

AWS Legal Group

Employee Handbook & HR Policy Manual

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1. Introduction & Company Overview

1.1 Message from the Chairman

At AWS Legal Group, we believe that people are our most valuable asset. Our lawyers, consultants, and support staff represent not only our professional reputation but also the trust that clients place in us. This Employee Handbook is issued to guide and protect every member of our team, ensuring clarity, fairness, and compliance with UAE Labour Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021).

1.2 Group History & Growth

Founded in 1997, AWS Legal Group has grown from a single legal practice into a multi-disciplinary group with operations across the UAE, KSA, and Egypt. Over the decades, we have built a reputation for integrity, professionalism, and innovation. Today, we are recognized for combining traditional advocacy with modern legal consultancy and AI-driven solutions.

1.3 Entities under AWS Legal Group

- **Suhad Al Juboori Advocates & Legal Consultants** – Litigation & arbitration licensed practice under LAD Dubai.
- **AWS Legal Consultancy LLC-FZ** – Licensed in RAKEZ for consultancy, compliance, and advisory services.
- **AWS Consultancy LLC-FZ** – Corporate structuring, business setup, and international advisory.
- **Aous Digital Marketing Agency** – Media, branding, and digital solutions.
- **AWS Vacation Homes Rental** – Licensed short-term rental and holiday home management.
- **AWS Real Estate** – Brokerage, property investment, and management.
- **AWS IT & Digital Systems** – Technology, HRMS/ERP solutions, AI legal innovation.

1.4 Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook serves three key purposes:

1. **Compliance** – To ensure every employee follows UAE Labour Law, MOHRE requirements, and internal governance.
2. **Clarity** – To provide transparent guidelines on rights, responsibilities, and benefits.
3. **Protection** – To safeguard both the company and employees against misunderstandings, disputes, or legal risks.

1.5 Scope & Applicability

- Applies to **all employees** (lawyers, consultants, support staff, interns, and contractors) across all AWS entities.
- Policies apply **regardless of location** (onsite, remote, hybrid, or international representation).
- In case of conflict between this handbook and UAE Labour Law, **UAE law prevails** but this handbook is designed to align fully with the law.

2. Vision, Mission & Core Values

2.1 Vision Statement

AWS Legal Group strives to be the **benchmark of excellence in law and consultancy across the Middle East**, integrating traditional legal practice with modern innovation, while fully aligned with UAE's Vision 2030.

2.2 Mission Statement

Our mission is to **deliver legally sound, client-focused solutions** while ensuring compliance with UAE Labour Law, MOHRE regulations, and international standards. We aim to:

- Protect client rights with integrity.
- Empower our people through structured growth and accountability.
- Operate transparently, with financial and ethical discipline.
- Lead innovation in legal technology and client services.

2.3 Core Values

- **Integrity** – We never compromise on truth, ethics, or confidentiality.
- **Excellence** – Every case, every employee, every service must reflect the highest standards.
- **Client-Centricity** – No client is left unattended; every client interaction is professional and respectful.
- **Innovation** – We embrace legal tech, AI, and modern systems to stay ahead.
- **Collaboration** – Our departments work as one team; silos are not tolerated.

2.4 Alignment with UAE National Vision 2030

- **Human Capital Development** – AWS invests in employee training, CLPD, and professional growth.
- **Digital Transformation** – Full adoption of HRMS, AI legal tools, and WPS-compliant payroll.
- **Sustainability & Governance** – All policies align with UAE labour standards, anti-discrimination laws, and workplace safety regulations.
- **Emiratisation (Tawteen)** – We support the UAE government's drive for Emirati employment and career growth.

3. Employment Policies

3.1 Recruitment & Selection

- All recruitment must follow a structured process:
 - Approved requisition from Management.
 - Job description with KPIs.
 - Fair, merit-based selection no bias, no favoritism.
- Offers are only valid when issued by HR on company letterhead or official email.
- Verbal offers are not binding.

Scenario: A manager verbally promises a job to a candidate. Later dispute arises. HR confirms only signed offer + MOHRE contract is valid.

3.2 Employment Categories

- **Full-Time Employees** → Eligible for all statutory benefits (EOSB, insurance, WPS salary).
- **Part-Time Employees** → Must have MOHRE Part-Time Work Permit. Benefits are calculated pro-rata.
- **Interns** → Bound by Internship Agreement. Not entitled to EOSB or insurance unless explicitly provided.
- **Consultants** → Governed by Consultancy Agreement, not MOHRE contracts. No EOSB.

3.3 Offer Letters & Employment Contracts

- Every employee receives:
 - **Offer Letter** (summary of terms).
 - **MOHRE/Free Zone Contract** (official binding contract).
 - **Addendum** (NDA, non-compete, IT policy) .
- Contracts are bilingual (English/Arabic).
- All contracts must be registered in MOHRE (mainland) or Free Zone portal.
- Without registration → employee is not legally recognized.

Scenario: Employee signs offer letter but does not join. HR marks as “Offer Declined” in MOHRE → visa misuse prevented .

3.4 Probation Period

- **Maximum duration:** 6 months (UAE Labour Law, Article 9).
- **Resignation during probation:**
 - Employee → must give **14 days' notice**.
 - Employer → must give **14 days' notice**.
- If employee joins another UAE company → they must give **30 days' notice**.
- EOSB is **not payable** during probation.

Scenario: Employee resigns on Day 89 of probation. EOSB = 0, but 14-day notice required .

3.5 Contract Renewal & Termination

- Renewals must be initiated **60 days before expiry**.
- If not renewed, contract lapses automatically.
- Termination must follow:
 - **Valid reason** (performance, redundancy, restructuring).
 - **Written notice** (30–90 days, as per contract).
 - **Article 44** applies for gross misconduct → immediate dismissal without EOSB .

Scenario: Lawyer dismissed for leaking client files → Termination with cause, EOSB forfeited, legal case filed .

Compliance Note

- AWS Legal Group strictly follows **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** and MOHRE circulars.
- Any contract, renewal, or termination not in MOHRE compliance = **invalid**.
- Employees must sign **acknowledgment forms** for handbook, NDA, non-compete, and IT usage before starting .

4. Code of Conduct & Professional Standards

4.0 Purpose

To set clear, non-negotiable standards of behaviour and professional practice for everyone who works for AWS Legal Group. This policy protects clients, colleagues, and the firm's reputation; it clarifies expectations, reporting channels, and consequences for breaches.

4.1 Scope

Applies to all employees, contractors, interns, consultants, and temporary personnel across all AWS entities and jurisdictions where AWS operates. Applies to behaviour on and off premises when actions are reasonably connected to the company (e.g., client meetings, public events, online posts that identify the firm).

4.2 Fundamental Principles (short, uncompromising)

- **Confidentiality first.** Client files, strategies, and internal data do not leave AWS systems.
- **Professionalism always.** Speak respectfully, act responsibly, and represent AWS with dignity.
- **No tolerance for harassment or discrimination.** Zero tolerance; protection and confidentiality for complainants.
- **Compliance with law.** UAE Labour Law and all applicable regulations override any internal policy.
- **No personal advantage at the firm's expense.** No bribes, kickbacks, or side deals.

4.3 Detailed Standards & Rules

4.3.1 Confidentiality & Client Privacy

- Always use company email and approved systems (SharePoint, Legal Portal). Never forward client files to personal email or cloud services.
- Physical documents containing client or firm confidential information must be stored securely, not left on desks or in cars. Shred when disposing.
- Breach = immediate suspension pending investigation. Gross breach (e.g., deliberate sale of client files) = immediate termination and legal action.
- NDA & IP clauses survive employment indefinitely (see NDA forms). Employees must re-confirm NDA on exit.
- **Real scenario:** An associate sends a draft arbitration brief to a personal Gmail account to work from home. This is a confidentiality breach treated as gross misconduct; investigation and termination likely.

4.3.2 Professional Behaviour & Client Interaction

- Use formal salutations (Mr./Ms.) in client-facing written and verbal communications unless client expressly permits informality.
- All formal advice must be recorded in writing and approved by the responsible lawyer; WhatsApp may be used for urgent logistics only never for substantive legal advice.
- Never criticize clients publicly. Any disagreements or difficult conversations escalate internally via proper channels.

Real scenario: An employee posts about a client matter on LinkedIn. That is a breach disciplinary action up to termination.

4.3.3 Dress Code & Personal Appearance

- Client-facing roles: formal business attire expected daily (suits, formal dresses, abayas). No jeans, sneakers, or T-shirts.
- Internal support staff: smart business casual acceptable but must be neat, professional, and presentable for client encounters.
- Hygiene and respectful grooming are mandatory.

Enforcement: Repeated non-compliance = written warning; continued refusal = stronger disciplinary action.

4.3.4 Attendance, Punctuality & Representing the Firm

- Follow Attendance & Time Logging policy. Be punctual for client meetings; inform manager ahead of any unavoidable lateness.
- If representing AWS in any external forum, obtain prior approval from Department Head/Marketing. Use only approved slides/templates and the correct letterhead.

4.3.5 Gifts, Benefits & Conflict of Interest

- Accepting gifts worth more than AED 500 from vendors or clients requires written disclosure and approval. Cash or expensive gifts are prohibited.
- Disclose any potential conflict (family ties to a client, equity in a supplier, external work) to HR immediately. Failure to disclose = disciplinary action.

Real scenario: Procurement staff accepts expensive gifts from a supplier and later awards a contract. This is conflict of interest → investigation + likely termination.

4.3.6 Use of Company Assets, IT & Communications

- Company assets (laptops, phones, vehicles) are for business use. Unauthorized personal use that harms the company may lead to deduction, suspension, or termination.
- Passwords are personal and must not be shared. MFA is mandatory. Report lost/stolen devices immediately to IT & HR.
- Personal social media posts that identify clients, confidential matters, or internal disputes are prohibited.

4.3.7 Harassment, Bullying & Anti-Discrimination

- AWS enforces a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, bullying, or discriminatory conduct. Any allegation is investigated confidentially and promptly.
- Report via HR, the Whistleblower channel, or directly to the Chairman if necessary. Retaliation against complainants is itself a serious offence.

Investigation standard: Prompt suspension (if risk), impartial committee (HR + Dept Head + Legal), right to respond, written decision, right to appeal within 5 working days.

4.3.8 Alcohol, Drugs & Fitness for Duty

- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances at work or on client sites = gross misconduct and grounds for immediate dismissal.
- Prescription medication that affects performance must be disclosed to HR for reasonable accommodations or temporary restrictions.

4.3.9 External Work & Moonlighting

- Employees must not undertake outside work that conflicts with AWS's interests or which diminishes performance. Written approval is mandatory for any external consulting. Unauthorized side work = disciplinary action, up to termination.

4.4 Reporting, Investigation & Escalation (clear process)

1. **Report** Employee reports misconduct to HR via HR Portal, email, or anonymous Red Flag form. For immediate dangers (violence, theft), contact Security/Chairman immediately.
2. **Acknowledge** HR acknowledges receipt within 24 hours and initiates preliminary review.
3. **Suspend if needed** HR may place implicated employee on paid suspension pending investigation when risk to people, clients, or evidence exists.
4. **Investigation** Committee (HR + Dept Head + Legal) collects evidence, interviews witnesses, and provides written notice to the accused allowing response.
5. **Decision** Written outcome issued with findings and corrective action.
6. **Appeal** Employee can appeal to HR within 5 working days; final review is by Chairman.
7. **Record** All documents are stored in the employee file (confidential access only).

Timing: Investigations are prioritized; aim to conclude within 14 calendar days except complex cases requiring additional legal review.

4.5 Disciplinary Outcomes & Examples

- **Verbal Warning** first minor infractions (single lateness).
- **Written Warning** repeated minor infractions or initial moderate misconduct.
- **Final Written Warning** continued non-compliance after prior warnings.
- **Suspension (paid/unpaid)** pending serious investigation or as a penalty.
- **Termination with Notice** for repeated or serious misconduct (EOSB depending on grounds).
- **Immediate Termination without EOSB** gross misconduct under Article 44 (fraud, theft, falsification, severe breach of confidentiality).

Example cases:

- Fake sick note discovered on social media → Termination under Article 44.
- Repeated client complaints about negligence → PIP → final warning → termination if uncorrected.
- Employee caught copying case files to external drive → Immediate suspension, dismissal, and legal action.

4.6 Rights & Protections for Employees

- **Fair process:** No penalty without evidence and opportunity to respond.
- **Whistleblower protection:** Reports made in good faith are protected; confidentiality preserved where possible.
- **Right to appeal:** Employees may appeal disciplinary decisions. HR documents and timelines govern appeals.

4.7 Obligations: Who Does What

- **Employees:** Comply with this Code, report breaches, protect confidential data, and act professionally.
- **Managers:** Enforce rules consistently, act on reports, support investigations, avoid personal bias.
- **HR:** Conduct investigations, maintain records, provide training, and advise management on lawful action.
- **Chairman/Leadership:** Final authority on appeals and policy interpretation; responsible for ensuring compliance and resourcing HR.

4.8 Training, Communication & Acknowledgment

- Mandatory induction training on Code of Conduct during onboarding. Annual refresher required.
- All employees sign a written acknowledgment of this Code on joining and at each major update. Failure to sign is a policy breach and may affect employment status.

4.9 Compliance Note (MOHRE & UAE law)

- This Code is aligned with Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 and MOHRE guidance. Gross misconduct definitions and consequences are applied consistent with Article 44 and related provisions.
- In case of conflict between this Code and UAE law, UAE law governs.

4.10 Quick Practical Checklist (for managers)

- Did the employee receive prior coaching? → Document it.
- Is the alleged act covered by the Code as gross misconduct? → Consider suspension pending investigation.
- Have you preserved evidence (emails, files, CCTV)? → Immediately secure it.
- Is HR engaged? → Notify HR within 24 hours for any alleged misconduct.

5. Compensation, Payroll & Benefits

5.1 Purpose

To ensure employees are compensated fairly, transparently, and on time, while AWS Legal Group remains in full compliance with UAE Labour Law, MOHRE's Wage Protection System (WPS), and internal financial governance.

5.2 Salary Structure

- Salaries are paid in **AED** through the **WPS system only**.
- Components of salary:
 - **Basic Salary** (minimum 60% of total package forms basis for EOSB).
 - **Allowances** (housing, transport, telecom, or other role-specific).
 - **Overtime/variable pay** (if eligible).
- Payslips are issued electronically via the HR Portal. No verbal or off-record arrangements are valid.

Compliance note: UAE law requires EOSB to be calculated only on **basic salary** allowances are excluded.

Scenario: Employee's monthly salary = AED 12,000 (Basic 7,500 + Allowances 4,500). EOSB is based only on AED 7,500.

5.3 Payroll Cycle & WPS Compliance

- Salaries are released **monthly, no later than the last working day** of the month.
- By law, MOHRE may impose penalties if salaries are delayed more than **15 days**.
- HR monitors salary releases daily in the first week of each month and escalates to Finance/Chairman if delay risk is detected.

Scenario: Payroll delayed by 18 days. MOHRE can suspend AWS from issuing new work permits and may impose fines. HR must intervene before Day 10.

5.4 Overtime Rules

- **Eligibility:** Applies only to non-managerial, non-professional roles. Lawyers, managers, and executives are overtime-exempt unless contract specifies otherwise.
- **Rates (UAE Labour Law):**
 - Regular overtime → **125%** of hourly wage.
 - Night shifts/public holidays → **150%** of hourly wage.
- **Cap:** Maximum 2 hours per day unless exceptional approval given.
- **Approval:** Overtime must be pre-approved in writing by line manager.

Scenario: Admin assistant works 4 hours extra without approval and claims overtime. HR rejects claim overtime must be pre-approved.

5.5 Leave Salary & Encashment

- **Annual leave salary** is calculated on basic salary only.
- Must be paid **before leave begins**.
- **Leave encashment** applies only upon final settlement at resignation/termination.
- Formula: $(\text{Basic Salary} \div 30) \times \text{No. of unused leave days}$.

5.6 End of Service Benefits (EOSB)

As per Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021:

- Less than 1 year → no gratuity.
- 1–5 years → 21 days' basic salary for each year of service.
- 5+ years → 30 days' basic salary for each year of service.
- EOSB is capped at **2 years' total wage**.

Scenario: Paralegal with 6 years' service, AED 9,000 basic salary.

$\text{EOSB} = (21 \times 5 + 30 \times 1) \text{ days} \div 30 \times \text{AED } 9,000 = \text{AED } 51,300$.

5.7 Allowances & Benefits

- **Housing Allowance:** If not provided through company accommodation.
- **Transport Allowance:** Fixed or company car/fuel card (strictly for business use).
- **Mobile Allowance:** For roles requiring client communication outside office.
- **Medical Insurance:** Mandatory under UAE law; covers inpatient, outpatient, and emergency care as per DHA/HAAD. Dependents may be covered based on contract or cost-sharing.
- **Travel Reimbursements:** For approved business trips only, backed by VAT-compliant receipts.

Exclusions: No reimbursement for alcohol, personal entertainment, or family expenses.

5.8 Bonuses & Rewards

- **Performance Bonus:** Based on KPIs and ROI contribution.
- **Discretionary Bonus:** Issued only with Chairman's approval; cannot be legally claimed.
- **Spot Rewards:** Non-cash incentives (vouchers, recognition awards).

Scenario: Employee claims "I was promised a bonus verbally." → Invalid. Only bonuses in official contract or written approval apply.

5.9 Deductions

Permissible deductions under UAE law and company policy include:

- Absenteeism or lateness (recorded in HRMS).
- Salary advances/loans (deducted in instalments).
- Damages caused by negligence or misconduct.
- Court orders or MOHRE fines linked to employee actions.

Scenario: Driver damages company vehicle while intoxicated. Repair costs deducted; misconduct also triggers disciplinary action.

5.10 Employee Requests & Payroll Transparency

- Employees may request **Salary Certificate, Employment Verification, or NOC** via HR Portal. Must be issued within **3 working days**.
- All salary and benefit details are transparent, accessible through payslips and HR portal.
- Salary confidentiality applies: sharing salary details with colleagues is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

5.11 Compliance Note (UAE Labour Law & MOHRE)

- All payroll follows **Federal Decree-Law No. 33/2021** and MOHRE's **WPS regulations**.
- Non-payment or late salary release = potential fines, suspension of work permits, and reputational damage.
- EOSB is calculated strictly on **basic salary**, capped by law.
- AWS Legal Group reserves right to deduct legitimate dues but cannot impose arbitrary fines or delay EOSB beyond 14 days of exit.

6. Working Hours, Attendance & Leave Policies

6.1 Official Working Hours

- **Standard Hours:** Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (1-hour lunch break).
- **Maximum Weekly Hours:** 48 hours (as per UAE Labour Law).
- **Ramadan:** Reduced by 2 hours daily for all employees.

Note: Friday remains a working day unless the Chairman issues a specific directive.

6.2 Attendance & Time Logging

- Employees must **Punch In & Punch Out** daily through the AWS HR D. Portal (with GPS/IP tracking enabled).
- Remote or field staff must log attendance from assigned work locations.
- Proxy check-ins (logging in for another employee) = **disciplinary offence**.
- Forgetting to punch → notify HR immediately; repeated failures will be recorded as misconduct.

System Records:

- Date & Time of check-in/out.
- Geolocation (if enabled).
- Device/IP used.

6.3 Punctuality Rules

- Late arrivals (>10 minutes) = logged in HR system.
- **3 late arrivals in a month = Written Warning.**
- Absence without notice for **2 consecutive days or 7 total days** = deemed job abandonment/absconding.
- Early departures are tracked; repeated cases = disciplinary action.

Scenario: Employee arrives late 4 times in 2 weeks → HR issues a Written Warning.

6.4 Annual Leave

- **Entitlement:** 30 calendar days per year after completing 1 year.
- **Accrual:** 2 days per month if 6–12 months of service.
- **Application:** At least 30 days' prior notice, unless emergency.
- **Approval:** HR + Line Manager. AWS may reschedule leave for business continuity.
- **Payment:** Annual leave salary (basic only) is paid before leave begins.

Scenario: Lawyer requests 4 weeks leave during peak hearings; HR approves 2 weeks and postpones the rest → employee must comply.

6.5 Sick Leave

- **Entitlement:** 90 days per year (continuous or intermittent).
 - First 15 days → full pay.
 - Next 30 days → half pay.
 - Remaining 45 days → unpaid.
- Medical certificate required within **48 hours**.
- During probation → no paid sick leave.

Scenario: Secretary calls in sick but provides no medical certificate → days recorded as unpaid leave.

6.6 Maternity & Paternity Leave

- **Maternity:** 60 days (45 full pay + 15 half pay). Additional 45 unpaid if supported by medical report.
- **Paternity:** 5 paid working days within 6 months of child's birth.

6.7 Compassionate / Emergency Leave

- Death of spouse/child/parent: **5 paid working days**.
- Death of sibling/grandparent: **3 paid working days**.
- Additional unpaid leave may be granted with Chairman's approval.

6.8 Hajj & Study Leave

- **Hajj Leave:** 10–30 days unpaid (once in employment).
- **Study Leave:** 10 unpaid days/year (after 2 years of service, if enrolled in accredited institution).

6.9 Public Holidays

- Observed as per official UAE Government announcements.
- If required to work on a public holiday → entitled to **compensatory leave or 150% pay**.

6.10 Absence Without Notice (Absconding)

- 1–2 days → salary deduction + warning.
- 3 days → escalated as misconduct.
- 7+ consecutive days → marked as **absconding**, MOHRE notified, visa cancelled.

Scenario: Employee disappears for 10 days without contact → HR files absconding with MOHRE to protect AWS.

6.11 Leave Encashment

- Only processed at **end of service**.
- Formula: $(\text{Basic Salary} \div 30) \times \text{No. of unused leave days}$.
- No mid-service encashment unless approved by Chairman.
- It is only applicable to employees who have a **specific written agreement with the Company** regarding encashment of unused leave.
- Unless such agreement exists, leave encashment will **only be processed at the end of service**.

6.12 Compliance Note (UAE Labour Law)

- Policies aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021**.
- Leave pay and EOSB are based only on **basic salary**.
- MOHRE requires all absconding cases to be formally documented before visa cancellation.

7. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

7.1 Purpose

To ensure AWS Legal Group provides a safe, healthy, and legally compliant workplace, protecting employees while minimizing risks, liabilities, and operational disruptions.

7.2 Legal Compliance

- UAE Labour Law requires employers to provide a **safe and hazard-free workplace**.
- AWS complies with **Dubai Municipality, DHA, and Civil Defence regulations** for workplace safety, ergonomics, and occupational health.
- All workplace injuries are reported to MOHRE/insurance providers within **24 hours**.

7.3 Health & Safety Rules

- Emergency exits and corridors must remain clear at all times.
- Fire extinguishers and first-aid kits must be accessible.
- Smoking is strictly prohibited inside office premises.
- Office access requires authorized ID; tailgating (entering without swiping access card) is prohibited.

Scenario: Employee blocks fire exit with boxes. HR issues written warning; repeated offence = escalation as safety misconduct.

7.4 Emergency Procedures

- **Fire/Evacuation Drill** – Conducted at least once per year. Participation is mandatory.
- **First Aid Response** – Trained staff are designated in each office zone.
- **Emergency Contacts** – HR posts updated emergency numbers (Police 999, Ambulance 998, Civil Defence 997) at visible points.
- **Evacuation Protocol** – Employees must follow floor wardens; refusal = disciplinary action.

7.5 Ergonomics & Workplace Safety

- HR ensures desks, chairs, and monitors are ergonomically compliant.
- Employees must report unsafe equipment or wiring immediately.
- Personal modifications (heaters, extension cords, unsafe setups) are prohibited unless approved by Admin.

7.6 Medical Insurance & Healthcare

- All employees are covered by **UAE-mandated medical insurance** as per DHA/HAAD.
- Coverage includes inpatient, outpatient, and emergency services.
- Dependents (spouse/children) may be covered if included in the contract or at employee's cost.

Scenario: Employee requests cash in lieu of insurance → Not allowed; medical insurance is mandatory under UAE law.

7.7 Workplace Injury Protocol

- Any workplace accident must be reported to HR immediately.
- HR logs the incident, coordinates with insurance, and files MOHRE report if required.
- Medical expenses for work-related injuries are fully covered by AWS as per UAE law.
- If employee negligence caused the injury (e.g., reckless use of equipment), HR investigates and disciplinary measures may apply.

7.8 Employee Wellness

- AWS promotes mental and physical wellbeing through:
 - Stress management workshops.
 - Confidential HR support for personal or workplace issues.
 - Encouraging healthy work-life balance (timely breaks, leave usage).
- Employees are encouraged to seek HR assistance early if health or stress issues affect performance.

7.9 Responsibilities

- **Company:** Provide safe workplace, medical insurance, emergency training, and equipment.
- **Employees:** Follow safety rules, attend drills, report hazards, use equipment properly.
- **HR:** Maintain compliance logs, conduct awareness sessions, investigate incidents, and update safety protocols.

7.10 Compliance Note

- Aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021**, UAE Health & Safety Regulations, and DHA standards.
- Non-compliance with safety instructions is treated as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Work-related injuries are always company-covered unless caused by employee's deliberate misconduct.

8. Performance Management & Career Development

8.1 Purpose

To establish transparent performance standards, ensure accountability, and provide career growth opportunities tied to measurable contribution and compliance with AWS Legal Group policies. This framework ensures rewards are earned, not assumed.

8.2 Performance Appraisal Cycles

- **Frequency:** Appraisals are conducted **twice annually** (Mid-Year in June and Year-End in December).
- **Evaluation Sources:**
 - Department Head review.
 - HR verification of KPIs.
 - Peer/Client feedback (if applicable).
- **Scoring:**
 - **85%+ KPI achievement** → eligible for promotions/bonuses.
 - **70–84%** → meets expectations, eligible for increment subject to ROI.
 - **<70%** → placed on **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**.

8.3 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Each role has defined KPIs (see **TMP-HR-PS0103 role descriptions**).
- KPIs are **quantitative and qualitative**, examples include:
 - Billable hours (Lawyers).
 - Case closure timelines (Litigation).
 - Client acquisition and retention (Business Development).
 - Accuracy of reports, zero data leaks (Support staff).

Scenario: Litigation lawyer fails to attend multiple hearings → KPI breach → recorded as major underperformance.

8.4 Promotions, Salary Adjustments & Rewards

- Promotions and increments are **discretionary** and based strictly on:
 1. **KPI achievement (85%+).**
 2. **Behavioral compliance** (attendance, conduct, no disciplinary record).
 3. **Business need and ROI justification.**
- Salary increases follow **SOP-HR-PS0503** (ROI-based, not entitlement).
- Promotions require HR + Chairman approval.

Scenario: Employee demands increment after 1 year without meeting KPIs. HR rejects request entitlement is not a basis for salary adjustment.

8.5 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

- Triggered when an employee achieves **<70% KPI score** for **two consecutive cycles**.
- **Duration:** 90 days.
- **Process:**
 - Written notice issued by HR.
 - Clear measurable targets defined.
 - Weekly check-ins with line manager.
- **Outcome:**
 - Success → continue employment.
 - Failure → demotion, reassignment, or termination.

Scenario: Junior lawyer repeatedly misses filing deadlines → placed on 90-day PIP. After no improvement, terminated for poor performance.

8.6 Underperformance & Misconduct Separation

- **Underperformance:** Managed via PIP and possible termination with notice/EOSB.
- **Misconduct:** Handled under Disciplinary Policy (may lead to termination without EOSB).

8.7 Employee Development Opportunities

- **Onboarding Training:** Mandatory sessions covering policies, HR portal, compliance.
- **Mandatory Annual Training:** Cybersecurity, confidentiality, workplace conduct, health & safety.
- **Professional Training (Lawyers):** CLPD courses (DIAC, DIFC, LAD), arbitration certifications, legal tech training.
- **Leadership Training:** High-potential employees may be fast-tracked to management positions with Board approval.

Scenario: Employee refuses to attend mandatory compliance training → treated as misconduct, not preference.

8.8 Career Development Pathways

- Employees may request **lateral moves** across departments if justified (e.g., Litigation lawyer to Corporate).
- Career pathways are **earned**, not automatic.
- Employees demonstrating consistent performance may be nominated for leadership or strategic roles.

8.9 Company vs. Employee Obligations

- **AWS Obligations:** Provide fair appraisals, training opportunities, transparent promotion criteria, and equal growth access.
- **Employee Obligations:** Take initiative, meet KPIs, attend required trainings, maintain compliance with all policies.

8.10 Compliance Note (MOHRE & UAE Labour Law)

- Performance management and promotions are at the **employer's discretion**. UAE Labour Law does not guarantee increments or promotions.
- EOSB and statutory entitlements are unaffected by performance but may be reduced in cases of lawful termination for misconduct.
- ROI-based increments (as per SOP-HR-PS0503) ensure AWS Legal Group remains compliant while protecting against unjustified salary inflation.

9. Training, Learning & Development

9.1 Purpose

To ensure AWS Legal Group employees remain skilled, compliant, and competitive. Training is not optional it is a condition of employment. The firm invests in development, but employees are accountable for applying knowledge, respecting contractual commitments, and repaying costs if they exit prematurely.

9.2 Onboarding Training

- Mandatory for **all new hires**.
- Covers:
 - Company history, structure, and culture.
 - Employee Handbook policies.
 - HR portal, attendance, and payroll.
 - Confidentiality, NDA, and IT security rules.
 - Health & safety protocols.
- Must be completed within the **first 30 days of employment**.

Scenario: Employee ignores onboarding modules → non-compliance recorded; repeated refusal = misconduct.

9.3 Mandatory Annual Training

- All employees must complete:
 - **Compliance & MOHRE Labour Law updates.**
 - **Cybersecurity & data handling.**
 - **Workplace safety & harassment prevention.**
- Non-attendance without valid reason = disciplinary action.

9.4 Professional Training & Legal Development

- **Lawyers:** Required to complete CLPD (Continuing Legal Professional Development) credits under LAD/DIFC.
- **Support Staff:** Eligible for skill development workshops (HRMS, IT, client care, management).
- **High-Potential Staff:** May be nominated for leadership development programs.

Scenario: A junior lawyer refuses to attend CLPD training because it is “after hours.” This is misconduct; compliance training is not optional.

9.5 Tuition & Certification Assistance

- AWS may sponsor employees for external training, certifications, or postgraduate programs if directly relevant to business needs.
- A **Training Agreement** must be signed, which includes:
 - Sponsorship terms.
 - Commitment period (12 months minimum).
 - Cost recovery clause.

Cost Recovery Rule (Lawful & Compliant):

- If an employee **resigns within 12 months** of completing sponsored training, AWS may deduct training costs from final settlement.
- This is valid under UAE Labour Law provided it is pre-agreed in writing.

Scenario: AWS pays AED 25,000 for an arbitration diploma. Lawyer resigns after 4 months. → AED 25,000 recovered from EOSB/final dues.

9.6 Career Development Pathways

- Promotions and career moves depend on:
 - KPI achievement (see Section 8).
 - Behavior and compliance with policies.
 - Business need and approval from HR + Chairman.
- **Lateral moves** (e.g., shifting from litigation to corporate advisory) are considered based on skill and firm requirements.

9.7 Performance Reviews & PIP Integration

- Reviews conducted twice annually (see Section 8).
- Training needs identified during review must be addressed.
- Employees who fail to meet KPI expectations may be placed on a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**, which may include mandatory training assignments.

9.8 Employee Obligations

- Take initiative for self-learning and growth.
- Complete all assigned training and certifications on time.
- Apply skills in daily work.
- Repay training costs if exiting early under signed agreement.

9.9 Company Obligations

- Provide equal access to training opportunities.
- Ensure sponsorships are tied to ROI and business needs.
- Recognize and reward employees who apply new skills effectively.
- Maintain transparent training agreements and cost recovery clauses.

9.10 Compliance Note (UAE Labour Law)

- Training sponsorship with cost recovery is lawful under **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** provided the employee signed a clear agreement.
- AWS will not deduct any amounts that are not pre-agreed in writing.
- CLPD and mandatory compliance training are required under UAE legal frameworks and professional licensing refusal is treated as misconduct.

10. Technology, Data Security & Confidentiality

10.1 Purpose

To protect AWS Legal Group, its clients, and employees from unauthorized disclosure, data breaches, and misuse of company technology. Confidentiality and IT security are mandatory not optional.

10.2 Confidential Information

“Confidential Information” includes but is not limited to:

- Client names, files, contracts, pleadings, and case strategies.
- Legal research, templates, precedents, and intellectual property.
- Financial records, invoices, and billing arrangements.
- HR data, salaries, and employee files.
- Systems, passwords, internal tools, and AI/legal software.

Note: Confidentiality obligations survive employment indefinitely even after resignation or termination.

10.3 NDA & Restrictive Covenants

- Every employee signs an **NDA, Non-Compete, and Non-Solicitation Agreement** at hiring .
- Post-employment restrictions:
 - No competing with AWS in UAE/GCC for **12 months**.
 - No poaching AWS clients, staff, or vendors.
 - Breach may result in **withholding EOSB, legal claims, and damages recovery**.

Scenario: Former lawyer contacts AWS client to offer private services → AWS initiates legal action and withholds EOSB until resolved.

10.4 IT & Data Security Rules

- Use only **company email and servers** for official communication.
- Do not use personal WhatsApp, Gmail, or cloud drives for client files.
- Passwords are personal; sharing is prohibited. MFA is mandatory.
- Remote work requires secure VPN and HR-approved devices.
- Personal devices must have HR-approved security software if used for work.

Forbidden Actions:

- Installing unauthorized apps/software.
- Plugging USB devices without IT approval.
- Sending client data via personal accounts.
- Copying files outside AWS systems.

10.5 Monitoring & Enforcement

- All employee emails, system access, and IT activity may be monitored.
- IT and HR conduct random audits.
- Breach = disciplinary action, up to **termination under Article 44** (gross misconduct).

Scenario: Employee forwards client draft to personal email. HR flags, IT logs show breach → Immediate suspension pending investigation.

10.6 Cybercrime & UAE Legal Obligations

- UAE Cybercrime Law applies. Sharing confidential data without authorization = **criminal liability** (fines and imprisonment).
- Employees are personally responsible if their negligence leads to a breach (e.g., phishing, careless device loss).

Scenario: Employee loses laptop with unsecured files → HR reports to IT & insurance, but employee faces disciplinary review for negligence.

10.7 Intellectual Property (IP)

- All work produced during employment (documents, research, templates, software) is the exclusive property of AWS Legal Group.
- Employees cannot reuse or take AWS intellectual property after exit.
- Violations may result in civil and criminal claims.

10.8 Breach Consequences

- **Minor breach** (accidental email mis-send) → documented + retraining.
- **Serious breach** (sharing files externally) → immediate termination + legal action.
- **Gross misconduct** (selling data, poaching clients) → Article 44 dismissal + MOHRE report + criminal filing.

10.9 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Protect all client/company data, follow IT rules, report suspicious activity.
- **Managers:** Ensure teams comply, escalate issues immediately.
- **HR & IT:** Monitor systems, investigate breaches, enforce discipline.

10.10 Compliance Note

- Aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 (Labour Law)** and **UAE Cybercrime Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021)**.
- Breach of confidentiality is treated as **gross misconduct under Article 44**.
- AWS is obligated to protect client and company data; employees share this duty.

11. HR Services & Requests

11.1 Purpose

To provide employees with clear access to HR support while ensuring all requests follow proper procedures, timelines, and MOHRE-compliant documentation.

11.2 HR Portal & Access

All HR services are centralized in the **AWS HR D. Portal**. Employees are required to:

- Submit requests via portal (not informal messages).
- Use approved HR forms for leave, letters, grievances, and clearance.
- Track the status of requests directly in the portal.

11.3 Types of HR Requests & Forms

11.3.1 Leave Requests

- Form includes type of leave (annual, sick, unpaid, special).
- Minimum notice: **30 days for annual leave; 48 hours for sick leave with medical certificate**.
- Must be approved by HR + line manager.

11.3.2 HR Letters

- **Salary Certificate** (for banks, housing, or embassy).
- **No Objection Certificate (NOC)** (for travel, driving license, etc.).
- **Experience Letter** (upon resignation/termination).
- **Other official confirmations** (upon Chairman/HR approval).

Service Standard: HR issues official letters within **3 working days** of request.

11.3.3 Payslip & Payroll Requests

- Payslips are available in the portal.
- If portal inaccessible → employee may file **Payslip Request Form**.
- Salary confirmation/NOC is always issued on official letterhead.

11.3.4 Grievances & Complaints

- **Grievance Form** → for minor issues (to be handled confidentially by HR within 5 working days).
- **Red Flag Escalation** → for serious issues (harassment, misconduct, fraud) → escalated to HR + Chairman immediately.
- Employees are protected by **non-retaliation policy** no action may be taken against staff who raise issues in good faith.

11.3.5 Exit & Termination Forms

- **Exit Clearance Form** → confirms return of all assets (laptop, phone, access cards, client files).
- **Case/File Handover Declaration** → ensures legal continuity.
- **Exit Interview Form** → feedback on employee's experience.
- **EOSB Settlement Acknowledgment** → signed once final dues are paid.
- **NDA & Non-Compete Re-Confirmation** → signed at exit to reaffirm obligations.

11.4 HR Service Standards (SLA)

- Leave requests → HR acknowledgement within **2 working days**.
- Letters (Salary Cert, NOC, Experience) → issued within **3 working days**.
- Grievances → acknowledged within **2 working days**, resolved within **5 working days** (minor issues).
- Red Flags → immediate action within **24 hours**.
- Clearance & Exit bundle → completed within **14 days** of last working day (to comply with UAE EOSB law).

11.5 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Submit requests formally, provide required documents, respect SLA timelines.
- **Managers:** Endorse or escalate requests promptly.
- **HR:** Track, respond, and document every request in employee files. No request can be ignored or left undocumented.

11.6 Compliance Note

- All HR services and records are **legally binding** and part of the employee's file.
- UAE Labour Law requires EOSB and final settlements to be processed within **14 days of termination**.
- AWS reserves the right to reject incomplete or fraudulent requests.

12. Employee Relations & Conflict Resolution

12.1 Purpose

To establish clear, confidential, and fair processes for handling concerns, conflicts, and grievances. This ensures workplace harmony while safeguarding AWS Legal Group from unmanaged disputes or reputational harm.

12.2 Open-Door & Escalation Path

Employees are encouraged to raise issues early through the following hierarchy:

1. **Line Manager** – First point of contact for operational concerns.
2. **HR Department** – For unresolved or sensitive matters.
3. **Head of HR** – For escalations beyond departmental resolution.
4. **Chairman** – Final authority if issue remains unresolved.

Rule: Employees must follow the chain of escalation unless the issue directly involves their line manager or HR (in which case escalation skips to the next level).

12.3 Grievance Process

- **Step 1:** Employee submits a **Grievance Form** via HR Portal.
- **Step 2:** HR acknowledges within **2 working days**.
- **Step 3:** HR investigates (fact-finding, interviews, document review).
- **Step 4:** HR issues a written resolution within **5 working days** (or longer for complex cases).
- **Step 5:** If unresolved, employee may escalate to the Chairman.

Confidentiality: All grievances are handled discreetly; records are maintained in employee files.

12.4 Red/Green Flag Reporting

- **Green Flags:** Recognition for positive contributions (e.g., exceptional client care, process innovation). Used for rewards, promotions, or spot bonuses.
- **Red Flags:** Serious violations (fraud, harassment, data breach, repeated misconduct). Escalated immediately to HR + Chairman.
- **Flow:** Employee → HR → Chairman (final decision).

Scenario: Employee witnesses colleague mishandling client funds → reports Red Flag → immediate investigation launched.

12.5 Whistleblower Protection

- Employees may report misconduct **anonymously** through designated HR or compliance channels.
- No retaliation permitted against whistleblowers.
- Any manager found retaliating faces disciplinary action, up to termination.

Scenario: Junior staff reports harassment by supervisor. Supervisor retaliates with unfair workload. → Retaliation itself = separate misconduct, subject to termination.

12.6 Conflict Resolution Standards

- HR encourages resolution through mediation before formal escalation.
- Mediation sessions documented but kept confidential.
- If mediation fails, matter escalates to disciplinary procedures (Section 14).

12.7 Investigation Process

- HR opens case file within **24 hours** of escalation.
- Employee(s) involved receive written notice of allegations.
- HR interviews parties, secures evidence, and maintains neutrality.
- Written decision issued, including disciplinary or corrective measures.
- Employees may **appeal within 5 working days**. Final authority rests with Chairman.

12.8 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Raise concerns promptly, provide facts, not rumors.
- **Managers:** Address issues fairly; escalate if unresolved.
- **HR:** Maintain neutrality, conduct timely investigations, ensure confidentiality.
- **Chairman:** Final authority in unresolved or high-risk matters.

12.9 Compliance Note

- Processes are aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** (UAE Labour Law).
- Serious misconduct (fraud, harassment, absconding) must be reported to MOHRE when required.
- Documentation of grievances protects AWS from false claims or MOHRE disputes.

13. MOHRE & UAE Labour Law Compliance

13.1 Purpose

To ensure AWS Legal Group and all employees remain fully compliant with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** (UAE Labour Law), MOHRE regulations, and applicable Free Zone rules. Compliance is non-negotiable violations expose the company and individuals to fines, sanctions, and reputational damage.

13.2 Employment Contracts

- All employees must have a **MOHRE-registered contract** (mainland) or **Free Zone authority contract** (RAKEZ, DIFC, etc.).
- Contracts are **bilingual (Arabic/English)**. Arabic prevails in disputes.
- Addendums (NDA, Non-Compete, IT Policy) are attached to the official contract .
- No employee may start work until contract and visa are legally registered.

Scenario: Employee joins with only an offer letter but no MOHRE contract. → Non-compliant. HR must block access until official contract is registered.

13.3 Wage Protection System (WPS)

- Salaries are paid via WPS only no cash or off-record transfers.
- Payment deadline: within **15 days of due date**. Delays trigger fines and possible ban on new work permits.
- AWS monitors payroll status weekly. Any bank/WPS delays must be escalated to HR + Finance immediately.

13.4 Emiratisation / Tawteen

- AWS supports UAE's Emiratisation goals by hiring and developing Emirati talent in line with MOHRE requirements.
- All Emirati hires receive training, career pathways, and reporting as per NAFIS/MOHRE guidelines.
- Non-compliance with Emiratisation quotas may result in MOHRE fines and suspension of new visas.

13.5 Working Hours & Leave (as per Labour Law)

- Maximum working hours: **8 hours/day, 48 hours/week**.
- Overtime above limits requires compensation at 125% (regular) or 150% (public holiday/weekend).
- Annual leave entitlement: **30 days/year** after 1 year of service.
- Sick leave entitlement: **90 days/year** (15 full, 30 half, 45 unpaid).
- Public holidays: as announced by UAE Government.

13.6 Termination & End of Service (EOSB)

- Notice periods: **30–90 days**, depending on contract.
- EOSB is based on **basic salary** only (not allowances).
 - 1–5 years: 21 days/year.
 - 5+ years: 30 days/year.
 - Max: 2 years' salary.
- EOSB and final dues must be paid within **14 days of termination**.

13.7 MOHRE Inspections & Compliance Audits

- MOHRE may conduct random inspections (contracts, WPS records, workplace safety).
- HR must always maintain:
 - Updated employee files (contract, visa, passport, Emirates ID, NDA, handbook acknowledgment).
 - Payroll/WPS records.
 - Leave and attendance records.
- Non-compliance may result in immediate fines, company suspension, or legal proceedings.

13.8 Employee Obligations under UAE Law

- Respect MOHRE regulations and internal policies.
- Never misuse leave, abscond, or submit false documents (grounds for termination under Article 44).
- Cooperate with HR during audits or MOHRE inspections.

Scenario: Employee refuses to sign updated MOHRE contract. → Non-compliance. HR may suspend salary/benefits until contract is signed or terminate as per law.

13.9 Company Protections under UAE Law

- AWS has the right to:
 - Terminate employment for lawful reasons (Article 44 gross misconduct).
 - Withhold EOSB if employee breached confidentiality or caused financial damage (subject to court ruling).
 - Report absconding cases to MOHRE after 7+ days of absence.
 - File civil/criminal claims for fraud, harassment, or data breaches.

13.10 Compliance Note

- This section is aligned with:
 - **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** (Labour Law).
 - **Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022** (Executive Regulations).
 - **Wage Protection System (WPS) regulations**.
 - **UAE Cybercrime Law** for data breaches.
- In any conflict, **UAE law prevails** over company policy.

14. Disciplinary Actions & Misconduct

14.1 Purpose

To set clear rules for handling misconduct, ensuring AWS Legal Group protects its reputation, clients, and employees while complying with UAE Labour Law and MOHRE disciplinary regulations.

14.2 Scope

Applies to all employees, regardless of position, department, or length of service. Covers behaviour at the workplace, during client interactions, and in any external or online activity that affects the firm's reputation.

14.3 Types of Misconduct

14.3.1 Minor Misconduct

Examples include:

- Occasional lateness.
- Failure to follow instructions (non-critical).
- Unprofessional behaviour (rudeness, gossip).
- Dress code violations.
- Forgetting to log attendance.

Consequence: Verbal or written warnings → repeat offences escalate to serious misconduct.

14.3.2 Serious Misconduct

Examples include:

- Repeated lateness/absenteeism.
- Disrespect to supervisors or clients.
- Negligence leading to client dissatisfaction or loss.
- Misuse of company property.
- Unauthorized outside work (conflict of interest).

Consequence: Written warning, salary deduction, suspension, or termination with notice (depending on severity).

14.3.3 Gross Misconduct (Article 44 UAE Labour Law)

Grounds for immediate dismissal without EOSB:

- Fraud or deliberate falsification of documents.
- Theft, bribery, or breach of trust.
- Disclosure of confidential information.
- Alcohol/drug use at work.
- Assault, harassment, or verbal/physical abuse.
- Unjustified absence of 7+ consecutive days.
- Repeated serious violations despite final warnings.

Consequence: Immediate termination, EOSB forfeiture, MOHRE notification, and possible legal action.

14.4 Disciplinary Procedure

1. **Report** – Misconduct reported via HR Portal, Red Flag, or manager.
2. **Preliminary Review** – HR assesses seriousness; if gross misconduct suspected, employee may be suspended.
3. **Investigation** – HR + Department Head + Legal collect statements, evidence, and issue written notice.
4. **Employee Response** – Employee given at least **2 working days** to respond.
5. **Decision** – HR issues written outcome (warning, suspension, deduction, termination).
6. **Appeal** – Employee may appeal to Chairman within **5 working days**. Decision is final.

14.5 Disciplinary Ladder

1. **Verbal Warning** – for first minor offences. Recorded in HR file.
2. **Written Warning** – issued if repeated or moderate violation.
3. **Final Written Warning** – last chance before suspension or dismissal.
4. **Salary Deduction/Suspension** – proportionate to offence (lawful under UAE Labour Law).
5. **Termination with Notice** – for serious misconduct not reaching Article 44 threshold.
6. **Termination without Notice (Article 44)** – for gross misconduct.

14.6 Examples of Application

- **Late arrivals:** Employee arrives late 3x in a month → Written Warning.
- **Misuse of IT:** Employee installs unauthorized software → Final Warning + monitoring.
- **Absenteeism:** Employee absent for 8 days without notice → MOHRE Absconding Case + termination.
- **Data breach:** Employee forwards client file to external email → Immediate dismissal under Article 44.
- **Harassment:** Complaint against senior lawyer → suspension, investigation, possible termination.

14.7 Rights & Protections

- No employee may be penalized without evidence and investigation.
- Employees have the right to respond before a decision is issued.
- Appeals are allowed, but Chairman's decision is final.
- Whistleblowers and complainants are protected from retaliation.

14.8 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Comply with all rules, report misconduct, respect investigation processes.
- **Managers:** Enforce discipline fairly and document incidents.
- **HR:** Ensure investigations are impartial, timelines respected, and all actions legally documented.
- **Chairman:** Acts as final authority in escalated or high-risk cases.

14.9 Compliance Note

- Disciplinary procedures align with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021, Article 39–44**.
- Terminations for gross misconduct are fully enforceable under Article 44.
- Salary deductions and suspensions are lawful only if supported by investigation and documentation.
- AWS maintains documentation of all disciplinary cases to protect against MOHRE disputes.

15. Termination, Exit & End-of-Service

15.1 Purpose

To ensure all employee exits whether voluntary or company-initiated are handled fairly, legally, and efficiently, while protecting AWS Legal Group's business, clients, and intellectual property.

15.2 Types of Separation

1. Resignation (Voluntary)

- Employee must submit a **written resignation** through HR Portal.
- **Notice Period:** 30–90 days, depending on contract.
- Shortfall in notice = deducted from final settlement.

2. Employer-Initiated Termination

- Permitted for: redundancy, restructuring, or performance issues.
- Requires written notice as per contract (30–90 days).

3. Termination for Gross Misconduct (Article 44, UAE Labour Law)

- No notice period, EOSB may be forfeited.
- Examples: fraud, theft, data breach, harassment, absconding (7+ days).

4. Mutual Agreement

- Both parties may agree on early exit terms, subject to HR & Chairman approval.

5. End of Contract (Non-Renewal)

- Contract ends automatically unless renewed 60 days before expiry.

6. Death in Service

- EOSB and entitlements transferred to legal heirs.

15.3 Exit Clearance Process

Before release of EOSB and final settlement, employees must complete clearance:

- **HR:** Return handbook, HR files updated, policies acknowledged.
- **IT:** Return laptop, phone, access card; accounts deactivated.
- **Finance:** Loans, salary advances, and fines cleared.
- **Admin:** Office keys, passes, company property returned.
- **Legal:** All client files/cases handed over using **Case/File Handover Declaration**.

Final HR Approval required before processing EOSB.

15.4 Exit Documentation

- **Case/File Handover Declaration** → ensures continuity of client matters.
- **Exit Interview Form** → confidential feedback recorded by HR.
- **NDA & Non-Compete Re-Confirmation** → signed again at exit to reinforce obligations.
- **EOSB Settlement Acknowledgment** → employee signs receipt of dues; no further claims possible.

15.5 End-of-Service Benefits (EOSB)

- < 1 year → no EOSB.
- 1–5 years → 21 days' basic salary per year.
- 5+ years → 30 days' basic salary per year.
- **Cap:** EOSB cannot exceed 2 years' total salary.
- Calculation excludes allowances.

Example: Employee with 6 years' service, AED 8,000 basic salary → EOSB = AED 50,400.

15.6 Final Settlement

- Includes: unpaid salary, accrued leave salary, EOSB, reimbursements (if any).
- Must be paid within **14 days** of termination (per UAE Labour Law, Article 53).
- Payroll and Finance must process settlement jointly; HR verifies.

15.7 Post-Employment Obligations

- **Confidentiality:** NDA obligations survive indefinitely.
- **Non-Compete/Non-Solicitation:** 12 months post-exit; applies to UAE/GCC, legal services scope.
- **Return of IP/Work Product:** All AWS templates, contracts, and client work remain company property.

Scenario: Former associate tries to solicit AWS client within 6 months → AWS initiates legal claim and withholds EOSB until resolved.

15.8 Absconding Cases (MOHRE Reporting)

- Employee absent for 7+ consecutive days without notice → HR files **Absconding Report** with MOHRE.
- Visa cancelled; EOSB forfeited if gross misconduct is proven.
- Protects AWS from liability.

15.9 Exit Interviews & HR Review

- All exits include a structured **Exit Interview**.
- HR documents reasons for leaving (salary, management, relocation, personal).
- Trends are reviewed quarterly to identify retention risks.

15.10 Responsibilities

- **Employee:** Submit formal resignation, serve notice, complete clearance, hand over cases.
- **HR:** Manage exit forms, process EOSB, ensure legal compliance.
- **Finance:** Final settlement within 14 days.
- **Managers:** Approve handovers and ensure no client disruption.

15.11 Compliance Note

- Exit process aligns with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021**, Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022.
- EOSB and final dues must be settled within **14 days**.
- Article 44 governs immediate dismissal without EOSB.
- AWS reserves right to withhold clearance until obligations are fulfilled.

16. Employee Rights & Responsibilities

16.1 Purpose

To define the rights employees are entitled to under UAE Labour Law and AWS Legal Group policies, and the responsibilities they must uphold to protect the firm, its clients, and its reputation.

16.2 Employee Rights

1. Fair Pay & Benefits

- Monthly salary via WPS, on or before the last working day.
- Entitlement to medical insurance, leave benefits, and EOSB as per UAE Labour Law.
- Payslips, salary certificates, and HR letters available through HR Portal.

2. Safe & Respectful Workplace

- Freedom from harassment, bullying, or discrimination.
- Access to proper health & safety measures, ergonomic workstations, and emergency protocols.

3. Leave & Rest Days

- Paid annual leave (30 calendar days/year).
- Sick leave, maternity/paternity leave, and other statutory leaves as per UAE law.
- Public holidays declared by UAE Government.

4. Professional Development

- Access to training, CLPD (lawyers), and internal development opportunities.
- Tuition/certification sponsorships (with written agreement).

5. Grievance & Complaint Handling

- Right to file complaints or grievances without retaliation.
- Anonymous reporting channels for misconduct (Whistleblower protection).

6. Clear Exit Process

- EOSB and final dues paid within 14 days of termination.
- Experience letter issued upon successful clearance.

16.3 Employee Responsibilities

1. Confidentiality & Loyalty

- Protect AWS client data, legal strategies, financial records, and HR files.
- Respect NDA and Non-Compete obligations during and after employment.
- Avoid conflicts of interest; disclose external work or connections.

2. Compliance with Law & Policy

- Follow MOHRE/UAE Labour Law and AWS internal policies.
- Respect attendance, leave, and working hour rules.
- Cooperate during audits, inspections, and investigations.

3. Professional Conduct

- Maintain respectful, ethical behaviour at all times.
- Represent AWS with dignity in meetings, correspondence, and public settings.
- Adhere to dress code (formal business attire for client-facing roles).

4. Performance & Accountability

- Meet assigned KPIs.
- Complete mandatory training and development programs.
- Cooperate with PIP if performance falls below expectations.

5. Use of Company Property & IT

- Use laptops, phones, and systems for business purposes only.
- Never share passwords, install unauthorized apps, or transfer files outside AWS systems.
- Report lost devices, phishing attempts, or suspected breaches immediately.

6. Attendance & Leave Responsibility

- Be punctual and adhere to 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM work hours.
- Punch In/Out daily using HR D. Portal.
- Apply for leave in advance; emergency leave must be reported without delay.

16.4 Enforcement Balance

- Rights and responsibilities are **mutually binding**.
- Employees who fulfill responsibilities are guaranteed their rights.
- Breaches of responsibility may reduce or forfeit entitlements (e.g., termination for gross misconduct = loss of EOSB under Article 44).

16.5 Compliance Note

- All rights and responsibilities are aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** and MOHRE enforcement standards.
- AWS Legal Group provides more than the minimum statutory benefits (e.g., wellness programs, spot rewards), but employees are expected to uphold responsibilities without exception.

17. Grievance & Whistleblowing

17.1 Purpose

To provide employees with safe, transparent, and retaliation-free channels for raising concerns, whether minor grievances or serious misconduct, ensuring AWS Legal Group addresses issues promptly and lawfully.

17.2 Grievance Procedure (Workplace Issues)

1. **Submission** – Employee submits a **Grievance Form** through HR Portal.
2. **Acknowledgment** – HR acknowledges within **2 working days**.
3. **Investigation** – HR investigates, interviews parties, and collects evidence.
4. **Resolution** – Written response issued within **5 working days** (or extended for complex cases).
5. **Escalation** – If unsatisfied, employee may escalate to the Head of HR, then Chairman.

Examples of grievances: workload imbalance, unfair treatment, leave disputes, office conditions.

17.3 Whistleblowing (Serious Risks or Misconduct)

Employees may report, anonymously or directly, incidents such as:

- Fraud, theft, or corruption.
- Harassment, discrimination, or abuse of authority.
- Breach of client confidentiality.
- MOHRE or legal compliance violations.

Channels:

- HR Portal → Red Flag form.
- Direct email to Head of HR (confidential).
- Direct escalation to Chairman (serious/urgent cases).

17.4 Non-Retaliation Rule

- No employee will face dismissal, demotion, or penalty for reporting in good faith.
- Retaliation = separate misconduct offence, punishable by termination.

Scenario: Junior associate reports harassment by supervisor. Supervisor retaliates with workload manipulation. Supervisor terminated for retaliation.

17.5 Confidentiality of Reports

- All grievance and whistleblowing reports are treated confidentially.
- Information shared only with investigation committee.
- Anonymous submissions are respected, but HR encourages named reports for faster resolution.

17.6 Investigation Standards

- HR logs case file within **24 hours**.
- Accused employee receives written notice and chance to respond.
- Committee (HR + Dept Head + Legal) reviews evidence.
- Written findings and action plan documented.

17.7 Disciplinary Outcomes

- **Grievances:** If valid → corrective action, process adjustment, or manager coaching.
- **Whistleblowing:** If confirmed → disciplinary action (up to termination), MOHRE/legal reporting if required.
- **False Reports:** Malicious or false claims = misconduct offence.

17.8 Chairman Oversight

- Red Flag escalations or whistleblower cases involving senior management go directly to Chairman.
- Chairman's decision is final and binding.

17.9 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Raise issues responsibly and truthfully.
- **Managers:** Encourage open communication; never retaliate.
- **HR:** Act quickly, protect confidentiality, and document resolution.
- **Chairman:** Oversee high-risk or sensitive cases.

17.10 Compliance Note

- Aligned with **UAE Labour Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021)** and UAE whistleblower protection principles.
- Ensures AWS Legal Group remains compliant, fair, and transparent in addressing workplace concerns.

18. Anti-Discrimination, Harassment & Equal Opportunity

18.1 Purpose

To ensure AWS Legal Group maintains a workplace free from harassment, bullying, or discrimination, while guaranteeing equal opportunities based on merit, not bias.

18.2 Zero Tolerance Policy

- AWS does not tolerate harassment, bullying, discrimination, or abuse of authority in any form.
- Applies to conduct **inside and outside office**, including client meetings, social events, and online platforms.
- Applies to all staff, regardless of seniority including managers, lawyers, and partners.

18.3 Definitions

- **Harassment** – Unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates a hostile environment (e.g., sexual comments, unwanted touching, intimidation).
- **Bullying** – Repeated hostile behaviour (e.g., insults, threats, humiliation).
- **Discrimination** – Unfair treatment based on gender, nationality, religion, age, disability, or any protected category.
- **Retaliation** – Punishing someone for reporting or participating in an investigation.

18.4 Reporting Channels

- HR Grievance Form (minor issues).
- Red Flag Report (serious issues: harassment, abuse, threats).
- Direct escalation to **Head of HR or Chairman** for sensitive cases.
- Anonymous reporting available (whistleblower protection).

18.5 Investigation Procedure

1. **Complaint Received** – HR logs case within **24 hours**.
2. **Immediate Protection** – If safety risk exists, accused may be suspended with pay.
3. **Investigation Committee** – HR + Legal + independent manager.
4. **Employee Response** – Accused is given chance to present their side.
5. **Findings** – Written report with evidence, witness statements, and recommended action.
6. **Outcome** – Decision issued within **14 working days** where possible.

18.6 Consequences of Violations

- **Minor breach (e.g., inappropriate joke):** Written warning + training.
- **Serious harassment/bullying:** Suspension, final warning, or termination.
- **Gross misconduct (e.g., sexual harassment, physical assault):** Immediate termination under **Article 44 UAE Labour Law**.
- **Retaliation:** Treated as separate misconduct, punishable by termination.

18.7 Equal Opportunity & Diversity

- Hiring, promotions, and benefits are based on merit, KPIs, and ROI contribution.
- No employee shall be disadvantaged based on gender, nationality, religion, disability, or lawful personal status.
- AWS supports UAE Emiratisation (Tawteen) initiatives, ensuring UAE Nationals are given fair development opportunities.

18.8 Employee Protections

- Confidentiality of reports preserved.
- No retaliation allowed protection guaranteed.
- Employees may request relocation or reporting-line changes during investigation.

18.9 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Treat all colleagues with respect, report misconduct promptly.
- **Managers:** Lead by example, act immediately if harassment/discrimination is observed.
- **HR:** Enforce zero tolerance, conduct impartial investigations, document outcomes.
- **Chairman:** Final authority in escalated or high-risk cases.

18.10 Compliance Note

- Aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021** (Labour Law) and UAE legal principles on workplace equality.
- Harassment and discrimination cases may also fall under **UAE Penal Code** AWS reserves the right to escalate to authorities.
- Policy protects AWS from liability while ensuring staff safety and dignity.

19. Remote & Hybrid Work Policies

19.1 Purpose

To regulate remote and hybrid working arrangements while safeguarding AWS Legal Group's productivity, confidentiality, and compliance with UAE Labour Law.

19.2 Eligibility

- Remote/hybrid work is **not an entitlement**; it is granted only with written approval from HR and the Chairman.
- Eligibility determined by:
 - Nature of role (e.g., client-facing litigation roles must be office-based).
 - Performance record (no unresolved PIP, no disciplinary cases).
 - Business needs (case load, client meetings, hearings).

19.3 Application & Approval Process

- Employee submits **Remote/Hybrid Work Request** via HR Portal.
- Line Manager reviews and recommends.
- Final decision rests with **Head of HR + Chairman**.
- Approved arrangement documented in employee's file.

19.4 Conditions of Remote Work

- **Work Hours:** Employee must remain logged into HR D. Portal during standard working hours (8:00 AM – 5:00 PM).
- **Availability:** Must respond to calls, emails, and portal messages within reasonable time.
- **Meetings:** Mandatory attendance at online and in-person meetings when required.
- **Productivity:** Tasks must be updated in HR Portal/Projects system daily.

Scenario: Employee fails to attend a scheduled remote hearing → treated as misconduct, not technical issue.

19.5 IT & Data Security Rules

- Only AWS-approved devices may be used.
- Secure VPN must be enabled at all times.
- Confidential files cannot be downloaded to personal devices.
- Printing client files at home requires prior HR/Legal approval.
- Breach of IT/Data rules while remote = **gross misconduct** (Article 44).

19.6 Monitoring & Accountability

- Remote attendance tracked via **GPS/IP logging** on HR D. Portal.
- HR monitors login hours and task completion.
- Managers review daily updates; repeated gaps = warning or suspension of remote privileges.

Scenario: Employee logs into portal from outside approved location. HR flags → investigation for proxy logging or location misuse.

19.7 Expenses & Equipment

- Company provides laptop, headset, and approved software.
- Internet and electricity costs are employee's responsibility unless explicitly covered in agreement.
- Loss/damage of company assets due to negligence = employee liable.

19.8 Hybrid Work Arrangements

- Employees may be granted fixed hybrid days (e.g., 2 days remote, 3 days office).
- Hybrid schedules must not affect client service, case preparation, or team collaboration.
- HR may revoke hybrid privileges at any time if business needs change.

19.9 Termination of Remote/Hybrid Work

- HR may terminate arrangement for:
 - Declining performance.
 - Misuse of system or attendance manipulation.
 - Security breaches or client complaints.
- Employee must immediately return to full office-based work.

19.10 Compliance Note

- Policy aligned with **Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021**.
- Remote work does not waive employer/employee obligations under UAE law.
- All disciplinary and confidentiality rules remain fully enforceable.

20. Travel, Expenses & Reimbursement

20.1 Purpose

To regulate business-related travel and expense reimbursements, ensuring accountability, transparency, and compliance with UAE Labour Law and AWS Legal Group's financial policies.

20.2 General Principles

- Expenses must be **reasonable, necessary, and directly related to business needs**.
- All expenses must have **pre-approval** from line manager and HR/Finance.
- Claims without supporting documentation will not be processed.

20.3 Reimbursable Expenses

- **Transport:** Economy-class airfare, taxi fares, mileage reimbursement for personal cars (if approved).
- **Accommodation:** Standard business hotel rates only (no luxury or resort bookings).
- **Meals:** Reasonable meal expenses during travel, supported by receipts.
- **Business-related communication:** Roaming charges, international calling if required for client work.
- **Official entertainment:** Client meals/events if pre-approved.

20.4 Non-Reimbursable Expenses

- Alcohol, personal entertainment, or luxury upgrades.
- Family expenses during business trips.
- Fines (traffic, parking, visa violations).
- Personal shopping, gifts, or holiday extensions.

Scenario: Lawyer submits claim for resort upgrade during arbitration trip. HR rejects non-reimbursable personal expense.

20.5 Expense Claim Process

1. Employee submits **Expense Claim Form** through HR D. Portal.
2. Attach original **VAT-compliant receipts**.
3. Line Manager reviews; HR/Finance approves.
4. Approved claims reimbursed in the next payroll cycle.

Timeline: Claims must be submitted within **10 working days** of incurring expense. Late claims = rejection.

20.6 Corporate Credit Cards / Advances

- Issued only to senior staff with Chairman's approval.
- Must be used strictly for business purposes.
- Misuse = deduction from salary + disciplinary action.

Scenario: Employee uses corporate card for personal shopping abroad. Finance deducts full amount + HR initiates disciplinary case.

20.7 Travel Insurance

- All employees traveling on company business are covered by **company-provided travel insurance**.
- Covers: accidents, medical emergencies, flight disruptions.
- Employees must carry travel insurance confirmation during official trips.

20.8 Disciplinary Action for Misuse

- Submitting false receipts → treated as fraud → termination under **Article 44**.
- Unauthorized travel expenses → full deduction from salary + written warning.
- Repeated misuse → permanent loss of travel/expense privileges + termination risk.

20.9 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Submit accurate claims with receipts; avoid misuse.
- **Managers:** Approve only legitimate business expenses.
- **HR/Finance:** Verify claims, enforce rules, process reimbursements transparently.

20.10 Compliance Note

- Aligned with **UAE Labour Law** and company financial governance.
- Any misuse of funds = grounds for dismissal under gross misconduct.
- All reimbursements must be fully documented for audit purposes.

21. Intellectual Property & Confidential Information

21.1 Purpose

To protect AWS Legal Group's intellectual property (IP), confidential information, and client data from misuse, theft, or unauthorized disclosure during and after employment.

21.2 Definition of Confidential Information

Confidential information includes but is not limited to:

- Client names, case files, strategies, and contracts.
- Financial data, invoices, and billing records.
- Employee records, payroll data, HR files.
- Technology, passwords, AI/legal systems, and internal tools.
- Templates, legal research, and proprietary knowledge.

Note: Confidentiality obligations survive employment indefinitely.

21.3 Intellectual Property (IP) Ownership

- All work produced during employment contracts, pleadings, research, memos, training materials, software, or presentations is the **exclusive property of AWS Legal Group**.
- Employees may not use, copy, or take any AWS work product for personal or external use.
- Any attempt to reuse AWS materials in another firm/business is treated as IP theft.

21.4 NDA, Non-Compete & Non-Solicitation

- NDA is signed at hiring and re-confirmed at exit.
- Employees agree that during employment and for **12 months post-employment**, they will not:
 - Provide legal/consultancy services to AWS clients.
 - Establish or join a competing business in UAE/GCC.
 - Solicit AWS employees, clients, or vendors.
- Breach may result in **withholding EOSB, legal claims, and damages recovery**.

Scenario: Former associate approaches AWS arbitration client within 3 months of resignation → AWS withholds EOSB and files civil claim.

21.5 IT & Data Security

- Use only company email/servers for official work.
- No uploading client files to Gmail, Dropbox, or WhatsApp.
- No unauthorized devices (USBs, personal laptops) unless HR/IT approved.
- Remote work requires secure VPN and approved equipment.

Scenario: Employee sends draft to personal email → breach of NDA + possible Article 44 dismissal.

21.6 Monitoring & Enforcement

- AWS monitors emails, portal logs, and IT systems.
- Evidence of misuse triggers investigation under Disciplinary Policy.
- Gross breaches (data theft, leaks) = termination under Article 44 + legal action.

21.7 Legal Protection (UAE Cybercrime & IP Laws)

- **UAE Cybercrime Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021)** criminalizes unauthorized data sharing.
- **UAE Intellectual Property laws** protect AWS-created documents and systems.
- Employees who leak or steal information face civil damages and potential imprisonment.

21.8 Breach Consequences

- **Minor breach** (accidental email mis-send): documented + retraining.
- **Serious breach** (sharing confidential documents with third parties): termination + legal claim.
- **Gross misconduct** (client poaching, IP theft, selling data): Article 44 dismissal + MOHRE notification + criminal filing.

21.9 Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Protect all confidential data, respect NDA/non-compete, report suspected breaches immediately.
- **Managers:** Enforce policies, prevent unauthorized use of IP, escalate risks to HR.
- **HR/IT:** Monitor compliance, investigate breaches, enforce corrective actions.

21.10 Compliance Note

- Policy aligned with **UAE Labour Law, Cybercrime Law, and IP regulations**.
- NDA and IP clauses remain binding **even after exit**.
- AWS reserves the right to take civil and criminal action against violators.

22. Amendments & Acknowledgment

22.1 Purpose

To clarify that AWS Legal Group reserves the right to update, amend, or revise this Employee Handbook in line with business needs, MOHRE regulations, and UAE labour laws.

22.2 Amendments to Policies

- Policies may be **amended, updated, or replaced** at any time by HR and the Chairman.
- Updates will be communicated via:
 - HR D. Portal (official posting).
 - Company-wide circular/email.
 - Employee acknowledgment forms (for major changes).
- Employees are bound by updated policies once officially communicated, even if they have not signed a fresh acknowledgment unless the update materially changes contract terms (in which case formal consent is required).

22.3 Hierarchy of Authority

- In case of conflict between:
 - **UAE Labour Law** (Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021, Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022)
 - **AWS Legal Group policy**

→ **UAE Law prevails.**
- For Free Zone employees, **Free Zone Authority rules** apply in addition to company policy.
- In disputes, **Chairman's interpretation of policies is final**, provided it does not conflict with law.

22.4 Employee Acknowledgment

All employees must sign the **Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form** confirming:

1. They have received and read the Handbook.
2. They understand the policies and agree to comply.
3. They understand violations may result in disciplinary action, including termination under Article 44.
4. They understand that confidentiality, NDA, and IP obligations survive employment.

Refusal to sign = non-compliance = disciplinary action.

22.5 Enforcement Authority

- **HR Department** – responsible for implementation, monitoring, and enforcement.
- **Managers** – responsible for departmental compliance.
- **Chairman** – final authority on interpretation, exemptions, and escalations.

22.6 Acknowledgment Form

AWS LEGAL GROUP – EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the AWS Legal Group Employee Handbook.

I agree to comply with all company policies, procedures, and rules. I understand that failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

I confirm my awareness that confidentiality, intellectual property, and non-compete obligations remain binding even after my employment ends.

Signed: _____
Employee Name

Date: _____