

Covenant University Employment Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is:

- a) To state the role of the University with respect to the execution of its equal employment obligations;
- b) To provide a guideline for employees to use when dealing with equal employment matters;
- c) To clarify the rights of employees;
- d) To clarify the role of the equal employment governance structures

1.0 Definition of Terms and Concepts used in this document in relation to Employment Policy.

This policy aims to ensure that the University complies with employment policy legislative principles by upholding fair and objective principles and procedures for the staffing, development, retention and exiting of employees of the University and providing guidelines for the appointment of candidates to the institution, as well as, the development, promotion, retention and exiting of employees in the University.

- 1.1 Affirmative Action means measures developed in response to barriers identified to ensure that suitably qualified persons from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories in the workforce.
- 1.2 Barriers means any obstacle to implementing equal employment opportunities and affirmative action as identified by the institutional barrier analysis and set out in the objectives of the University's current equal employment policy.
- 1.3 Employee means any person other than an independent contractor who works for the University and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration and in any manner assists in carrying on or conducting the business of the employer.
- 1.4 Employment policies, practices, and procedures refer to, but are not limited to, recruitment procedures, advertising and selection criteria, appointments (and the appointment process), job classification and grading, remuneration, employment benefits and terms and conditions of employment, job assignments, the working environment and facilities, training and development, performance evaluation systems, promotion, transfer, demotion, and disciplinary measures other than dismissal.
- 1.5 Persons with disabilities: Persons are considered as 'Persons with disabilities' if they have a physical or mental impairment which is long-term (i.e. the impairment that has lasted or is likely to persist for at least twelve months) or recurring, which substantially limits their prospects of entry into or advancement in employment.
- 1.6 Suitably qualified person means a person may be suitably qualified based on the formal qualifications, prior learning, relevant experience or capacity to acquire, within a reasonable time, the ability (attributes, skills and competencies necessary) to perform a job.

2.0 Scope and Objectives: This Policy applies to all permanent, fixed-term contractors, part-time employees and job applicants of the University. Excluded are volunteers, independent contractors and all other forms of recruitment.

2.1 The University strives to promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment by eliminating unfair discrimination and implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment to ensure equitable representation in all occupational levels in the workforce.

3.0 Policy Principles: The University shall realize the objective of creating an equitable work environment for all its employees by interpreting and implementing this policy in accordance with the following principles:

3.1 The staffing policies and their implementation will be fundamentally aimed at matching the staffing resources to the strategic and operational needs of the University and ensuring the full utilisation and continued development of all employees.

3.2 Each employee-related decision must be rationally and objectively justifiable.

3.3 The strategic and operational needs of the institution and the relevant reporting and managerial structures of the institution are determined by the Board of Regents which cascade to the Central, College and Departmental management. The employment policies are developed in consultation with employees and their representatives via the various consultative forums.

3.4 All aspects of talent management (the staffing, structuring, recruitment, selection, interviewing, appointment, development, promotion, retention and termination) of employees will be non-discriminatory, except as provided in this policy with reference to employment policy and will afford employees equal opportunity to grow and develop in the institution.

3.5 The equitable representation of all occupational levels shall be fulfilled in a fair and equitable manner by considering:

3.5.1 Relevant interests and legitimate aspirations of all employees,

3.5.2 The University's commitment to academic excellence; and

3.5.3 The need for balancing efficiency.

3.6 The University shall promote an organisational culture of respect for the dignity, inclusivity and non-marginalisation of all its employees, and barriers to the full utilisation of the potential of all employees shall be removed.

3.7 The University is an Employment Equity employer, and as such, preference will be given to suitably qualified candidates who are members of designated groups as defined in section 1 of the Employment Equity Act, as amended, until their representation in all occupational levels has reached the desired targets and long-term goals.

3.8 Transparency: All Employment Equity measures and decisions shall be taken transparently and justifiably.

3.9 Communication and consultation: In line with its commitment to transparency, the University shall ensure that all policies, programmes and procedures relating to Employment Equity are developed on a consultative basis with all relevant stakeholders. All relevant stakeholders shall be allowed to participate in relevant decision-making.

3.10 Resources: The University shall ensure that adequate financial and other relevant resources are available to ensure the support and realisation of this Policy, subject to affordability and financial sustainability.

3.11 The University recognises that all the people who have been appointed have met the criteria of suitably qualified as defined in this policy.

3.12 The University furthermore shall promote and maintain an environment that empowers all its employees and students to achieve their highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias.

4.0. Implementation

4.1 Affirmative Action and Employment Policy in Covenant University:

4.1.1 As a designated employer, the University shall, in order to achieve employment policy, implement affirmative action measures for people from designated groups.

4.1.2: Affirmative action measures are designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational levels in the institution's workforce.

4.1.3 Affirmative action measures include, but are not limited to, the following: a) measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affects people from designated groups; b) measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people; c) making reasonable accommodation for suitably qualified people from designated groups including persons with disabilities; d) measures to recruit, promote, retain and develop people from designated groups, including skills development and skills transfer; and, e) measures that include preferential treatment, numerical goals and measures other than numerical goals.

5.0 Employment Equity:

5.1 The University is defined as a designated employer dealing with affirmative action and is directly applicable to the institution.

5.2 The University shall take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice.

5.3 Unfair discrimination is prohibited where no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin,

colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.

5.4 It will not constitute unfair discrimination to take affirmative action measures consistent with the purposes of equal employment as set out in this policy or to distinguish, exclude or prefer any person based on an inherent requirement of any job.

5.5 Victimization and harassment of an employee, including racial and sexual harassment of any form, constitutes unfair discrimination, and such conduct shall attract disciplinary action against any employee found to have committed such acts.

5.6 Pay disparity based on unjustifiable and arbitrary grounds constitutes unfair discrimination, and the University shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value shall be upheld for all appointments.

6.0 Recruitment and Selection:

6.1 Recruitment and selection, as an important mechanism to achieving the University's numerical goals and targets and increasing the representativity, shall be conducted fairly and without unfair discrimination to ensure that a larger skills pool is available from which to recruit.

6.2 The recruitment and selection process will be done fairly and openly to verify demonstrated competence, growth potential and alignment with the institutional values and principles.

7.0 Career Advancements:

7.1 The University recognises upward mobility and lateral transfers as having the potential to impact and accelerate equitable representation of all groups at occupational levels.

7.2 The advancement and transfer processes shall be informed by the University's Promotion Policies/procedures and are considered key drivers for employment policy in that they can involve fast-tracking the advancement towards achieving numerical goals and targets through structured and targeted capacity building programmes, including succession planning, career development, and leadership development.

7.3 The University is committed to developing all its employees, and its objective is to encourage their learning and development while prioritising designated groups.

7.4 Staff learning and development processes shall be informed by the University's Learning and Development policy, which will be guided by the University's Employment Policy and which will grant preference in access to training and development opportunities for designated groups until their representation in all occupational levels has reached the desired targets and long-term goals.

7.5 The University shall ensure reasonable accommodation for job applicants and employees from designated groups, including persons with disabilities, where applicable. 7.6 Education and Training:

7.6.1 Deans of Colleges/ Heads of Department shall be provided with the necessary and appropriate guidelines and training to ensure they are competent to deal with any incidents relating to unfair discrimination, harassment, and managing a diverse workforce profile.

7.6.2 Training and guidance shall also be provided by the Human Resource Unit (HR) for selection, performance evaluation, grading and promotion committees/panels regarding appointments, the conduct of the evaluation process and performance management.

8.0 Disputes: Disputes must be reported immediately for the speedy resolution thereof. The following dispute resolution procedure must be followed regarding interpreting and implementing this Employment Policy.

8.1 All grievances or complaints related to human resource matters and conditions of service should be directed to the HR Unit for resolution.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation: The Human Resource Unit is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of this policy at least every four years or as required to stay current with applicable legislation and University strategic objectives.