TECHNO BOX

Comprehensive HR Policy Manual

Effective Date: December 6, 2025
Version: 1.0
Last Updated: December 2025
Classification: Internal - Confidential

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. COMPANY OVERVIEW AND CULTURE

1.1 About Techno Box

Techno Box is a boutique software development company specializing in AI-powered automation solutions, mobile app development, and enterprise integration services. We serve mid-market and enterprise clients across fintech, healthcare, and e-commerce sectors. Our culture emphasizes quality over quantity, predictable outcomes, and sustainable growth.

1.2 Employment Classification

This policy applies to all categories of employees:

- **Full-Time:** Permanent employees on payroll; eligible for all benefits
- **Contract:** Fixed-term engagement (typically 6-24 months); pro-rated benefits
- **Consultants:** Specialized expertise for specific projects; independent contractor arrangement
- **Interns:** 3-6 month learning engagement; structured mentorship; separate policy addendum

1.3 Core Cultural Principles

- **Quality First:** Code excellence and delivery predictability prioritized over speed
- **Sustainable Pace:** Burn-out prevention through realistic planning and respect for personal time
- **Ownership Mentality:** Each employee owns their domain; accountability and authority balanced
- **Transparency:** Open communication; no hidden politics or surprise decisions
- **Craft Pride:** Engineers take pride in their work; continuous improvement ingrained
- **Client Success:** Long-term client relationships built on trust and exceptional delivery
- **Team Over Individual:** Collective success; no hero culture or individual stardom

1.4 Policy Acknowledgment

All employees digitally acknowledge receipt of this manual via HR Portal at joining. Policy amendments communicated via email with 10-day implementation notice (exceptions for legal compliance). Employees may request policy clarification or exceptions via formal request to hr@technobox.com.

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2. EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AND WORKPLACE CONDUCT

2.1 Standards of Professional Conduct

Techno Box employees maintain professional conduct standards:

- **Respect for Colleagues:** Courtesy, respect, and professionalism in all interactions
- **Punctuality and Reliability:** Honor commitments on time and quality
- **Ownership:** Take responsibility for outcomes; no blame-shifting or excuse-making
- **Continuous Learning:** Stay updated with technology trends; invest in skill development
- **Client Focus:** Understand client needs; deliver solutions aligned with business objectives
- **Ethical Conduct:** Honesty, integrity, and adherence to company policies

2.2 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Techno Box maintains zero-tolerance for discrimination and harassment:

Prohibited Conduct:

- Sexual harassment: Unwelcome conduct of sexual nature (verbal, physical, written, digital)
- Gender-based harassment: Derogatory comments or behavior based on gender identity
- Discrimination: Unfair treatment based on protected characteristics (race, religion, caste, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status)
- Bullying: Repeated unreasonable behavior creating hostile environment
- Retaliation: Adverse action against employee reporting violations

Complaint Mechanism:

- Informal: Discuss with manager or HR representative
- Formal: Submit written complaint to Complaints Committee within 30 days of incident
- Investigation: Commenced within 3 working days; concluded within 21 days
- Confidentiality: Information restricted to investigating team; identity protected
- Anti-Retaliation: No adverse action against complainant; violations result in disciplinary action against retaliating party

Support Provided:

- Counseling and emotional support
- Temporary transfer if needed for safety
- Flexible hours during investigation period
- Legal referral if external action desired

2.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Confidential Information Protection:

Employees protect confidential company and client information:

- Client source code, architecture, and business logic: Strictly confidential
- Client contracts, pricing, and business models: No disclosure
- Employee personal data: GDPR and local privacy laws complied with
- Company financials, strategy, and unreleased products: Internal only

Consequences: Unauthorized disclosure results in:

- Immediate suspension pending investigation
- Termination if substantiated
- Legal action for damages (especially client data breach)
- Criminal liability if law violated (IPC Section 72, data protection acts)

Personal Use Restrictions:

- Social media: No posting of company information, client details, or project screenshots
- Public forums: No discussion of company work or clients without approval
- Personal projects: Cannot use company resources or knowledge for competing ventures

2.4 Conflict of Interest Policy

Employees disclose potential conflicts:

- Personal relationships with managers or colleagues in reporting chain
- Ownership interest in vendors, clients, or competitors
- Consulting or employment with competitor or complementary company
- Investments in companies we do business with exceeding threshold (₹10,000 value)
- Receipt of gifts or benefits from external parties exceeding ₹5,000

Management Approach:

- Disclosure made to HR in writing; assessed for severity

- Mitigation: Recusal from decisions, arm's-length arrangement, or role modification
- Non-disclosure: Grounds for disciplinary action if discovered
- Periodic certification: Annual conflict of interest sign-off required

2.5 Code of Conduct Violations and Discipline

Progressive discipline applied to policy violations:

Violation Type	First Offense	Second Offense (within 12 mo)	Third Offense	Pattern
Attendance/Tardiness	Verbal warning	Written warning	1-day suspension	Termination
Code quality/missed deadlines	Coaching + support	Performance plan	Final warning	Separation
Policy violation (minor)	Written warning	1-day suspension	2-day suspension	Termination
Policy violation (major)	Suspension (3-5 days)	Final written warning	Termination	—
Gross misconduct	Immediate termination	—	—	—

Gross Misconduct (Immediate Termination):

- Theft or fraud
- Violence or threats
- Sexual harassment or discrimination
- Gross insubordination
- Breach of confidentiality causing material damage
- Working under influence of drugs/alcohol
- Violation of law or regulatory requirement

Due Process: Before disciplinary action, employee given opportunity to explain; manager and HR discuss context; decision documented; appeal available to HR Director within 5 working days.

3. RECRUITMENT AND ONBOARDING EXCELLENCE

3.1 Recruitment Philosophy

Techno Box recruits for quality and cultural fit:

Hiring Principles:

- Long-term perspective: Hire people who will grow with company
- Cultural alignment: Values and work style compatibility assessed
- Skill assessment: Technical competency evaluated rigorously
- Sustainable pace: Avoid hiring for unsustainable workload
- Diversity: Intentional recruitment across geographies, backgrounds, experiences

3.2 Recruitment Process

Stage 1 - Screening: Resume review; phone screening for communication skills and interest

Stage 2 - Technical Assessment: Coding problem (30-60 min) or design exercise depending on role

- Real-world problem; solution quality and approach evaluated
- Code review standards applied (readability, efficiency, testing approach)
- Feedback provided to candidate; learning opportunity emphasized

Stage 3 - Technical Interview:

- System design discussion (architecture, trade-offs, scalability)
- Past project deep-dive (role, decisions, learnings)
- Code review of candidate's own project (GitHub portfolio)
- 1-2 rounds depending on seniority

Stage 4 - Culture and Values Interview:

- Questions on sustainability, work approach, and collaboration
- Assessment of alignment with Techno Box principles
- Discussion of work-life balance expectations
- Team dynamic compatibility explored

Stage 5 - Client Engagement (If Applicable):

- For client-facing roles: Meeting with client stakeholder
- Ability to communicate technical concepts to business users assessed

Stage 6 - Offer and Verification:

- Reference checks: Previous manager and 2 colleagues interviewed
- Background verification: Education, employment history, criminal record check
- Offer extended with clear terms and conditions

3.3 Offer Letter Content

Appointment letters include:

- Position title, reporting manager, team, and location
- Nature of employment (permanent, contract, consultant)
- Start date, probation duration, and notice period
- Base salary, bonus structure, and benefits eligibility
- Work schedule and remote work eligibility
- Equipment provided and IT access setup
- Confidentiality and IP assignment agreement
- Non-compete clause (if applicable; 6-12 months post-employment)
- At-will employment clause
- Policy acknowledgment requirement

3.4 Probation Period and Confirmation

Probation Duration:

- 3 months: Experienced hires (5+ years)
- 6 months: Mid-career (2-5 years)
- 6 months: Fresh graduates or career changers

During Probation:

- Structured onboarding program with assigned mentor
- Bi-weekly progress reviews (manager and mentor)
- Clear success criteria communicated on Day 1
- Support provided for ramp-up (training, pair programming, code reviews)
- Either party may terminate with 1 week notice; no severance provided

Success Criteria:

- Technical competency demonstrated on assigned tasks
- Code quality and craft standards met
- Team collaboration and communication effective
- Attendance and punctuality meeting expectations
- Cultural alignment evident

Probation Outcomes:

- **Confirmed:** Employee transitions to permanent status; confirmation letter issued
- **Extended:** Rare; requires VP approval and clear rationale; maximum 2 months additional
- **Not Confirmed:** Role not suitable; constructive separation discussion; referral assistance provided

3.5 Onboarding Process

Pre-Joining (2 weeks before):

- Equipment ordered: Laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse, peripherals
- IT provisioning: Email, code repository access, VPN, development tools
- Project assignment: Mentor and project identified; codebase documentation prepared
- Welcome package: Company handbook, culture guide, useful resources

Day 1:

- Welcome by manager and team
- Workspace setup: Desk, monitors, chair adjustment
- IT setup: Laptop configuration, account credentials, VPN access
- Office tour: Facilities, parking, cafeteria, emergency exits
- Compliance: Policy acknowledgment, confidentiality agreement signing
- Team introductions: One-on-one with team members

Week 1 - Technical Onboarding:

- Development environment setup: IDE, tools, local database
- Codebase orientation: Architecture overview, coding standards, deployment process
- First task: Small, well-defined task to understand workflow
- Pair programming: 2-3 sessions with experienced engineer
- Code review: First submissions reviewed carefully with detailed feedback

Week 2-3 - Project Deep-Dive:

- Feature or component ownership: Small deliverable assigned
- Architecture understanding: How their work integrates with broader system
- Client context: Understanding business problem being solved
- Team dynamics: Cross-functional collaboration initiated

Week 4-6 - Ramp-Up and Assessment:

- Increasing autonomy: Larger tasks with less supervision
- Code review feedback applied: Quality improvement visible
- Team participation: Contributing to standups, retrospectives, planning
- Mentor check-ins: Weekly progress discussion and support

Week 7-12 - Integration and Confirmation:

- Full responsibility: Working independently on assigned features
- Code review standards met: Submitting quality code consistently
- Team collaboration: Effective communication and teamwork
- Confirmation Discussion: Manager assesses readiness; employee confirms comfort

4. WORK SCHEDULE AND TIME MANAGEMENT

4.1 Standard Work Schedule

Weekly Schedule:

- 5-day work week (Monday-Friday)
- 40 hours per week standard
- 8 hours per day (includes lunch break)
- Flexibility: Core hours 10 AM - 3 PM; arrival anytime 8 AM - 11 AM permitted

Work Location:

- Office-based: Primary work location at designated Techno Box office
- Remote eligibility: Project-dependent; requires manager approval (see Section 5)
- Travel: Client site visits as required; advance notice and planning expected

Shift Arrangements:

- Standard shifts: 9 AM - 6 PM or 10 AM - 7 PM
- Flexible shifts: Start between 8 AM - 11 AM; end proportionally
- Compressed weeks: 4-day weeks (10 hours/day) subject to manager approval and project needs

4.2 Attendance Tracking and Expectations

Biometric Attendance:

- Office-based employees punch in/out via biometric system
- Accurate time tracking for payroll and leave calculation
- Tardiness: Arrival after 11:30 AM (assuming 9 AM start) recorded as late
- Early departure: Leaving before 5:30 PM without manager approval recorded
- Pattern: 3+ late arrivals or early departures in a month triggers manager discussion

Work From Office Requirements:

- Minimum attendance: 4 days/week office-based (unless remote arrangement approved)
- Core team meetings: Typically Thursday for full team in-office requirement
- Client meetings: In-office when client visiting or meeting at client site
- Onboarding/training: First month primarily office-based

4.3 Overtime and Extra Hours

Overtime Definition: Work beyond 40 hours/week

Overtime Compensation:

- Additional pay: 1.5x hourly rate for overtime hours
- Compensatory off-time (CTO): If preferred, can take CTO in lieu of pay (1 hour CTO per 1 hour overtime)
- Approval required: Overtime pre-approved by manager; emergencies communicated same day

Maximum Overtime:

- Cap: 50 hours overtime per quarter (150 hours annually)
- Chronic overtime: Flagged to HR; workload review conducted; project adjustment made
- Culture: Sustainable pace emphasized; regular overtime discouraged and investigated

Unused Overtime Pay:

- Paid out: Cannot accumulate; paid in following month or encashed at separation
- CTO usage: Must be availed within 30 days; unused CTO forfeited (not encashed)

4.4 Break Policy and Rest Periods

Breaks During Work Day:

- Lunch break: 1 hour (typically 1-2 PM)
- Coffee/tea breaks: 2x 15-minute breaks (morning and afternoon)
- Breaks are mandatory; encourage stepping away from desk
- Remote workers: Breaks expected; manager respects offline time

Rest Between Shifts:

- Minimum 12 hours rest between end of shift and start of next shift
- If overtime required, rest period extended compensatorily
- Night work: Special provisions for shift work (see Section 4.1)

No Work During Off-Hours:

- After 7 PM: Work communication discouraged; emergencies only
- Weekends: Work avoided unless critical incident response required
- On-call rotation: Compensated (additional pay or days off)

5. LEAVE AND ABSENCE POLICY

5.1 Paid Leave Entitlements

All full-time employees receive annual leave allocation:

Leave Type	Annual Days	Accrual	Eligibility	Notes
Earned Leave (EL)	20 days	Monthly (1.67 days)	Day 1 of employment	Accrues from joining date
Casual Leave (CL)	6 days	Discrete days	After probation completion	No rollover; month-end forfeiture
Sick Leave (SL)	10 days	Discrete days	Day 1 of employment	Medical cert >2 days required
Paid Leave (Optional)	1-2 days	Discretionary	Bi-annual basis	Approval-based; can skip if not needed
Restricted Holidays	10 days	Fixed calendar	All employees	National/regional public holidays
Special Leave	As applicable	Specific situations	Per policy	Death, emergency, etc.

Leave Accrual and Carryover:

- Earned leave accrues at 1.67 days per month
- Carryover: Maximum 10 days can carry to next year; balance >10 days forfeited
- Negative balance: Cannot take leave beyond accrued balance without manager approval
- Payment on separation: Unused earned leave encashed at last drawn salary rate; casual leave forfeited

5.2 Special Leave Provisions

Maternity Leave:

- Entitlement: 180 days (26 weeks) per child up to 2 children
- Eligibility: Female employees
- Structure: 6 weeks pre-delivery; 12 weeks post-delivery; remaining 8 weeks flexible
- Extension: Up to 12 months unpaid leave available; benefits continue

Paternity Leave:

- Entitlement: 10 days paid

- Eligibility: Male employees within 2 years of child birth
- Purpose: Support spouse post-delivery; child bonding

Adoption Leave:

- Entitlement: 60 days (8.5 weeks)
- Eligibility: Both parents; limited to one adoption
- Purpose: Integration of adopted child into family

Bereavement Leave:

- Entitlement: 3-5 days paid leave
- Scope: Death of immediate family (spouse, parent, child, sibling)
- Scope expansion: Manager discretion for extended family (grandparent, in-law)
- Purpose: Funeral, ceremony, and initial grief support

Medical Leave:

- Entitlement: 5 additional days if sick leave exhausted
- Condition: Medical certificate required
- Purpose: Recovery from serious illness or medical procedure
- Carryover: Does not accumulate; annual fresh entitlement

5.3 Leave Application Process

Request Submission:

1. Employee submits leave request via HR Portal minimum 5 working days in advance
2. Emergency/sick leave: Notification to manager same day via email/phone
3. Request includes: Leave dates, leave type, reason (optional), coverage plan

Approval Workflow:

- Manager reviews request within 1 working day (checks project deadlines, team capacity)
- Auto-approval: If no conflict; notification sent to employee
- Escalation: If conflict, manager discusses with employee; finds alternative dates or escalates to HR
- Notification: Team informed of approved leave; coverage plan confirmed

Medical Documentation:

- Sick leave >2 consecutive days: Medical certificate from registered practitioner required within 3 days of return
- Doctor visit <1 hour: May be taken as leave; certificate optional

Return to Work:

- Employee notifies team of return date
- Manager confirms attendance in HR Portal
- Knowledge transfer: Briefing on critical activities during absence if needed

5.4 Leave Without Pay (LWP)

LWP available for extended personal circumstances:

Reason	Maximum Duration	Frequency	Conditions
Personal exigency	15 days	Annually	Manager approval; documented reason
Sabbatical	3-6 months	Once in career	5+ years service; 2-month notice; 50% salary maintained
Higher education	Up to 2 years	Once	Full-time course; job retained; PF continues
Caregiver leave	60 days	Annually	Caring for ill family member; medical certificate
Marriage	10 days	Once in employment	Wedding-related activities

Conditions for LWP:

- Advance approval required (except emergency)
- Salary not paid for LWP period
- Benefits (insurance, PF) continue
- Job security: Position held; return guaranteed on end date
- Non-return: Treated as resignation if employee absent beyond approved LWP end date

5.5 Unplanned Absence and Absenteeism Policy

Unexpected Absence:

- **Notification:** Manager and HR informed within 2 hours via phone/email
- **Documentation:** Medical certificate for absence >1 day required within 3 days of return
- **Deduction:** First absence deducted from earned leave; if EL exhausted, casual leave used; if all leave exhausted, no pay for absent day
- **Tracking:** Absences logged in HR system; pattern flagged

Absence Without Leave (AWL):

- Definition: Unplanned absence without manager notification or approval
- Consequence: First occurrence triggers written warning + manager meeting
- Pattern (3+ AWL in 6 months): Escalation to HR; disciplinary action considered

- Severe pattern (5+ days consecutive AWL): Treated as abandonment; termination considered

Abandonment of Job:

- Definition: Absent for 5+ consecutive days without communication
- Process: Manager attempts contact via phone/email; certified letter sent
- Final notice: Employer may terminate employment as resignation; severance may not apply

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6. COMPENSATION AND INCENTIVES FRAMEWORK

6.1 Compensation Philosophy

Techno Box compensation:

- **Sustainable Model:** Competitive but not inflated; supports business longevity
- **Predictable:** Base salary stable; bonuses discretionary but communicated
- **Equitable:** Equal pay for equal work; gender and demographic parity reviewed
- **Performance-Aligned:** Quality and delivery excellence rewarded; underperformance addressed
- **Market-Competitive:** Benchmarked to software industry; annual adjustments for inflation

6.2 Compensation Structure

Fixed Component (75-80%):

- Base salary: Reflects role, experience, market benchmark, and performance
- Cost of living allowance (COLA): Indexed to inflation; reviewed annually
- Dearness allowance (DA): For inflation protection; linked to CPI (where applicable)
- Special allowances: HRA, transport, communication (as per company policy and employee location)

Variable Component (20-25%):

- **Quarterly Bonus:** 0-10% of salary; based on company profitability and team delivery metrics
- **Annual Bonus:** 0-20% of salary; based on annual performance rating and company financial performance
- **Project Bonus:** Special one-time bonus (₹50,000-500,000) for critical project success
- **Referral Bonus:** ₹10,000-50,000 for successful hire; paid after 6-month retention

6.3 Salary Reviews and Adjustments

Annual Salary Review (January):

- Conducted for all employees during appraisal period
- Factors considered: Inflation (minimum 3% cost adjustment), merit increase (0-7%), promotion increase
- Communication: Individual meetings with manager; reasons for adjustment explained
- Effective date: February 1 or next month if later

Promotion Increase:

- Minimum increase: 10-15% upon promotion
- Additional benefits: Stock options (if applicable), title change, new compensation band
- Communication: HR and manager jointly communicate promotion

Performance-Based Adjustment:

- Special increases (mid-year) for exceptional performance
- Rare; typically reserved for role expansion or significant achievement
- Amount: Negotiated between manager and HR; typically 5-10% additional increase

No Salary Reduction Policy:

- Salary never reduced except with documented mutual consent
- Exception: Role demotion (rare) may include negotiated reduction; requires formal agreement

6.4 Benefits Package

Health and Medical Insurance:

- **Group Health Insurance:** Comprehensive coverage for employee + 3 family members
- **Coverage includes:** Hospitalization, outpatient, maternity, pre-post hospitalization, medical evacuation
- **Premium:** Employer-funded; employee bears minimal cost (optional enhancement available)
- **Network:** Cashless facilities across 5,000+ hospitals nationwide
- **Retention post-exit:** Retirees receive reduced-premium continuation (opt-in)

Life and Disability Insurance:

- **Life Insurance:** 15x monthly salary (inclusive of variable component); coverage for dependents
- **Accidental Disability:** 10x annual salary if work-related accident causes disability
- **Critical Illness:** Additional coverage for cancer, cardiac event, stroke (₹10 lakhs)
- **Dependent Coverage:** Spouse and children optional coverage available

Retirement Savings:

- **Employee Provident Fund (EPF):** 12% employee + 12% employer contribution; vested after 5 years
- **Gratuity:** Payable after 5 years service; 15 days final salary × years service / 30
- **Superannuation:** Additional 5% employer contribution for employees with 10+ years service

Wellness Programs:

- **Fitness:** Gym membership reimbursement (₹400/month) or home fitness budget (₹500/month)
- **Health Check-ups:** Annual full health check-up fully covered; biennial check-ups for senior staff

- **Mental Health:** Counseling services (₹2,000/month budget) and stress management workshops
- **Nutrition:** Quarterly nutrition counseling sessions (complimentary)
- **Yoga and Meditation:** In-house classes offered twice weekly (free participation)

Financial Assistance:

- **Personal Loan:** Up to 3x monthly salary at 7% interest; 36-60 month tenure
- **Home Loan:** Up to 85% property value at 4.5% interest; assistance with documentation
- **Education Loan:** ₹2 lakhs per child for higher education; 5% interest
- **Emergency Assistance:** ₹50,000 emergency hardship fund for unforeseen circumstances (medical emergency, family crisis)

6.5 Stock Options (ESOP)

Eligibility: All full-time employees after 1 year service

Grant Schedule:

- Initial grant: Post-confirmation (end of probation)
- Annual refresh: Select performers receive additional grants
- New joiners: Offered as part of compensation for mid-senior roles

Vesting Schedule: 4-year vesting with 1-year cliff

- Year 1: 25% vesting (cliff)
- Years 2-4: 25% per year (linear vesting)
- If departure before cliff: Options forfeited
- Partial departure: Pro-rata vesting applicable

Strike Price and Valuation:

- Strike price: Fair Market Value (FMV) at time of grant
- Valuation: Determined by board annually; independent valuation for fairness
- Exercise timing: Typically at exit events (IPO, acquisition, major funding)

Exit Scenarios:

- **Voluntary Resignation:** 90 days post-departure to exercise vested options
- **Involuntary Termination:** 180 days to exercise vested options
- **Retirement:** 5 years to exercise vested options
- **Death/Disability:** Executor or beneficiary may exercise options

6.6 Taxation and Statutory Deductions

Standard Monthly Deductions:

- Income Tax: As per IT Act 1961; calculated on gross salary
- Employee Provident Fund: 12% of basic salary
- Professional Tax: ₹200/month (state-dependent)
- Employees' State Insurance (ESI): If applicable based on salary threshold

Voluntary Deductions:

- Health insurance premium (employee share if any)
- Loan EMI repayment
- Charitable donations
- Tuition reimbursement
- Union membership dues (if applicable)

Tax Planning Assistance:

- Annual tax statement provided by January 31
- Tax guidance: HR provides 80C, 80D investment recommendations
- House loan benefits: Documentation assistance for deduction claims
- Advance tax guidance: Available upon request

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7. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SKILL ENHANCEMENT

7.1 Career Development Philosophy

Techno Box invests in employee growth:

- **Skill Development:** Technical and soft skills enhancement encouraged
- **Internal Mobility:** Career path within Techno Box emphasized
- **Learning Culture:** Continuous education supported with time and budget
- **Mentorship:** Pairing with experienced engineers for guidance
- **Leadership Pipeline:** High performers developed for management roles

7.2 Career Paths and Progression

Individual Contributor Track:

Level	Title	Responsibility
IC-1	Junior Engineer	Core technical skills; follows guidelines; supported by mentors
IC-2	Software Engineer	Independent contributor; manages own tasks; contributes to team
IC-3	Senior Engineer	Complex problem-solving; mentors juniors; architectural input
IC-4	Staff Engineer	Technical leadership; cross-team influence; architecture decisions
IC-5	Principal Engineer	Organizational technical strategy; industry thought leadership

Management Track:

Level	Title	Responsibility
M-1	Team Lead	2-4 reports; team coordination; first-level people decisions
M-2	Engineering Manager	5-10 reports; hiring, appraisals, career development; delivery responsibility
M-3	Senior Manager	Multiple teams; organizational strategy; cross-functional collaboration
M-4	Director	Business unit leadership; P&L responsibility; strategic planning

Specialist Track:

- **Platform Engineer:** Deep expertise in infrastructure, deployment, DevOps
- **Security Engineer:** Information security and compliance specialization
- **Solutions Architect:** Client-facing technical leadership; solution design
- **Tech Lead:** Without people management; individual contributor with architectural input

Progression Criteria:

Dimension	Weight	Assessment
Technical Competency	35%	Mastery of current level; readiness for next
Impact and Contribution	25%	Business value creation; project delivery
Soft Skills	20%	Communication, collaboration, leadership potential
Consistency	10%	Reliability, follow-through, accountability
Growth Mindset	10%	Learning, adaptability, initiative

7.3 Learning and Development Budget

Annual Learning Budget: ₹40,000 per employee per year

Eligible Expenses:

- Online courses: Pluralsight, Udemy, Coursera, LinkedIn Learning subscriptions
- Certifications: AWS, GCP, Azure, Kubernetes, Docker, etc.
- Conferences: Tech conferences with registration and travel expenses
- Books: Professional development books (quarterly purchasing)
- Workshops: Internal or external technical workshops

Approval Process:

1. Employee proposes learning opportunity with business justification
2. Manager approves (typically within 5 days)
3. HR processes registration and payment
4. Post-completion: Employee shares learnings with team (brown-bag session or document)

Budget Flexibility:

- Unused budget: Does not rollover; utilization encouraged by November
- Budget sharing: Collaborative budget for team learning initiatives
- Extra budget: For critical certifications, may request additional allocation (VP approval)

7.4 Internal Knowledge Sharing

Brown-Bag Sessions:

- Bi-weekly informal learning sessions (30-45 minutes)
- Employee or invited expert presents on relevant topic
- Lunch provided; all-hands optional attendance
- Topics: Architecture decisions, technology deep-dive, project learnings

Tech Talks Series:

- Quarterly formal technical presentations
- External speakers or internal experts
- Focus: Industry trends, emerging technologies, best practices
- Recording: Sessions recorded and available to remote employees

Documentation and Wikis:

- Company wiki maintained with architectural decisions, setup guides, best practices
- Employees contribute documentation as part of project work
- Searchable knowledge base for common questions

Mentorship Program:

- Senior engineers paired with junior engineers (12-month assignment)
- Mentor provides guidance on technical growth, career planning, and culture
- Mentee takes ownership of learning; mentor provides structure

- Quarterly check-ins; annual review of mentorship effectiveness

7.5 Promotion Process

Promotion Criteria and Readiness Assessment:

Promotions evaluated on:

- **Performance:** Consistent delivery; quality standards met
- **Skills Gap:** Possessed skills for next level; demonstrated in current role
- **Impact:** Clear organizational contribution; thought leadership shown
- **Readiness:** Employee expresses interest; manager agrees on readiness
- **Business Need:** Organizational need for higher-level role present

Promotion Timeline:

- Nominations: Managers submit promotion nominations (June-July for Feb effective date)
- Review: Promotion committee reviews nominations; interviews conducted
- Calibration: Cross-functional alignment of promotions
- Decisions: Communicated by November; effective February 1

Frequency and Timing:

- Annual promotion cycle (February effective date)
- Out-of-cycle: Rare; only for critical business need or exceptional circumstances
- Minimum tenure: Typically 2 years at current level before next promotion

Promotion Compensation:

- Base salary increase: Minimum 12-15% upon promotion
- Performance bonus: Reset to new role band
- Additional benefits: Stock options (if not already at grant level), title change
- Communication: Manager conducts promotion discussion; HR provides offer letter

Rejection and Feedback:

- Not recommended: Manager provides specific feedback; development plan created
- Encouragement: Reinforce capability; identify specific development areas
- Retry timeline: Re-evaluation after 6-12 months with demonstrated growth

8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

8.1 Performance Cycle and Appraisal Process

Annual Appraisal Timeline:

Period	Activity
December 1-15	Appraisal window opens; forms distributed
December 15-20	Employees complete self-evaluation
December 20-Jan 10	Managers complete appraisal; HR consolidates
Jan 10-25	Appraisal results communicated; 1:1 meetings conducted
Jan 25-Feb 15	Appeal process (if applicable)

Appraisal Dimensions:

Dimension	Weight	Criteria
Delivery Excellence	30%	On-time delivery; quality; meeting commitments
Technical Competency	25%	Skill application; problem-solving; learning
Collaboration	20%	Teamwork; knowledge sharing; cross-functional cooperation
Initiative	15%	Proactivity; ownership; continuous improvement
Reliability	10%	Attendance; punctuality; accountability

8.2 Performance Rating Scale

5-Point Rating System:

Rating	Description	Performance Level
5 - Exceptional	Significantly exceeds expectations; exceptional contribution	Top performer
4 - Exceeds	Exceeds expectations; valuable contribution; consistent quality	High performer
3 - Meets	Meets expectations; solid contribution; fulfills role requirements	Effective performer
2 - Partially Meets	Below expectations in some areas; improvement needed	Needs support
1 - Does Not Meet	Significantly below expectations; substantial improvement required	Performance risk

Rating Distribution Guidance (Not Forced):

- Exceptional (5): 5-10% of population
- Exceeds (4): 20-30%
- Meets (3): 50-60%
- Partially Meets (2): 5-10%
- Does Not Meet (1): 2-5%

Distribution is guidance, not quota; actual distribution driven by performance.

8.3 Performance Feedback and Coaching

Ongoing Feedback:

- Monthly informal 1:1 meetings: Manager and employee discuss progress, challenges, support needs
- Feedback frequency: Timely feedback within 2-3 days of significant achievement or gap
- Peer feedback: Solicited monthly informally; included in annual appraisal
- Multi-source feedback: Manager, peers, and cross-functional partners provide input

Coaching and Support:

- Constructive feedback: Focused on behavior, not personality; actionable improvement suggestions
- Positive reinforcement: Acknowledgment of achievements and strengths
- Development coaching: Manager guides growth areas; resources provided
- If underperforming: Early support offered; performance improvement plan considered

8.4 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

Trigger Conditions:

- Performance rating: "Partially Meets" or "Does Not Meet" in annual appraisal
- Repeated missed deadlines or quality issues
- Significant collaboration or communication breakdown
- Attendance or reliability concerns

PIP Structure (60 Days):

Week 1 - Goal Setting:

- Manager and employee collaboratively define 3-4 specific, measurable improvement goals
- Root cause analysis: Identify skill gap, external factors, or role fit issues
- Support plan: Training, mentorship, workload adjustment, resources identified
- Success criteria: Clear definition of expected performance at plan end

Weeks 2-8 - Weekly Check-ins:

- 30-minute weekly meetings: Review progress against goals
- Support provided: Training, mentorship, pair programming, or coaching as needed
- Adjustment: Goals refined if external circumstances change
- Documentation: Progress notes maintained; shared with employee

Week 9 - Final Evaluation:

- Achievement of PIP goals assessed
- Performance improvement verified through task completion and quality
- Decision made: Success (continue), partial success (extended support), or unsuccessful (separation)

PIP Outcomes:

- **Successful:** Rating upgraded; employee continues; PIP closure documented
- **Partially Successful:** Extended PIP (30 days) offered; clear final criteria established
- **Unsuccessful:** Separation discussion; severance offered per Separation Policy; references provided

PIP Conditions:

- No promotion, transfer, or salary increase considered during PIP
- Bonus may be withheld or reduced
- Continued employment contingent on improvement
- Transparency: Regular communication with employee on status

8.5 Compensation Decisions Based on Performance

Salary Increases:

- Annual increase: 3-7% based on inflation, merit, and performance rating
- Performance factor: Higher-rated employees receive higher increases
- Distribution: No fixed percentage per rating; increases reflect inflation + merit pool

Bonus Determination:

- Quarterly bonus: 0-10% based on company financial performance and team delivery
- Annual bonus: 0-20% contingent on performance rating and business performance
- Rating impact: Exceptional (100%+ of target), Exceeds (75-100%), Meets (50-75%), Partially Meets (0-25%), Does Not Meet (0%)

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9. WORKPLACE SAFETY AND EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

9.1 Workplace Safety Standards

Physical Safety:

- Office facilities: Fire exits marked; emergency procedures documented; drills conducted quarterly
- First aid: Trained first-aiders available; first aid kits well-stocked
- Equipment safety: Ergonomic workstations; regular maintenance of equipment
- Hazard reporting: Employees report unsafe conditions to facilities; addressed within 3 days

Psychological Safety:

- Open culture: Mistakes treated as learning; blame culture avoided
- Safe to disagree: Constructive disagreement valued; no retaliation for respectful dissent
- No fear: Speaking up about issues encouraged; no adverse consequences
- Support: Manager provides coaching and support; escalation available if needed

COVID-19 and Pandemic Preparedness:

- Remote work capability: Infrastructure supports work-from-home if needed
- Health protocols: Vaccination encouraged; sick employees stay home
- Health monitoring: Regular health check-ups; wellness resources provided
- Emergency response: Business continuity plan in place; critical services identified

9.2 Mental Health and Wellness

Mental Health Support:

- Counseling services: Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential counseling (5 sessions/year, free)
- Therapy budget: ₹2,000/month for ongoing professional therapy
- Mental health days: 2-3 days per year for mental health (separate from leave; no questions asked)
- Peer support: Employee resource groups for specific communities (LGBTQ+, parents, caregivers, etc.)

Stress Management:

- Yoga classes: Twice weekly in-house sessions (participation free)
- Meditation and mindfulness: Weekly sessions; mobile app access provided
- Work-life balance: Flexible schedule, unlimited PTO, no after-hours email culture
- Burnout prevention: Manager monitors workload; escalates if excessive

Crisis Support:

- Immediate support: Crisis counseling available 24/7 via EAP
- Time off: Unlimited paid leave during personal crisis
- Accommodation: Schedule flexibility during difficult periods
- Follow-up: HR check-ins during and after crisis; support continued

9.3 Physical Wellness Programs

Fitness and Exercise:

- Gym reimbursement: ₹400/month for gym membership (bill required)
- Home fitness: ₹500/month budget for home equipment, online classes, apps
- Corporate wellness: Quarterly fitness challenges (steps, running, yoga)
- Sports activities: Badminton, cricket, running groups (organized by employees)

Nutrition and Health:

- Quarterly nutrition counseling: Free sessions with nutritionist
- Healthy snacks: Fruits, nuts, and beverages in office pantry
- Cafeteria: Healthy meal options available daily
- Cooking workshops: Occasional sessions on healthy eating and meal prep

Preventive Care:

- Annual health check-up: Fully covered; routine tests (blood, cardiac, etc.)
- Vaccination drives: Flu, COVID-19, and other vaccinations offered at office
- Medical reimbursement: ₹5,000/year for medical expenses beyond insurance
- Chronic disease management: Flexible hours for ongoing treatment (dialysis, therapy, etc.)

9.4 Substance Abuse and Wellness Policy

Substance Abuse:

- Zero tolerance: Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs prohibited
- Impairment: Employees not permitted to work while impaired (drugs or alcohol)
- Testing: Random testing may be conducted; positive result triggers counseling
- Support: Confidential rehabilitation and counseling available via EAP
- Confidentiality: Information restricted; no public disclosure; no stigma

Rehabilitation Support:

- In-house counseling: Professional counselor available for confidential discussion
- External treatment: Referrals to de-addiction centers; insurance covers treatment
- Job security: Position maintained during treatment; return assured
- Follow-up: Post-treatment counseling and monitoring for sustained recovery

10. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

10.1 Grievance Definition and Scope

What Constitutes a Grievance:

- Unfair treatment or discrimination
- Harassment, bullying, or inappropriate behavior
- Work condition concerns (safety, resources, workload)
- Compensation or benefit disputes
- Denial of promotion, transfer, or training opportunity
- Policy violation or inconsistent application
- Retaliation against whistleblower or grievance reporter
- Any work-related dissatisfaction affecting employee well-being

10.2 Multi-Level Grievance Process

Level 1 - Informal Resolution (Encouraged):

- **Objective:** Rapid, amicable resolution through direct communication
- **Process:**
    1. Employee approaches manager or HR representative informally
    2. Meeting within 2-3 working days to discuss concern
    3. Manager listens, seeks to understand root cause
    4. Solution explored collaboratively
    5. Agreement documented (email summary acceptable)
    6. Follow-up: Agreed action taken within specified timeline
- **Timeline:** 5-7 working days total
- **Success:** 70%+ of grievances resolved at this level
- **If Unresolved:** Employee may escalate to Level 2

Level 2 - Formal HR Investigation:

- **Objective:** Formal investigation and resolution by impartial HR authority
- **Submission:**
    1. Written complaint to HR (email or formal letter)
    2. Include: Nature of grievance, dates, people involved, evidence, witnesses, desired outcome
    3. Submission within 30 days of incident (exception if extenuating circumstances)
- **Acknowledgment:** HR confirms receipt within 1 working day; assigns grievance ID
- **Investigation (7-10 working days):**
    - Investigator interviews complainant (detailed statement)
    - Interviews respondent (opportunity to respond)
    - Interviews witnesses and relevant parties
    - Collects documentary evidence
    - Maintains confidentiality
- **Investigation Report:**
    - Findings documented with evidence
    - Root cause analysis

- Recommended corrective action
- Report shared with HR Manager for approval
- **Resolution Communication:**
  - Both parties informed of findings
  - Corrective action communicated (if substantiated)
  - Remedial steps explained (e.g., policy clarification, training, compensation, disciplinary action)
  - Appeal deadline communicated
- **Timeline:** 15-20 working days from complaint to resolution

Level 3 - Appellate Review:

- **Objective:** Independent review if complainant disagrees with resolution
- **Appeal Submission:** Within 7 working days of Level 2 resolution communication
- **Content:** Written appeal with specific reasons for disagreement and additional evidence (if any)
- **Appellate Authority:** HR Director or independent external arbitrator (for sensitive cases)
- **Scope:** Review of Level 2 process fairness and substantiveness of decision
- **Decision:** Affirm, reverse, or modify Level 2 resolution
- **Finality:** Level 3 decision is final and binding
- **Timeline:** 10 working days from appeal to final decision

10.3 Special Grievance Procedures

Sexual Harassment (POSH Complaints):

- **Fast-track process:** Investigation initiated within 3 working days
- **Timeline:** Investigation concluded within 21 days
- **Authority:** Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) with external member
- **Support:** Counseling, flexible schedule, temporary transfer if needed for safety
- **Interim measures:** Respondent may be asked to maintain distance during investigation

Discrimination Complaints:

- **Heightened scrutiny:** HR Director and external expert involvement
- **Fast-track:** Resolution within 10 working days
- **Remedial action:** If substantiated, includes apology, training for respondent, compensation if applicable

Retaliation Claims:

- **Immediate protection:** Respondent instructed to cease retaliation immediately
- **Interim measures:** Respondent may face suspension pending investigation
- **Accelerated investigation:** Completed within 5 working days

Whistleblower Grievances:

- **Confidentiality:** Identity protected; investigation conducted confidentially
- **Protection:** Non-retaliation strictly enforced
- **Support:** Employee provided counseling and workplace accommodation

- **External escalation:** Employee may report to regulatory authorities; company does not object

10.4 Confidentiality and Anti-Retaliation

Confidentiality Principles:

- Grievance details restricted to investigating team and management decision-makers
- Complainant, respondent, and witnesses entitled to confidentiality
- Public disclosure or discussion of grievance considered breach of confidentiality
- Violation of confidentiality results in disciplinary action

Anti-Retaliation Protection:

- Prohibited: Any adverse action against employee filing grievance
- Prohibited actions: Negative appraisal, denial of benefits, unfavorable transfer, salary reduction
- Enforcement: Retaliation substantiated results in disciplinary action against retaliating party
- Severity: Intentional retaliation may result in termination

Protection During Investigation:

- No adverse action during investigation period
- No impact on performance appraisal
- Job security maintained during investigation
- Confidential accommodation provided if needed

10.5 Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Culture of Feedback:

- 360-degree feedback: Quarterly informal feedback encouraged
- Skip-level conversations: Employees may discuss concerns with manager's manager
- Anonymous feedback: Anonymous feedback mechanism available via HR portal
- Regular surveys: Pulse surveys quarterly; results discussed in team meetings

Feedback Channels:

- One-on-one with manager: Primary feedback mechanism
- Skip-level meeting: Escalation if needed
- HR one-on-one: Anonymous concerns discussed confidentially with HR
- Anonymous suggestion box: Digital suggestion box for sensitive topics
- All-hands forum: Opportunity to raise organizational-level concerns

11. POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND COMPLIANCE

11.1 Policy Review and Amendments

Annual Review Process:

- Comprehensive review: December each year
- Regulatory updates: Implemented within 2 weeks of law change (emergency amendments)
- Ad-hoc updates: As organizational needs dictate

Amendment Procedure:

1. Draft amendment prepared by HR with legal input
2. Senior management review and approval
3. Communication: Email with clear summary of changes
4. Effective date: 10 days post-communication (or sooner if legally required)
5. Training: Manager briefing conducted for implementation clarity

Change Communication:

- Clear statement of what changed and why
- Side-by-side comparison (old vs. new policy)
- FAQ document addressing common questions
- Manager Q&A session for team-level implementation

11.2 Policy Acknowledgment and Documentation

Acknowledgment Process:

- All employees acknowledge receipt via digital signature (HR Portal)
- Acknowledgment captured at:
  - Initial onboarding
  - Major policy amendments
  - Annual policy reaffirmation

Record Retention:

- Acknowledgments stored in HR system (7-year retention)
- Employee file includes dated copy of policies acknowledged
- Audit trail maintained for compliance verification

11.3 Policy Interpretation and Dispute Resolution

Ambiguity Handling:

- Policy intent prioritizes employee fairness
- HR Director provides official interpretation
- Conflict with applicable law: Law supersedes policy
- Exception requests: Submitted in writing to HR; evaluated case-by-case

Dispute Resolution:

- Initial discussion: Manager and employee discuss interpretation
- HR involvement: HR clarifies policy intent
- Executive review: HR Director final authority on interpretation

- External escalation: If unresolved, labor department or legal counsel engaged

11.4 Non-Compliance and Corrective Action

Manager Non-Compliance:

- Policy deviation identified: HR alerts manager
- Corrective action: Manager brings into compliance; documented
- Pattern: Multiple violations result in manager disciplinary action
- Escalation: VP-level action if manager consistently violates policies

Employee Non-Compliance:

- Minor violation: Coaching and verbal warning
- Repeated: Written warning and performance plan
- Severe: Disciplinary action per policy (suspension or termination)

HR Non-Compliance:

- Policy misapplication: Corrected immediately; communication to affected parties
- Systemic issue: Policy clarification; training conducted
- Serious deviation: HR department audit; corrective measures implemented

11.5 Policy Governance Committee

Committee Composition:

- CHRO (Chief Human Resources Officer): Chair
- Legal Counsel: Compliance and regulatory input
- Senior Manager: Operations and implementation perspective
- Employee Representative: Employee voice in policy

Responsibilities:

- Quarterly review of grievances and policy effectiveness
- Policy amendment recommendations
- Regulatory monitoring
- Feedback compilation and trend analysis
- Annual policy strategy review

Meeting Frequency: Quarterly; additional meetings if urgent matters arise

APPENDIX A: EMPLOYEE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, the undersigned, acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Techno Box Comprehensive HR Policy Manual, Version 1.0 (December 2025).

I understand and confirm:

- These policies apply to my employment with Techno Box
- I have read and understood the policies contained in this manual
- Policy violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination
- Confidentiality and anti-retaliation protections are available
- I have multiple channels to raise concerns and grievances

- My statutory rights under applicable labor laws remain unaffected
- I have had opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification
- I acknowledge receipt of a complete copy of this manual

I further agree:

- To comply with all policies herein
- To maintain confidentiality of company and client information
- To treat colleagues with respect and dignity
- To report policy violations through appropriate channels
- To participate in policy acknowledgment processes as required

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Employee Name: _____

Employee ID: _____

Department: _____

Joining Date: _____

Email: _____

Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____

Date of Acknowledgment: _____

Manager Name: _____

Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____

HR Representative: _____

HR Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B: DOCUMENT CONTROL AND AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	Key Sections Updated	Approved By
1.0	Dec 6, 2025	Initial Comprehensive Policy Manual	CHRO & Leadership
Future	TBD	Regulatory updates, policy refinements	Policy Committee

APPENDIX C: QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Frequently Referenced Policies:

Topic	Key Points	Reference
Work Schedule	40 hrs/week; 8 hrs/day; flex arrival 8-11 AM	Section 4.1
Earned Leave	20 days/year; 1.67 days/month accrual; 10-day carryover max	Section 5.1
Remote Work	Project-dependent; manager approval; minimum 4 days office/week	Section 5 (implied)
Salary Review	Annual in January; 3-7% merit increase; promotion 10-15% min	Section 6.3
Performance Rating	5-tier system; no forced distribution; development-focused	Section 8.2
Bonus Structure	Quarterly 0-10%; Annual 0-20%; based on performance	Section 6.2
ESOP	All employees eligible; 4-yr vesting with 1-yr cliff	Section 6.5
Grievance Process	Level 1 (informal), Level 2 (formal 15-20 days), Level 3 (appeal)	Section 10
Special Leave	Maternity 180 days; Paternity 10 days; Bereavement 3-5 days	Section 5.2
Learning Budget	₹40,000/year; courses, certs, conferences eligible	Section 7.3

Classification: Internal - Confidential

Distribution: All Techno Box Employees, Managers, HR Personnel

Document Control: Maintained by HR Department

Next Scheduled Review: December 2026

Policy Questions: Contact hr@technobox.com

Techno Box is committed to maintaining fair, transparent, and inclusive employment practices. This manual represents our commitment to employee well-being, professional

growth, and organizational excellence. For policy clarifications, questions, or feedback, contact the HR Department at hr@technobox.com or visit the Techno Box HR Portal.