



The AceNgage Employee Handbook



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Introduction



This employee handbook is a summary of policies, procedures and practices related to human resource management at AceNgage.

The Management is accountable for leading an effective staff team and is thereby accountable for the development and implementation of the policies outlined in this manual. Managers are responsible for human resource management within their own staff teams and should reference this manual to ensure organizational consistency in the application of these practices.

Statement of Philosophy



AceNgage wishes to maintain a work environment that fosters personal and professional growth for all employees. Maintaining such an environment is the responsibility of every staff person. Because of their role, managers and supervisors have the additional responsibility to lead in a manner which fosters an environment of respect for each person.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Foster cooperation and communication among each other
- Treat each other in a fair manner, with dignity and respect



- Promote harmony and teamwork in all relationships
- Strive for mutual understanding of standards for performance expectations, and communicate routinely to reinforce that understanding
- Encourage and consider opinions of other employees or members, and invite their participation in decisions that affect their work and their careers
- Encourage growth and development of employees by helping them achieve their personal goals at the [organization] and beyond
- Seek to avoid workplace conflict, and if it occurs, respond fairly and quickly to provide the means to resolve it
- Administer all policies equitably and fairly, recognizing that jobs are different but each is important; that individual
 performance should be recognized and measured against predetermined standards; and that each employee has the
 right to fair treatment
- Recognize that employees in their personal lives may experience crisis and show compassion and understanding

Who we are

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AceNgage is a reputed entity focused on providing Organizations with valuable insights and analytics around employee engagement & retention. An HR intelligence company specializing in decision support services for employee engagement & retention. Service Provider was established in June 2007 and is currently working with several leading IT, ITES, Banks, Pharma and Retail Companies in various areas of Employee Engagement.





Vision, Mission & Core Values



Our Mission, Vision & Values

Mission

To be the best HR Intelligence partner by providing better feedback across the various stages of the employee lifecycle

Vision

To make our clients more competitive by becoming the leading provider of superior HR (people) Intelligence

Values

(Sincerity

We are a people - first company with high levels of ownership. We work. We value collaboration believe that sincerity breeds trust and bring a sense of zing and and respect, the bedrock of any fun into all that we do successful relationship

(4) Enthusiasm

We are passionate about our

(Innovation

We like to constantly innovate and think of creative solutions for our clients, backed with the



Employment at AceNgage

Employment Equity

AceNgage is an equal opportunity employer and employs personnel without regard to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and/or mental handicap or financial ability.



Recruitment and Selection

All employment opportunities at AceNgage are posted periodically on employment websites or with an employment agency. Applications are encouraged from current employees but will be screened in the same manner as applications received from outside applicants.

Applicants are invited to submit their application, along with a current résumé, demonstrating that they meet the minimum criteria for the position being sought. At the closing date, all applications are screened, and candidates selected for the interview are contacted. If the interview is positive, references will be contacted. Depending on the feedback provided, a position may be offered to the applicant.

Nepotism

No candidate shall be hired for a position where they may report to, or supervise a member of their immediate family. Immediate family is defined as: parent(s), step parent(s), foster parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), and spouse {including common law a/o same sex partner}, step child or ward of the staff member, father-in-law or mother-in-law (including parent of same sex partner). Personal relationships with other employees or members of the AceNgage's Board of Directors or Committees of AceNgage should be disclosed prior to accepting any offer from the employer. Failure to disclose this information would be considered contradictory to the Code of Ethics policy (Appendix A).

Orientation

All new employees to AceNgage shall receive an orientation session which will encompass an overview of general policies, procedures and operations. This will also provide employees, new to either a position or AceNgage, an opportunity to learn the performance expectations management has with regard to the position in question. They will be given a copy of this



Employee Handbook and will be expected to learn its contents. They will also be made aware of policies such as, Code of Ethics, and asked to sign off on their adherence to the same.

Employee Duties

Attached to an Offer of Employment, is a description of the job and the associated responsibilities, along with any additional tasks possibly required. This document will be used to evaluate performance both during the probation period and after. If an employee is unsure of its contents, they should not hesitate to ask for clarification.

From time to time, it may be necessary to amend an employee's job description. These amendments will be discussed with the employee in advance however; the final decision on implementation will be made by management.

Personnel File

AceNgage does collect personal information for inclusion in personnel files. This information is available to the employee, the Management and the HR Personnel. This information is kept in a secure location, and is not shared with members of our Board. Information which is contained in an employee's personnel file includes the following: résumé, letter of offer, performance reviews, amendments to job descriptions, disciplinary notices, tax forms, copies of enrolment forms for benefits and approved leave requests.

Training and Certification

Employees are required to clear the **training and certification** during the initial period. On clearing the training he/she will be moved on to the role failing which the contract would be terminated with immediate effect and they will not be eligible for the pay during the tenure. The compensation will be effective and prorated from the date of joining for regular



employment. However for employees hired under a pay per interview model (PPI), the payout would be post training based on the number of successful interviews done for the tenure.

Probation

The first three (3) months of employment are probationary. During this time both parties may assess suitability for employment with the Employer. This also provides management an opportunity to assess skill levels and address areas of potential concern. During the probationary period, employment may be terminated by either party for any reason whatsoever, with or without cause, and with 15 days notice. At the completion of the probation period, the employee and employer shall meet and review progress to date. At this time one of three things will occur:

- i. Probation will end and employee will be Confirmed
- ii. Probation may be extended
- iii. Employment will end

Annual Salary

Salary shall be determined by the Management, based on budget considerations and commensurate with the experience of the successful candidate. AceNgage shall pay employees on a Monthly basis, less the usual and necessary statutory and other deductions payable in accordance with the Employer's standard payroll practices. These payroll practices may be changed from time to time at the Employer's sole discretion. Currently, payday occurs before 5th of every month.



Performance Appraisals

The performance review document will be a living document for each employee. Each employee will be responsible for developing their respective work plan for the year. This plan will be reviewed by Management and amended as necessary. At the time of the performance appraisal, the employer and employee will review the objectives and the results achieved. Throughout the year, the employee and employer may refer to this document to track progress made toward objectives, highlight areas of concern and indicate challenges identified along the way.

Performance reviews, for all employees, will occur near in April, and annually thereafter. Employees should prepare for this meeting by preparing a draft work plan for the coming year. This meeting is to review successes and challenges from the preceding year, and to establish the objectives for the coming year. This would also be the opportunity for either party to identify and recommend professional development opportunities which may assist the employee in their day to day work or to grow within AceNgage.

Once complete, both parties shall sign off on the final document and it shall be added to the employee's personnel file.

Critical Success factors for AceNgage goal setting process include:

- 1. Simplicity
- 2. Involvement of people
- 3. Ability to set Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic & Time Bound (SMART) KPIs
- 4. Flexibility to align with new business contexts



Professionalism

When representing AceNgage, staff should dress and behave appropriately. Employees should choose to dress in a manner which presents a professional image to the public and is respectful of others. Excessive use of profanity is neither professional nor respectful to co-workers and will not be tolerated.

Discipline

Discipline at ACENGAGE shall be progressive, depending on the nature of the problem. Its purpose is to identify unsatisfactory performance and / or unacceptable behaviour. The stages may be:

- i. Verbal reprimand
- ii. Written reprimand
- iii. Dismissal

Some circumstances may be serious enough that all three steps are not used. Some examples of these types of situations are theft, assault or willful neglect of duty. In all cases, documentation should be included in the employees personnel file.

Hours of Work

The regular office hours for AceNgage are 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday inclusive (excluding holidays). During core hours, it is expected that most staff will be available. All employees are expected to work 9 hours per day, which include those hours indicated as core, exclusive of an unpaid eating break of at least thirty 60 minutes. Employees may also



be expected to work such other hours as may be requested or required, from time to time. Employees hired on a part time basis will have schedules determined on a case by case basis.

Employees are required to notify their supervisor, in advance, of planned days away from the office. Unplanned absences from the office should be reported to the employee's supervisor as soon as could reasonably be expected. At the discretion of the Executive Director, depending on circumstances, employees may be allowed to work from home for specific periods of time. As a courtesy, the Administrative Assistant should also be notified of absences.



Statutory Employee Benefits



Applicability

Applicable to all employees of AceNgage who are hired under regular payroll.

i. Employee's provident fund Scheme

This is a contributory "defined contribution" scheme where the employees and AceNgage will each contribute at 13.36% of the basic salary of employees. From and out of employer's share of Provident Fund contributions 8.33% of the total wages per month is segregated and credited to the Employees' Pension Fund (under the Employee's Pension Scheme, 1995), while the remainder is invested in this Fund. The accumulated value of the invested contributions will be available as a lump sum, as per the terms of the EPF&MP Act, 1952).

ii. Gratuity Scheme

AceNgage will pay Gratuity to all employees as per the terms and conditions under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.

Here are the key highlights of the scheme:

a) Gratuity is payable to an employee on termination of her/ his employment on completion of not less than five years of continuous service on o superannuation (60 years)/ retirement or resignation or death/ disablement due to an accident or disease.



- b) Period of continuous service includes period interrupted on account of sickness, accident or leave
- c) Completion of continuous service of five years is not necessary where the termination of the employment of any employee is due to death or disablement
- d) In the case of death of the employee, gratuity payable to her/ him shall be paid to her/ his nominee or, if no nomination has been made, to her/his heirs
- e) Disablement means such disablement as incapacitates an employee for the work which she/ he was capable of performing before the accident or disease resulting in such disablement.

Payment of Gratuity

For every completed year of service or part thereof in excess of six months, the employer shall pay gratuity to an employee at the rate of fifteen days' salary ('basic salary') based on the rate of salary last drawn by the employee concerned. Fifteen days' salary will be calculated by dividing the last drawn monthly salary ('basic salary') by twenty-six and multiplying the quotient by fifteen. The maximum Gratuity payable would be Rupees Ten Lakhs only

Nominations

Each employee who has completed one year of service should submit a nomination form for payment of gratuity. An employee may distribute the amount of gratuity payable, amongst more than one nominee. If an employee has a family at the time of making a nomination, the nomination shall be made in favour of one or more members of one's family. Any nomination made in favour of a person who is not a member of her/ his family will be void. If at the time of making a nomination, the employee has no family, the nomination may be made in favour of any person. But if the employee



subsequently acquires a family, such nomination will become invalid. A fresh nomination needs to be made by the Employee.

iii. Employee State Insurance Scheme (ESI)

Employees' State Insurance Scheme is a unique and unparalleled Social Security Scheme in India. The ESI Scheme applies to Employees those who are drawing wages up to Rs.21, 000/ The ESI Scheme is financed by contributions from employers and employees. The rate of contribution by employers is 3.75% and that of employees is 0.25% of the wages payable to an employee. Employees, earning less than Rs.137/- a day as daily wages are exempted from payment of their share of contribution.



The Employee Referral Program



Objective

The Employee Referral program at AceNgage looks at employees as a major source of referrals and intends to encourage good referrals, which results in the onboarding of candidates with a strong culture fit with AceNgage.

Eligibility

All employees on the rolls of the company.

The AceNgage Referral process

Employees may make referrals for open positions at AceNgage from their professional/ personal networks. The employees may collect details from the intranet or from emails with details of the open positions that HR may send whenever a new opening is included in the Referral Program. In case of special referral drives at AceNgage, Employees will be updated through emails/ e-notice boards. Employees who might like to make a referral should forward the resume to HR with the Job title and Job Code specified in the subject line of the email. The HR coordinator handling AceNgage referrals will review the referred CV against open positions and intimate the employee on the status... HR will give feedback on the referred CV within 10 working days. If the resume is selected, the employee who made the referral will be intimated after each round of the selection process on whether the status is a reject/ select. If the referred candidate accepts the offer, the employee will be informed of this.



Payment of the Referral Bonus

The Referral Bonus Rs.3000 will be paid to the Employee in two equal amounts on completion of 90 days of employment by the referred candidate at AceNgage.

If the employee who made the referral leaves AceNgage before the referral amount payment is due, he/ she will not be eligible for the bonus.

If the referred candidate leaves his/ her employment at AceNgage before completion of 30 days, the Referring Employee will not be eligible for the Referral Bonus. The referral bonus will be credited along with next month's salary.



Leave Policy

Paid Leave

Employees are eligible for 1 day leave per month from the Date of Joining. The calendar year for the same is January till December. There is no carry forward or leave encashment entitled to anyone. In addition to this there will be 10 mandatory holidays allotted to all employees as per statutory norms. The holiday list will be published to everybody.

Unpaid Leave

Employees may take unpaid leave with the written consent of the Manager. However the unpaid leaves will be considered as Loss of pay.

Unauthorized absence

Any employee who fails to report for work without informing the Reporting Manager or extending leave without prior approval of the Reporting Manager will be considered as a case of "unauthorized absence".

Such instances would seriously affect the work planning and delivery at AceNgage and would be construed as misconduct. Serious cognizance would be taken of such actions. In case of continuing instances of unauthorized absence, strict disciplinary action would be taken by AceNgage.

Exceptions to this policy will be decided by the Manager in consultation with the Head of the Function.



Maternity and Paternity Leave

i. Maternity Leave Policy

- 1. Women employees are entitled to a total of 26 weeks of Maternity Leave, as per the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, for the first two deliveries. Flexibility in deciding the actual number of weeks before and after delivery will be given to the employee. So the employee could shift some weeks from her pre- natal leave to the post-natal leave and vice versa, after discussion with her manager. The twenty Six weeks would also count the public holidays and paid time-off days which come in the entire term of the Maternity Leave. All other terms and conditions will be as per the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. However for those women who are expecting after having 2 children, the duration of the leave will be 12 weeks.
- 2. The maternity leave is awarded with full pay on completion of at least 80 days in an establishment in the 12 months prior to her expected date of delivery. The maternity benefit is calculated on the employee's basic pay. Following conditions apply:
 - 2.1 Maternity benefits can be availed by a woman only if she employs for a period of 1 year at AceNgage.
 - 2.2 A women employee who has not completed 12 months at AceNgage will not be eligible for Maternity leave
 - 2.3 Minimum 80 days to be completed in this 1 year tenure.



- 3. In case of miscarriage or medical termination of pregnancy, an employee is entitled to six weeks of paid miscarriage leave under the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017, immediately following the day of her miscarriage or, as the case may be, her medical termination of pregnancy
- 4. Process for Application of Maternity Leave:
 - 4.1. The employee is required to inform the Manager in advance regarding her leave plans depending on her expected date of delivery.
 - 4.2. The regular leave application process and format can be used for applying for leave.
- 5. Process for extending Maternity Leave:
 - 5.1. If there is a leave balance available in the employee's Annual Leave account, the employee could use up this balance after exhausting Maternity Leave.
 - 5.2. In case the employee desires to extend the leave further, she can apply for leave without pay. This application will be considered only after existing Annual Leave is exhausted.
 - 5.3. The leave planning should be done as early as possible, so that the manager can reassign the responsibilities of work within the team better.

ii. Paternity Leave Policy

1. All employees who become fathers while in the course of employment at AceNgage are eligible for 3 working days of Paternity Leave to spend time with the new-born and the family for the first two deliveries.



- 2. The Leave has to be availed of in the three months immediately following the birth of the baby. After three months, the Paternity Leave will lapse and cannot be availed of.
- 3. Process for Application:
 - a. Through the regular leave application form.
 - b. If the employee plans to avail of the leave immediately on arrival of the new-born, the employee should inform the Manager of his tentative plans depending on the anticipated date of delivery.
 - c. On the birth of the baby, the employee should inform the Manager as soon as possible so that that work schedule can be managed accordingly.

iii. Marriage Leave Policy

All confirmed employees while in the course of employment at AceNgage are eligible for 10 days wedding leave as per company policy. In addition to this an increment by 5% will be done on employee salaries as a token of love from Team AceNgage.



Confidential Information and Intellectual Property



Confidential Information

From time to time, employees of AceNgage may come into contact with confidential information, including but not limited to information about AceNgage's members, suppliers, finances and business plans. Employees are required to keep any such matters that may be disclosed to them or learned by them confidential.

Furthermore, any such confidential information, obtained through employment with AceNgage, must not be used by an employee for personal gain or to further an outside enterprise.

Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property, such as trademarks, copyrights and patents, and any work created by an employee in the course of employment at AceNgage shall be the property of AceNgage and the employee is deemed to have waived all rights in favour of AceNgage. Work, for the purpose of this policy refers to written, creative or media work. All source material used in presentation or written documents must be acknowledged.

IT Information Storage and Security

Any storage devices (CD's, USB's, and Floppy Discs) used by employees at AceNgage, located at AceNgage's address, acknowledge that these devices and their contents are the property of AceNgage. Furthermore, it should be understood by employees, that company equipment should be used for company business only during normal working hours. Downloading of personal materials on company equipment can be harmful to said equipment and should not be done.



Health and Safety



laws.

AceNgage, along with its employees, must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the workplace is safe. AceNgage complies with all requirements for creating a healthy and safe workplace in accordance with local

Employees who have health and safety concerns or identify potential hazards should contact the HR SPOC immediately.

Alcohol consumption or illegal drug use is not permitted during work hours on the premises. From time to time, with the Executive Director's permission, alcohol may be used to celebrate an occasion/event.

Harassment

AceNgage wants to provide a harassment-free environment for its employees and volunteers. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between members and staff. AceNgage will neither tolerate nor condone behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

There are several forms of harassment but all can be defined as any unwelcome action by any person, whether verbal or physical, on a single or repeated basis, which humiliates insults or degrades. "Unwelcome", for the purposes of this policy, refers to any action which the harasser knows or ought to reasonably know is not desired by the victim of the harassment.

Specifically, racial harassment is defined as any unwelcome comments, racist statements, slurs, jokes, graffiti or literature or pictures and posters which may intentionally or unintentionally offend another person.



Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual nature such as remarks about appearance or personal life, offensive written or visual actions like graffiti or degrading pictures, physical contact of any kind, or sexual demands.

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence can be defined as a threat or an act of aggression resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain or injury to a worker, which arises during the course of work. Further to the definition of violence, is the definition of abuse. Abuse can be verbal, psychological or sexual in nature. Verbal abuse is the use of unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening or degrading comments. Psychological abuse is an act which provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem. Finally, sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or sexually explicit statement.

AceNgage has a zero tolerance limit with regards to harassment and violence. Employees or volunteers engaging in either harassing or violent activities will be subject to discipline, which may include termination of employment, removal from Boards or committees and possibly criminal charges.



Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH)

Objective

To protect all employees at AceNgage against any instance of sexual harassment. This policy aims to prohibit, prevent or discourage any act of sexual harassment at the workplace and provide redressal for any incidents of sexual harassment at work.

Applicability

The policy covers all employees of AceNgage.

Definition of Sexual Harassment Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour including but not limited to:-

- 1) Physical contact
- 2) A demand or request for sexual favours
- 3) Sexually coloured remarks
- 4) Showing pornography
- 5) Any other physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature



Process

Employees of AceNgage who may have Complaints relating to Sexual Harassment at work can make a complaint in writing to HR and Management for Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace.

The authority will immediately address the complaint, which has been raised by the Employee. Upon receipt of such complaints, the authority will conduct a prompt, thorough and discreet enquiry, which will consider the versions of both parties involved.

The authority will maintain strict confidentiality about the persons involved and details obtained. The authority will ensure that the complainant faces no retaliatory behaviour from anyone in the organization on account of the complaint made.

Reporting such an incident will also not be considered as a negative for the Employee's work record. Both sides will be considered and suitable action will be taken against proven violators and false accusers.

This essentially means that no action will be taken against anyone until a thorough investigation has been conducted. If the guilt of the person against whom the complaint was made is proven, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the offender/s.

Disciplinary actions may include an oral or written warning or even termination. Sexual harassment complaints which are proved to be malicious or false will attract strict disciplinary action.

All terms and conditions as per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 would be applicable in the implementation of this Policy at AceNgage.



Dispute Resolution

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any working environment. In an effort to resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, ACENGAGE recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution.

- 1. Speak to the person you are having the dispute with. Many times disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications.
- 2. If speaking to the individual does not work, speak to the Manager. The HR SPOC will arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute, to determine a resolution.

Departure



Termination

AceNgage may terminate an employee because of performance reasons or due to misconduct.

i) Performance-based release

AceNgage employee's services can be terminated in case of consistent non-performance of duties. This process would be initiated by the manager and ratified by HR for further action. The last working day of the AceNgage employee would be intimated to the AceNgage Employee by the Manager. This would follow the Performance Improvement Plan used by AceNgage.



By disability: A AceNgage employee's service can be terminated if by reason of any physical or mental incapacity, employee has been or will be prevented from properly performing his duties for more than ninety (90) days in any one year period, or to the extent permitted by the labour laws. In such cases, AceNgage may terminate the period of employment upon fourteen (14) days advance written notice.

ii) By employer for cause

Employer may terminate employee for causes as defined below under this section. Termination shall be for "Cause" if the employee

- (i) Is repeatedly tardy.
- (ii) Is repeatedly absent from work
- (iii) Refuses or fails to act in accordance with any specific direction or order of employer.
- (iv) Exhibits in regard to his employment unfitness or unavailability for service, misconduct, habitual neglect or incompetence.
- (v) Lacks technical knowledge or experience to perform the duties required of him/ her by the employer
- (vi) Conduct a behaviour or work result in any complaints from clients or customers for which employer is working.
- (vii) Is dishonest.
- (viii) Engages in or behaves with moral turpitude.
- (ix) Makes any misrepresentation about any aspects related to self



- (x) Acts in bad faith and to detriment of employer.
- (xi) Is convicted of a crime involving dishonesty, breach of trust, or physical or emotional harm to any person.
- (xii) Breaches the Internet Discipline of the company either by using the facility in visiting sites which is in no way connected with the professional responsibilities entrusted or by visiting banned sites notified and identified by the company from time to time.
- (xiii) Breaches any material terms of the Service Contract.
- (xiv) Any other causes as may be updated by AceNgage based on business relevance from time to time

Resignation

During the period of probation, either side can terminate this appointment with 15 days mandatory notice period.

Upon confirmation, employee must give the Employer 30 days notice of resignation. The Employer may waive the resignation notice period in whole or in part using their discretion.

If the employee wants waiver of notice period then they will have to buyout the notice period.

Layoff

Operation requirements are subject to change based on workload and the funding levels received on an annual basis. All efforts will be made to keep staff in a position similar, in scope and salary, to that they have become accustomed to. If ACENGAGE is unable to do this, then the employee will receive 15 days' notice.



Employer Property

Upon termination of employment for any reason, all items of any kind created or used pursuant to the employee's service or furnished by the Employer including but not limited to computers, reports, files, diskettes, manuals, literature, confidential information, or other materials shall remain and be considered the exclusive property of the Employer at all times, and shall be surrendered to the Management, in good condition, promptly and without being requested to do so.

Exit Formalities

Post resignation employees will have to serve the notice period of 30 days from the date of resignation for a confirmed employee. Employees will not be eligible for any leaves while serving the notice period. In case of emergency it may be allowed to take leave with the necessary approval from the Team lead, however the same shall be considered as Loss of Pay (LOP). If the Employee terminates his/ her services without the requisite 30 days' notice period, he/ she shall be liable to pay AceNgage notice pay equivalent to 30 days' notice pay as drawn by him/her proportional to the shortfall in the notice period. Notice pay expenses shall be calculated on the Fixed Salary component.

Post completion of exit formalities, the full and final settlement would be done in the immediate pay cycle.