



Employee Handbook

Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC)

Employee Handbook

Kabul, Afghanistan

Date: Jan 01, 2023

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION..... 1

1.1 POLICY INTERPRETATION..... 1

1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS 1

2. ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY CONSORTIUM (HRRAC)..... 1

2.1 THE ORGANIZATION..... 1

2.1.1 VISION 2

2.1.2 MISSION 2

2.1.3 OUR VALUES - IMPACT..... 2

3. EMPLOYMENT STATUS 2

3.1 STAFFING..... 2

3.1.1 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES..... 3

3.1.2 TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES..... 3

4. RECRUITMENT 3

4.1 NON-DISCRIMINATORY HIRING 3

4.1.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER 3

4.1.2 PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS 4

4.1.3 PROHIBITED WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS..... 4

4.2 RE-HIRING FORMER EMPLOYEES 4

4.3 NEW HIRE ORIENTATION..... 4

5. PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION..... 5

5.1 SALARY DETERMINATION 5

5.1.1 INITIAL SALARY DETERMINATION 5

5.1.2 SALARY ADJUSTMENTS..... 5

5.3 EMPLOYEE TIME REPORTING 6

5.4 PAY..... 6

5.5 SALARY ADVANCES 6

5.6 TAXES 6

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & CAREER PROGRESSION..... 6

6.1.1 PROBATIONARY PERIOD.....	6
6.1.2 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT.....	7
6.2 PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS.....	8
6.3 ACTING APPOINTMENTS.....	8
6.4 STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.....	8
<u>7. GRIEVANCE, EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE AND SEPARATION PROCEDURES.....</u>	<u>8</u>
7.1 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.....	8
7.2 EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE.....	9
7.2.1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE.....	10
7.2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE.....	11
7.3 SEPARATION FROM HRRAC.....	12
7.3.1 FINAL PAYMENTS AND RETURN OF HRRAC RESOURCES.....	12
7.3.2 SEPARATION PAYMENTS.....	12
7.3.3 GRATUITY.....	13
7.3.4 CALCULATION BASIS FOR BENEFITS AT SEPARATION.....	13
7.3.5 FINAL PAYMENTS UPON DEATH OF EMPLOYEE.....	13
<u>8. CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT.....</u>	<u>13</u>
8.1 WORKPLACE ISSUES.....	14
8.2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.....	15
8.3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.....	15
8.4 HRRAC RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS.....	16
8.4.1 PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN HRRAC-FUNDED PROGRAMS.....	16
8.4.2 PROTECTION OF BENEFICIARIES OF ASSISTANCE FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE.....	16
<u>9. OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</u>	<u>16</u>
9.1 WORK SCHEDULE.....	16
9.1.1 NORMAL WORKING HOURS AND LUNCH TIME.....	16
9.1.2 ATTENDANCE.....	16
9.1.3 OVERTIME.....	17
9.1.4 UNSCHEDULED OFFICE CLOSINGS.....	17
9.2 WORK ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT.....	17
9.2.1 USE OF TELEPHONES.....	17
9.2.2 USE OF HRRAC VEHICLES AND PERSONAL VEHICLES.....	18
9.2.3 USE OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND COMMON SPACES.....	18
9.2.4 CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE.....	18
9.3 EMPLOYEE RECORDS.....	18
9.3.1 CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS TO PERSONNEL DATA.....	19
9.3.2 REFERENCE REQUESTS AND VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT.....	19

9.4 REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES..... 19
9.5 EMPLOYEE RELOCATION IN THE EVENT OF BUSINESS NECESSITY..... 19

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy Interpretation

The policies described in this Handbook are intended for guidance. HRRAC reserves the right to amend or withdraw these policies at any time. If any ambiguity or inconsistency exists between this summary document and Afghan labor laws, the applicable Afghan labor laws will prevail.

1.2 Definition of Terms

The **Executive Director (ED)** is the overall manager of all HRRAC programs and activities in Afghanistan. The authority delegated to the ED in this Handbook may be exercised by any other HRRAC employee designated to act on behalf of the ED during the absence of the ED.

The **HR Staff** lead all HR activities and manage all employee separations and employee relations issues.

A **Donor** is any organization or body that provides financial resources for strategic initiatives or specific projects in the HRRAC portfolio.

A **partner** is any governmental or non-governmental organization or research institution that works with HRRAC in the implementation of services.

2. About Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC)

2.1 The Organization

The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC) is an Afghan-led human rights organization established in the year 2006, with a vision to contribute to “a just, equitable and peaceful Afghanistan that respects and protects fundamental rights of all people and ensures democratic freedom”.

HRRAC top expertise are lobby and advocacy, research, community engagement, community-based conflict resolution, capacity building and access to justice. HRRAC fulfill its mandates by research and evidenced based advocacy.

The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium is a non-governmental, not for profit organization. HRRAC is managing its activities in all regions of Afghanistan with its Head Office located in Kabul.

As stated in the background, HRRAC has been implementing numerous projects and programs since its establishment not merely implementation but has been involved in whole process of project/program starting from concept development to the project and program design to its implementation and regularly monitoring and evaluation in order to achieve its intended objectives and ultimately the desired aim.

2.1.1 VISION

“HRRAC’s vision is of a just, equitable and peaceful Afghanistan in which the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people are respected in law and practice”.

2.1.2 MISSION

“HRRAC strives to advance the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people of Afghanistan, particularly those most vulnerable to human rights violations. HRRAC does so by conducting evidence- based advocacy for policy changes and by raising awareness on human rights.”

2.1.3 OUR VALUES - IMPACT

- **Innovation** to meet the evolving needs of our beneficiaries, donors and partners.
- **Mutual respect** for diversity and cultural differences.
- **Passion** driven by a personal determination to make a positive difference.
- **Accountability** for our work, measuring, reporting and continually improving all that we do.
- **Commitment to excellence** assured by the highest ethical, quality, operational performance and scientific standards.
- **Teamwork** across disciplines and geographies, within the organization and with our partners.

3. Employment Status

3.1 Staffing

Individuals provide services to HRRAC and its donors. Those employed directly by HRRAC are hired under one of several categories to help balance the workload and to enhance the capabilities of all HRRAC staff. These categories include:

- Full-Time Employees
- Part-Time Employees
- Temporary Employees

The policies and procedures in this Handbook apply to all HRRAC employees. Any questions or clarifications should be addressed by an employee’s immediate supervisor or the HR representative.

From time to time, HRRAC may engage individuals in other capacities, such as through partners or consultant arrangements. Generally, any individual providing services on behalf of, or in concert with HRRAC, is expected to follow HRRAC policies while providing such services.

3.1.1 Full-Time and Part-Time Employees

Full-time employees generally work 40 hours per week. Drivers, receptionists and some other employees may be required to work different hours as defined in their individual employment agreements, in accordance with Afghan law. Full-time employees are eligible for the HRRAC local benefits package.

Part-time employees work on a reduced schedule of not less than 20 hours per week and may be eligible for certain HRRAC local benefits in accordance with Afghan law, generally on a pro-rata basis.

3.1.2 Temporary Employees

Temporary employees are hired at all grade levels to supplement the work force during peak periods or to replace full-time employees during short-term absences. Temporary employees are hired for a specific period of time, generally not exceeding six months, and are required to report time worked on timesheets in the same manner as full-time employees. Temporary employees are not eligible for HRRAC local benefits unless required under Afghan law.

4. Recruitment

The HRRAC recruitment policy provides managers and supervisors with a process through which they can identify qualified employees for open positions. For each vacancy, a job description is developed and may be posted both internally and externally. Current employees who have completed probation and have at least three (3) months at HRRAC may apply for open positions. Candidates meeting the minimum qualifications will be considered prior to final selection.

To ensure that recruiting is administered in a fair and equitable manner, Human Resources oversees the process. All managers, supervisors and employees involved in the recruiting process must be aware of HRRAC recruiting policies and practices. Employees are encouraged to discuss their career goals with their supervisor and Human Resources.

4.1 Non-Discriminatory Hiring

4.1.1 Equal Opportunity Employer

HRRAC provides equal employment opportunities in accordance with applicable Afghan laws to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or status. Employment decisions, including promotions and transfers, are based on a person's qualifications and performance (e.g., experience, education, special skills, past performance assessments).

4.1.2 People Living with HIV/AIDS

HRRAC does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/Aids status whether actual, suspected or perceived, in relation to employment. HRRAC encourages and supports the implementation of location-specific HIV/AIDS workplace programs focusing on prevention, testing, care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS. HRRAC welcomes HIV-positive individuals who are interested in applying for positions for which they are qualified.

4.1.3 Prohibited Workplace Relationships

Qualified family members and friends of HRRAC employees who clearly meet job qualifications are generally considered for employment. However, to ensure transparency and that there is no conflict of interest, any such relationship must be disclosed at the time of application. Furthermore, where the employment of a family member would result in a supervisory/subordinate position or an actual or perceived conflict of interest (“prohibited relationship”), the application will not be accepted. For purposes of this policy, HRRAC defines family members as a spouse, parent, grandparent, grandchild, child, step-child, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, first cousin, niece, nephew, uncle or aunt.

Similarly, employees who establish a close personal relationship can continue in their current positions as long as a prohibited workplace relationship is not created. If such a relationship does occur, employees are required to notify HR. The circumstances will be assessed and a determination made to appropriately remedy the situation. Failure to disclose such relationships is subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

4.2 Re-Hiring Former Employees

HRRAC considers re-hiring former employees under certain conditions. Former employees may apply for a vacant position for which they are qualified and participate in a competitive interview and selection process. HRRAC will also:

- Review prior HRRAC performance records;
- Review the circumstances of separation from HRRAC;
- Verify, through reference checks, performance in positions held after leaving HRRAC; and
- Review the former employee’s conduct and attitude towards HRRAC since separation.

4.3 New Hire Orientation

Newly hired employees receive a general orientation to acquaint them with the history, mission, structure, programs, benefits, policies and procedures of HRRAC. The orientation includes a review of the Employee Handbook and the New Employee Orientation Checklist. A departmental orientation is also organized to acquaint new employees with their departments and projects. The new employee’s supervisor is responsible for orienting the employee to the

program and their roles and responsibilities. The position description will be used to communicate job objectives and expectations.

5. Payroll Administration

5.1 Salary Determination

The primary purpose of the salary determination process is to ensure that HRRAC can attract, motivate and retain highly qualified employees. To ensure that employees receive fair and competitive pay for the level and quality of work they perform, salary scales from the non-governmental organization (NGO) community are considered along with local market conditions, donor guidelines and the National Technical Assistance (NTA) salary scales.

5.1.1 Initial Salary Determination

A job title and position description are developed for all HRRAC positions prior to recruitment which details the primary duties and responsibilities of the position. The HR team reviews position descriptions and market conditions, and assigns a pay scale band according to HRRAC job progressions which establishes the salary range. HR then takes into consideration the applicant's previous relevant experience and qualifications, including education and unique skills, and the applicant's salary history. Before any salary is finalized, HR will conduct a review of salaries of current employees in similar jobs to ensure internal equity.

5.1.2 Salary Adjustments

In order to maintain a compensation package that is competitive in the local market, overall or individual salary adjustments may be made from time to time based upon validated information related to appropriate pay for an employee's particular job.

- **Market adjustment.** HR and management periodically review local economic conditions and median pay for certain jobs in Afghanistan.
- **Merit increase.** Merit increases are discretionary and determined on the basis of merit as established by the annual written performance review. Merit increases are provided subject to the availability of funds and with consideration given to applicable labor laws and standard HRRAC policy and practices.
- **Promotion.** A promotion (competitive or non-competitive) is the advancement to a position in a higher base pay range with significantly increased complexity or responsibility.
- **Reclassification.** Reclassification can occur when a different skill set is needed due to the changing responsibilities of a job. Reclassification may or may not result in a salary adjustment for the position.
- **Equity adjustment.** An equity adjustment corrects an internal or external disparity in pay as may be appropriate.

- **Salary changes** and adjustments are at the sole discretion of HRRAC management and generally are considered on January 1. The approving Executive Director in collaboration with HR department, considers budget limitations and recommendations by the supervisor in determining changes and adjustments. Employees hired or promoted on or after 1st June in any calendar year are not eligible for a merit increase until June 1st, following a full calendar year after their employment or promotion start date.

5.3 Employee Time Reporting

HRRAC is committed to recording and allocating labor costs accurately, as well as complying with Afghan Labor Laws regarding timekeeping. For all employees, timely and accurate time charging on a daily basis is a requirement of employment and a critical compliance, legal and ethical responsibility. You will be advised on how to complete your timesheet during your orientation to ensure compliance.

Employees are required to record actual hours worked. Please note that any exceptions to the approved work hours, including overtime, must be approved in advance and in writing by the employee's supervisor. Payment of overtime will follow Afghan laws, where applicable.

Compliance with this policy, as with other HRRAC policies, is a requirement of employment and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

5.4 Pay

All employees will be paid in local currency (Afghani) on a monthly basis unless otherwise stated. Salaries are processed by the end of each month, based on timesheets submitted by employees.

5.5 Salary Advances

HRRAC is unable to provide loans or advances to employees, or to make pay checks available prior to designated pay dates. Salary advances are not permitted under any circumstance.

5.6 Taxes

HRRAC withholds all taxes from an employee's paycheck and pays those withholdings to the Afghan government on behalf of the employee as required by Afghan law. HRRAC provides employees with pay slips for each pay period which show deductions, withholdings and net pay.

6. Performance Management & Career Progression

6.1.1 Probationary Period

The probationary period is an opportunity for employees to learn about their new position and associated tasks, and for HRRAC to assess the employee's performance and suitability. The

duration of the probationary period is determined in accordance with Afghan law, as stated in the attached Terms & Conditions.

Either the employee or the employer may terminate the employment contract at any time during the probationary period, in accordance with Afghan law.

During the probationary period, the new employee is expected to demonstrate their ability to:

- Meet the required standards of the position and conform to the basic terms and conditions of employment as stated in the Employee Handbook;
- Meet expectations established at the beginning of employment by the supervisor;
- Work willingly and industriously at assigned tasks and to make an extra effort when required;
- Comply with the employee Code of Conduct;
- Work agreeably with other personnel, clients and the public.

HRRAC probationary assessment forms are completed by the employee's immediate supervisor within two weeks of the conclusion of the employee's probationary period, with one of the following ratings:

- Successful completion of probation
- Need to extend probation period
- Need to terminate employment

In the event an employee does not successfully complete probation and no extension is provided, the employee will be terminated in accordance with Afghan law.

6.1.2 Annual Performance Assessment

Good performance management is a continuous, collaborative process of supporting and strengthening employees. Supervisors are expected to conduct performance discussions throughout the year with employees.

The annual performance assessment provides a record of how an employee is doing in their job based on mutually agreed upon, measurable performance objectives and expectations. The assessment is used to identify an employee's career goals and training needs and is also considered for any merit increases, bonuses, and/or promotion opportunities.

Annual performance assessments are formally conducted from January - March. These include a self-assessment by the employee compared against documented performance indicators. Following the self-assessment, the supervisor and technical supervisor insert their comments and jointly or separately discuss feedback with the employee. Employees are expected to participate fully in the performance assessment process. A signed and dated copy of each annual performance assessment is maintained in the employee's personnel file in the HRRAC country office.

A discretionary merit increases and/or bonus may be awarded on the basis of performance. Employees whose work is unsatisfactory are not eligible for merit increases. In that event, the employee and their supervisor discuss and document how performance may be improved using a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for a specific period of time. The consequences of

continued unsatisfactory performance are also explained by the supervisor.

6.2 Promotions and Transfers

The HRRAC policy for promotions and transfers provides managers and supervisors with a process through which they can assist employees with their career development. A promotion is defined as an employee's advancement that results in an upward movement in grade level and change in job title. HRRAC distinguishes between two types of promotions: competitive and non-competitive. A transfer is defined as when an employee moves within the organization without a change in grade. Transfers may result in a title, division, or department change.

6.3 Acting Appointments

The HRRAC policy for acting appointments addresses the need for short-term assignments resulting in a change or increase in roles and responsibilities. HRRAC recognizes that certain events (e.g., employment separation, leave of absence, prolonged illness) may require an employee to serve in an "acting" role. To ensure equity within the organization, HRRAC may compensate employees who serve in "acting" positions at any band level for greater than forty-five calendar (45) days. When eligible, the additional pay will begin on the forty-six (46th) calendar day and will continue until the acting period has concluded; allowances and other benefits will be calculated on the normal base pay rather than the acting pay.

6.4 Staff Training and Development

Provided funding is available, HRRAC management will consider support for job-related training. In the event funding is available, HRRAC may allow employees to adjust work hours in order to participate.

7. Grievance, Employee Discipline and Separation Procedures

Grievances, conflicts, behavior and performance issues in the workplace are unavoidable and may happen from time to time. HRRAC's approach to handling such matters is to ensure open and honest communication between management and the staff they supervise and to handle such matters with professionalism and mutual respect. To that end, HRRAC promotes an Open-Door policy where employees are encouraged to discuss job-related concerns or suggestions with their supervisors without the fear of reprisal. Please be assured that HRRAC does not tolerate any form of retaliation. Should retaliation occur, the employee should contact Human Resources.

7.1 Grievance Procedure

HRRAC promotes constructive feedback and conflict resolution at every level when workplace conflicts occur. Grievances are handled internally with discretion and employees are encouraged to first try to resolve disputes themselves. However, if resolution is not possible, the employee should then discuss the situation with their immediate supervisor, or

their supervisor's supervisor if the supervisor is involved or if the employee is unsatisfied with the supervisor's resolution.

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved, all parties to the dispute will meet with Human Resources to discuss the situation. If the matter cannot be resolved, either HR or the employee may request the Executive Director to assist in reaching a solution.

HRRAC will not retaliate against any employee who registers a complaint through this process. HRRAC will comply with the Afghan labor laws that govern the grievance process in the country.

7.2 Employee Discipline

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner while at work. To continue employment with HRRAC, the following conditions must be met by each employee:

- Compliance with HRRAC policies, procedures and practices;
- Satisfactory performance of duties and responsibilities; and
- Adherence to high standards of professionalism, courtesy and tact in dealing with other members of HRRAC staff, clients and the public.

Violations of standards and policies by any employee, regardless of position, may lead to disciplinary action. Depending on the gravity of the case and Afghan labor laws, disciplinary action may include verbal or written counseling, suspension from duty, or termination of employment.

HRRAC has a "zero tolerance" policy with respect to certain acts that threaten the safety and security of staff, the integrity of the organization, or represent a breach of trust. The following are examples of acts that fall into this category, but note the list is exemplary and not intended to be exhaustive.

- Acts of unprofessional or prohibited behaviors, including harassment, disruptive behavior, rioting, fighting, drunkenness, drug abuse, carrying a weapon, immoral conduct
- Acts of dishonesty that represent a breach of trust, including theft, fraud, falsification of records or documents including time cards and medical certification for sick leave
- Acts of negligence that create a risk to the safety of others or potential loss to the organization, including violation of safety norms, failure to operate equipment properly or to report damage promptly, negligence in the performance of duties.

The premise of the zero-tolerance policy is that any such acts will be addressed promptly and, if proven will result in disciplinary action that may include suspension without pay for a period of up to 10 business days or immediate termination for cause in accordance with applicable Afghan law. The nature and severity of the offense and any previous offenses will be considered in determining the appropriate disciplinary action which will be determined in coordination with the HR Partner.

Principles used to identify offenses, their severity and the appropriate disciplinary measure if

required include the following:

- Mutual respect for colleagues
- Integrity and honesty
- Professional behavior
- Promotion of safety and security
- Proper use of equipment
- Safeguarding of assets
- Risk to the organization – its staff, assets and reputation.

Disciplinary measures, where warranted as determined by HR and management are proportional, reflecting the nature of the offence, previous efforts to correct undesirable performance or behavior, and the risk(s) posed to the safety and security of staff, assets and organizational reputation. Employee Discipline is addressed through progressive steps – verbal or written warning and counseling, suspension from duty without pay, or termination from employment. Performance-related matters may also include a Performance Improvement Plan, or “PIP” if written warnings and counseling fail to correct poor performance.

Please note that the offenses listed in the Employee Handbook or in any HRRAC policies are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive. HRRAC reserves the right to exercise disciplinary action against any employee who has committed an offense not specifically stated, but which constitutes an action that reflects unsatisfactory performance, unprofessional behavior, disregard for colleagues, beneficiaries or partner organizations, disregard for the safety and security of staff or property, or is otherwise a breach of duty or trust.

7.2.1 Performance Management and Progressive Discipline

The primary objective of performance management and disciplinary action is to correct and strengthen performance rather than to punish. Emphasis is placed on effective employee-management communications to prevent the development of situations that require disciplinary action. This objective is enhanced by use of progressive disciplinary action that provides both structure as well as flexibility so that appropriate measures are taken depending on the nature as well as frequency of the issue.

The employee will be informed whenever any of the following steps are taken that a disciplinary action is being taken, the basis for such action and the consequences of the action and/or failure to remedy the matter. The employee will be given an opportunity in any disciplinary matter to explain or defend their behavior and, in most cases, contribute to the development of a plan to remedy behavior or performance.

Specific steps in progressive discipline are as follows:

- **Coaching/Counseling.** For minor performance or behavioral issues, the supervisor and employee meet to discuss the issue and determine an appropriate plan to address the issue discussed.
- **Verbal Warning.** As a second step, or an initial step for more serious issues, the

supervisor and employee meet to discuss the performance or behavioral issue and determine an appropriate plan to address the issue discussed. The supervisor notes the warning as a Memo to File, reflecting the date and nature of the matter, acknowledged by signature of the employee.

- **Written Warning.** As a third step, or an initial step for more serious issues, the supervisor and employee meet to discuss the performance or behavioral issue and determine an appropriate plan to address the issue discussed. A formal memorandum is prepared, reflecting the date and nature of the issue and required corrective action. The memorandum is signed by both the employee and the supervisor. An employee may be terminated after receiving three successive Warning Notices.
- **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).** In the event of poor performance, the employee meets with their supervisor and the Executive Director to develop a formal plan of action to improve performance within a specified period of time. The PIP is signed by the employee, the supervisor and the Executive Director. Failure to successfully improve performance within the prescribed period may result in separation for cause.
- **Suspension or Separation for Cause.** Depending on the severity of the behavior/performance, or if employee's misconduct or poor performance continues, the employee meets with their supervisor, the Executive Director and HR to discuss the seriousness of their actions and to determine the appropriate course of action: suspension without pay in the event of serious misconduct (three days for first offense, up to 10 days for second offense) or separation. In the event of separation, HRRAC, at its sole discretion, may give the employee an opportunity to resign with immediate effect.

In the event of unexplained absences, where authorization is not subsequently granted, the period of absence will be deducted from the accrued leave balance or if there is no accrued leave, from the employee's wages.

Appeals from a Verbal or Written Warning must be made in writing within three business days to HR. Appeals from Suspension or Separation must be made in writing within five business days to HR and the Executive Director. HR will review all appeals and respond to the employee's appeal within five business days, or as soon as possible if extenuating circumstances exist. Subsequent appeals from Suspension or Separation must be made in writing within five business days to the Executive Director. All supporting documentation must accompany each appeal.

7.2.2 Administrative Leave

In the course of business, there will be times when an investigation will need to take place. At such time, it may be in the organization and/or the employee's best interest to be absent from the workplace during the time of the investigation. In consultation with the HR, the employee may be placed on paid administrative leave as an interim measure for the well-being of HRRAC, its employees, clients and visitors while also protecting the rights of the employee. In particularly egregious situations, and in consultation with the HR and local counsel, an individual may be

placed on unpaid suspension.

7.3 Separation from HRRAC

An employee's separation from the organization may occur due to voluntary or involuntary termination. Upon separation notice, HR will schedule a meeting with the outgoing staff member for the coordination of all matters related to separation. The employee's supervisor will coordinate the transition of work in preparation for the departure.

Generally, employees may not take annual leave during their notice period. Requests from an employee to utilize part of their annual leave after giving notice are reviewed by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis. HRRAC policy requires the employee to be at work on their last day of employment. A Certificate of Employment will be provided if requested.

Voluntary separation is initiated by the employee and includes resignation and retirement. In order to accommodate changes in workload, HRRAC requests one month's notice. The employee must submit notice in writing to their supervisor with copy to HR. Failure to provide written notice in accordance with Afghan law may result in a salary deduction and any termination pay benefits.

Involuntary separation is initiated by the employer for business reasons generally beyond the control of the employee and includes reductions in force (RIFs) and employee death. Separations due to unsatisfactory performance, job abandonment, or misconduct are also considered to be involuntary.

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to gross disobedience, theft, fraud, material abuse, fighting, deliberate disregard of policies, rules, regulations or laws, asking for or accepting bribes, falsifying official records or documents and other acts which constitute negligence, breach of trust or reflect negatively on HRRAC. Involuntary separations occur only in consultation with the Executive Director.

7.3.1 Final Payments and Return of HRRAC Resources

Employees may be entitled to receive payment for any accrued, but unused annual leave at time of separation, based on the employee's current basic salary. Unused sick leaves are not paid out. The employee may be required to reimburse HRRAC for any unused portion of any advance payment.

Upon separation, employees must return all HRRAC property and official documents in their possession including ID cards, keys, computer hardware and software devices, phone and other equipment.

Any amounts owed to HRRAC must be settled and agreed to in writing, and may be deducted from any payments due the employee, prior to issuing the final paycheck.

7.3.2 Separation Payments

Employees are entitled to receive separation payments in accordance with the Afghan law. For the

sake of clarity, the several terms associated with separation pay as implemented by HRRAC are defined below.

- **Final wages.** Wages, unused accrued leave, as well as prorated allowances and/or bonuses, if any, owed through date of separation are included as final wages. Final wages are paid to all employees, regardless of the reason for separation from employment.
- **Severance and Gratuity.** Generally, these provisions apply only as required by Afghan law, and are considered to be mutually exclusive – the employee will be entitled to one, but not both. Employees who have not completed the Probationary Period or who are terminated for misconduct are not eligible for either of these payments unless required by Afghan law.

7.3.3 Gratuity

Employees may be entitled to receive Gratuity in accordance with Afghan law or in accordance with HRRAC policy as may be applicable, which may be subject to funds availability and donor approval.

7.3.4 Calculation Basis for Benefits at Separation

Unless otherwise specified by Afghan law, calculations for all separation benefits are based on basic salary (exclusive of allowances). Severance and gratuity are based on the *monthly* rate, with 30 days or 4 weeks equal to one month if expressed by law in terms of “days” or “weeks”. Accrued leave is based on the *daily rate* (annual basic salary divided by 260 days) unless otherwise specified by Afghan law.

7.3.5 Final Payments Upon Death of Employee

Upon death of an employee, payments that would normally be owed to a separating employee, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, may be paid to designated beneficiaries less any amounts owed by the employee to HRRAC. Such payments will be made in accordance with the Afghan labor law.

8. Code of Ethics and Conduct

The HRRAC Code of Ethics and Conduct is to provide guidance to all employees, officers and members of the Board of Directors, and to assist in carrying out activities in accordance with HRRAC values and policies and Afghan laws. Adherence to these values and to the guidance in this Code is required of HRRAC staff throughout the world.

HRRAC Code of Ethics explains basic expectations for professional and personal behavior that all employees should follow. Given the variety and complexity of ethical questions that may arise in the course of operations, this Code is not intended to describe specific problems that HRRAC staff may encounter. ***When confronted with ethically ambiguous situations, this Code, HRRAC values and specific HRRAC policies should be your guide as you confront***

day-to-day challenges. Moreover, you should use your management as a resource for you to raise concerns or ask for advice. We want to ensure that you have access to any source of advice within HRRAC that you need.

The Office Internal Audit (OIA) strengthens that commitment to business integrity. OIA staff are available at any time to discuss questions and concerns; they also provide in-person training on a number of important topics.

HRRAC has an “open door” policy – employees can report violations to their supervisors or other managers without fear of retaliation. Concerns can also be reported to any member of the Office of Internal Audit team, or anonymously through one of the following:

E-mail: internal.audit@hrrac.af

Ethics Hotline: 93-(0) 20 2311 826

HRRAC has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of ethics and conduct policies and employees may be subject to progressive disciplinary action up to, and including termination for violations. The full Code of Ethics policy and all HRRAC global policies can be found on HRRAC website and shared folder. Each employee will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that they received, reviewed and understand several specific policies further described below.

8.1 Workplace Issues

HRRAC has a number of policies that address workplace conduct and ensuring a workplace that is professional and safe for all employees. A brief overview of policies of particular interest follows.

Harassment-Free Workplace. HRRAC believes that all employees are entitled to work in an environment free from harassment, intimidation, coercion and such behaviors which may interfere with good working conditions or job opportunities. To that end, HRRAC has created a Harassment-Free Workplace policy and will take all actions necessary for its implementation and enforcement.

Drug-Free Workplace. The manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of unlawful controlled substances, including the abuse of medications and alcohol on HRRAC premises and work sites or while operating a HRRAC vehicle is strictly prohibited and are grounds for immediate dismissal and possible legal action. Alcohol is not to be consumed during work hours.

Smoke and Tobacco Free Workplace. Smoking and the use of any tobacco product is prohibited in all HRRAC owned, leased or controlled facilities in Afghanistan. Smoking and the use of any tobacco product is prohibited in all HRRAC motor vehicles.

Workplace Violence. HRRAC does not tolerate any acts or threats of violence committed by or against its employees or visitors on HRRAC premises at any time or while engaged in business with, or on behalf of HRRAC, whether on or off HRRAC premises. Employees are strictly prohibited from carrying any firearms or other weapons while on any HRRAC premises or work site or while in any HRRAC vehicle. Such acts are subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Information Technology Resources. HRRAC information technology resources (including

computer systems, cell phones, telephones, memory devices and other technology devices) are designed and intended for official business purposes only. All systems and data stored or conveyed on these systems are considered exclusive – they belong to HRRAC. Incidental personal use of these resources is permitted but must be kept to a minimum and must be appropriate. Inappropriate prohibited use includes hacking, pirating of software, sending unofficial chain letters, advertisements, personal or commercial solicitations or mass mailings. Unauthorized installation and copy or use of the software programs on HRRAC’s computer equipment is not permitted. The use of HRRAC information technology resources in ways that interfere with or disrupt network users, services, or equipment or otherwise constitutes abuse of privileged use is strictly prohibited. Such acts are subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

8.2 Conflicts of Interest

A potential conflict of interest exists when a person’s private interest may interfere in any way with the interests of HRRAC. At times, potential conflicts of interest may arise despite best efforts. Such situations may not be a problem provided they are disclosed in accordance with HRRAC’s conflicts of interest policy, using the Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest Statement. Examples of potential conflicts of interest are provided below and should be avoided if at all possible and disclosed immediately.

- Board service, employment, consulting or any financial interest in any organization which has a program similar to HRRAC.
- Non-HRRAC employment or consultancies.
- Acceptance of material gifts, favors or hospitality that might influence or give the appearance of influencing business decisions or judgment in actions affecting HRRAC. Receipt of cash is never appropriate.

8.3 Intellectual Property and Confidential Information

Information is an important intangible asset of HRRAC. In the normal course of business, employees may create or have access to confidential information or proprietary materials – information that may be the property of HRRAC or its donors and is not generally available to the public. Employees are responsible for protecting such confidential or proprietary information. Examples of confidential information and proprietary materials include work product – information or data generated through investigations and research; program and technical information such as business plans, proposals, policies and procedures; financial information including pricing policies and budgets; and confidential information such as employee information and proceedings of meetings. Generally, any information developed for a specific use by HRRAC or its donors is considered confidential and proprietary.

HRRAC reserves the exclusive right to determine what information can or cannot be communicated outside the organization and to provide guidance for safeguarding confidential or proprietary materials appropriate for local offices. If you have any questions about whether or not material is confidential or proprietary, consult your supervisor or other management staff.

8.4 HRRAC Research and Programs

8.4.1 Protection of Children in HRRAC-Funded Programs

HRRAC is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of children and does not tolerate any form of abuse or exploitation of children involved in its research or services. For all positions, especially for positions where an employee is required to work with children, HRRAC Human Resource will conduct an appropriate screening process. Employees with any criminal history of child abuse, child sexual abuse, pedophilia, violence, sexually exploitive behavior or other crimes involving children, or who have been terminated from paid or volunteer positions for reasons of misconduct with a child will be excluded from selection for such positions. Any failure to comply with or complete the screening process will result in automatic exclusion from consideration for such positions.

8.4.2 Protection of Beneficiaries of Assistance from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Humanitarian workers are required to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and is consistent with the HRRAC's Code of Conduct. Employees at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and maintain environments which prevent the use of power, money or opportunity for the purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse of any individual, but particularly with respect to beneficiaries and persons under the age of 18. HRRAC supports and adheres to the core principles of the United Nations Standing Committee on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises, articulated in the HRRAC Code of Ethics.

9. Other Policies and Procedures

9.1 Work Schedule

9.1.1 Normal Working Hours and Lunch Time

HRRAC normally operates from 8:00 to 5:00 all over Afghanistan from Sunday to Thursday. Any exceptions to these work hours, including requests for overtime, must be approved in advance, in writing, by the employee's direct supervisor and the Executive Director, as well as the donor agency as may be required.

Drivers, receptionists and some office employees may be required to work different hours as defined in their individual employment agreements. Work time for drivers begins when the driver reports to work and is in possession of HRRAC vehicle, not when the driver leaves his residence.

9.1.2 Attendance

Dependable staff members are critical to the effective and efficient operation of HRRAC's programs. HRRAC recognizes that there may be occasions when emergencies occur and an employee may need to arrive late, leave early or not report to work on a particular day. Continued cases of unpunctuality – reporting to work after the normal starting time or leaving before regular closing time – or instances where absences cannot be justified may lead to disciplinary action, in accordance with Afghan law.

Employees must inform their immediate supervisor as soon as possible, not later than within one hour of the normal work start time, if they are not able to report to the office on time or at all on a given day.

Whenever possible, the employee should make arrangements to have critical work assignments covered by a colleague or ensure the supervisor is aware of work that needs to be completed in his or her absence. Depending on the reason for absence, the employee will be expected to take appropriate paid leave (e.g., sick, annual, compassionate).

An employee who is absent without the consent of his or her supervisor for more than 3 work days and fails to contact either a supervisor, HR or a member of the management team, is considered to have abandoned their job. A letter of abandonment will be issued, and the employee will be given 2 days to respond. The employee's response will be considered and a disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, will be determined by management.

9.1.3 Overtime

In rare circumstances, employees eligible for overtime may be asked to work more hours than normally approved in a given week. Overtime hours must be approved *in advance* and *in writing* by the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director.

9.1.4 Unscheduled Office Closings

Unscheduled office closings can occur in instances where there is a security concern, an emergency situation, or in other situations that prevent employees from performing their jobs at the office or work site. Such instances include, but are not limited to, any threat to personal or public safety or security such as natural disasters, pandemics, inclement weather, fire, war, civil unrest, attacks upon HRRAC offices, property or persons, sustained power outage, medical emergency, or an announced holiday.

The Executive Director may formally announce a delayed opening, early closing, or closure for an entire day due to unanticipated events through prescribed local office procedure. Employees will be instructed on how to record such time for which they will be compensated.

9.2 Work Environment and Equipment

Maintaining an orderly work environment promotes professionalism and enhances the productivity of staff. Mutual respect for colleagues in a shared workspace includes good work habits, proper use of equipment and cleanliness, all of which contribute to the health, safety and well-being of HRRAC employees, beneficiaries and visitors.

All employees are expected to take proper safety precautions in the performance of their work duties and to promptly report any workplace injury or illness to their supervisor.

9.2.1 Use of Telephones

The office is a professional environment and employees are expected to use telephone facilities responsibly. Personal calls at work should be brief, limited to those that are absolutely necessary, and should not interfere with, or be disruptive to the work of other employees.

9.2.2 Use of HRRAC Vehicles and Personal Vehicles

Personal use of HRRAC vehicles by local hire personnel is strictly prohibited unless authorized by the Executive Director in an emergency situation.

Employees driving or riding in HRRAC vehicles are expected to ensure that all occupants observe standard safety measures and abide by all local traffic laws (e.g., seatbelts, speed limits, etc.). Employees who commit traffic violations are responsible for payment of any and all fines, and may be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director. All accidents involving HRRAC vehicles and/or staff must be reported immediately to management. Failure to report accidents or violations in a timely manner may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees using personal vehicles for official business must obtain prior approval from their immediate supervisor or Executive Director and complete a personal vehicle log sheet for reimbursement. Mileage reimbursement is made according to pre-approved rates which may vary from location to location.

9.2.3 Use of Office Equipment and Common Spaces

The proper functioning of office equipment is the responsibility of all employees. Employees must seek instruction for use of equipment with which they are unfamiliar and promptly report equipment that is not functioning properly.

Office equipment such as laptops, cell phones, calculators and audio-visual equipment may be used off premises for business purposes provided written pre-approval is obtained from management. Off premise equipment use will be authorized on a first-come-first-served basis with priority given to meeting the needs of the organization.

Each employee is responsible for ensuring the cleanliness and order of their workspace as well as common spaces, including vehicles, kitchens and bathrooms. This includes, but is not limited to, proper disposal of trash, reducing litter, replacing supplies, and proper clean up and storage of kitchen equipment and food.

9.2.4 Children in the Workplace

HRRAC recognizes that circumstances may occasionally necessitate bringing children into the workplace and, with their immediate supervisor's approval, this may be done in limited circumstances. Employees are expected to refrain from bringing their children to work if the child is ill. Children who are a distraction to others performing their work assignments will be asked to leave the premises.

9.3 Employee Records

HR maintains a personnel file for each employee that includes historic records for personnel actions, benefits, and training. The personnel file documents employee application, hire, performance and job progression, salary history, separation and other personnel actions. All HRRAC employees have the right to confidentiality regarding certain employment documents and information such as performance evaluations and compensation. Only employees handling personnel files and records as part of their job responsibilities may have access to these documents.

9.3.1 Changes and Corrections to Personnel Data

It is the employee's responsibility to promptly notify Human Resources of any change or correction to address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, emergency contact, beneficiary designation, or any other data that would affect employee benefits or the ability to make contact quickly.

Employees should also notify HR of any change in professional or scholastic achievements, or work authorization if a permit or license is required.

9.3.2 Reference Requests and Verification of Employment

All requests from outside sources for personnel information must be directed to Human Resources. To protect the confidentiality of employee records, Human Resources will only verify whether information provided by a current or former employee is accurate (for example, employer's name, nature of employer's business, length of service, job title, current or departing salary). This information may be provided in a Certificate of Service. For other outside inquiries except in the case of a court order, HRRAC will not provide personal or employee related information without prior written authorization from the current/former employee.

9.4 Reimbursable Expenses

Employees who incur business-related expenses must submit an expense claim with supporting documents to their supervisor for reimbursement. For the incurred expenses, claims must be submitted within one week of the date the expense was incurred.

Employees on official travel must submit all expense claims no later than 5 working days after the date of their return. Supervisors are required to review all expense claims for appropriateness and validity before approving for processing.

9.5 Employee Relocation in the Event of Business Necessity

HRRAC may hire or transfer an employee who requires relocation to another part of the country when required by business necessity. Only in such instances will the employee be provided with a relocation benefit based on approved relocation rates as well as hotel accommodation for up to 30 days in the new location. All relocation benefits must be pre-approved and agreed in writing prior to making any travel arrangements and/or incurring any costs. Repatriation at the conclusion of the assignment is paid only if required by Afghan law.

Employees relocated at their own request are not entitled to relocation benefits. If an employee voluntarily resigns from HRRAC within one year of relocation to a new HRRAC location, the employee will be required to repay HRRAC for all relocation benefits provided to the employee.