



**GUIDE TO USING
THE DIVERSITY
JOB BANK**

THE DIVERSITY JOB BANK

Malcolm Fialho
University of Western Australia

1. Background

The University of Western Australia has a strong record with respect to equal opportunity and diversity and *'Achieving Excellence through Diversity'* builds on those achievements. This project identifies employment priorities and aims to maximize performance through drawing on the widest possible pool of skills available. The focus of the Strategy is to increase workforce participation in three priority areas: Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The 'Diversity Job Bank' (DJB) is a key component to implementing the Workforce Diversity Strategy and the information contained in this guide aims to provide managers with knowledge and information to assist them in managing workforce diversity. In addition, it aims to ensure that UWA not only attracts quality staff but retains and promotes them within the structure.

The guide is designed to explain the process involved in selecting staff through the DJB, outline the respective roles of the Equity Office Managers and answer frequently asked questions.

2. What is the Diversity Job Bank (DJB)?

The DJB is an Equity Office database that is linked to a wide range of employment service providers who work with people from each of the three priority areas ie. Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The DJB aims to provide a comprehensive 'brokerage' service for prospective managers who might wish to recruit general staff within their faculties, departments and central administration.

3. How does one recruit staff through the Diversity Job Bank?

There is a range of employment and training options managers and supervisors can adopt with respect to participating in the Workforce Diversity Strategy. Essentially, these fall into two broad categories:

Category A – Recruitment to established positions (ongoing; fixed-term; casual)

The process to be followed while recruiting DJB staff under this category is described below.

- Develop and/or review selection documentation for the position.
- Lodge vacancy with Diversity Officer and negotiate appropriate timeframes with respect to advertisement and selection.
- Upon receipt of applications, commence process as outlined in the HR Policy and Procedures Manual:
 - Shortlist;
 - Interview;
 - Select most suitable candidate from the pool.
- Inform candidate, Diversity Officer and Personnel of the outcome of the selection process and forward all documentation to Personnel Division, Human Resources.
- Prepare an orientation program for new staff member recruited through the DJB.
- Discuss with the Diversity Officer any issues or factors that need to be taken into consideration prior to the commencement of the staff member.

Option B - Special Employment Project (SEP) based

This category refers to a situation where you may not have a position currently available but are committed to diversity and wish to participate in this project. There is a range of training initiatives available which can be modified to suit the needs and requirement of the work area.

These options include:

- Business Administration Traineeships offered by the WA Government
- Information Technology Traineeships offered by the WA Government
- National Indigenous Cadetship Program
- Employing People with Disabilities Special Initiatives Project
- Employing Indigenous Australians – STEP Program

Please contact the Diversity Officer for further information in relation to these and other employment and training options available to assist staff from diverse backgrounds.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Each placement through the DJB is a unique partnership arrangement between the Equity Office and the recruiting department. To achieve the best possible outcome for both the employee and the department, it is important that the respective roles of the Equity Office and the manager/supervisor are clearly delineated.

Role of the Equity Office:

- Assist a potential work area that may wish to offer a position to a candidate to review their criteria, prepare the selection panel appropriately etc.
- Prepare, in consultation with Employment Service Providers, a suitable list of candidates for consideration by the selection panel.
- Assist the selection panel with support, if required, with respect to cross-cultural matters, disability issues and any other considerations that may arise.
- To provide regular non-technical support to the successful DJB client and supervisor for a period of 6 months with ongoing follow-up sessions. This support would take the form of meeting other successful DJB applicants, mentoring, relevant training and development issues and issues arising from interaction with others in the work area, etc.
- To provide management support to the supervisor in relation to workplace issues that may arise.
- Promote DJB placement outcomes through UWA channels in order to encourage greater participation in the scheme.

Role of the Manager/Supervisor:

- Develop the selection documentation appropriately to ensure criteria are inclusive and do not contain any inherent bias that may preclude applications from a diverse range of applicants.
- Forward the selection documentation to the Diversity Officer for advertisement through appropriate recruitment channels.
- Develop an appropriate timeframe in consultation with the Diversity Officer.
- Conduct the selection process as per the guidelines stipulated in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Proceed with the required administrative procedures associated with recruitment and appointment in accordance with the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Provide direction for and manage the successful DJB applicant in accordance with relevant procedures, policies, practices and guidelines.

- Identify, in consultation with the Diversity Officer, appropriate training and development opportunities and support requirements for the employee.
- Develop and/or extend skills in relation to managing diversity.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

5.1 Can both academic and general staff be recruited through the DJB?

At this stage, the Strategy is in the formative stages and will focus only on general staff, normally at entry level (Level 3 / Library Officer Level 1 / Groundsperson Level 1).

5.2 Are there any plans to expand the Workforce Diversity Strategy?

It is anticipated that the Strategy will gradually focus on both mid-level and senior general staff as well as academic staff. This could occur for example, through broadening current '*Search and Screen*' processes for academic staff to more frequently include educational institutions in Africa, Asia and Central and South America.

5.3 Do I have to utilise the DJB for all entry level positions in my area?

You currently have the option to utilise one of the three following options with respect to filling an entry-level position in your area:

- To utilise the DJB exclusively, thereby encouraging workforce diversity.
- To utilise the current procedure recommended in the HR Policy and Procedures Manual ie. through the print media and/or the Internet.
- To advertise both through the mainstream process as well as through the Diversity Job Bank.

5.4 Do I have to develop special criteria for positions I want to advertise under the DJB?

YOU determine the key requirements of the position and develop the selection documentation to reflect those needs. Candidates under the DJB would be assessed against the same set of criteria as would apply to applicants entering through current systems and procedures.

The Strategy, unlike some equal employment opportunity initiatives, is not about SPECIAL treatment. Rather, it is about encouraging employers to be creative in the selection process and use alternate recruitment strategies, thereby tapping into a set of skills/perspectives that may not be presently available in their current workplace.

5.5 What if I am unable to find a suitable applicant from the DJB?

You would then refer the documentation associated with the position to the Recruitment section in Human Resources and advise that you would like it to proceed with advertising as per the process outlined in the Policy and Procedures Manual.

5.6 Are staff recruited through the DJB likely to require intensive assistance?

Staff recruited through the DJB will require orientation and a level of support that would normally be provided to a new member of staff. It is important to note that the appointment of a DJB candidate is made on merit and, therefore, they would be expected to perform effectively and efficiently on the job.

5.7 Are there any special considerations/factors that need to be taken into account when employing staff from one of the 3 priority areas under the DJB?

You will need to be aware of and sensitive to the different needs of Indigenous staff, culturally and linguistically diverse staff and those with disabilities who have been recruited through the DJB. For example, you may need to take into consideration special requirements with respect to workstation design, office layout etc. when employing people with disabilities. Similarly, your management style may need to vary in order to respond more effectively to DJB appointments from Indigenous or culturally diverse backgrounds. Be assured that you will receive a full and comprehensive briefing from the Diversity Office and other appropriate areas (eg. Occupational Health & Safety Office) prior to the engagement of a staff member through the DJB.

5.8. Are DJB appointees subject to a probation period?

All DJB appointees are subject to the conditions specified in the recently negotiated Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for General Staff.

5.9 What are the benefits of employing staff under the DJB?

There is a vast body of research in the diversity management area that attests to the numerous benefits that organisations derive from recruiting employees from diverse backgrounds and from untapped markets. Employers at UWA who have utilized the DJB confirm this finding and cite numerous benefits such as the ability to speak the languages spoken by many international students, cross-cultural skills and different perspectives with respect to decision-making. Please also refer to Section 4 in our publication '*Achieving Excellence Through Diversity*' which offers a comprehensive list of benefits. '*Achieving Excellence Through Diversity*' can be found on the web at: www.acs.uwa.edu.au/hrs/equity.

5.10 Is it discriminatory to appoint staff from the DJB?

Sections 51 and 66R of the WA (1984) Equal Opportunity Act contain provisions that allow for special measures that promote access to services and opportunities in response to identified 'gaps' with respect to employment and training. Section 2 of *Achieving Excellence through Diversity* clearly describes the process that has been followed with respect to identifying 'gaps' in our staffing profile.

UWA has demonstrated a strong and tangible commitment to diversity and has therefore implemented the 'Workforce Diversity Strategy' with a view to addressing the identified gaps.

5.11 Will existing staff at lower levels be disadvantaged in the process?

The Workforce Diversity Strategy will focus primarily on entry-level (Level 3) positions. There may be some instances where employers may identify a higher level position (Level 4) as one suitable to be advertised through the DJB. In those instances, the position would be advertised through both the internal system, the external system (as recommended in the HR Policy and Procedures Manual) and through the DJB. All internal applicants would therefore compete on merit with applicants from the DJB.

5.12 What if the staff member has a problem/concern/issue? How do they resolve?

The staff member receives a comprehensive orientation from both the Diversity Officer and their work area. They are briefed in relation to problem-solving and/or conflict resolution and advised to contact one of the available resources – The Diversity Officer, support person and/or line manager. Depending on the situation, they will drive the process with the appropriate support to enable a mutually beneficial and positive outcome to be achieved.