

Inclusive Employment Case Study

Instructions: this case study should be read as a group. The training facilitator can read the case study outside, or group members can volunteer to do so. Different trainees will be assigned different roles to offer their perspective on the situation during these pauses.

The Case Study:

University A and Employer B have created a new and exciting partnership to create pathways for recent university graduates to enter the workforce. University A has realigned their mission over the past 5 years to focus more on Economic Inclusion and creating pathways to work for students who are from underrepresented or economically excluded groups. They are partnering with Employer B to provide internship opportunities for their students each year. Employer B has agreed to take on 10 paid interns per semester. While there is no guarantee that interns will receive a job offer at the end of their internship, Employer B is often hiring for entry level roles and has informally promised University A that they will offer jobs to some of the interns who perform well, depending on job openings and availability.

In order to receive the internship, University A invites students to apply. The university has the power to sort through applications and select students based on their application. The application includes information about the internships that are available that semester (which vary by semester), asks about a student's academic background and professional interests, and also gathers demographic information about the student, which is voluntarily declared (optional to share).

This semester, University A received 53 applications for 10 internship roles. The university, in alignment with their recent investment in Economic Inclusion and DEI, has started to pay more attention to the demographic make-up of the students offered the internship program. Simultaneously, Employer B has recently shown interest in expanding the diversity of their talent pool and they see this internship program as one way to do this. Employer B is especially excited about hiring more young people, more persons with disabilities and more women into the company.

The two Career Services Staff who review and assign the 10 internship spots agree on 9 applicants, and disagree on the last one. There are two similar students, both with the same major and similar academic track records. They both have strong statements of interest and applications, but one is a female student with a physical disability and the other is a male student without a declared disability. The male student has slightly higher grades and more extracurricular activities on his CV vs. the female student with the disability.

The first career services staff states that they believe the student with the disability should receive the internship spot. The career services staff knows that Employer B has recently assessed and updated their workspace to be accessible for persons with disabilities in partnership with the Federation of Kenyan Employers and multiple Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The career services staff knows that not all employers will have accessible workspaces and argues that the student with the disability should be given this internship, as she has a comparable resume to the young male applicant but will have less opportunity as many workspaces in Kenya are still inaccessible.

The second career services staff states that the young male student has a higher GPA and more relevant extracurricular activities versus the female student with the disability. The career services staff states that they must give the internship to the most qualified candidate, and states that the male candidate has higher qualifications and therefore should be the one to get the 10th internship spot.

- Please assume the role you have been assigned.
- Based on your perspective / role, who do you think should get the internship spot? Why?

- What questions do you have, that could help you make this decision?

Roles (please print these on separate sheets of paper, or print them out and cut and hand out each role separately):

- **Intern with a disability / job seeker:** You were born into an upper-middle class family in Nairobi and were grateful to have parents who advocated for your inclusion into strong academic institutions throughout your education. It is your last semester at school and you are applying for jobs. You were called back to a couple of job interviews, but once they learned that you have a physical disability these companies did not extend an offer. You know you will be a strong asset to a company and are excited about this company and read online more about their investment in DEI.
- **Talent Acquisition Officer at Employer B:** the talent acquisition officer recently joined the talent acquisition team and is thrilled to be working with a leading company to recruit talent. While they are enthusiastic about inclusive hiring, their background is not related to DEI and they don't know much about the legal implications of selecting one job candidate over another due to identity. The talent acquisition officer is female, divorced, with three kids.
- **HR Officer at Employer B:** The HR officer started their career 2 years ago; although they have had a long career spanning 25 years, they shifted their career and recently entered the world of HR. They are excited about learning and are no longer focused on career advancement. Their kids are grown up and moved out of the house.
- **Hiring Manager at Employer B:** the hiring manager desperately needs new talent to work on their team. They have had great success hiring and training interns with different identities over the last couple of years from this internship programme, and are looking for someone who is bright, enthusiastic and quick to learn. This person is in their mid-30s, single and has no kids.
- **Legal Team at Employer B:** The Legal representative is in charge of ensuring compliance with national laws and regulations. Last year, Employer B was sued for discrimination during the recruitment process, and since then the legal representative was brought on to give input into recruiting cases. This person identifies as male, is married and has 1 kid.
- **University President:** the university president has held their role for 6 years. They joined the university and immediately invested in initiatives promoting Economic Inclusion. The president is typically focused on the big picture and doesn't typically weigh in on micro level decisions. The president identifies as female, is married, and has a child with Autism.
- **University Career Services Staff 1:** this career services staff joined the university 3 years ago. They previously came from working at a vocational training centre. This staff member was excited about the university's public commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and this is one of the key reasons that they applied to work here. This staff member identifies as female, cis gendered¹, married and has 1 child.
- **University Career Services Staff 2:** this career services staff has worked at the institution for 10 years. While they are not against the DEI initiatives that the university is investing in, they disagree with approaches rooted in affirmative action. This staff member identifies as male, cis gendered, is married, and has two children – both girls.

¹ Cis-gendered: a term used to describe a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their sex assigned at birth.

