

NEXA Employee Handbook

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Company Name: NEXA

Tagline: "Integrity • Innovation • Inclusivity"

Legal Framework: In accordance with the Indian Shops and Establishments Act, Maternity Benefit Act, and other applicable labor laws.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to NEXA. This handbook is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide for employees, providing detailed information on our policies, benefits, expectations, and procedures. The document reflects our commitment to global best practices as well as adherence to local legal standards. At NEXA, merit and performance are the foundations of all decisions. We ensure that every employee, regardless of background, is provided equal opportunities to grow professionally and personally. Our policies are continuously updated to reflect current trends in employee engagement, workplace safety, and technology usage.

This handbook serves multiple purposes:

- It is a point of reference for employees to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- It functions as a training guide for new hires to learn about the company culture and operational standards.
- It serves as a reliable source of information during audits or internal reviews.

2. COMPANY MISSION, VISION, & CORE VALUES

Mission:

- Deliver innovative IT and business solutions across India while upholding sustainable growth, ethical practices, and social responsibility. We continuously invest in research and development to ensure our products and services meet the evolving needs of our clients.

Vision:

- Be recognized as the benchmark for ethical, inclusive, and innovative business practices in India. We strive to lead the IT sector by integrating cutting-edge technologies with ethical business practices that benefit both the company and society.

Core Values:

- **Integrity:** Conduct business with absolute transparency and honesty. Every decision is made with ethical considerations at the forefront.
- **Meritocracy & Inclusivity:** Base hiring, promotions, and performance evaluations solely on individual merit and potential. Every employee is given equal opportunities, and our systems are designed to eliminate bias.
- **Innovation:** Encourage creativity and continuous improvement. Employees are empowered to explore new ideas and technologies in an environment where innovation thrives.
- **Collaboration:** Promote teamwork and open communication across all levels. A collaborative approach is essential for sharing ideas and achieving common goals.
- **Neutrality:** Maintain a professional environment by keeping personal political opinions private. This practice ensures that workplace interactions remain neutral and free of bias.

3. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES & WORKING HOURS

Employment Categories:

- **Full-Time Employees:** Work a 45-hour workweek, typically Monday to Friday with an extended half-day on Saturday to meet business needs.
- **Part-Time Employees:** Work a minimum of 20 hours per week; benefits are prorated based on the number of hours worked.
- **Contract/Temporary Employees:** Engage in defined roles with fixed-term assignments as per local labor laws. Their responsibilities and work duration are outlined in individual contracts.

Working Hours:

- **Standard Office Hours:** 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM, including a one-hour lunch break, designed to balance collaboration and productivity.
- **Flexible Start Options:** Employees may start their day between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM, provided the required work hours are completed.
- **Hybrid Work Model:**
 - On-Site Requirement: Employees must be present in the office at least three days per week.
 - Remote Work: Up to two remote work days are permitted each week with core collaborative hours from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM to ensure team connectivity.
- **Breaks & Rest Periods:**
 - One-hour unpaid lunch break is provided daily.
 - Two additional 15-minute breaks for tea or refreshments are granted to support well-being and sustained productivity.

Equal Employment Opportunity:

- All recruitment, performance evaluations, and promotions are strictly merit-based. Remote work and leave provisions are applied equally to all employees, ensuring fairness and supporting a diverse, inclusive work environment.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT, WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR & POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

Professional Behavior:

- Employees are expected to interact respectfully with colleagues, clients, and vendors at all times. Professional communication and conduct are essential to maintain a positive work environment.
- Adherence to a smart-casual dress code is expected, unless formal attire is required for client interactions or special events.

Anti-Harassment & Anti-Discrimination:

- NEXA enforces a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and discriminatory behavior.
- All incidents must be reported immediately to supervisors or the Human Resources (HR) department. Reports are handled with the utmost confidentiality to protect all parties involved.

Conflict of Interest & Political Neutrality:

- Employees must disclose any potential conflicts of interest as soon as they are identified to maintain transparency and trust.
- Personal political opinions should remain private and are not to be shared within the workplace, ensuring a neutral and unbiased work environment.

Confidentiality:

- All proprietary and sensitive company information must be safeguarded at all times.
- Employees are prohibited from sharing confidential data externally, including through unsanctioned platforms or AI tools. This policy is critical for protecting both company and client information.

4A. GROUNDS FOR INSTANT TERMINATION AND WARNINGS

Grounds for Instant Termination:

- **Gross Misconduct:** Acts such as violence, theft, or any behavior endangering the safety of employees or clients.
- **Breach of Confidentiality:** Unauthorized sharing or leaking of sensitive company or client information, including the use of external platforms or AI tools.
- **Severe Policy Violations:** Actions that directly contradict core company policies, such as misuse of IT resources, unauthorized use of generative AI tools, or deliberate violation of data security protocols.

- **Harassment or Discrimination:** Engaging in behavior that constitutes harassment, discrimination, or abuse towards colleagues, clients, or vendors.
- **Conflict of Interest Breaches:** Failing to disclose or acting on conflicts of interest that compromise the integrity of business decisions.
- **Repeated or Extreme Political Bias:** Persistently broadcasting personal political views in a way that disrupts workplace neutrality and creates conflicts.

Infractions That Typically Result in Warnings:

- **Minor Policy Infractions:** Occasional breaches of guidelines that do not compromise security or safety, such as minor tardiness or non-critical dress code violations.
- **First-Time Confidentiality Lapses:** Unintentional or minor lapses in handling confidential information, provided they do not lead to significant data exposure.
- **Communication Issues:** Instances of unprofessional communication that do not escalate to harassment or discrimination.
- **Initial Conflicts of Interest:** Situations where conflicts are not disclosed promptly but are remedied once identified, without further negative impact.
- **Repeated Minor Infractions:** A pattern of small-scale violations that, while not severe enough for immediate termination, indicate non-compliance and require formal warnings and corrective actions.

Each case is reviewed individually, with the severity, intent, and impact taken into account when determining the appropriate disciplinary action.

5. HEALTH, SAFETY, & HYBRID WORK MODELS

Workplace Safety:

- Safety is a top priority at NEXA. Regular safety drills and clear emergency procedures are in place at all office locations.
- Employees participate in mandatory training sessions covering fire safety, ergonomics, and overall hazard management to ensure a secure work environment.

Wellness & Health Programs:

- In-house wellness centres and quarterly health check-up camps are available to support employee well-being.
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers professional counselling and stress management resources.
- Subsidized gym memberships and wellness workshops are provided to promote a healthy lifestyle among employees.

Hybrid Work Model Specifics:

- **Remote Work Guidelines:**
 - Employees must set up a secure and dedicated workspace when working remotely.
 - Only company-authorized VPN services i.e ProtonVPN and WindScribe are allowed to ensure data security.
- **Communication Tools:**
 - Daily virtual stand-ups and weekly team meetings are conducted via approved platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom to facilitate effective communication.
- **Performance Monitoring:**
 - Managers use digital dashboards to monitor work output and productivity metrics, ensuring consistent performance regardless of remote or on-site work.

6. COMPENSATION, BENEFITS & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Compensation Structure:

- NEXA offers competitive salary packages benchmarked against Indian industry standards.
- Annual salary increments are merit-based and reflect individual performance as well as overall company success.
- Quarterly performance bonuses are awarded based on both personal achievements and company performance.

Employee Benefits:

- **Healthcare:**
 - Comprehensive group medical, dental, and vision insurance is provided for employees and their dependents, ensuring robust health support.
- **Retirement & Provident Fund:**
 - Contributions are made in accordance with statutory requirements, with additional company contributions to enhance long-term financial security.
- **Paid Time Off (PTO):**
 - Employees are entitled to 15 days of vacation leave per annum, in addition to national and regional holidays.
 - An additional 10 days of paid sick leave are provided to cover health-related absences.
 - A maximum of 5 unused vacation days can carry over to the next financial year. This does not include sick leaves.
- **Family Support Benefits:**
 - Maternity Leave: Female employees are granted 26 weeks of fully paid leave in accordance with the Maternity Benefit Act, with options for reduced work hours if needed.
 - Paternity Leave: Male employees may avail of 2 months (60 days) of fully paid leave, with the possibility of reduced work hours during this period.
 - Adoption Leave: Employees who adopt a child receive 12 weeks of fully paid leave.
 - Family Care Leave: Up to 6 weeks of leave is provided for employees to care for critically ill family members, subject to managerial approval.

- **Additional Perks:**

- Meal allowances, transportation reimbursements, and employee recognition programs are offered to ease daily expenses and encourage a positive work environment.

Career Development:

- Regular training programs, structured mentorship initiatives, and tuition reimbursement opportunities are available to support continuous learning and professional growth.
- Promotions and role re-assignments are based on clearly defined criteria that include merit, performance metrics, and individual contributions, ensuring a transparent and attainable career progression path.

7. IT, DATA, & GENERATIVE AI USE POLICIES

Usage of Company IT Resources:

- IT equipment and internet access are provided exclusively for business purposes. While minimal personal use is allowed, it must not interfere with work productivity.
- Employees are expected to follow guidelines for the responsible use of technology resources.

Data Security:

- Data protection is of utmost importance at NEXA. All employees must complete mandatory cybersecurity training and strictly adhere to data protection policies.
- Sensitive information must be handled according to established company guidelines to prevent unauthorized disclosure.

Generative AI Usage Guidelines:

- **Allowed AI Tools:**

- Employees may use Phi by Microsoft via HuggingChat and Claude by Anthropic to enhance learning and productivity.

- **Usage Conditions:**

- AI tools are to be used solely for enhancement and learning purposes. Employees must maintain full control over any outputs generated by these tools to ensure accuracy and relevance.

- All AI-related activities must be conducted using the employer-provided account in compliance with company policies.
- **Confidentiality Restrictions:**
 - Confidential company documents or data must not be uploaded or shared with external AI services under any circumstances.
- **Consequences:**
 - Violations of these guidelines will result in strict disciplinary action, which may include immediate termination for severe breaches.

Authorized VPN Services:

- Only ProtonVPN and WindScribe are authorized for maintaining secure connections when accessing company resources remotely.

Social Media Use:

- When representing NEXA on social media, employees must maintain professionalism at all times.
- Personal political views and any sensitive company information must not be shared online.

8. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES & GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

Disciplinary Measures:

- Violations of company policies—including misuse of AI tools, breach of confidentiality, or expression of political bias—will trigger progressive disciplinary actions.
- The disciplinary process begins with a verbal warning, followed by written warnings if the behavior persists, and may ultimately result in termination for continued non-compliance.

Grievance Process:

- Employees may file grievances either anonymously or directly via the HR portal.
- All grievances are thoroughly investigated, with a target resolution period of 15 working days.
- Appropriate corrective actions are taken based on the findings, in accordance with company policy and relevant local labor laws. This process ensures that all employee concerns are addressed fairly and transparently.

9. EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Every employee is required to review this handbook thoroughly. An acknowledgment form must be signed—either electronically or on paper—confirming that the employee has read, understood, and agrees to abide by all the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined herein. This signed acknowledgment is maintained in the employee's personnel file and serves as confirmation of the employee's commitment to uphold the company standards.