

# Assessing your leadership abilities... to optimize your leadership capacity



A scientific, customised assessment process to provide senior academics at Stellenbosch University (SU) with insight into their own leadership abilities



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## SU COMPETENCIES :

### 1. Management/ Leadership

- People development
- Managing organisational dynamics
- Leadership

### 2. Work-/Process-related

- Ensuring sustainability
- Strategic planning

### 3. Decision-making/ Problem-solving

- Managing complexity through systems thinking
- Pro-active decision-making

### 4. Client/Stakeholder engagement or management

### 5. Personal management

- Adapting and coping
- Self-responsibility/  
Conscientiousness



## Introduction

We have developed a tailor-made assessment centre for senior academic leaders at SU. This is available to all vice-deans, executive heads, heads of department and heads of divisions in academic environments. The programme is based on international best practice, is scientific, and most important has been developed specifically with an in-depth understanding of what it means to be a successful academic leader at SU.

## What is an assessment centre?

This is a process during which various simulations and assessments are used to determine current ability, skills and training needs as well as potential – with regards to management and people skills —by evaluating performance in the assessment centre against a number of competencies which are regarded as being of critical importance for being effective in a position or role.

## Benefits of being assessed

Your insight into your ability to lead, manage and develop a team of people is increased, providing you with clarity on your strengths and development areas. This self-insight, arrived at on the basis of an in-depth feedback session, will inform and enhance your ability to optimise your learning on any future development programmes.

## What it involves

1. Completing a series of on-line questionnaires that will give you an opportunity to understand the behaviour patterns that come naturally to you.
2. Participation in a one-day assessment centre that will involve a simulation of an academic department (in a series of exercises you will be given an opportunity to outline how you would deal with a variety of demands and conflicting priorities).
3. Feedback is the next step in the process. This will enhance self-insight and promote self-learning and guide you in terms of future development.

## FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS:

- *"The in-basket exercise and role play create a real-life scenario - I almost felt as if it reflected my own in box !"*
- *"These exercises were well thought through, in my opinion, and were a very good reflection of the day to day task of a departmental chair."*
- *"I could perfectly associate the case with what is happening in an Academic environment ."*
- *"I found it stimulating and relevant - it was clear to me that those who compiled the material had a good grasp of the academic environment."*
- *"I found this challenging though intriguing and informative. It was definitely enriching."*
- *"I felt I achieved something, even if I did not know the outcome! "*
- *"Alhoewel ek aanvanklik letwat skepties was, was dit eventueel vir my 'n besonder verrykende proses ."*



## Aspects and dimensions of assessment

**Personality questionnaires** – to gain an understanding of your likely behaviour in the work environment

**Problem-solving** – to gain an understanding of your problem-solving ability (as it relates to what you are required to do in your position)

**Simulation exercises** – to afford you an opportunity to demonstrate your insight into people and task management; to assess your ability to use your discretion; and to give you the chance to demonstrate your management style

### After the assessment

Each participant will be given comprehensive one-on-one feedback about his or her various strengths and competencies. Any particular development areas concerning the competencies required of an academic leader at SU will also be identified.

### What sets this programme apart?

- ◇ The simulation of an academic department used in the assessment was developed with the input of a group of senior academics from SU. Feedback from the pilot project has validated this as reflective of the demands and requirements of managing an academic department.
- ◇ Your participation in the programme will give you access to a rigorously defined set of competencies that have been verified as relevant and core to the role of a leader within a university. The competencies are supported by clear proficiency and behavioural indicators, which will form the basis of measuring your growth and learning.
- ◇ Your personality preferences are mapped and integrated with the results from the simulation exercises to produce a holistic overview. This forms the basis of an in-depth feedback session that will inform and enhance your ability to optimise your learning on a development programme.

### How to become part of this process

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