



## **POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF CLOSE RELATIVES**

<b>Reference number</b>	3P_3.2A
<b>Accountable executive manager</b>	Executive Director: People and Culture
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Executive Director: People and Culture
<b>Responsible division</b>	Executive Director: People and Culture
<b>Status</b>	Approved
<b>Approved by</b>	Council
<b>Date of approval</b>	19 November 2025
<b>Review date</b>	2028

## **POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF CLOSE RELATIVES**

### **Preamble**

Against the background of our vision to discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, thereby advancing our relevance and impact, the Council of the North-West University (“NWU”, “university”) adopted this policy on 19 November 2025.

The NWU strives to attract and retain the best talent to support its vision. The University values its employees and recognises their contributions to its success. It is therefore important for the NWU to be an inclusive and supportive employer. The NWU recognises that family separation can affect its ability to attract and retain employees, particularly in academic, mission-critical, scarce-skills and management positions. To create an additional value proposition and enhance its ability to attract and retain key employees, the University may consider offering employment at the NWU to the spouses or partners of newly appointed and current employees in key positions.

This policy aims to support the NWU’s efforts to attract and retain top-tier talent particularly in remote areas such as Mahikeng, and to align with the NWU’s internationalisation strategy. It is also designed to address the need to attract employees with critical skills, including international employees and distinguished professors.

### **1 Interpretation and applications**

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the –

- 1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- 1.2 Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995
- 1.3 Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998
- 1.4 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997
- 1.5 Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000
- 1.6 Statute of the North-West University
- 1.7 Recruitment and Selection Policy of the NWU
- 1.8 Employment Equity Policy of the NWU
- 1.9 Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), Act 2 of 2000
- 1.10 Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998
- 1.11 Skills Development Levies Act, 24 of 2010
- 1.12 South African Qualifications Authority Act, 58 of 1995
- 1.13 Immigration Act, 13 of 2002
- 1.14 NWU Policy and Rules on Conflict of Interest and on Declaration of Interest and of Gifts

### **2 Scope and application**

This policy applies to close relatives of newly appointed or current employees in the following categories:

- senior academics,
- management
- mission critical positions and
- employees in the scarce skills category.

### 3 Definitions

<b>Close relatives</b>	In this policy, “close relative” has the same meaning as “relative” as defined in Section 1 of the Higher Education Act, which includes a person’s spouse or partner, relatives within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, and adoptive children within the first degree of consanguinity. Legally, the term “immediate family” follows its dictionary definition, referring to parents, spouses, children and siblings, as defined in Black’s Law Dictionary (2 <sup>nd</sup> edition).
<b>Management</b>	The administrative and executive leadership of the NWU, responsible for overseeing the University’s operations, strategic planning and academic activities.
<b>Mission critical positions</b>	Mission-critical positions are those roles within the NWU that are essential for maintaining its core functions and overall mission. Effective performance in these roles is crucial to the success and operational continuity of the organisation.
<b>Partner</b>	Someone with whom an employee has lived in a conjugal relationship for at least two years, or someone with whom they are in a permanent relationship, particularly if they are the parents of a child, despite not being married to each other. For the purposes of this policy, only one partner can be considered.
<b>Senior academic employees</b>	NWU’s senior academic employees include associate and full professors who hold positions in the faculties and are responsible for leading research, delivering high-quality teaching, and contributing to academic policy.
<b>Spouse</b>	The parties who are married in terms of the Marriages Act of 1967, the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998 and the Civil Union Act of 2006, as amended from time to time. The term is gender neutral.  For the purposes of this policy, only one spouse may be considered.

### 4 Purpose

This policy facilitates the employment of close relatives of newly appointed and current employees in specified categories and forms an integral part of the University’s recruitment and retention strategy. It sets out clear guidelines for the recruitment, selection and employment of such relatives at the NWU. The policy upholds the University’s commitment to fairness and transparency while avoiding conflicts of interest and serves as an effective tool for attracting and retaining talented employees by recognising the importance of fostering family relationships.

### 5 Application

- 5.1 The NWU must endeavour to employ the spouse or partner of a newly appointed employee but cannot guarantee such employment and accepts no liability if the partner is not employed.
- 5.2 The Recruitment and Selection Policy must be applied to all appointments of close relatives.
- 5.3 In accordance with the provisions of the Immigration Act 13 of 2002, the University may not employ foreign nationals without a valid work or residence visa.
- 5.4 Only close relatives currently in a relationship with an employee of the NWU employee may be considered under the provisions of this policy.
- 5.5 This policy places the onus on the newly appointed or current employee to take personal responsibility for seeking and facilitating the application for employment opportunities in any of the following categories:
  - Short-term, temporary placements against vacancies
  - Short-term, temporary placements against annual budgets, such as academic leave, temporary teaching, and temporary assistance

- Longer-term, fixed-term contract appointments against vacancies or externally raised funds
- Longer-term, permanent appointments against vacancies.

5.6 Once an application has been made, the Chief Director: People and Culture must be notified of the application.

5.7 Once the application has been facilitated, any discussion or communication must be made directly and exclusively with the close relative of the newly recruited or current employee. The newly recruited or current employee may not be involved in any discussions or negotiations relating to the appointment of their spouse or partner.

## **6 Guidelines**

### **6.1 Eligibility**

6.1.1 Close relatives of newly appointed and current NWU employees may apply for and be appointed to positions in the NWU, provided they meet the qualifications and experience requirements for the role.

6.1.2 Appointments must follow the standard recruitment and selection processes, including advertising, shortlisting, interviews and reference checks.

### **6.2 Avoidance of Conflict of Interest**

6.2.1 No employee shall be involved in the recruitment, selection, supervision, or evaluation of a close relative.

6.2.2 If a close relative of a candidate is in a position to influence the hiring decision, they must recuse themselves from the process. The People and Culture Department must ensure that a neutral party oversees the process to maintain objectivity.

6.2.3 Employees must disclose any familial relationships with applicants to the People and Culture Department as soon as they become aware of them.

6.2.4 The newly appointed or current employee may not hold a position of direct authority over a close relative, nor be involved in their recruitment, selection, supervision or evaluation.

6.2.5 All current employees are required to declare any familial relationships within NWU in accordance with the NWU Policy and Rules on Conflict of Interest and Declaration of Interest and of Gifts.

### **6.3 Recruitment and Selection Process**

6.3.1 The recruitment of a close relative shall be conducted with transparency and fairness, ensuring that no preferential treatment is given.

6.3.2 A selection committee responsible for recruitment shall include members who have no direct relationship with the candidate, to ensure impartiality.

6.3.3 The People and Culture representative shall document the entire recruitment process, including measures taken to avoid conflicts of interest.

### **6.4 Employment Conditions**

6.4.1 Close relatives appointed to positions in the NWU are subject to the same terms and conditions of employment as other employees, including performance appraisals and disciplinary procedures.

6.4.2 The employment of a close relative should not affect the employment, promotion or compensation of any other employee.

### **6.5 Attraction and Retention**

6.5.1 This policy forms part of the NWU's broader strategy to attract and retain top talent, recognising the importance of family connections in creating a supportive work environment.

6.5.2 The NWU is committed to being an employer of choice, where employees feel valued and supported, both professionally and personally.

## **6.6 Review and Monitoring**

- 6.6.1 The People and Culture Department is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy to ensure compliance and to address any potential conflicts of interest.
- 6.6.2 Any concerns or grievances relating to the appointment of close relatives must be reported to the People and Culture Department and dealt with in accordance with the University's grievance procedures.

## **6.7 Employment Equity Considerations**

- 6.7.1 Accelerating the achievement of employment equity targets is a key consideration for the NWU. Vacancies are an important means of achieving these targets.
- 6.7.2 While an emphasis on internal candidates supports employee development, it may hinder progress towards employment equity targets.
- 6.7.3 To balance these objectives, the selection process for internal candidates must also consider the impact on employment equity.
- 6.7.4 A strategic approach must be taken to ensure that equity targets are not compromised, including the potential for targeted development programmes for underrepresented groups.

## **6.8 Preferential Consideration for Attraction and Retention Purposes**

- 6.8.1 In exceptional circumstances, and as part of the University's broader attraction and retention strategy, preferential consideration may be given to the appointment of a close relative of a newly appointed or current employee who occupies a critical, scarce-skill or strategic position.
- 6.8.2 Such preferential consideration shall not equate to automatic appointment, but may include, where justified:
  - 6.8.2.1 fast-tracked shortlisting where the minimum requirements are met;
  - 6.8.2.2 priority access to temporary or contract positions aligned with the candidate's qualifications and experience, and
  - 6.8.2.3 support with career development opportunities aimed at building a pathway to longer-term employment.
- 6.8.3 Where preferential consideration is applied, documentation must clearly record the following:
  - 6.8.3.1 the rationale for deviation from standard processes;
  - 6.8.3.2 the steps taken to uphold fairness and transparency, and
  - 6.8.3.3 the measures implemented to avoid conflict of interest.
- 6.8.4 This provision may not be applied where doing so would compromise the University's employment equity objectives or result in unfair discrimination against other candidates.

## **7 Confidentiality**

All information relating to the appointment of spouses and partners shall be treated in the strictest confidence and held securely by the People and Culture department.

## **8 Non-Compliance**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment, depending on the severity of the breach.

## 9 Review of Policy

This policy must be reviewed every three years, or more frequently, if necessary, to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

Current details: (10225676) C:\Users\User\NWUNextcloud\Appointment close relatives\3P\_3.2A\_Policy appointment of Close relatives.docm  
19 November 2025

File reference: 3P\_3.2A