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## POLICY

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# NATIONAL HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICE

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## RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

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**TABLE OF CONTENT**

No:	TOPIC	PAGE
1.	Strategic intent	4
2.	Definition of key terms	4
3.	Guiding principles	6
4.	Scope and application	6
5.	Recruitment	7
6.	Selection	10
7.	Records	16
8.	Probation	16
9.	Transfer	16
10.	Review	17

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## 1. STRATEGIC INTENT

The National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) recognizes that in order to achieve its national mandate, to provide diagnostic support services to the national, provincial and local departments of health through its country-wide network of quality assured diagnostic laboratories, it requires suitable qualified staff of highest quality. Accordingly, it must have appropriate policies which support the recruitment and selection process.

## 2. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In this policy, the following words shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

**Employees** means any person, excluding and independent contractor, who works for another person or for the State and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration; and any other person who in any manner assists in carrying on or conducting the business of an employer.

**Employer** refers to the National Health Laboratory Services

**Advertising Media** refers to the various media traditionally used for advertising vacancies including newspapers, Journals, websites, social networking and notice boards.

**Appointable** refers to a candidate who is considered by a duly constituted selection panel, as likely to be successful in the post.

**Critical/scarcce Skills** refers to an absolute or relative demand, current or future for skilled, qualified and experienced people to fill the post.

**Designated group** means black people (i.e. Africans, Indians, Chinese and Coloured) women and people with disabilities, who are natural persons, and:

- Are citizens of the RSA by birth or descent; or
- Are citizens of the RSA by naturalisation but who legally became entitled to become citizens of the RSA

**Employment Equity** means the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, and the Regulations and Codes of Practice issued in terms of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

**People with Disability** mean people who have a long-term or recurring physical, including sensory or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospect of entry into or advancement in employment.

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**Employee Value Proposition (EVP)** means a balance of the rewards and benefits that are received by employees in return for their performance at the workplace

**Vacancy** means an existing or newly created position that does not have an incumbent formally appointed to the position

**Suitably qualified** means a person who has the abilities, formal qualifications, the relevant experience and or the potential to acquire, within a reasonable time, the skills and competencies necessary to perform in a specific job

**Selection criteria** means the job requirements against which a candidate will be assessed and selected, based on the job profile

**Recruitment and Selection** means a planned process used to fill a vacancy with a competent person to effect appointment

**Job Profile** means the expected duties and responsibilities of a job, indicating the necessary experience and skills required of the incumbent. It serves as a guide for the incumbent and his/her manager, and is used to determine the level within the organisational structure

**Inherent job requirements** means job requirements genuinely essential for competent performance in the job including physical abilities which can be fairly and objectively measured as well as qualifications, medical examinations, and valid licences where applicable

**Competency** means the experience knowledge, skills, attitudes and capabilities necessary to deliver job related outcomes at a specific level of quality

**Assessment** means the process of gathering information related to pre-determined criteria in order to make a judgment / decision within a specific context.

**Executive appointment** means any special appointments made from E level and above.

**Transfer** refers to the horizontal transfer of staff within and between branches, laboratories, and departments without any financial gain to a vacant post within the same or another occupational class.

**Probation** is defined as a period of 3 months after appointment/promotion in a new post, during which an employee is provided with information, guidance, training and assessment to determine his/her suitability for continued employment.

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy reflects NHLS objective for good governance as well as sustained value creation for all stakeholders. This policy further ensures that:

- 3.1. Guide the process of recruitment, selection and placement of staff at National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)
- 3.2. Provide guidelines for the recruitment and selection of scarce skills and suitably qualified candidates to meet current and future organizational staffing needs.
- 3.3. Ensure that vacancies are efficiently filled with competent and skilled employees and the process is consistently applied.
- 3.4. Candidates will be selected for appointment according to their , qualifications, experience and/or potential to fulfill the job requirements, without regard to race, gender, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, social conscience, culture, language, marital status, family responsibilities or pregnancy to enforce compliance with the policy and applicable legislation.
- 3.5. Ensure that recruitment practices are fair and equitable to both existing employees and external applicants.
- 3.6. Enable NHLS to demonstrate its commitment to diverse representation of all races, gender and various diversities across various levels and provide them with equal access to opportunities; as well as implement equitable systems of remuneration and reward.
- 3.7. To introduce positive action plans to accelerate the advancement of employees from designated groups (i.e. Africans, Coloureds, Chinese and Indians, women and persons with disabilities) so that staff at all levels is suitably qualified or have the potential to meet the inherent requirements of jobs.
- 3.8. To integrate the requirements of the Employment Equity legislation into the broader Human Resources management strategy, policies and processes and recruitment and selection processes.

### 4. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all employees, decision makers at every level, and entities in the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) who are appointed in accordance with the National Health Laboratory Service Act, Act 37 of 2000, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Employment Equity Act and the Labour Relations Act of 1995 as amended.

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The NHLS is an equal opportunity organization, recognizing that men and women are equal and therefore entitled to equitable employment practices.

The NHLS management and its relevant stakeholders will be empowered from time to time to develop or review its Recruitment Policy to ensure compliance with labour legislation and/or in consideration of issues impacting on recruitment practices.

## 5. RECRUITMENT

The process of searching, attracting, and engaging with talent which will meet the NHLS Employment Value Proposition (EVP).

### 5.1. Authorisation

The replacement of any vacancy is not automatic and must be in line with NHLS's Business Requirements and Budget. Such replacement must be motivated by the Department Head for Executive approval and in consultation with the Executive Manager – Human Resources

While preference will be placed on advancing internal candidates, it should be noted that operational requirements and employment equity targets might necessitate a decision to recruit externally.

Newly created posts must be job profiled and evaluated before the post can be advertised. Requests to assess a post must be forwarded to Regional Human Resources Department after being duly authorised and approved.

### 5.2. Advertisement

Advertising is an effective method of recruiting suitable candidates for vacancies. Through effective advertising, the National Health Laboratory Service will endeavor to ensure that all potential applicants, especially people from the designated groups, are considered for employment on the basis of their skills, competencies, knowledge, level of training, and potential.

In the interest of time and ensuring that NHLS get the best talent, advertising of all positions may be external and internal at the same time. This is supported given that NHLS medical disciplines are broad-banded and have progression embedded

### 5.2.1 Contents of the advertisement

An advertisement for a post shall specify the job title, the grade, the inherent requirements of the job and core functions based on the most recent signed off Job Profile, as well as the person who should respond to enquiries. The Human Resources Department is responsible for facilitating the advertisement format and procedures.

Qualifications should not be defined primarily or solely in terms of educational attainment, but should, for example, include skills and relevant experience. If educational requirements are essential, these should be set at such levels, which balance the need for competence with the goal of accessibility. However, qualifications, which are an inherent requirement, should be stated in the advertisement.

The language and style of the advertisement should be clear and simple.

Requirements for additional health or security clearances, where these are justified by the inherent nature of work, should be clearly stated in the advertisement.

Any credentials of the applicant shall be subject to ITC checks and background checks

It must be indicated in the advertisement if the applicants will be subject to any of the following:

- Security clearance
- Competency/ psychometric assessment
- Other applicable allowances
- Appointments in line with EE plan of the NHLS
- Presentation and typing tests

### 5.2.2 Scope of advertising in the media

Any vacant post in the Executive Management and posts from E level and upwards shall be advertised nationwide and in some instances internationally.

In the event that i-recruitment fails to deliver suitable applications, a vacancy may be advertised in the printed media locally and or internationally to reach the target group identified. Approval must be obtained from the Executive Manager Human Resources.



All other posts below Executive Management will be advertised within the National Health Laboratory Service as a minimum, except where specific competencies are required in line with operational requirements of the organization. In that case posts may also be advertised in the local, national and even international media. The scope of advertising must reach the target group identified for the filling of the specific post.

Applications will be open for a standard period of minimum five (5) working days, unless there is a business need to extend the period; Especially for Executive Management positions and other post where it is not possible to receive applications within the set time.

### 5.2.3 Posting

Posting is an alternative advertising method, which has low cost impact, may be used for lower level positions (e.g. bands A1 to C1) and training (e.g. registrar and intern student) positions. Posting must be done by means of a notice on notice boards within and outside the organisation. Public institutions may be used, such as, the Universities etc. For it to be successful, this way of recruiting must be communicated to the general public so that it will be common knowledge where they need to look if they need a job.

### 5.2.4 People with Disabilities

The National Health Laboratory Service may recruit people with disabilities by means of liaison with various organizations that concentrate on advocacy and development work aimed at empowering people with disabilities.

NHLS will consciously identify / earmark positions suitable for people with disabilities through the Employment Equity Plan of the organisation.

### 5.2.5 Skills Search / Head Hunting

This method of recruitment may be used to identify candidates in areas where skills are scarce where traditional methods of recruiting are ineffective.

### 5.2.6 Recruitment Agencies

The NHLS may appoint Recruitment Agencies from time to time. Line Managers may not therefore directly work with a Recruitment Agency.

The Recruitment and Selection Department will liaise with agencies on behalf of the NHLS and will serve as intermediary between management and the agencies.

Search agencies including head hunters may be employed to assist in recruitment for senior and scarce skill positions provided the post is also advertised. There are generally significant costs involved in making appointments through search agencies and this cost shall be borne by the business unit that wishes to make the appointment subject to the approval by the Human Resources Department.

#### 5.2.7 Internet Recruiting Methods

The NHLS may use available professional web sites and/ or I-recruitment facilities to solicit applications.

### 6. SELECTION

#### 6.1. Roles and Responsibilities

The Human Resources Department is responsible to, inter alia, advise on and facilitate the selection process. Besides giving guidance concerning the prescribed measures, line managers will be advised regarding the use of selection instruments and the composition of selection committees to, among other things, ensure the inclusion of appropriate expertise and to ensure that objectivity will be served during the interviews.

A selection committee shall be appointed for the filling of every vacant post to make recommendations on appointment of such post.

The selection committee shall consist of at least three members who are employees of a grading higher than the grading of the post to be filled and will include the manager of the position interviewed for.

The chairperson of the selection committee shall be of a higher grade to the post to be filled

In the event that the manager of the unit within which the vacant post is located, is graded lower than the vacant post, such a manager will be a member of the selection committee.

A Human Resources representative must serve on all selection panels in a technical advisory capacity as well as being a member of the panel to ensure that the principles of the Employment Equity and Labour legislation are adhered to.

A selection committee shall include members with relevant expertise. Members shall be chosen for the value that they could bring to the decision making process. The selection committee shall and include adequate representation (race and gender) of people from the designated groups

A selection Committee will:

- Ensure that all candidates who are being interviewed are afforded equal and fair opportunity to present themselves; and
- 
- Formulate and record the reasons for specific recommendations.

The Board shall appoint a selection committee constituted for the appointment of executive manager.

Area Managers or Executive Manager or a delegated authority – Human Resources, dependent on the level of the position, shall appoint a selection panel for the appointment of all levels below senior management

Interview panels for the filling of posts on grade D1 and higher must include a Human Resources Manager.

Interview committees for the filling of posts on grade C1 to C4 must include a representative from the Regional Human Resources Department.

Executive appointments may not necessarily be subjected to the whole recruitment and selection process; however, the principles of the policy should be adhered to as closely as possible. Before any executive appointment is made, the Executive Manager: HR must be satisfied that: all the requirements of this policy have been followed

## 6.2. Applicants

Relatives of an employee will not be employed to work with either directly or indirectly under the supervision of any relative (by blood or marriage), or in the same department/laboratory , floor or area which could in any way result in a conflict of interest of whatever nature as a result thereof, irrespective of level

Internal applicants may inform their direct line manager of their application. It is however the employee's prerogative to do so should they feel that such disclosure would in any way jeopardise their application.

External applicants shall be responsible for all expenditure related to attendance of interviews

Internal candidates will be allowed to claim travel expenditure from the recruiting cost centre as per the Subsistence & Travel Policy and must be granted special leave as per the Conditions of Employment Policy to attend interviews when short-listed

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### 6.3. Screening

The purpose of screening is to eliminate candidates who clearly do not meet the minimum criteria, prior to the shortlisting meeting. Screening expedites the shortlisting process and prevents wasted costs in copying the curriculum vitas of persons who clearly do not meet minimum criteria. Screening may be conducted, on behalf of the selection panel by the HR Representative, externally appointed agency or by nominated representatives from the selection panel, including the Chair and the HR Representative.

### 6.4. Shortlisting

The purpose of shortlisting is to determine which applicants prima facie meet the selection criteria and shall proceed to the next phase of the selection process (typically assessment or interview). The selection panel and HR Representative shall determine the shortlist for interviews. Shortlisting shall be conducted in a fair and consistent manner where all candidates are measured against the minimum requirements for the post and other published selection criteria. Reasons for non-short-listing must be documented and kept by the human capital department for future reference. The shortlist for interviews should generally include up to five of the applicants who most closely match the requirements for the equity priorities of the operational unit.

In an unlikely situation that candidates who meet basic inherent requirements are more than five, advantages inclusive of equity requirements of NHLS and/or division shall be utilised.

There may also be situations where if the line manager is of the opinion that an application obtained after the closing date, will add to the quality of the candidates to be interviewed, such late application must be in agreement with the Executive Manager and Executive Manager – Human Resources.

Once the above has been approved, the requirements of selection process must apply where all compete equally based on the inherent requirements of the job.

It is noted that some of the scarce skills positions attract fewer number of applicants. In such situation the relevant Executive may authorise that the Recruitment process continues.

### 6.5. Psychometric Assessment

Testing of candidates for operational competencies can take place prior to the interview, whilst psychometric assessment should only be done following an initial interview. No selection decision should be based on psychometric assessment scores only, learning potential and competency assessment should be considered. Assessments should be relevant to the job and justifiable and should be free of cultural bias

6.6. Presentation

Candidates may be required to make a presentation to the selection panel. The topic for the presentation must be clear and should not favour one applicant or a category of applicants, e.g. internal candidates. Assessment standards must be predetermined by the selection panel.

6.7. Interviews

No candidate may be recommended for appointment unless they have been interviewed by a duly constituted selection panel. Short-listed candidates must be given sufficient notice of the date and venue of the interview (3 – 5 days in advance). Interviews may be conducted telephonically in exceptional cases.

6.8. Reference

An employment contract shall be subject to prior reference checks. At least two, but preferably three, references should be obtained before selection is concluded. If referee reports are to be used as part of the decision making, they must be used consistently for all short listed candidates

Only referees whose names appear on the candidate's CV must be contacted. If for any other reason another person not indicated on the CV is to be contacted, the candidate's consent must be obtained. Reference checks should at least the most recent employment, if possible, and information to be solicited should relate to the nature of the position. Consent from an applicant is needed to carry out criminal and credit checks.

6.9. Confidentiality

Members of the Selection Committee shall refrain from informing individuals who have been identified as suitable for a particular position prior to the approval by the executing authority or his delegate. Any transgression will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure of the National Health Laboratory Service.

6.10. Decision Making

Decision-making shall be by consensus wherever possible. In the event of a vote, the Chair shall have a casting and deliberative vote. Prior knowledge of a candidate shall not be used as the sole basis for decision making but shall not be excluded. Panel members with prior knowledge should declare this to the Chair and if there are concerns regarding the candidate then these must be put to the candidate during the interview or verified by a suitable referee before being used as part of the decision.

#### 6.11. Ranking of candidates

Candidates must first be assessed individually against the requirements and key performance areas for the post to determine if they are appointable.

Ranking of appointable candidates shall be in the following order:

- Candidates from the target designated group
- South African citizens
- Where there are two appointable candidates who rank equally after applying the above, then traditional merit rating score is applied to identify the best person for the job.

#### 6.12. Communication with candidates

The successful candidate must be informed in writing with a formal offer of employment / employment contract / promotion letter/ transfer letter from the relevant Human Resources Manager

The effective date of appointment of an internal candidate must be negotiated between the employee's current and new line manager. It is advised that a successful candidate should have assumed duty in his / her new post within a period of one month, after he/she received notification of successful candidature, unless otherwise arranged.

Unsuccessful candidates who were interviewed for the post must be informed in writing after the nominated candidate has accepted his/her appointment/ promotion.

Reasons will be provided to candidates who were not short-listed or nominated, on receipt of a written request.

Internal applicants who were short-listed and interviewed but found unsuitable for the post, may, on request, be counseled by line management highlighting the following:

- Reasons for the applicant falling short of the requirements for the post
- The need for the applicant' shortcomings to be linked to his/her development plan as far as it is relevant to his/her career in the National Health Laboratory Service

### 6.13. Salary offer

All salary offers shall be made by the Human Resources Department, in consultation with the Chair, in terms of the Remuneration & Reward Policy.

A post should be filled at the entry level salary level as it was created. If there is an operational need (including the need to obtain scarce skills) the mid-point will act as further guide or if it is to be filled at a higher or lower level, the Chief Executive Officer or delegated authority must give a directive in this regard.

The Area Managers/Executives may recommend deviations up to midpoint on condition that such salary is duly motivated for and funds are available. The Executive Manager HR will approve all appointments on the midpoint of the scale and higher. The CEO must approve all deviation appointments that reports directly to Executive managers.

### 6.14. Reappointment of former employees

Former employees who resigned or retired early or prematurely may be re-employed in a permanent position if they successfully apply for a post through competition.

Former employees who resigned or whose services were terminated due to ill health can be re-appointed if they successfully apply for an advertised post and provide the organisation with recent and conclusive evidence of recovery.

A former employee may not be re-appointed where:

- The original grounds for termination of service are such that the reappointment of a former employee cannot be considered. For an example, former employees who were dismissed for misconduct or repudiated in terms of the provisions of the Labour Relations Act, 1995
- Employees reaching the retirement age as per Conditions of Employment Policy may be re-employed on a post retirement contract in order to retain/transfer expertise/skills of the employee where no replacement could be found.
- Such appointment must however be motivated and approved before an offer can be made.

7. RECORDS

The National Health Laboratory Service will where possible keep a database of job seekers who applied for advertised posts for future reference. Consent in this regard should be obtained from the applicants. This is in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act

All relevant Recruitment and Selection documentation will be kept by the Human Resources Department for a period of 3 years

8. PROBATION

An employee is appointed on probation where the probationary period is defined as a period of 3 months after appointment/promotion in a new post, during which an employee is provided with information, guidance, training and assessment to determine his/her suitability for continued employment.

Probation for employees on E Band and above shall be a period of 6 month.

If an employee is unable to meet the requirements of his/her post during the probationary period, the probationary period may be extended for another three months, provided that his/her general conduct justifies continued employment in his/her post.

9. TRANSFER

Transfers refer to the horizontal transfer of staff within 12 months and between regions, laboratories, and departments without any financial gain to a vacant post within the same or another occupational class. In exceptional cases, application for an earlier transfer with the necessary motivation may be made to the Executive Manager Human Resources

Both the employer and employee may initiate the transfer of employees. In the case where the employee initiates the transfer such intention must be discussed with the employee's current supervisor to ensure that operational requirements are not compromised should the request for a transfer be successful.

Employees may be redeployed on a temporarily basis onto a vacant post or additional to the establishment only where no other arrangement can be made



## 9.1 Transfer of employer's request

The organization operates nationally and may require employees to serve wherever their services are required. However, transfers will only be considered if it is the operational requirement to transfer an employee to fill a vacancy, which would otherwise jeopardize the organization's interests.

The terms and conditions of the employer-initiated transfer will be consulted with affected employees on a case-by-case basis. The employer shall provide support in terms of relocation as follows:

A once off transfer allowance as determined by the business beyond a radius of 120 kilometers

Actual removal costs as determined by the business from time to time. The employee is required to present three quotations for the removal of his/ her personal effects to the Human Resources Manager.

A pre visit of three days for the purpose of finding accommodation. The subsistence and travel allowances outlined in Chapter 3 of the NHLS Conditions of Employment Policy apply. The employee shall be granted three days special leave for the purposes of a pre visit.

Whenever an employee is transferred in terms of these provisions the following principles shall apply:

- Such transfer must have an operational rationale
- Such transfer may only be executed after proper consultation with the employee and the affected manager where the employee is transferred.

## 9.2 Transfer at the employee's request

If an employee is transferred at his own request, the organization shall not be liable for any transfer costs.

## 10. REVIEW

The NHLS management and its relevant stakeholders through the leadership of the Human Resources Division are empowered from time to time to develop or review this Recruitment and Selection Policy to ensure compliance with labour legislation updates and/or in consideration of best practice issues impacting on recruitment and selection processes.