

FAQ Document

Travel Allowance

1. Why do females get travel allowance?

When the difficulties that females face in commuting to work are at the same level as the difficulties that males face in commuting to work, their travel allowance will go away.

There is no concept of travel allowance in societies where men and women have the same facilities and allowances to commute available to them. Females don't have the same travel privileges that males enjoy

Competency Framework and Salary review

2. Why isn't salary reviewed on a bi-annual/quarterly basis?

Everyone is reviewed on their annual and six-month marker. However, in the case of 6 months, an increment is applicable:

- if there is an inflation adjustment
- if one is underpaid as compared to their peers
- If they went through a role shift and need to be compensated accordingly

3. Is salary reviewed after one has completed their probationary period?

We review salary after probation only where we've made a commitment over the offer email about increasing the salary on completing 3 months. Everyone else is reviewed on their annual and six-month marker.

4. Why isn't one's experience considered when deciding increments?

We decide increments based on one's competency profile. The competency framework has been designed in such a way that it is improbable for someone to achieve a higher competency level without gaining experience. So experience is taken into account, be it indirectly. Only the designations are updated based on one's years of experience.

5. Is Team lead's review the only consideration when making increment decisions?

Salary decisions are no longer dependent on the team lead's review alone. We introduced 360-feedback in 2021. With 360, all members will be reviewed by their team lead, peers, and in some cases, clients as well. Same is the case with the Team lead's review. A team lead's competency will be filled and published by everyone reporting to them. If someone has worked with multiple teams in a year, the previous team is also expected to fill the competency for that team member.

6. To be ridiculously competent, does one have to achieve the highest level in all the pillars?

Ideally, yes. It also depends on one's preference. For example, if someone wants to be ridiculously competent at technical execution alone, they should strive to achieve just that. Not everyone wants to be a leader and wants to stay focussed on just the engineering and we understand and respect that. It won't have a negative impact on their role and compensation in the company.

7. In cases where one's growth stops due to the project they are in, how does that impact the compensation?

Arbisoft encourages rotation. If your growth in a project is stagnant, you should prioritize training your successor and moving to more challenging projects with higher growth prospects, otherwise it can impact one's compensation.

8. With 360 evaluation, members who don't have complete knowledge of my work are evaluating me. How can they fill the competency accurately?

In any team's structure, there are QAs, PMs, and non-tech team members. Some can fill the entire form, some can't. That's where there is an option to mark some subtopics as "NA / not applicable". Reviewers should use that choice when they didn't get enough time to evaluate that topic or are not fully aware of it. Any non-engineer can still fill an engineer's competency since 3 out of 4 topics are on non-tech aspects (i.e. Communication, Teamwork, and Maturity).

9. What is being done to update the competency forms on a regular basis and to make it as accurate and quantifiable as possible?

POD does a monthly sync where they try to incorporate all the suggestions received on the competency framework. Taking feedback on the competency framework is also a mandatory part of people partner's check-in with the leads.

10. Does Arbisoft conduct a market survey to analyze the salary bracket?

We have actively participated in Pasha's salary survey for many years. They stopped conducting the survey during which we tried getting insights via mercer. Pasha relaunched their survey again in 2021 and Arbisoft participated this time as well. We haven't made the report public and Pasha has discouraged that but we are happy to share with someone interested in knowing salary benchmarks on a 1-1 basis.

11. Can we just pick one metric for reviewing salaries, competency framework or experience level? People with a lot of experience gap lie close to each other according to the framework?

Salaries are being reviewed based on one's competency profile. Experience has an indirect role to play but it has no direct implication on one's salary decisions. Two super competent people may have similar compensation with 4 and 6 years of experience respectively. That is intentional.

12. Those who are joining now are getting more pay than those who have been here for many years, is that true?

That's not entirely true. We want people to compare their earnings and not salary alone. An earning includes what they make in terms of performance bonus and salary. Anyone who has been part of Arbisoft for years is earning a lot more than those who joined recently or a few years ago.

We have also introduced streams of compensation packages; people now have the option to opt-out of bonuses, or benefits as a whole. That can give one the impression that new joiners are being hired on higher pay.

13. Is there a precedent of giving a salary raise when one has another job in hand?

Retaining someone when they have another job offer is something that we discourage and will continue to discourage. When someone shares their interest in leaving, we do tell them their expected future earnings based on their nearest review month.

14. Based on the new competency framework, increments would be skill-based. So if two people have a huge salary difference but give the same output working on the same technology stack with the same competence level, in this case, would one be giving an equal salary to the other? Even if it needs a 100% increment? Or would the increment amount still be in a specific slab?

Competency is based on capabilities, skills, and impact demonstrated over extended periods of time and hopefully on multiple projects. Competency determines the fixed portion of one's compensation (i.e. salary). There is a variable component of compensation (i.e bonus) which is based on short-term work output, performance on a single project etc. So a very competent person could be performing low on a project, this will affect his/her bonus, not salary. Similarly, a beginner could be working very hard to increase output on a single project, again that would lead to a better bonus, not a better salary.

The competence tier changes when multiple people rank a person's capabilities (not performance) to be in a higher tier and the person uses those capabilities to demonstrate an impact on multiple projects or assignments.

15. Is the leadership thinking about doing company-wide increments once or twice a year?

Company-wide reviews are a time of very high anxiety for most companies and may leads to needless comparisons and speculations. This was the main reason for doing reviews at peoples' own annual cycles, rather than a company-wide cycle. It also allows careful consideration for each person being reviewed because reviews are spread out over 12 months rather than 1 or 2 months. For these reasons, we are likely to not switch to company-wide reviews anytime soon.

16. If someone changed their tech stack during their tenure with Arbisoft, would it affect their increment? When and how would that skill be evaluated?

Competency, let's say in technical execution, isn't tied to how much experience you have in one language (e.g. python), although having many years of experience in a language or framework gives you an advantage in productivity. With software engineering principles being the same across the stacks you should be able to deliver value without the stack being a big roadblock.

With that being said, we've excellent people leading teams at Arbisoft, your team lead should be able to help you ramp up and guide you to leverage your existing experience to check more competency points quickly.

The competence framework for engineers is technology agnostic. If you spot an example of skill or impact that is technology-dependent, please report it to POD and we will update it.

17. Where can I see the salary bracket for software engineers of all the competency levels? Is it available publically or do we have to request it or is it something not available for the public right now?

Salary brackets exist but are not available publicly, you can reach out to the committee or the relevant POD member and they can share the process and range with you.

You are free to request external benchmark data from the PASHA conducted survey.

18. Why don't we have a process to evaluate any Team lead's performance/skills?

We do. Team leads are evaluated on the competency framework by the people reporting to them. The salary review is now based on one's 360 evaluation. So the feedback comes from the client, peers, and team members.

Team rewards process

19. Are bonuses linked with salaries?

Salary is just one of the factors in calculating a team's bonus amount. Other factors are the sum of team's project logs, team member's role, and project's performance score. When distributing, a team should assign a number based on relative contribution instead of benchmarking multiples of salary.

20. Where can I give feedback on the bonus process?

Bi-annual surveys are one way to share bonus process feedback. You can also share your feedback with your people partner.

21. How does the committee score in cases where a team member didn't get the opportunity to work on all three criteria?

In the case of a project/client or where the project tenure is short, the scoring criteria are made flexible based on the project's situation. Any team that didn't get a chance to work on a particular criterion is expected to show outstanding

performance on the other two. The committee has awarded more than the maximum possible criterion scores on such occasions in the past as well.

22.Are teams compared when scoring?

Projects of similar nature at times are compared. Otherwise, each team is scored independently.

23.Team-based rewards process needs improvement as someone/team leads with knowledge of bonus committee working and methodology has an unfair advantage over others also taking working hours as a proxy of impact is unfair as you can use 8hrs/days doing impactful work as opposed to working 12hr/days doing non-impactful/routine work. However, under the existing process, someone working 12hr/days will be rewarded more. How can that be addressed?

Lead should review logs of anyone logging more hours than required in a task, that's the whole idea behind having monthly logs approved by the team lead. They should point out anything unusual.

On having an unfair advantage, when there are 9 committee members reviewing each team's performance, one committee member's advantage has little or no impact on the score, especially when they are reviewing each team individually. Starting from 2022 we will be regularly updating committee members who've served a committee for more than 3 years, so that too should solve the concern.

24.Is there a cap of 4 salaries when distributing bonuses?

There is no such cap. In fact, one shouldn't benchmark multiples of salary when deciding bonus amount.

25.What is the company's reasoning for excluding part-time employees and contractors from the bonus policy?

Sometimes the bonus is bundled in the contract for a position. In that case, the member isn't entitled to the bonus. However, a team lead when distributing, can allocate a portion of team's bonus to part-time and contractors.

26. The moment we compare our compensation package to other organizations, we are told to include bonuses in them, why? I have to wait for a year to get a bonus (if anyone leaves, they are kinda screwed), and even then it's very much dependent on my team's performance. When it's something that's not constant and depends on a lot more things than just my competence, how much role should it play while doing comparisons?

- If a person was hired at a lower than market pay, the salary will be normalized between one to two years.
- For people leaving the organization before bonus distribution, their leads are reaching out to performance advisory for early bonuses which are being disbursed.
- Client feedback is one factor in bonus evaluation. Not-so-great feedback can dent the bonus but cannot wipe it out completely.
- No portion of the bonus is constant. It depends on a few factors which get set after the performance review sessions at the end of the year. Furthermore, a team lead distributes the bonus among his/her team members after getting a total number therefore it's simply not possible to predict how much bonus a team or individual will get. Feel free to raise more questions if something is still not clear.

Other Benefits

27. Is there a well-being fund at Arbisoft, somewhere I can request things for my or someone else's well-being?

We have a society named "[Support Fund](#)" to address such concerns. Anyone who'd like to apply for something they are not entitled to can send a request to the support fund and they can review the request.

28. The 3+ day logic for dispatching covid hampers weighs more for the employees who took these leave and not for the ones who even worked when they were severely sick? I have seen multiple posts of arbisoft sharing posts about new joiners joining with their pictures and captions on LinkedIn. Why haven't we been contacted by PoD or celebrated on such a platform? If one has cleared its probation with very good reviews, why doesn't the management take the Initiative to celebrate them or share small gratitude?

Every year, we change the welcome pack we give out to new joiners, these welcome packs have evolved over the years. When we were under 100, we gave nothing as such. Our gift hampers have only improved with time. Because of covid

and hybrid model, dispatching gifts hasn't been easy. If anyone gets missed out, please reach out to Samia/Amber and they will get them dispatched.

The care hamper has its own limitations, we have to set some criteria to identify people who were sick, sick leave data is one way. Manually asking each member if they were sick and working is hard to scale for a 700+ size company. Another challenge is finding vendors who can send us quality stuff in such a big number. Took the team months to finalize one.

Birthday and work anniversaries (coming soon) are also there.

29. If a person refers to a candidate and due to some reasons either major or minor, the probation period is extended, does the person who referred is no more eligible for the referral bonus?

There should be a difference in reward when someone refers to a very high-quality candidate vs someone who just refers to an average quality person. By process, referrals are applicable when someone exceeds expectations during the 3 months time period. Causes of extensions can vary, which is where this is handled on a case-to-case basis. For example, an extension because of an evaluator not getting enough time and then confirming with a good rating should result in a bonus. Extension on average performance and us moving that individual to a relatively easier/lighter project may result in confirmation but isn't applicable for a bonus. Hope this helps.

30. I know we have phantom shares and PF/ gratuity but do we have any retirement plan (due to age factor) as a part of the long-term benefits policy?

We have a provident fund in place for this very purpose.

A mechanism exists to transfer the fund amount from one employer to the other (but that happens very rarely in practice).

Other than that, Voluntary Pension Schemes (VPSs) are offered by virtually every mutual fund company in Pakistan which is employer-agnostic. You can periodically put in your savings there which are used up at the time of retirement.

31. Are contractual employees eligible for the biannual dollar adjustment bonus?

Contractual employees will be eligible for dollar adjustment bonus only if they're required to work 40 hours/week. Any contractor working below 40 hours/week will not be eligible for this benefit.

Team Structure

32.Logs, OKRs, check-ins, etc put added pressure on the person and one ends up doing less technical work and more administrative work. How can we handle that?

A number of people have come with this concern. Teams that have a project manager in their team have had lesser complaints on such issues. We are actively hiring more PMs and might add PMs to each project in the near future.

33.So there are people that are in the same team for more than two years or more and are happy with it but shouldn't POD circulate people in teams after some years to another team, it will add to one's exposure. know there is a transition form for that but I don't know how effective will that be it's more comfortable than coming from POD than myself asking for a team shift as this might affect my current team. Also, should we apply for it when needed and how likely is it going to be approved?

I think this should be the path to all such decisions:

1. Have a candid check-in with your team lead about your desire to switch to a different project
2. After you have discussed a succession plan with the TL, you or your TL can put in a request for rotation to POD
3. POD should add your request to the queue of such requests and as soon as an opportunity arises for such a rotation, they can affect the transition.

If the relationship with the TL is sour, that is an issue that needs to be addressed first. Again, here is a suggested path:

1. Have a check-in with the TL
2. if the issue is not resolved, privately reach out to POD
3. If the issue is still not resolved you can reach out to the CEO directly.

34.Is it okay for a team lead to not share his update with the team in daily standup?

No, in fact, the team leads are more than responsible for sharing their updates, how they are managing the goals, and discussing any blockers(among other things). Just because they have a position does not mean they are an exception. Not just the Team lead, PM, or any other role in the team is equally responsible and should actually "lead" by example.

WFH/Hybrid Model

35. Will WFH continue, whether it is covid or not?

Yes, the Hybrid model is here to stay, we will not mandate people to WFO but we will encourage teams to come up with a plan to overlap with their team members in person.

Project Logs

36. Why am I being asked to add details to my project logs, isn't this a violation of the core value: Trust over process?

This is not an issue of trust at all. We trust that a vast majority of people at Arbisoft give their absolute best to each project they are working on. Not just that, people often go above and beyond the call of duty to create value for their teams and clients. There may be some exceptions to this here or there but those exceptions are hopefully a small minority. We do not base our policies or procedures on the actions of a small number of people.

So the reason for requiring discipline around project logging has nothing to do with trust.

Here are the reasons why we want more details in project logs. If you have heard any other opinion, it could be someone's personal opinion far from reality so please redirect them to this channel:

- Details in project logs create transparency for our clients and partners. They have often demanded it explicitly and value it a lot. This was the most frequent suggestion for improvement from our bi-annual NPS customer surveys in the last few iterations.
- Pursuit of excellence is an essential core value at Arbisoft. It is nearly impossible to pursue excellence without first measuring both the quality and the quantity of work one does. Detailed project logs allow you to do that. If you have a better suggestion for how that measurement can be more accurate and reliable, let's discuss and work on it.
- In summary, no one is saying you are not doing enough. All we are saying is: let's measure whatever we are doing so we can all be better at it. The revised project logs feature in Workstream has several updates planned, which will allow us to record work more easily e.g. it will allow easy fetching of meetings from google calendar and check-ins from GitHub.

- We are also open to seeing what positive impact is brought about by this initiative and are flexible about updating it to be more helpful.
- Hopefully, this clarifies any misconceptions if they existed. Please also rest assured that while we care about the discipline of accurately logging work in as much detail as possible, the amount of work being logged has no material implications (bonus, salary, etc.) so please don't be anxious about that.
- When calculating bonuses the quantum of work done by a team is a factor in team bonus calculations. That is only fair because if a team had a very high workload should expect to be rewarded more than a team that had an average or low workload. However, team performance scores are not based on the quantum of work i.e. people evaluating team performance are not looking at the number of hours recorded by the team or their breakdown.

37. If we work fewer hours but complete tasks earlier and efficiently. Our Team Lead and other members are satisfied with our performance. How will this factor impact someone's profile?

Here are some ways you can utilize your idle time:

- Pick up the next task in the backlog
- Do some self-learning
- Review your work to make sure the quality is excellent
- Train others on what you're good at
- Write a blog post on arbisoft blog
- Contribute to company products
- Make open-source contributions

38. Should the team fun activities/team lunch be logged under Project logs? Why or why not? If a team is going for team lunch or doing any fun activity, what is the expectation around managing hours for the missed time?

Extra activities can be logged but under the "Other" category.

39. Why are 8 hours a day mandatory for work?

Each one of us spends days when there are only 3-4 hours of work or the motivation is down or one is not in the "zone". That is perfectly fine as long as one is also willing to put in 12-hour days when there is a need, a deadline to meet, the work is exciting or one is in the zone. The two should balance out over time to get to a rough 8-hour average.

About Arbisoft in General

40. What does the word “Arbi” mean in “Arbisoft”?

It means Arbitrage. Arbisoft was originally meant to be a financial software company, Arbitrage Software made sense

41. I feel that within Arbisoft those who do Course Authoring & QA work are not considered hard-working people and it also affects the compensation. Why?

The organization considers all roles to be important and worthy of respect. That's the organizational view on this. If the viewpoint of some individuals is different, you should just ignore it.

As for fixed compensation (salary and increment), it is always based on benchmarking i.e. what are people performing similar roles able to earn as salary in the industry. Just because some roles are benchmarked at higher salaries and some at lower salaries, does not mean any one of those deserves more/less respect.

42. “Edly is in this channel” what does that mean?

Edly is a product by Arbisoft. It contains a separate team. That's why Slack is showing Edly (team members) on this channel.

43. Do we have an Arbisoft holiday calendar somewhere online?

<https://arbisoft.com/holidays/>

44. Are there plans of opening offices in other cities and when?

Yes, we do have plans of opening offices in other cities. The next city we want to target is Islamabad, for that the discussions are already in place.

45. Why do we not use the words, resources, management, employees?

We consider Arbisoft a community and a team, so we like to call everyone in this team members, people, peers, colleagues etc. Instead of management, we use leadership. Since every team is independent and works directly with the client, we don't have a managerial hierarchy. Anyone leading a team is called a team lead/mentor/Project manager. Another reason for discouraging the term “manager” is, unlike other companies, everyone is working hands-on. Anyone becoming senior or a lead is discouraged to be restricted to team management.

IT

46. Why does Arbisoft invest in mac instead of dell, hp, etc.?

We wanted to move everyone on a Single Platform, We still have Laptops but they are issued as per requirement.

Gradually, we are removing all PC-Laptops and moving everyone to Mac OS.

47. Why are our systems being monitored in such a way by an installed AV that can read sensitive information (passwords, credit card information)? I am curious who else can access this information from IT/Administration?

No one else can access any kind of information of any user whether it's from administration or IT department, installation of AV is only for the protection of systems from Viruses, Malware's e.t.c Antivirus which we are using in arbisoft is not a keylogger it doesn't record any info related to keystrokes or (passwords, Credit Card info).

We have an Enterprise grade EndPoint Security system that is used to monitor the licensing centrally and assign the issued license to another host without buying another license.

Due to some reason, We are going to deploy Mobile Device management.

48. What is MDM or Mobile Device Management and why is it pre-installed?

MDM or Device is used to monitor the installed Applications, remotely remove/install apps based on their usage.

49. Why does the IT-Team force or request us to email every query or request?

IT Team wants to record every request handled by team members and for record purposes so that they audit Hardware/Software related information from the emails or HelpDesk System.

50. Does the IT Team keep accessories for the iPhone or Other mobile devices?

No, the IT Team issues each and everything that comes with the Mobile devices to users. It is explicitly mentioned in the email so that IT Team and end-user, both have records.

51. Does Office Chair & Desk issuing come under IT Team Authority?

Office Infrastructure is managed by Office Admin, [Aamir Rafique \(aamir.rafique@arbisoft.com\)](mailto:aamir.rafique@arbisoft.com), this can be taken to home with the permission of Office Administrator by sending an email to him.

52. How to take the LCD/LED home for WFH and Why does the Office Security Team don't allow us without a Gate pass?

During the beginning of the Pandemic, employees took the LED home without informing the IT Team at the end of the day or when none of the IT Team members was in the office. To make a record of this hardware, IT Team manages the records of all LED issued to users for WFH and also checks at the end of IT Clearance

53. Why Printer is not available to everyone in the office?

Printer is only available for office use (POD, Accounts, IT, and Admin). To avoid misuse of the Printer, it is restricted to the above-mentioned Teams. If anyone wants any print, they can contact the IT Team.

Overlap Time Strategy

54. Does Arbisoft recommend the process of allowing team members to work at different times in a day with a must overlapping team hrs? Is E.g 6 hrs Overlap Time and 2 hrs flexible?

Some teams have been working with a 6:2 ratio for almost as long as we have been working from home. They have hardly seen any issues with that. But whenever a team member requires the collaboration of another team member in their 2 hours, other members are requested to increase the overlap time and it is managed well.

Talent Management and Recruitment Practices

55. Why does POD not provide feedback to rejected candidates?

Hiring is a lengthy and time-consuming process and takes a lot of the candidate's time as well. Sending out an email just saying "we regret to inform you. Or thanks for taking interest in our organization" is not helpful to improve their skill set.

It would be practically impossible for POD to send interview feedback to each and every candidate. We do on average 80-100 interviews a week, they receive a response to their hiring status within the next 5-7 days. Instead of pod giving feedback, a better way could be an interviewer asking the candidate if they'd like feedback on their interview and then giving one. I've done that a number of times and been honest to candidates about it.

If a candidate is eager enough to ask for honest feedback at the end of the session some interviewers usually provide them, highlighting all major areas where there is room to improve or if anything that could be phrased out better in communication. That doesn't mean they give feedback to those who don't bother to ask or are too shy or passive. There should always be an eagerness to grow and improve otherwise the feedback is pointless.

56. Is there any formal process for selecting a team lead? On what criteria is a team lead selected? Once a lead is chosen, is there any training program provided by POD to the new team lead?

There are multiple ways for selecting a TL.e.g

1. Sometimes Company needs a senior member in a different tech stack in which the company is not working, in such a case that member becomes the TL automatically.
2. If a TL is moving to another team then he/she can suggest some names that he/she thinks can be a TL and POD and leadership chooses one of them after discussion with TL.
3. A member can prove herself/himself by managing/leading small projects within team/company
4. Sometimes a client chooses a member as TL.
5. Sometimes a client starts with one member and after some time the team grows and that senior, resulting in being promoted to a TL.

There are other ways too but the main point is to grow yourself in skills such as technical, communication, Teamwork, and maturity. If someone grows herself/himself in skills then he/she can easily approach POD or TL and ask for a position within the team/company. We have a lot of examples where people grew their skills and performed very well as TL

57. Does Arbisoft consider the experience of people who gain experience while they are graduating?

Industry experience, no matter when it was gained, is taken into account. However, work done within the bounds of academia is a far cry from what someone will face in the industry hence it's not considered.

58. I have heard any commitment made to someone during hiring is not fulfilled, is that true?

If there are any commitments during the offer, the practice we follow is to document it over email. There is no such thing as verbal commitment.

59. Is fresh hiring applicable to previous year's graduates too?

No, the fresh hiring process is for graduating (final year) students.

60. If our referred candidate is declined for one position, can we refer him again against another position within six months?

Yes

61. Is the fellowship program on-site or remote?

Hybrid, but preferably on-site

62. For the fellowship program, what main topics should the candidates learn in order to make it through the screening?

It's just like our fresh test; basic concepts regarding data structures, databases, algorithms, problem-solving, mainly like a GRE-styled MCQ-based test. Anyone who registers through Hirestream would be notified with the test link and other details.

63. What are the steps that a person can follow to edit their application on hirestream for a job posting?

They have to register with the email they applied with. They will then be able to edit and later see their application status too

64. Is there a position for the candidates who are in the process of being re-assessed as interns at Arbisoft? i.e experienced people from other backgrounds other than CS and willing to start a career in CS fields?

Anyone who is in the process of re-skilling shall go through an evaluation once they feel they are ready to switch.

If the evaluation goes well, we will move them to the relevant skill.

Processes and Guidelines

65. As per the disciplinary criteria, we will receive a warning letter on misbehaving with any of the company members (similarly same with harassment or misbehaving with the client). And eventually, a dismissal if it is done a second time. Isn't it too strict especially in case of misbehaving with a company member? I mean there can be many cases in it. For example, a member receiving a warning letter believes that it was not his/her intention. Or it should have been a verbal warning before a written final one?

This is one of those cases where understanding the principle is more important than the details of the rule. The principle is "do not misbehave when dealing with people whether they are coworkers or clients". If an unfortunate incident happens, it's reviewed by a committee that tries to consider all aspects of it e.g. whether actual harm was intended or not. However, I have to say it works both ways, while a couple of minor incidents may not lead to a dismissal, in some cases the first incident can be so serious that it would be unwise to wait for a second incident. So best to understand the principle and maintain professional decorum at all times rather than thinking "I can get away with it at least once if not more times so let me take it out on someone".

66. Why is there a minimum 5 member limit eligible for a recreational trip in a policy?

It's primarily for team bonding, if 4, 5 people go on a trip then there are chances to spend more time and to know your team members more

If trips aren't creating opportunities for bonding with other people, it defeats the purpose of this perk. If there aren't enough people in your team, try using it as an opportunity to meet people from other teams

67. On what basis are designations updated?

Designation changes are based on years of experience and not competence. For some positions, it's a straightforward process where on completing 3 years, a SE becomes [Sr.SE](#) and PSE on completing 6 years. These designations are updated once every month. If someone's title is not updated there can be an issue with their experience dates being incorrect or there can be a possibility that they have not yet provided us with their experience letters. Reasons vary from case to case. If anyone wants to discuss their title concern, they can directly get in touch with POD

For non-engineers, it is decided from case to case. Most of the time we receive recommendations from TLs, clients or at times this is discussed by us with the leads if someone has completed a certain number of years. But this varies from case to case. At times the title is finalized based on changing market trends as well.

68.What is meant by maturing of Provident Fund? It increases our taxable income, which means that every month my take-home salary is reducing whereas inflation and expenditures increase over time. Knowing this, can we accommodate this in our salary bracket and increments or instead provide the choice of just opting out of it? Technically our salaries are reducing with each month?

Now tax exempt.

69.Why is the company contribution in the provident fund taxable? There are 3 different types of provident funds and in no type the company share is taxable?

Now tax exempt.

70.Why first aid care medicines are not reimbursed for e:g band-aids, sanitizers, alcoholic wipes, and other stuff. Even in these hard times if anybody buys a mask it's related to medicine which a doctor cannot write in hard form sometimes but isn't it normal to buy such things along with other medicines?

By process, only prescription items are reimbursed.

Claims without pharmaceutical bills & doctor's prescriptions will not be entertained.

71. Why does one have to give 2 months' notice on resigning?

We started a 2 month notice period almost two years ago (2019), it's not applicable to all those hired before that. The decision of going for 2 months was for better transitioning. When a client facing a member leaves on a month's notice, it's not "every time" taken well by the client, and it's not easy to immediately train a backup and a replacement. However, a 2-month notice isn't a very strict requirement, if a lead and client feels the transition is smooth and can be managed under 2 months and some days can be waived, that's taken care of on a case-to-case basis.

Also, not all companies give a 1-month notice, there are some who go for 2 months and in fact in some cases three months.

72. I just read the latest Direct Competitor list shared by Arbisoft, we have a shooting 165 companies on the list already and counting. I know I shouldn't be allowed to go work on my project directly with Arbisoft consent, but what about Harbor, Abele, Gutenberg Technology, I don't even know what they do and still, I am not allowed to switch to them. This doesn't seem right to me. Why?

A) We need to prune this list constantly, which is admittedly something we have not been good at. Some of the examples you mentioned like Abele and Gutenberg Technology are definitely no risk and we should remove them. That will significantly shorten the list as there are many many stale entities in there.

B) As Arbisoft team members people are often privy to information that can be valuable to a potential competitor or customer e.g. knowledge of the strongest people in the organization. This knowledge can become a potential conflict of interest. To clarify with an example, suppose person X joins company Y which is Arbisoft's customer/competitor and person X has never interacted with company Y at arbisoft. When person X joins company Y, they ask: please identify all the strongest people you know in arbisoft in different teams so we can run a targeted hiring campaign? Do you see how this can become a conflict?

73. I was reading the big list of companies for which non compete applies, but is it alright for someone to apply for a job in such a company first? And if they get the offer, they can bring it to the POD so they can confirm if it has conflict of interest? What are the chances for us to be allowed for working for these companies if we are ethical and straightforward with POD and let them check for conflicts of interest?

You should check whether it is a conflict of interest before applying not after.

More importantly, share your concerns about the growth of your career with POD. Maybe we can help you achieve your goals at Arbisoft or if we are unable to, we may be able to help guide you to a job that does not conflict with Arbisoft's NDA or non-compete.

74. Where do I mention if I'm planning to visit the office tomorrow?

<https://inoffice.me/login/> or check-in app

75. Does Arbisoft provide business cards on request? If not, does the company have a format that we can use to get cards made on our own?

Yes, Arbisoft does provide business cards. The format is also defined
The details should be in this format:

- ☐ Name:
- ☐ Designation:
- ☐ Phone:
- ☐ Email:

Email it to Admin

76. Why can't everyone be moved to the subcontractor offer?

In general the subcontractor option is beneficial to people who have higher salaries since they have to bear a higher tax burden. The subcontractor option comes with its trade off; like reduced entitlement, leaves and change of employment status, so any one with less than 300k salary is better off without the subcontractor option.

In order to qualify for the subcontractor offer, one needs to meet the below criteria:

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Client Trips

77. Does Arbisoft arrange foreign trips for their employees in collaboration with their clients to attend some conference or get exposure in terms of business?

Yes, quite a few of our people have visited clients in the US and other places. For example, 7-8 of us attended the Open edX conference in Spain in 2017. These trips are usually client-sponsored. Before COVID happened, we also planned to start sending people for training to other countries on the Arbisoft budget but then COVID happened. Will pick that thread back up once life gets normal again.

Well being

78. Does arbisoft have a process to help a member having a hard time focusing on work/being productive on work due to some personal reason or burnout or any reason like that, even when taking a day off did not help?

- One can always apply for Annual Leaves to get some relaxation time. Give time to your inner self and you will get relaxed soon.
- You can talk to your lead or POD and figure out what kind of help you need. Your mentors should be able to guide you in the right direction or at least give you the motivation/help you are looking for.
- You can also go for [Professional Consultation](#) if you want to talk to somebody professional and outside the company.

79. How does one manage a situation where the client sets unrealistic expectations and deadlines? One ends up working overtime which affects one's mental wellbeing?

- The culture in the team should be so open that people should be able to talk to their lead about deadlines, timelines, decisions, or even object to decisions. They should be openly and freely talk to the lead or decision-makers about anything. That's the arbisoft culture.
- We must not because their demands will always go higher and higher. We must set their expectations properly (emphasis on properly). And it's mostly done by the lead, but not without the support of the team. There's a fine balance between keeping the client happy (delivering sufficient work), and keeping the team happy (working with motivation). The leader must know how to find that balance, and stay on it. Give the client the team's point of view, and give the team the client's point of view. Of course, sometimes this balance will tip on either side (sometimes we'll have to do more work, or sometimes we'll do less work just like this week), and that should be fine with both, as long as the overall work delivery has been consistent for the most part.
- I've also found agile processes to be really helpful in introducing a discipline in the client's expectations as well as in the team's delivery. Just plan a sprint, see how much the team delivers, measure the velocity, and show it to the client. Then, try to increase it incrementally, and show the client a burndown/burn-up graph over multiple sprints. You have no idea how much they appreciate it (the good ones, at least). Show them your velocity rising. Remember, for clients, "more" will never be enough. You have to draw the line somewhere, so make sure it's in a place that is healthy for both the team and the client, and justify that point with metrics and stats. But as mentioned before, sometimes you will cross that line, to achieve some targets or milestones. But it should not become a norm. When 10+ hours of work becomes a norm, what would happen when your client expects even more than that? You won't be able to deliver more, ergo, client dissatisfaction.
- As for the deadlines, it's hard to tell whether this is a product team or a project. In client projects, it's important to set expectations about delivery. Underpromise and overdeliver, and measure/forecast the work as mentioned above. In product teams, however, each team member does what's needed for the success of the product. It should be intrinsic and never be forced by the Product Manager or any stakeholder. If your product team is not in on it, they won't do their best work. Happy to talk about this further if that's the case.
- To summarize my thoughts, a "no overwork" policy will not do anything to improve the TLs who are unaware of their team losing their sanity. We need to educate the

TLs. We need to have policies where TLs must ensure the well-being of their team members by utilizing techniques like the ones mentioned above and more.

- Check out the [Professional Consultation policy](#) and see if that addresses some of the concerns.

Work Efficiency

80.Can you suggest a free app for maintaining a wiki for a project?

- Try [slite.com](#)
- Use readme files
- GitHub pages
- Notion

81. How do you minimize screen time when all work you do is on-screen?

- Don't take phone/tab with you to the bathroom
- Don't watch tv/laptop while eating
- Add screen time-out that notifies you when you have been seeing the screen for more than an hour. That's your cue to have a short break.
- Find other hobbies than using social networking sites/apps in your free time
- Get wireless earphones, walk around when you have a meeting that doesn't require looking at the screen
- Then I would suggest you use dark mode/ dark themes wherever possible and also keep the brightness level of the screen to a lower level. This should at least reduce eye strain.

82.Is there a free tool available for task management for very small remote teams?

It should have a board (just like Jira's) that shows the current week (one column per day) and lists all the tasks that need to be done on a particular day and also who they are assigned to? Is it too much to ask for free?

- Try Notion
- You can probably set that up with Asana by naming your sections as the days of the week and using their board view
- Trello

83.If I want to record a meeting with 6 people and avoid the zoom's 40 min time limit, what are my options?

- You can use hangout and screen record
- POD has paid zoom account, so you can ask them to schedule a call for you

Learning and Growth

84.What's the best way to do the Data Engineering Nanodegree or should I contribute to open source using these software stacks?

- A Nano degree just provides you with a learning path that you can continue alongside your regular work.
- If you have any prior basic knowledge of Data pipelines, data wrangling, or warehouses/lakes then don't opt for the degree. If not, it's not then it's a very good way to start.
- Keep in mind, it's a longer degree than another nano degree. It involves 5 projects and longish tutorials
- Recommended any open source project that is using D.E tools stacks.
- If you already have prior knowledge then it might not be that beneficial for you.
- The title of the degree itself isn't worth anything. It's only the knowledge that you get from the degree.

85.Those who have done a Udacity nano degree: Does the courseware remain accessible to you even after you've finished the degree (and stopped paying monthly)?

Yes, you have access to videos only (and not workspaces) for 1 year after graduating from Nanodegree.

86.Any recommendations for an online English Language course or any YouTube channel for learning English?

- Duolingo English learning App
- engvid.com

Account Queries and Reimbursements

87.Is getting vaccinated by a private organization reimbursable under Medical Policy?

Yes

88.Why couldn't we claim medical expenses for our dependent family members(younger sisters & brothers)?

If you are the only breadwinner in the family and your siblings are solely dependent on you, submit your bills and we can take a look on a case-to-case basis.

89.Can we claim the Medical expense after probation if expenses incurred during probation?

Yes, you can.

90.In the "Professional Consultation", is the member-only covered, or family (parents/spouse) are also covered in this?

Currently only for Arbisoft people.

91. What are phantom shares and how to buy them? What are the prerequisites for that?

We will be drafting policy around that

92.I want to ask one thing regarding internet bill reimbursement. I joined Arbisoft in January 2021 and for the last 6 months I am working from home but I haven't been reimbursed any internet bill. Will Arbisoft reimburse all previous months' internet bills?

I think it's really important to understand the principle on which this policy is based: if you already have a shared internet at home that everyone in your house uses and you didn't have to acquire a new connection for working from home, then you shouldn't submit the bills, even though we won't question you if you do. If you acquired a connection specifically for your work-from-home needs, then you can submit bills retroactively also.

93.How much time on average does it take to process an expense claim?

Reimbursements are transferred in the first 10 days of next month

94.Is there an Accounts-Helpdesk?

Yes, [#accounts-helpdesk](#)

95.Does Arbisoft refund Professional Consultation (Therapy) during probation?

Yes

POD Queries

96. Is there a channel for pod-related queries or some focal person from there regarding hirings/referrals?

[#pod-outreach](#) or pod-helpdesk@arbisoft.com for Tickets

97. Do we have an option to opt-out of background checks?

Background checks have been mandated by most of our clients so we have made it compulsory for everyone. It is standard practice.

98. Who do I contact if I want to get an incorrect doc removed from ERP?

If it is an experience/education document, you can edit it from the experience/education section.

In case you want to remove an incorrect document. You can get in touch with the POD Operations team, they'll remove it from the backend. You can find them in Workstream Organogram under POD Team.

99. How can I have an appointment with the nutritionist?

We invite the nutritionist almost once every quarter or when there are more than 20 signups. You can contact POD Operations for more details.

100. If I have taken annual leaves and they have been approved and before they start my team gets changed, would they get affected? since the annual leaves were approved by the previous lead?

You should let the new TL know before or when you join the new team so that he is aware and prepared.

101. I applied for a half-day casual leave on Dec 7th and ended up taking the whole day off. Therefore, I tried to apply for another half-day casual leave on Dec 7th but the system didn't let me, saying that I have already applied for leave on that date. What should I do?

Cancel your half leave and apply for full leave on the same day

Workstream Queries

102. Who to report to in case of finding a bug in ERP?

- workstream@arbisoft.com
- [#workstream-helpdesk](#)
- There is a button, which says “need help” on the bottom right corner

Admin

103. Who to contact if you've forgotten/lost an item at the office?

Admin

104. Who do I contact if I forgot something in the office & now I'm home?

Admin

105. As per the policy, the sharing of salary, bonus, and other increment information with other employees is against the policy and is subjected to action. So, that said, can the married couples or would-be couples in Arbisoft share that information with each other or does that confidential clause apply there as well?

Married couple can and should; would-be couples should refrain

Expense Claim Queries

106. Does the child education policy allow/cover expenses in case my kid is attending a daycare/playroom service? This is a recurring expense so I wanted to ask if it is covered or does the policy only cover proper school fees.

No, such expenses shall not be covered.

107. Can I claim the expense of probation months after being a permanent employee?

Yes, you can. Just save the receipts of the expense you did while you were in probation, once your probation ends you can claim it for those months.

108. What is our Internet reimbursement limit?

Internet reimbursement limit is upto Rs. 2000/-

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