suitable for appointment given the competencies for the post.
- Of those that are suitable, preference must be given to the member of a designate group in line with the employment equity target 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 nationals applied and were suitable for this post.
- Remember that any applicants with a disability must be treated in terms of the University's Disability Policy for Staff.

3.6 Development Issues:

- Guide the committee in identifying, from the list of applicants, members of staff from a designated group who are not worthy of appointment but who have potential.
- The committee shall then task the relevant individual in the HR Division with looking at ways to enhance such individuals' employability.

3.7 In the case of current staff moving to a new job:

Where a vacancy has been filled with a current staff member and the individual has indicated that they wish to take up the post, remind the future Head/Manager to contact the current Head/Manager to discuss the transfer of the staff member. Refer the person to the policy in this regard.

3.8 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.