



National Diploma Animal Farm Staff Management

Handout 18 Employment Equity and Recruitment Policy Guidelines

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Employment Equity

Include a statement relating to affirmative action and the company's intention to redress past inequalities by giving preference to suitably qualified people from designated groups until such time as the company's employment equity targets or objectives have been met. The recruitment policy should state clearly that non-designated groups would not be barred from applying for employment or from eligibility for promotions but may state that preference will be given to designated groups. Thereafter selection criteria would be based exclusively on candidates meeting the requirements of the job i.e. opportunities for employment would then be open equally to candidates from all designated groups once employment equity targets have been met.

Recruitment and selection is essentially about choice and therefore has the potential to constitute the biggest single basis for discrimination claims. Companies that do not adhere to the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity in ensuring access to employment run the risk of having complaints lodged against them in respect of unfair discrimination on one or more of the prohibited grounds.

Recruitment and selection is often the most important drive for the achievement of numerical targets and equal representation of designated groups in the workplace.

Adverts should state that preference will be given to affirmative action candidates.

Approval process

It is important to evaluate each job and measure the necessity, profitability and productivity of each job. Alternatives should also be considered, for example: re-deployment, workload redistribution and re-organisation etc.

Some companies need the directors to approve all appointments in other cases the line manager may authorise.

A Human Resources representative can also be requested to determine whether the vacancy is in line with the approved manpower plan and the Finance Department requested to sign off on vacancies in terms of the budget before the process can proceed. (In small companies the line manager or directors can do these approvals)

Internal transfers

Most companies state in their policies whether preference will be given to internal candidates. Internal transfers provide the opportunity for employees to develop themselves and reduce staff turnover, as employees do not then need to leave the company to grow.

Most companies also state in their policy for what period the internal adverts will be advertised to enable all staff to know about the vacancy.

Type of advertising internally

You need to determine whether you are going to place all adverts on a prominent notice board, electronically on an intranet site or email all vacancies to all staff. If it is a small company you can also mention this at a staff meeting with flyers to give to staff.

Current managers

You can also determine at what stage the current manager should become aware of the employee's application. The earlier the manager is aware of the application the sooner he can address the situation (either motivation of staff or creation of a possible vacancy) i.e. if all applications go through the current managers.

You can also only notify the manager once the applicant is on the short list of candidates or at the latest stage when the applicant becomes successful. The decision regarding when to advise the current manager will largely depend on the relationship that managers have with their staff.

The policy should however be mindful that there should not be negative results to the employee if he is unsuccessful. Some managers victimise employees when they apply for alternative jobs. This should be guarded against as it can become a case of constructive dismissal where an employee feels he is forced to resign due to victimisation.

External recruitment

There is normally a decision on what preferred method of advertising is used. A preferred supplier in terms of recruitment can also be used and listed in your recruitment policy.

Companies should, where possible, place their job advertisements in a variety of media to ensure that they will be accessible to all members of the population particularly those from designated

groups. Companies should consider reviewing readership and audience patterns when selecting the most appropriate media in which to advertise jobs.

Further factors that need to be considered will be the cost of the recruitment method and who needs to approve what amount of expenditure. It is important to keep in mind the effectiveness of the advertising related to the target market.

2.9.5 Job Application Forms

A job application form is a form developed by a company as part of the process of selecting a suitable job applicant for a job. Companies may require applicants to complete application forms.

The purpose of a job application form is to:

- Standardise the information companies receive from job applicants. This prevents selectors for a job unconsciously short-listing applicants who share common ground with them, which may not be relevant to the criteria for the job
- Ensure that the information received from job applicants focuses on the requirements of the job and not on discriminatory grounds
- Obtain biographical information to provide a company with an easy to use mechanism to monitor applications from various designated groups and ascertain the work experience of job applicants applying for a job. The job application form should state that biographical information will only be used for analysing biographical data for employment equity purposes.

2.9.5 Short listing of Job Applicants

Short listing is a process in which the company considers all job applications, including each applicant's curriculum vitae and/or job application form. The company should place those job applicants who meet the criteria set by the company on a short list so that they are eligible to continue to the next round in the job selection process.

Before commencing the process of short-listing job applicants, the company should decide on the system or approach it will use to short list applicants. This approach or system may include:

- A scoring system where the company allocates points to the various job criteria. The company should mark each job applicant against these criteria based on the information provided by the job applicant in their curriculum vitae or application form

- A cut-off score system where the company sets a minimum score that a job applicant must achieve, (obtained using the marking system), to be considered further in the selection process
- Guidelines of some form that can be used as proof of how the short-listing decision was made e.g. minutes of the short-listing meeting.

The company should involve more than one person in the process of short-listing job applicants, to reduce the possibility of individual bias impacting on the decision.

Ideally an employee from the Human Resources department or the recruitment administrator should assist with the short-listing process.

If the company has outsourced the short-listing process it must ensure that the manner in which this is done by the contractor is in line with its recruitment policy, employment equity and affirmative action policy.

Only evidence from the application form and/or the job applicant's curriculum vitae should be used during the short-listing process. The company should not rely upon second-hand knowledge or assumptions about what type of work the applicant may be able to do.

A company should ensure that it short lists as many suitably qualified applicants from designated groups as possible.

Suitably qualified applicants must meet the minimum or essential job requirements as well as the inherent requirements of the job.

When short listing, a company may decide to include those job applicants from designated groups who meet most but not all of the minimum requirements for the job and who may have the potential to develop to meet all the job requirements within a specified time frame.

Short listing may be aligned to non-traditional hiring strategies where these are present. Companies may receive applications from candidates who do not necessarily meet the criteria for the particular vacancy for which they applied but who may be hired on the basis of their talent and potential even though a suitable vacancy does not exist. These applications should be set aside and considered by the person in the company responsible for the hiring of such talent.

Recruitment administration

There should be one person who will receive the CVs, evaluate them and notify candidates of interview times etc.

Psychometric testing

The company also needs to decide whether psychometric evaluation will be done. This is very costly but can add great value. This is a service that recruitment agencies can offer as part of their placement fee. Psychometric testing must be applied consistently.

You should make sure that the tests that are done are in line with legislation as it is very strictly governed by Section 37 of the Health Professions Act, stating the provisions for registration of Psychologist before doing testing and interpreting tests. Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998 as amended, Section 8 states that psychometric testing and other similar assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used:

- Has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable
- Can be applied fairly to employees
- Is not biased against any employee or group.

Interviews

Most companies conduct interviews with job applicants. Interviews are a selection tool that provides a company with an opportunity to meet a job applicant face to face and ask questions relating to the applicant's ability to perform the job.

Companies should try to include the same people in the short listing and interviewing processes, as they will be familiar with the requirements of the job.

An equitable panel with inclusive representation from the three designated groups should carry out the short listing and conduct the interviews for the company with the job applicants.

Companies should ideally provide training or guidance to the panel conducting the interviews on:

- Interview skills
- The scoring system if this is utilised by the company
- The company's employment equity and affirmative action policy
- Issues relating to diversity, which involve recognising differences amongst employees.

Companies should develop a standard interview questionnaire. This is a questionnaire prepared before the interview listing a set of questions that will be asked of each applicant that is interviewed to determine the applicant's suitability for the job. The interview questionnaire should be based on the job description and competency specification for the job. Companies should ideally regularly audit their interview questionnaires to ensure that they do not contain questions that are potentially discriminatory.

A company should consistently and objectively assess all job applicants that it interviews using as a basis the job description, competency specification and scoring system if used. The company should allocate the same amount of time for each candidate that it interviews, and each candidate should be asked the same or similar questions. This ensures consistent treatment of all job applicants interviewed.

If a scoring system is used, ideally a standardised scoring system, the company must assess the weightings allocated to ensure that there is a balance between meeting job requirements and meeting numerical goals.

Clear definitions should exist regarding the profile of the applicants the company wishes to recruit as this will assist in determining a common understanding of "culture fit" of candidates who are interviewed.

Who should attend the interviews:

This again depends on the size of the company and the level of the appointment. It is however good practice to have a person who can determine technical fit and a person who can determine personality fit within the company.

This is because it is just as important to have an employee that is compatible with "the company way" as an employee who is competent at doing the work.

Scoring of candidates

When candidates are scored using the **interview score** sheet the following should be taken into account: Where an employee scores just below the threshold and requires a maximum additional number of skills or competencies, the discretion of the employer can be used to appoint the individual as a trainee, subject to acquiring the additional requirements to meet the threshold within a specific period of time and with the necessary mentoring, training and support.

Reference checking

The purpose of a company conducting a reference check on a job applicant is to verify information provided by a job applicant during the selection process.

The same number and type of reference checks must be conducted on all applicants regardless of their designated group.

When conducting a reference check on a job applicant, a company should focus on the applicant's ability to do the job in question in view of the job description and competency specification for the job and not seek to obtain any arbitrary or irrelevant information unrelated to the job.

A company should avoid conducting general character references unrelated to the job.

A company should only conduct integrity checks, such as verifying the qualifications of a job applicant, contacting credit references and investigating whether the applicant has a criminal record if related to the requirements of the job.

Feedback

It is important to state in adverts whether or not you will give feedback to the candidates. Some companies will state in the advert: "If you do not receive any feedback after 2 weeks from closing date you can deem your application to be unsuccessful."

It is however good practice to email or write a letter to each applicant to notify them of the fact that their application was unsuccessful. This just enhances the image of the company outside. Also, for internal applicants it can be very stressful to apply internally and if they do not receive proper feedback with good reasons it can cause a negative effect on morale.