

July 19, 2024

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY


HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

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The Policy owner in Human Resources is required to keep this Policy updated. It will be reviewed by Human Resources after 3 years issuance or earlier if so required by the University.

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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 It is the policy of Aga Khan University (AKU) to recruit and select applicants who are suitably qualified or trained for employment for vacant positions in the Staff category, in accordance with pre-determined job-related criteria and the procedure specified herein. The University will generally endeavor to place staff members in positions that best utilize their skills and abilities and provide opportunity for professional and personal development and growth.
- 1.2 AKU strongly believes on the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity which includes prevention from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender (except where gender is a bona fide occupational qualification), national origin, marital status, and disability which under known physical limitations of a qualified disabled applicant or employee would be able to perform the essential duties of the job if such accommodation is made.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 To provide a framework to facilitate a consistent approach for new hirings for staff or trainee positions, ensuring that due process is followed as outlined in this policy.

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1 All staff/trainee positions which include full-time, temporary, part-time and contract-based positions, including aid workers and those working in outreach and humanitarian settings, within authorized staffing budgets.
- 3.2 All shortlisted external and internal candidates for vacant staff positions.
- 3.3 HR will be responsible for coordinating all stages of the recruitment and selection process for hiring of staff, and will maintain a complete record, including job postings, interview evaluations, professional and employment references being sought and received, and other related information/correspondence.
- 3.4 This policy is an overarching global policy applicable to all entities/ campuses of the University including the outreach humanitarian settings and field sites where the University has its programs.
 - 3.4.1 Campuses of the AKU, in each country where it operates, will need to have applicable work procedures for their respective programs/operations to ensure due coverage, compliance, and monitoring, and reporting to HR; actions to be taken for any non-compliance will be as per applicable laws of the respective countries and related policies at AKU.

4.0 OBSERVATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- 4.1 Depending on the position level, as part of the recruitment process, candidates may be asked to make a presentation on a relevant topic, which would be finalized between the candidate and Department Head / Entity Head, as applicable.
- 4.2 Human Resources will maintain an updated data bank of applications of candidates who have applied for jobs at AKU and are qualified in areas relevant to staff positions.
 - 4.2.1 All applications received for staff positions by any department will be forwarded to the concerned Business Partner in HR who will ensure that these are duly logged timely and included in the applications data bank.
- 4.3 The minimum age for employment at AKU is 18 years. Applicants for national positions must have a valid identification document (e.g., Computerized National Identity Card, Passport, Work Visa), without which an employment offer will not be made.

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- 4.4 Staff in employment at the University who desire a transfer from their current assignment and fulfill the necessary job requirements, will compete with external candidates, within the limits of the policy for [Transfers and Appointments](#) (Policy # HR/RC-08).
- 4.5 For recruitment of senior staff positions, a Search Committee comprising senior staff members and leadership of the University may be formed to fill the vacant position. This is normally constituted by the President in consultation with VP-HR and leadership of the concerned service.
- 4.6 Applicants who were previously employed by the University and have reapplied will be given due consideration, subject to their past work history and performance being satisfactory, and there being no known record of sexual exploitation and abuse or other misconduct, including fraud, misappropriation, corruption and/or bribery. They will normally be considered for re-hire after a minimum period of 6 months after separation, to enable the concerned incumbent to address reasons due to which he/she separated.
 - 4.6.1 However, by exception the concerned divisional head/entity head and VP Human Resources or designee may approve an earlier re-hiring if so required by the University and reason for the same noted.
- 4.7 Employment of all staff is subject to receipt of satisfactory references, which will be from at least two of the previous employers, where applicable. This condition is not applicable to the fresh graduates joining the University or those who do not have prior work experience or those who only have work experience with one organization prior to joining AKU. Any other references or verifications may be sought by HR at its discretion, if considered necessary.
- 4.8 Disclosure of misinformation or derogatory references or submission of forged documents, will be considered a basis for termination of the selection process or employment of the incumbent.
- 4.9 For staff positions, if a candidate shortlisted for an interview needs to travel to the location where the interviews are being conducted, the costs for related travel and accommodation expenses will be borne by AKU.
- 4.10 Incumbents being appointed for staff positions at AKU but are not resident in the same city as the campus where appointed, will be provided a relocation allowance for self and eligible dependents for airfare, unaccompanied air freight, and moving allowance, as per the relocation benefits applicable to the position (reimbursement of expense(s) should be claimed within 6 months of joining supported by original payment receipts). Eligibility for relocation benefits is subject to the employment contract being for at least 2 years. (Please refer [Annexure X: Relocation Entitlement](#)).
- 4.11 AKU will follow the safeguarding referencing process for the hiring of staff who have been previously or are currently employed in other agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN); it will become an integral part of the external recruitment process, and the internal network mobility process. The safeguarding reference will be managed and handled by the designated HR contacts at the University who will coordinate with their counterparts at the concerned agency of the AKDN for required information.
 - 4.11.1 The Safeguarding Referencing process of the AKDN is complementary to and separate from any other forms of due diligence that the University carries out as part of the recruitment process, for the purposes of assessing a candidate's suitability for a position.

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- 4.12 During the selection process, department heads / hiring managers should not share with the applicant any confidential information pertaining to the hiring process including salary for the position.
- 4.13 Employment of all expatriate personnel will be subject to approval by the entity head, and the Vice President Human Resources or designee at the campus.
- 4.14 Employment of all foreign nationals is subject to approval by the government of the country in which they will be working, and issuance of a work visa.
- 4.15 Hiring of Family Members
 - 4.15.1 AKU will consider employing persons who are family members of an employee/trainee at AKU (by blood or marriage), provided the individual possesses the necessary qualifications for the position, following due process and limitations stated herein.
 - 4.15.2 All employment applications from family members of existing employees/trainees will be impartially evaluated, and hiring decisions will be based strictly on merit.
 - 4.15.3 If an employee/trainee is part of the decision-making process for a vacant position, and he/she identifies that one of the applicants is a family member, he/she needs to inform the Department Head of the Conflict of Interest (COI) situation and should normally request to be excused from participating in the process.
 - 4.15.4 Related employees will not be given work assignments that require one employee to direct, review or process the work of a related employee, or to permit one to have access to the personnel records of the other. Related employees cannot have influence over one another's employment, salary administration or related considerations.
 - 4.15.5 If an employee/trainee at AKU marries another employee/trainee at AKU, both may retain their positions provided they are not under the supervision of each other, and neither occupies a position that has influence over the other's employment. If in case either one of the employee/trainee is under supervision of the other, one of them will need to transfer to another position to ensure that a situation of Conflict of Interest does not occur.
 - 4.15.6 Normally, related employees will be assigned to different departments. However, under special circumstances based on which the department head feels that an exception is justifiable, related employees may be placed in the same department with due approvals from the division head and the Vice-President HR or designee, subject to above provisions.
- 4.16 A candidate's misconduct history will be processed and shared in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, regulations, and institutional policies, as applicable in respective countries.
 - 4.16.1 A candidate's misconduct history as received by AKU can only be shared with the candidate if so required by law, policy, or governance framework. This will be done only by an authorized officer in Human Resources after obtaining required approvals from the VP-HR or designee at the campus.

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5.0 APPOINTMENT ON CONSULTANCY CONTRACTS

- 5.1 The University may offer consultancy contracts to identified individuals in the circumstances listed below to meet the special needs of a department/division for a defined period, normally for a short-term duration, which should preferably be part of the department's budget for that year.
 - 5.1.1 Short term assignment for critical support for a department's business needs for the technical, professional, research, patient care and administrative roles.
 - 5.1.2 Employees having special skills/expertise who cannot continue on a full-time basis due to extenuating circumstances and their services are critical for the department/University to fill the gap for the services required. They may either work on site or virtually, depending on the nature of the job.
 - 5.1.3 Those having retired or completed their post-retirement contracts may be appointed as Consultants (Please refer to the Policy for [Retirement](#) (Policy # HR/ER-18)).
 - 5.1.4 Consultants may be appointed on a full-time or part-time basis.
- 5.2 Those identified to be appointed as Consultants should be screened by HR to ensure that they are meeting the criteria, i.e. qualifications, skills, competencies and experience required for the assignment.
- 5.3 The period of the consultancy contract can be from one month to a maximum period of one year. Contract extensions will require approval from the respective entity heads and should be duly planned and budgeted.
- 5.4 Those appointed as "Consultants" will be paid a monthly fee for the service rendered. They will not be eligible for benefits offered by the University to its employees and will be liable for the tax deductions in line with the applicable tax laws of the country.
- 5.5 The departments/divisions will be required to ensure that requests for appointments on consultancy contracts meet the criteria as defined herein. The department/division heads will be required to coordinate with Human Resources for the appointment of Consultants.

6.0 COMPLIANCE OF THE POLICY

- 6.1 The University expects Department Heads/Chairs/Entity Heads and those engaged in implementing the process in HR and other concerned Departments to comply with the recruitment and selection procedures for staff/trainee positions as outlined herein.
- 6.2 If the University identifies any instances of non-compliance with this policy, concerned incumbents can be liable to disciplinary action as per the University's policies.
- 6.3 In case an employee is found to have submitted forged documents or to have given false information regarding his/her past records and/or has a proven record or suspicion of sexual misconduct or allegations during background checks, he/she will be liable to disciplinary action according to the University's policy on [Employee Discipline](#) (Policy # HR/ER-21). Relevant documentation will be done and included in the personnel file/HR Records system to ensure that concerned incumbent is not considered for re-hire at a later point in time.

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7.0 LIST OF ANNEXURES

- 7.1 [Annexure I: Procedure](#)
- 7.2 [Annexure II Personnel Requisition Form](#)
- 7.3 [Annexure III: Interview Evaluation Form](#)
- 7.4 [Annexure IV: Authorities Matrix for Selection of Job Applicants for Staff Positions](#)
- 7.5 [Annexure V: Application Form for Employment](#)
- 7.6 [Annexure VI: Employment Reference Check Form](#)
- 7.7 (i) [Annexure VII A to D: AKDN – Safeguarding Referencing for Inter-Agency Employee Movement](#)
(ii) [Annexure VII-D: Directory of Authorized Personnel for Safeguarding Referencing.](#)
- 7.8 [Annexure VIII: Definitions](#)
- 7.9 [Annexure IX: Measures to Facilitate Appointment/Retention of Staff Hired for Research Projects Funded by Extra-Mural Grants](#)
- 7.10 [Annexure X: Relocation Entitlement and Initial Accommodation Facility For Faculty And Staff Joining From Outside Pakistan/Karachi](#)

8.0 RELATED POLICIES

8.1 The Policy for Staff Recruitment and Selection should be read in conjunction with its Annexures and the following policies:

- 1. [Policy for Pre-Employment Medical Examination](#) (Policy # HR/RC-03)
- 2. [Policy for Job Descriptions](#) Policy # HR/ER-03)
- 3. [Policy for Transfers and Appointments](#) (Policy # HR/RC-08)
- 4. [Policy for Probation](#) (Policy # HR/ER-04)
- 5. [Policy for Retirement](#) (Policy # HR/ER-18)
- 6. [Policy for Employee Discipline](#) (Policy # HR/ER-21)

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Annexure I: Procedure for the Policy for Staff Recruitment and Selection

- 1.0 To fill a budgeted vacant staff position (replacement or new) in the department, the concerned department/divisional head or designee will forward the approval to HR for initiating the hiring process. Recruiters need to ensure that all documentation related to the hiring process, including receipt of the approved [Personnel Requisition](#), is completed before selection is finalized.

1.1 Search

1.1.1 HR, in collaboration with the relevant department head, will tap appropriate sources for potential candidates, which may include one or more of the following:

- a) Internal announcement (for employees onboard)
- b) Data bank of active applicants.
- c) AKU/AKDN web portal.
- d) Advertisement in newspapers, professional journals, and websites.
- e) Educational and technical training institutions.
- f) Alumni and ex-employees.
- g) Announcements in appropriate forums.
- h) Job fairs.
- i) Head Hunters/External Consultants.
- j) Social media platforms

1.1.2 Normally, a vacant position will be appropriately posted on the website of AKU, which will also include a closing timeline for receipt of job applications. This job announcement should normally be made by HR within a week of the Department Head advising HR to activate hiring for a vacancy.

1.1.2.1 Some positions may be advertised internally only on the AKU intranet depending on the nature of the position and applications already available in the application data bank.

1.1.3 The job announcements will have information conveying the following:

- (i) AKU is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to safeguarding and expects all employees/trainees and partners to share this commitment, and
- (ii) Comprehensive employment reference checks will be conducted.

1.2 Screening

1.2.1 HR will assist in initial screening of applications as required by concerned department heads to determine if the applicant meets the requirements for the said position this may include an initial screening interview by HR or the Department. Shortlisted applications will be shared with the concerned department.

1.3 Shortlisting

1.3.1 Candidates shortlisted by the concerned department will be invited by HR for assessment (as applicable), which may include skills assessment tests, and interviews, preferably with gender-balanced panelists, etc. HR will assist in scheduling of interviews. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by the designated panel/ department head, along with the HR Business Partner or a representative from HR.

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- 1.3.2 The number of candidates shortlisted for interview(s) will vary depending on the position and the pool of applicants available.

1.4 **Interviewing**

- 1.4.1 Based on the level of the position for which the hiring is being processed, the first stage of interviews could be the final selection stage such as for ancillary and support staff or there could be more than one interview e.g., in case of senior level positions in the management or executive cadres (please refer [Annexure IV: Authorities Matrix for Selection of Job Applicants for Staff Positions](#)).
- 1.4.2 The members of the interview panel will be selected by the Department Head; interviewers will normally be senior in rank to the position for which interviews are being conducted and must be well-versed with the job and competencies required.
- (i) The number of interviewers will normally vary between 3 to 5 members, depending on the level of the position being interviewed for.
- (ii) Conflict of Interest: In case a candidate is known to an interviewer or is a family member, he/she should bring this to the attention of the Department Head in writing as a disclosure since this could pose a conflict of interest. The Department Head will discuss with the Business Partner (BP) in HR in this regard and whether this member of the panel should continue or otherwise; the Department Head will respond to the concerned member of the panel accordingly.
- 1.4.3 Interviewers will complete their evaluation on [Annexure III 'Interview Evaluation Form'](#) (or prepare a File Note, if applicable) after the interview and will forward it to HR. The interview evaluation report must clearly indicate the interviewer's recommendations as to whether the candidate should be considered for the next stage of the selection process or not. (please refer [Annexure III: Interview Evaluation Form](#))
- 1.4.4 The HR representative will also discretely inquire from the candidate whether he/she has been subjected to any inquiry regarding instances of involvement in any acts of misconduct and/or related investigations and outcomes of the same and will state the findings (if any) as part of his/her interview evaluation.

1.5 **Shortlisting for Final Selection**

- 1.5.1 Applicants shortlisted for final selection will normally be decided jointly by the concerned Department Head, Entity Head and the HR Representative (as applicable) based on interview evaluations and other assessments during the shortlisting/selection process. Normally the number of applicants shortlisted for the final selection will be 2 to 4 candidates but this will depend on the position level of the vacancy, and number of applicants found suitable for the position/job.
- 1.5.2 For positions at the level of AD4 and above (or equivalent), the hiring process may require subsequent interviews by next level seniors e.g., with concerned

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Director or Entity Head or others in Senior Leadership, depending on the position. The HR representative coordinating the hiring process will address for next level interviews, as applicable. (Please refer [Annexure IV: Authorities Matrix for Selection of Job Applicants for Staff Positions](#))

- 1.5.3 Those shortlisted for final selection (2 to 4 candidates) or only the selected candidates will be sent [Annexure V: Application Form for Employment](#) and will be asked to submit it to concerned HR representative within the next 2 to 3 days. The Form will require applicants to self-declare regarding involvement in any instances of sexual misconduct or other related misconduct or termination of past employment, and/or concerns registered with government authorities, if any.
(Please refer to [Annexure V – Application Form for Employment](#)).

1.6 **Checking Employment Reference**

- 1.6.1 HR will ensure that the recruitment and selection procedures strictly adhere to said requirements i.e., that the candidates shortlisted for selection or offer of employment at AKU, including those to be working in humanitarian settings, do not have any known track record/history of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in previous and current employment tenures through contacting previous employers for an employment reference. Employment reference concerning safeguarding misconduct will be obtained for all new hires including those who are currently working at AKDN agencies or have previously done so.
(Please refer to [Annexure VI – Employment Reference Check Form – Confidential](#)).
- 1.6.2 The HR representative will normally send the employment references before the selection decision has been finalized. Feedback may be received in due course, but at the latest within 3 months or prior to the end of the probation period. If the offer is formalized and conveyed to selected candidate before receipt of the reference, the offer letter should specifically state that the offer is subject to receipt of satisfactory references and other related provisions.
- 1.6.3 HR should ensure that at least 2 of the selected candidate's former employers and the current employer have been contacted for an employment reference. (This will not be applicable if the incumbent does not have any previous work experience or has only 1 former employer). This will include the employment reference from an AKDN agency, if applicable.
- 1.6.4 If an employment reference has not been received within one month of having sent it, despite the reminders having been sent, the HR representative coordinating the process should include a file note to this effect and obtain concurrence of the Business Partner in HR for the process to be closed temporarily with a file note to be included in the new employee's file along with a copy of all correspondence for follow-up.

- 1.6.4.1 However, this matter i.e., employment reference not received till end of probation period or by end of 3 months of the employee's joining AKU, it should be addressed by HR with the Department Head and concerned

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employee.

1.6.4.2 Options to be considered can be (i) extension of probation and making concerned employee responsible to provide the reference or (ii) conclusion of employment since employment reference is essential or (iii) confirmation of employment with a provision in the letter that employee will provide the reference within a specified time period, and also provide contact details of other referees for the process to be completed.

1.7 **Job Offer**

1.7.1 (i) Once the decision for the selected candidate is finalized by the concerned authority, HR will determine the salary to be offered, in consultation with the concerned Department Head/Entity Head (as applicable), which will be as per applicable salary structure in line with the University's policy, and a comparative analysis with peers.

(ii) This will not be applicable for cases where incumbents are hired on entry level positions or from trainee to staff, for which entry level salaries are offered; benefits will be as applicable as per the grade classification of the position and the nature of the contract for which applicable written information will be provided. While doing so, due consideration will be given to maintaining internal pay equity and consistency with staff members on board in comparable positions.

1.7.2 The formal employment offer to the selected candidate will be made by HR, which will initially be in terms of informing him/her of selection for the position and salary and benefits offered, and that this is subject to clearing the pre-employment medical examination, and receipt of satisfactory references. The selected candidate will be informed by HR to complete the required formalities such as Pre-Employment Medical Examination, and that on clearance of the same, she/he will be given a formal employment offer, and that the date of joining AKU will need to be finalized then.
(Please refer to the Policy for [Pre-employment Medical Examination: Policy # HR/RC-03](#)).

1.7.3 Upon accepting the offer, the selected candidate will be required to submit a copy of his/her educational and professional degrees/ certifications preferably within the next 2 to 3 days normally, which should be before receiving the letter of appointment (the original documents should also be presented for checking by HR). The most recent and/or relevant degree/certification will be sent for verification from the issuing authorities.

1.7.4 HR will normally inform candidates who were part of the final round of interviews (but not selected), of the outcome of the interview process with reference to their case i.e., shortlisted but not selected. This would be done either by informing the candidates via phone call or sending a 'letter of regret' via email within one week of the selected candidate having joined AKU. This will normally be applicable for positions at AD5 and above, or equivalent.

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1.8 **Letter of Appointment**

- 1.8.1 On satisfactory completion of the above requirements, HR will issue the selected candidate an appointment letter along with a copy of the job description, before the date of joining. Employee will return a signed copy of his/her appointment letter & job description to HR, which will be kept in the personnel file of the new employee//trainee. The appointment letter should normally be issued to the selected candidate within 5 working days of acceptance of the offer, which should be before the date of joining.

1.9 **On-Boarding/ New Employee General Orientation**

- 1.9.1 HR will assign an employee number to each new employee normally when preparing the appointment letter and will communicate the same to him/her on the day he/she joins. If the new employee is a re-hire, he/she will be assigned the same employee number as was in his/her previous employment at AKU.

- 1.9.2 As part of the on-boarding process, each employee/trainee is required to complete the New Employee Orientation Program in which one of the sections will orient new hires on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). This Orientation Program may be an online program taken up by the new employee or carried out in-person by a representative of HR with a group of employees, depending on the position level.

- 1.9.2.1 An Exclusive Orientation Program will be conducted for those newly hired at positions of Managers and above, or if the new employee is an expatriate, even if at a lower position.
(Please refer to the HR Policy for New Employee Orientation: Policy # HR/LD-01)

1.10 **Probation Period**

- 1.10.1 New employees in staff or trainee positions will be required to serve an initial period of probation for 3 months or 6 months, depending on the position level, as stated in the appointment letter, during which his/her performance will be assessed to evaluate suitability for the position. Further details are stated in the policy for [Probation \(Policy # HR/ER-04\)](#).

- 1.10.2 Confirmation of employment of all staff is subject to clearance of pre-employment medical examination, receipt of satisfactory employment references, and completion of the New Employee Orientation Programme.

- 1.10.2.1 If employment references received are not satisfactory or have a reference to any instances of misconduct by the applicant / employee, HR will discuss the matter with concerned Department Head, along with the concerned employee, if required, and employment may be concluded after due investigation of the reference received.


1.11 **AKDN Safeguarding Referencing for Inter-Agency Employee Movement**

- 1.11.1 As a standard job announcement at all levels, it will be mentioned that comprehensive employment references are sought as part of the recruitment process.

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- 1.11.2 If an applicant shortlisted for final selection has previously worked for an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), the recruiter at AKU will inform him/her that a comprehensive employment reference, including elements of safeguarding misconduct, will be sought from the concerned agency, and consent for the same will be obtained from the applicant. The recruiter will at this stage contact the designated HR contact at AKU to obtain the required employment reference on the prescribed form (please see [Annexure VII-C](#)). This will be obtained from the AKDN agencies who were his/her former employers; or if it is the current employer, they will be contacted for an employment reference after obtaining the applicant's consent in writing. The names of the designated contacts in each agency are featured in the Directory of Authorized Personnel for Safeguarding Referencing. (Please refer [Annexure VII-D](#)).
- 1.11.3 (i) In the context of Safeguarding Referencing, it is within the discretion of AKU to request an AKDN Agency to provide further information than the minimum required within the safeguarding reference form/employment reference form, if so required.
(ii) If the AKDN Agency is not able to provide information due to restrictions for compliance and legal frameworks, the University would be informed accordingly by the concerned Agency's designated HR Contact and vice versa for HR at AKU receiving a safeguarding reference request for a current or former employee at AKU.
- 1.11.4 (i) Normally, before making an offer of employment, the University will duly consider references received from Designated HR Contacts at Aga Khan Development Network Agencies (or any other organization) where the candidate has previously worked or is currently working.
(ii) It is recommended that in case if there is information for serious allegations, the University should exercise prudence and wait for the outcome of the investigation, if in process, before finalizing the offer for appointing the individual.

(Please refer [Annexure VII: Safeguarding Referencing for Inter-Agency Employee Movement](#)).

Approved by: 
Navroz Surani
Vice President
Human Resources