The Crucial Role of Recruitment and Selection Policies at Technological Universities

Introduction

Academics are vital for higher-education institutions' (HEIs) global competitiveness. This article addresses the necessity of a robust recruitment policy at technological universities (TUs), emphasising their role in ensuring both professional and ethical faculty selection. Irish HEIs recognise the significance of attracting qualified academics, who have a profound impact on teaching, research, and community service (Berry et al., 2011; Munyoro et al., 2016; Odor et al., 2019).

Inadequate recruitment policies can harm a HEI's image, reputation, and faculty retention (Crothall et al., 1997, p.99; Henningsson & Geschwind 2021, p.2). These concerns are particularly relevant to HEIs in Ireland. Munyoro et al. (2016, p.15) argue that one of the most imperative procedures driving higher education is the recruitment and selection of academics (French & Rumbles, 2010), while Henningsson and Geschwind (2018) highlight varied stakeholder views and the European Commission's promotion of transparency through its Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Strategic human resource management

International HEIs often adopt tenure-track systems for clarity, but in-house hiring remains common (Henningsson & Geschwind, 2021). Allui and Sahni (2016, p.361) suggest that research on the relationship between faculty satisfaction and retention is scarce, which is a concern for HEIs, and sadly Ireland is no different. Inadequate strategic human resource management (SHRM) programmes for faculty satisfaction may stem

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Irish higher-education institutions (HEIs), including technological universities, recognise the significance of attracting qualified academics, who have a profound impact on teaching, research, and community service. TUs should investigate the influence of the UK's Further and Higher Education Act (1992) on HEIs in Ireland, especially regarding their human resources management systems since British polytechnics became universities from 1992.

from misinformation, highlighting the potential benefits of SHRM-aligned recruitment and selection policies.

TUS, which opened on 1 October 2021 and was formed by the merging of Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) under the Technological Universities Bill (2018), faces the challenge of attracting and retaining top talent. It is therefore essential to develop recruitment and selection policies that prioritise fairness, thoroughness, transparency, and effectiveness (UCD, 2001, p.3). Despite a strong theoretical foundation for SHRM, practical research on its implementation in HEIs is lacking (Allui & Sahni, 2016), as they must optimise limited resources to address talent shortages and enhance efficiency.

A rigorous selection process ensures that the best candidates are hired.

A rigorous selection process ensures that the best candidates are hired (Conroy, 2021, p.5), so Irish academics have a better understanding of their employer's working conditions and contributions to human-capital improvement. HEIs in Ireland should provide top-quality training, flexible payment systems, and results-driven performance evaluations, involving faculty in decision-making. To link compensation to academic performance, HEIs must implement performance rating and pay systems, fostering a conducive context.

Better collaboration of human-resource departments across faculties is essential for a harmonised appraisal system. Strengthening SHRM helps HEIs navigate a dynamic environment (Allui & Sahni, 2016). Both theoretical and practical research on SHRM in higher education lacks depth, although Mohammad (2020) identifies valuable research on recruitment and selection. A substantial knowledge gap exists on the impact of SHRM implementation on student achievement, despite its importance in labour-intensive higher education.

Changing landscape

In Ireland, academic career structures have evolved significantly in the last three decades, bringing uncertainty, competition, and limited opportunities for tenure (EUI, 2021). Job demand exceeds supply, with Irish HEIs favouring flexibility and short-term contracts, which diminishes job security. Rising student enrolment is putting increasing pressure on academics to prioritise teaching over research (EUI, 2021).

Odor et al. (2019, p.38) emphasise the importance of merit-based recruitment and selection policies in HEIs, promoting competent, knowledgeable, and well-developed SHRM practices. These policies should include best practices and equal-opportunity guidelines. Scott (2012) points out the need to address concerns about inequality stemming from the transformation of UK polytechnics into universities, something that may also apply to TUs in Ireland.

Valenzuela (2019, p.11) highlights the significance of HEIs monitoring SHRM changes to improve long-term recruitment and selection policies, given the strict standards and procedures that managers must follow in academic recruitment. Future studies should encompass academic culture, organisational climate, the labour market, and the legal/regulatory environment before HEIs can develop recruitment and development policy documents. With this in mind, TUs should:

» continue to advertise in newspapers and online for skilled employment
» assess position necessity to align human-resource management skills with HEI priorities
» commit to equal opportunity in recruitment, adhering to Equality Acts (1998–2015)
» develop SHRM policies compliant with equality laws for quality personnel selection to meet strategic goals
» review recruitment and selection policies in HEIs both at home and abroad
» develop a deep understanding of the criteria for policy creation.

Finally, TUs should investigate the influence of the UK's Further and Higher Education Act (1992) on HEIs, especially regarding their HRMS (recruitment and selection policy documents) in the British polytechnics that became universities over 20 years ago (Pearson, 2015).

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Every Branch of the Healing Art

RCSI is delighted to announce the launch of *Every Branch of the Healing Art: A History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland* by Dr Ronan Kelly.

This book tells the story of a small group of Irish surgeons that broke ranks with the Guild of Barber-Surgeons in 1784 to form the Royal College of Surgeons.

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From 19th-century body-snatchers to the 1916 Rising, through two pandemics and two world wars, with a vivid cast of characters, and reaching right to the present day, the book is a fast-moving, lavishly-illustrated narrative of a great Irish – and now global – institution.