

Understanding the Importance of the Employment Equity Act



Why is the Employment Equity Act important in the workplace and when was it introduced in South Africa?

The question of why the *Employment Equity Act* is important, as well as whether it is relevant, is still raised. This article will answer these burning questions by looking at the definition of what the Employment Equity Act is, as well as the purpose it serves.

What is the Employment Equity Act?

According to the *Department of Labour's* 'Act Summary', the Act has two main purposes, namely–

- 'promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination'
- 'implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.'

When the Employment Equity Act was passed in 1998 the political climate in South Africa was changing. While discrimination and inequality were the norm, there was a need to *ensure* change and to enhance equality in the South African workplace.

As you can see from the Department of Labour's definition of the purposes of the Act, it was established as a means to address these inequalities.

Why is the Employment Equity Act important?

- The importance of the Employment Equity Act is an extension of its purpose. Given the diversity of people in South Africa, fair and equal representation is important to ensure that all citizens have the ***necessary access to employment opportunities***.
- Having fair access to employment should, firstly, ***reduce the level of unemployment*** in the country. Secondly, by allowing fair and equitable access to the workforce, businesses are more likely to employ the most suitable individuals for available positions, and their selection based on merit rather than demographics.
- By ensuring that positions are filled based on merit, the quality of the workforce is improved. This, in turn, leads to better provision of quality goods and services, which has the potential to ***instil trust in South African businesses*** both locally and internationally.

Why Is the Employment Equity Act relevant?

The Employment Equity Act is relevant because of its potential to improve employment standards. This, in turn, results in a long-term improvement in the quality of and trust in South African businesses. If this is implemented properly, it has the potential to stabilise and improve our economy, which is certainly relevant, especially for those who rely on such fairness to ensure their employment and development.

Contact us to get the best possible advice from experts in the field of legal compliance. At **SERR Synergy** we are dedicated to helping businesses meet the requirements of the Employment Equity Act, for their own benefit and that of the country as a whole.

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