

A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

FOR AN

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH

BY

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PRETORIA

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis, A Needs Assessment and Implementation Guidelines for an Employee Assistance Programme at the University of the North, hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or another University, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

.....
S. L. Sithole

Dedication

This work on an A Needs Assessment and Implementation Guidelines for an Employee Assistance Programme at the University of the North is dedicated to all the employees of Universities in South Africa, especially employees of the University of the North.

Acknowledgements

This research project was made possible through the assistance of a lot of individuals and organisations. Space and time do not permit a listing of all who have contributed directly or indirectly to the success of this project. Nevertheless, the following individuals and groups contribution is worth mentioning:

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Summary

This study on An Employee Assistance Programme for the University of the North was conducted in response to the personal problems experienced by University employees and the fact that universities in South Africa are lagging behind in the provision of services to their employees.

The first step in the research process was a literature review on EAPs in Universities. A fair degree of information was obtained about such services from universities in the United States of America. Very little information was found on EAPs in South African universities. The literature from abroad also emphasized services that are provided to academic staff. Very little mention was ever made for other segments of the university employees such as the administrative staff as well as the service workers. This shortcoming made interpretation of the findings extremely difficult.

The literature review also had to take place within the current context of rapid changes that are taking place in higher education. Of significance is that this study is the first one to establish what employees of the universities feel about these changes that are currently taking place in South Africa.

A quantitative-qualitative approach was adopted for this study in which the researcher used the exploratory-descriptive design. The research population for this study were all employees of the University of the North and the total for all employees was 1781, made up as follows:

- 450 academic staff;
- 74 heads of departments
- 16 deans
- 775 service workers; and

- 10 members of the executive management.

Data collection instruments were designed for each stratum of the university employees.

The instruments were hand delivered to these samples and the following response rates were obtained per sample:

- academic staff 48%;
- heads of departments 49%;
- deans 63%;
- executive management 60%; and
- administrative staff 30%.

Because the university also has employees that can neither read nor write, two focus groups were convened as another attempt at conducting a needs assessment.

The findings obtained from all the respondents confirmed that employees of the University of the North experience personal problems such as financial, legal, marital and substance abuse that undermine their productivity. The study also confirmed that the University neither has a policy or service that addresses such problems. This deficiency notwithstanding, the University has a favourable policy for the establishment of such a kind of service.

Key words

1. Employee Assistance Programme
2. Needs assessment
3. Personal problems
4. Productivity
5. Academic staff
6. Head of department
7. Dean
8. Administrative staff
9. Management
10. Service workers

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