

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

A TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF SKILL, SCARCITY AND/OR EXCELLENCE IN UJ

1. INTRODUCTION

Recruiting staff to and retaining them in public higher education institutions has long been a problem of escalating proportions. This is particularly true in respect of those individuals who have high levels of scarce skills, competence and knowledge and the ability to perform at superior levels of excellence in respect of such skills, competencies and knowledge. This makes such individuals upwardly mobile in the labour market (both national and international), the more so if the institution (as in the case of UJ) competes for such skills, competencies and knowledge in the economic heartland of South Africa. If these individuals also belong to the Black designated groups their mobility increases. This therefore demands of institutions to develop ever more competitive conditions of service and remuneration packages to recruit such individuals and to retain their services.

Individuals with scarcity and/or excellence value for the institution are, for the most part, “free agents”, with no ultimate constricting dependence on the University of Johannesburg to enable them to earn a living; in fact, the institution is dependent on their skills and abilities and their reputational value to enable it to attain its strategic goals and to enhance its stature. Their employment status, in fact, from a strategic and planning (rather than a legal) point of view, is more akin to that of independent contractors supplying the institution with their (skilled and scarce) services.

UJ has recognized the need for a strategy to create for itself a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining top talent for the institution. A range of policies and strategies exists to create incentives for top and scarce talent that allows UJ to recruit and retain such individuals. The following policies and strategies currently exist:

1.1 *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Academic Staff* (approved by Council on 20 September 2007)

This strategy provides for the following three categories of person in respect of whom a recruitment or retention strategy is implemented (as per the strategy document):

- (i) Individuals with exceptional academic merit¹;
- (ii) individuals with a scarcity value and therefore ready employability outside the institution as a result of their particular knowledge, skills and competencies in the academic environment;
- (iii) individuals from the Black designated groups.

1.2 *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Non-academic Employees* (approved by MEC on 7 October 2008)

This strategy provides for the same three categories of person as stated in 1.1 above

1.3 *Financial Policy for Income Generated by means of Non-subsidized Academic Programmes, Solicited Research and Consultation* (approved by Council on 22 November 2007)

This policy provides for the following income-generating activities that can supplement an academic employee's income:

- (i) Teaching and learning in non-subsidized academic programmes;
- (ii) Consultation.

¹ “Exceptional merit is defined as follows: “(1) An individual who has knowledge, skills and competencies that will add significant value to the pursuit of one or more of the following strategic objectives of the institution: (i) nationally and internationally competitive and innovative research; (ii) excellence in teaching and learning; (iii) an engaged university through strategic initiatives and partnerships; (iv) the active development, sustenance and utilization of the institution’s intellectual capital; (2) An individual who has knowledge and experience that will add significant value to the development of a *research field* in which the institution strategically invests (or will invest) significant additional research resources. Researchers with an outstanding research profile and a reputation for scholarly excellence are typical candidates for this category.”

1.4 *Human Resource Management of “Non-core” Income-generating Activities of Academic Employees* (approved by Council on 22 November 2007)

In addition to the income-generating opportunities provided for in the policy listed under 1.3 above, this policy also provides for the following income-generating activities that can supplement an academic employee’s income:

- (i) Extraordinary subsidy-generating teaching and learning activities that supplement an employee’s income;
- (ii) Teaching and learning activities external to the university that supplement an employee’s income (i.e., “academic” private work)

1.5 *Conditions of Service for Employees of the University of Johannesburg* in respect of private work (par D8) (approved by Council on 11 November 2005)

Both academic and non-academic employees may be granted permission on an annual basis by the Vice-Chancellor to engage in private work no more than an average of eight hours per week during normal working hours, excluding university recess periods. There is no limit to the income that an employee can generate through private work.

1.6 *Vice-Chancellor’s Distinguished Awards for Teaching, Research and Innovation* (approved in 2007)

1.7 In addition to the above, the following should be noted:

- (i) A draft *Incentive Scheme for Research Promotion* has been proposed by the University Research Committee, This talent management strategy, however, replaces this incentive scheme.
- (ii) The *Performance Management System* currently applicable to executive, senior and middle management, is set to be implemented for all employees in the next 3-4 years.

- (iii) An incentive scheme to promote teaching competence has been mooted for some time. This talent management strategy, however, makes the development of such a scheme superfluous at this stage.

It is imperative to integrate the above policies, strategies and schemes with a strategy that recognizes and rewards those individuals in the institution who are exceptional because of their high levels of skill, scarcity and/or academic excellence and therefore deserve exceptional benefits. This strategy seeks to accomplish this.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SCARCITY AND/OR EXCELLENCE VALUE FOR UJ

The individuals with scarcity and/or excellence value for UJ occupy one of the following HEMIS personnel categories:

- *Instruction/research professional*
- *Specialist/support professional*

Excluded from this list is the category “*executive/administrative/managerial professional*”. In the case of such employees, an appropriately rigorous and adequately resourced performance management system provides for the required performance-based rewards scheme..

The following criteria apply in order to assist in identifying individuals with scarcity and/or excellence value in each of the categories listed above (all the criteria applicable to each subset have to be complied with in order to qualify for excellence benefits as per paragraph 3 below):

2.1 Instruction/research professional

The majority of individuals who have scarcity and/or excellence value for the institution and who will therefore be recipients of excellence benefits in terms of this strategy will fall into this

personnel category. Four sub-sets of excellence, each with their own set of evaluative criteria, exist:

2.1.1 *Research excellence*

- (i) NRF rating of A1-2, B 1-3 and P;
- (ii) demonstrable current reputation as a scholar of international standing and recognition;
- (iii) sustained outstanding research output over the last ten years;
- (iv) (where appropriate) demonstrated ability to generate substantial external funding for research projects;
- (v) supervisor and external examiner of a significant number of postgraduate theses/dissertations over the last ten years (“significance” determined by discipline specialization); and
- (vi) the extent to which the candidate has, in a sustained fashion over a ten-year period, transferred her/his knowledge and scholarly acumen to staff and students within his/her knowledge domain by means of mentoring and guidance.

2.1.2 *Innovation excellence*

- (i) Number of patents or trademarks registered with demonstrated commercial or social application;
- (ii) actual commercial value of technological innovation for the institution, or reputational value for the institution, or industrial application and social benefit for civil society;
- (iii) sustained track record over a period of ten years of research-based innovation and applied technology transfer; and
- (iv) number of students and staff members who benefit from the technology innovation efforts of the individual.

OR

- (i) Number of creative output;

- (ii) sustained track record of influential creative output as a creative practitioner over a ten-year period;
- (iii) national or international reputation as a creative practitioner and demonstrated influence of creative output on the art world; and
- (iv) the extent to which the creative practitioner has, in a sustained fashion over a ten-year period, transferred his/her creative knowledge, skill and acumen to staff and students by means of mentoring and guidance.

2.1.3 *Entrepreneurial enhancement*

- (i) Number, range and value of structured engagements (contract research, professional advice and related services) in a sustained fashion over a ten-year period with strategically important business and industry partners, employing UJ's intellectual capital;
- (ii) measurable impact of the deployment of UJ's intellectual capital on the entrepreneurial well-being of the business entity;
- (iii) quality, extent and impact of academic programmes (non-subsidized, short courses, workshops, seminars) over a ten-year period that impart essential entrepreneurial acumen to those engaged in business and industry;
- (iv) extent of contribution to the institution's third stream income; and
- (v) reputation of the individual within the broad business community.

2.1.4 *Teaching excellence*

- (i) Consistently high throughput in the programmes taught;
- (ii) demonstrable quality of learning materials;
- (iii) innovative teaching and learning methods and curriculum development;
- (iv) recognition by peers, by external stakeholders and by students as an excellent teacher;
- (v) active leadership role in strong or flagship programmes;
- (vi) ability to attract students into scarce skills programmes; and

In addition to the above criteria listed under par 2.1.1-2.1.4, the individual needs to satisfy the following criteria:

- (i) contribution, over an extended period of time, to the management/administration/planning/policy formulation within the University at a senior level;
- (ii) professional integrity and role model for younger or less established colleagues;
- (iii) institutional “ambassador”; and
- (iv) generally speaking, scholarly contribution, over an extended period of time, to the academic enterprise of research, teaching and learning and community engagement.

2.2 **Specialist/support professional**

- (i) Appropriate postgraduate qualification;
- (ii) demonstrable current national and international reputation, built up and sustained over a ten-year period, as a specialist in a recognizable domain of professional expertise;
- (iii) contribution, over a significant period of time, to the management/administration/planning/policy formulation within the University at a senior level;
- (iv) variety of high-level skills, knowledge and competencies;
- (v) professional integrity and role model for younger colleagues; and
- (vi) institutional “ambassador”.

Individuals are identified by a sub-committee appointed by the Management Executive Committee. This sub-committee receives applications from the responsible MEC member, who in turn receives a recommendation from the responsible member of the Executive Leadership Group. This sub-committee reports to the MEC, which makes the final decision. Membership of this category of highly-talented, highly-mobile, extraordinarily valuable individuals is limited to the select few. At most, therefore, no more than 50 individuals (or 2% of the workforce) should thus be recognized at any given time.

3. BENEFITS THAT ACCRUE TO INDIVIDUALS THUS IDENTIFIED

3.1. Provision is made for two excellence levels: *Level One* and *Level Two*. Level Two is reserved for the truly outstanding few. The performance-based criteria for each excellence level (in line with the criteria listed above) are determined by the MEC sub-committee referred to above (in consultation with the relevant senior line manager).

3.2. The following benefits, in a combination to be determined by the sub-committee, accrue to individuals thus identified:

(i) *Financial:*

- (a) In respect of individuals identified on the basis of criteria listed under 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.4, a non-pensionable “excellence” subvention of between 10%-15% (in the case of Excellence Level One) or 16%-25% (in the case of Excellence Level Two) of the total Cost-to-Company of the individual for the institution; the determination of the amount being subject to an evaluation, by the sub-committee, of the additional income the individual is able to earn by means of the taxable private income referred to in (b) below or by means of approved private work;
- (b) The option to pay out to the individual as taxable income no more than thirty percent of that portion of the annual research subsidy income generated for the institution by the individual by means of accredited research publications.
- (c) In respect of individuals identified on the basis of criteria listed under 2.1.3, approval to earn income in excess of the annual ceiling amount provided for in par 2.3.4.1 (and par 4.4.3 (i)) of the financial policy referred to in 1.3 above, subject to the limit and the proviso’s approved by the MEC on 4 November 2008 (and see too *Policy Statement on the Right to Earn Income by means of Approved “Third*

Stream” Activities Beyond the Approved Ceiling Amount of 17 November 2008).

- (ii) automatic extension of retirement age to 65 years (for those in the instruction/research professional personnel category) and automatic conferral of Honorary Professor status beyond 65 years;
- (iii) automatic sabbatical of one full year and (after consultation with the Executive Dean concerned) contraction of the sabbatical leave cycle to five years (subject, however, to standard conditions of service in respect of sabbatical leave)
- (iv) generous beyond-the-norm study benefits in respect of programmes not offered at the University of Johannesburg for dependants studying at other South African HE institutions (the extent of the benefits to be determined in consultation with the DVC (Human Resources and Operations) and the DVC (Finance);
- (v) reserved parking space.

3.3 The benefits awarded to each individual are reviewed every three years.

3.4 The excellence subvention (see 3.2 (i)) is non-pensionable. Upon the retirement of an individual who has been the recipient of excellence benefits at the date of her/his retirement, the MEC may decide to award to the individual an *ex gratia* payment (the amount to be determined at the time) for each year the individual has been the recipient of excellence benefits.

3.5 An individual who receives benefits in terms of this talent management strategy foregoes any subventions or allowances that such individual had received in terms of any of the strategies and incentive schemes listed in paragraph 1.1, 1.2 and 1.7 above.

3.6 If an individual who enjoys excellence benefits in terms of this strategy, resigns from the University or is dismissed from the University, she/he must recompense the University for such benefits. The value of the benefits, the extent of the benefits to be

recompensed and the manner of the compensation is determined by the Vice-Chancellor.

NOTE

Overlap exists between the definition of “*exceptional merit*” in the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Academic Staff* (and the mirror image *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Non-academic Employees*) – see footnote 1 at 1.1 (and 1.2) above – and the criteria for the determination of “excellence” in respect of especially the *Instruction/Research Professional* personnel category (see 2.1 above). Each of the indicators of “significant value” listed in component 1 of the definition of “exceptional merit” for the recruitment and retention strategy correlates directly with one of the four sub-categories listed under 2.1 above (ie, 2.1.1-2.1.4):

- 1 “nationally and internationally competitive and innovative research” correlates with “research excellence” (2.1.1);
- 2 “excellence in teaching and learning” correlates with “teaching excellence” (2.1.4);
- 3 “an engaged university through strategic initiatives and partnerships” correlates with “entrepreneurial enhancement” (2.1.3); and
- 4 “the active development, sustenance and utilization of the institution’s intellectual capital” correlates with “innovation excellence” (2.1.2).

The solution to this obvious overlap lies in a re-evaluation of the value attached to the notion of “exceptional merit” for purposes of the award of a recruitment or retention subvention to an individual, and a concomitant re-adjustment of the value of the subvention made under this category. The following amendments to the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Academic Staff (and for Non-academic Employees)* are hereby approved:

- (a) Replace the formulation in respect of “*exceptional merit*” (including the footnote) in 1.2.1 in the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Academic Staff* (and the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Non-academic Employees*) with the following:

“Individuals are to be identified for active recruitment who not only meet the standard appointments criteria for a particular position, but who, in addition, add *substantial beyond-the-norm value* by means of their unique knowledge, skills and competencies to the pursuit of the strategic goals of the institution (in particular, internationally competitive research, excellence in teaching and learning, the development of the institution’s intellectual capital and being an engaged university).”

- (b) In place of the open-ended and discretionary process to determine financial benefits to recruit or retain individuals with “*exceptional merit*”, as provided for in paragraph 2.5.1 (v) of the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy*, a ceiling to the benefits awarded, is set at a maximum of 65% of the excellence subvention for Excellence Level One provided for in 3.2 (i) above.

Approved by the Management Executive Committee December 2008