

මගේ අංකය :  
எமது இல.  
My Number

ඔබේ අංකය :  
உமது இல.  
Your Number

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யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், இலங்கை  
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

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20.08.2014

Dr.Sunil Jayantha Nawaratne,  
Secretary,  
Ministry of Higher Education,  
No.18, Ward Place,  
Colombo -07

Dear Sir,

**Discrimination against excellence: abuses in recruitment practices at the University of Jaffna.**

This has reference to your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014 on the above subject, requesting to submit a report on the issues raised by Jaffna University Teachers Association (JUSTA).

I wish to submit the following in this regard:

**Introduction**

Recruitment of staffs is made in the University based on the Scheme of Recruitment for the Position and by following the procedures stipulated by relevant Commission circulars

The Scheme of Recruitment for the Post of Lecturer (Prob.) clearly shows that the candidates who have First Class or Second Class (Upper Division) should be treated under one category and to be evaluated together for appointment. Further, Commission Circular 935 states that **if the Selection Committee is satisfied with the performance of the candidate/candidates interviewed, they are appointed as Lecturer (Probationary) depending on the availability of the cadre vacancies.**

The University of Jaffna has a marking scheme to evaluate the suitability of the candidates for appointment. According to the Marking Scheme of the University to evaluate the candidates for Lecturer (Probationary) under Category 1, 50 marks are assigned for qualifications - among which 50 marks will be allocated for First Class candidates and 40 marks will be allocated for the candidates who have Second Class (Upper Division)- , 20 marks are allocated for the candidates' presentation skill & subject knowledge and the balance 30 marks are allocated for the vision, creativity, Research interest and overall performance at the interview. A copy of the marking scheme is enclosed herewith. But unfortunately the Faculty of Science did not accept to follow this Marking Scheme in recruiting academic staff, though all other faculties accepted it. **A copy of the Marking Scheme marked A1 is annexed.**

In evaluating the presentation skill & subject knowledge the candidates are informed well before that they are required to make a presentation on a selected topic in the relevant subject before the Selection Committee in order to prove their teaching ability as Lecturer(Probationary). The candidates are allowed to select the topics for presentation on their own choice. All the candidates who attend the interview are requested to make their presentation, presuming that the members of the Selection Committee are the undergraduate students. On completion of the presentation, questions are asked on the topic they presented to evaluate their subject knowledge further. Based on the presentation of the Candidates, the Selection Committees award marks.

Selection Committee evaluated the candidates' vision, creativity, research interest and overall performance by asking relevant questions and verifying the research records and the information given by the applicants in their application with the documents they have. Based on the performance of the candidates and their records the Selection Committee assigns marks for overall performance including vision, creativity and research interest.

I also wish to point out here that in all the recruitments mentioned by the JUSTA, decisions of the Selection Committees were made unanimously.

Therefore the ability and suitability of the candidates were evaluated by the Selection Committees based on an **objective marking scheme** to identify the most suitable person for the appointment and made its recommendation accordingly.

#### **The Political Nexus and Pre- Council Meetings**

I do not know about pre council meetings. But, I know that one of the candidate for the Post of Vice Chancellor last time is an active member of the JUSTA. He got third majority votes and was included in the list of the first three candidates, but, he was not successful in getting such appointment.

#### **Malfeasance in Academic Recruitment**

- a. **Zoology:** No description of every awards are generally mentioned in schedule submitted to the members of the Selection Committee, but it are mentioned shortly and based on the information the Selection Committee goes through the documents submitted by the candidates. In this case, in the schedule it is mentioned as University prizes, and the Selection Committee inquired the candidates about the prizes and checked it with documents submitted by the candidates. Further enough time was given to Miss.N.Kanesharatnam, who was mentioned by JUSTA, for presentation and then asked question on her presentation to evaluate her subject knowledge. The candidate who was selected for the appointment performed well in her presentation and at overall performance and proved her subject knowledge. Hence she was identified as most suitable person for the appointment by the Selection Committee unanimously.

- b. **Computer Science:** Four candidates appeared for the interview held on 08.05.2012, but the Selection Committee disappointed with the performance of the candidates, especially on their subject knowledge and the presentation skill. Therefore the Selection Committee unanimously decided to re advertise the position. Accordingly the position was re advertised in April 2013 and four candidates who are eligible under category 1 were called for interview. Only two appeared the interview and the more suitable person among them identified by the Selection Committee was recommended for appointment. The statement that the selected person has no academic attainment is unacceptable, since he has a Master Degree in Computer Science and has good research record.
- c. **Engineering:** The candidates are out of touch with the subjects which taught in the Faculty and his presentation is very poor for a post of Senior Lecturer, Grade I. The newly established Faculty of Engineering needed senior academics with high standard of knowledge in the relevant subject to participate in updating curriculum and to teach students. The Senate nominee for the disciplines at the Faculty of Engineering are from other Universities and the Senate nominee for Civil Engineering, Prof.S.B.Weerakoon, University of Peredeniya specifically criticized the subject knowledge of the candidates who is referred by the JUSTA. The selected candidate is a recently obtained PhD in Japan and has good research records and performed well in the interview and scored high marks in the evaluation.
- d. **Sociology:** The Department of Sociology offers two different special degree programme in Sociology and Anthropology and has cadre provisions accordingly. As per the scheme of recruitment for Senior Lecturer it is clearly mentioned that the candidate should have postgraduate degree in relevant subject. The Head/Department of Sociology and Dean, Faculty of Arts did not consider the Postgraduate Degree of an applicant in Anthropology as relevant to Sociology and actually the discipline of Sociology need a person with a postgraduate qualification purely in Sociology. Hence the particular applicant was not considered for the position.
- e. **English Language Teaching:** The Post was advertised in December 2011. We received only one eligible application under category 1 of the Scheme of recruitment, and such applicant is referred by the JUSTA. The Selection Committee was fixed for 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and it was informed to him by letter dated 04.04.2012. The candidate by his letter dated 05.04.2014 requested to postpone the meeting to June 2012 to August 2012 and informed that he could assume duty, if he was selected only in 2015, after completing his PhD. Since the position was advertised to recruit a person urgently to shoulder the teaching load at ELTC we held the meeting of Selection Committee as scheduled. As he was not present for the interview, the candidates eligible under category 2 were called for an interview and selection was made. The University cannot wait for particular person for a long period where it urgently need the services.

Again the vacant position was advertised in 23.04.2013 and we received five eligible applicants under category 1 and the Selection Committee met on 10.10.2013. The candidate referred by the JUSTA informed by his letter dated 07.10.2013 his inability to attend the interview and apologized for it (**A copy of this letter is annexed as A2**). He never requested for an on-line interview as mentioned by JUSTA. The candidates who performed well obtained high marks in the evaluation were recommended by the Selection Committee for appointment.

- f. **Financial Management:** The candidate who was selected has obtained highest marks in the evaluation of the Selection Committee. As mentioned in paragraph (a)b above, in the schedule distributed to the Selection Committee it was mentioned that the candidate referred by the JUSTA has University Prize and the detail of such prizes were checked by the Selection Committee at the evaluation. Now she filed a petition at the Supreme Court of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the case is going on.
- g. **Commerce:** University of Jaffna offers different Special Degrees in Commerce, Marketing, Accounting, Human Resource Management and Financial Management and has separate Departments for such degree. Applications were called to the Department of Commerce and the candidates who have special Degree in Commerce were called for interview as per the Scheme of recruitment which says that the candidate should have Special Degree in relevant subject with class. If the argument of JUSTA is correct then we have to call all B.A. Degree holders who specialized in Geography or Tamil or any arts subjects for each and every discipline in the Faculty of Arts. The candidates who obtained high marks and rank were selected. Further, there was no candidate applied with GPA 3.63.
- h. **Sports Science:** No applicant was eligible to be considered under category 1 of the Scheme of recruitment. The candidates who called for interview under category 3 of the Scheme of recruitment were found not suitable for appointment due lack of subject knowledge needed for the Sports Science Unit. Hence no selection was made.
- i. **Non-Academic Appointments:** In terms of Commission Circular 876, list of candidates were obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education and appointments were made by following relevant procedure. Deferment of selection process of Computer Application Assistants was made following the instructions given by the Ministry of Higher Education. In the selection of Labourer, list of candidates were obtained from the Ministry and interview held on 10th and 11<sup>th</sup> of July to recruit Labourers.


## Conclusion

The University recruits human resource to perform the duties expected from such persons to satisfy the need of departments. Especially in academic positions, it expects persons with academic qualifications, teaching ability, subject knowledge, and research interest and with creativity. For identifying such Qualities University has an Objective Marking Scheme approved by the Senate and based on this Selection Committee evaluates the candidates to identify most suitable person. Further in the Selection Committee for Senior Lecturer/ Lecturer, apart from the Vice Chancellor and two Council members, Dean of the relevant Faculty, Head of the relevant Department of Study and a Senate nominee knowledgeable in the subjects are serving. If the University system wanted to select a person only with OGPA and University prizes there is no need to have an interview to evaluate the candidates by a Selection Committee, instead an administrative officer or a support staff who is handling the subject can select a person for academic positions.

Hence I reiterate that the University of Jaffna selects most suitable candidates for each position by evaluating them with an objective marking scheme and by following the procedure adopted by the UGC in recruiting staff.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,

  
Professor Miss. Vasanthi Arasaratnam  
Vice Chancellor

**VICE CHANCELLOR**  
University of Jaffna  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka