



Employment Q&A Guide

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Employment Standards Office
Qatar Financial Centre

Qatar Financial Centre Authority • PO Box 23245 • Doha, Qatar
T: +974 4496 7777 • F: +974 4496 7676 • info@qfc.qa • qfc.qa

1. What is the role of the Employment Standards Office?

The Employment Standards Office (ESO) is the equivalent of the Ministry of Labour for all QFC entities, Employers, and Employees.

It comprises the Employment and Labour Standards Administration (ELSA) division and the Commission for Conciliation and Adjudication (CCA) of employment disputes.

2. What kind of services does the Employment and Labour Standards Administration (ELSA) provide to QFC Employers and Employees?

ELSA provides dispute prevention services aimed at increasing awareness of the employment standards in the QFC, facilitating compliance with the QFC Employment Regulations and preventing workplace conflicts.

ELSA services include industrial relations and corporate services, forms and templates, attestation of employment agreements, training and workshops, technical education, and skills development, as well as the Labour Market Information System (LMIS).

3. What kind of services does the Commission for Conciliation and Adjudication (CCA) provides to QFC Employers and Employees?

The CCA provides conciliation and adjudication of workplace disputes.

4. What legislation applies to employment in the QFC?

The QFC Employment Regulations and the QFC Employment Code are the only legislation applicable to employment in the QFC. The State Labour Law does not apply in the QFC.

5. Does the State Labour Law apply to QFC Firms?

No, the State Labour Law does not apply to QFC Employers or Employees. The QFC Employment Regulations and the QFC Employment Code are the exclusive legislation applicable to employment in the QFC.

6. To whom do the QFC Employment Regulations apply?

The QFC Employment Regulations apply to all the Employees of institutions and entities established in the QFC.

7. What is the minimum age to work in the QFC?

The minimum age to work in the QFC is 18 years. However, minors between 16 and 18 can work with the consent of their legal guardians.



EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

8. Is a written employment agreement mandatory for all Employees?

The Employer must give each Employee a written employment contract which includes, as a minimum:

- A. the name of the Employer and the Employee;
- B. the date of commencement of employment;
- C. the employee's salary or method of calculation of salary;
- D. the intervals at which the salary is paid;
- E. the job title or job description;
- F. whether the employment is for a specified fixed term or of unlimited duration;
- G. the place of work;
- H. any terms or conditions relating to hours of work and annual and sick leave;
- I. reference to any disciplinary rules and/or grievance procedures applicable to the employee; and
- J. any other matter that may be prescribed in any rule, policy or order issued under these regulations.
- K. Where annual leave, holidays, hours of work and sick leave are not specified in the employment contract, the terms provided in the regulations will be implied in the employment contract.

9. Are there different types of employment agreements?

Employment agreements can be for an indefinite term or a fixed term.

10. What is an indefinite employment agreement?

An indefinite employment agreement is a contract with no predetermined expiry date that can be terminated for the following reasons:

- Employee resignation
- Lawful termination by the employer
- Employee retirement
- Permanent closure of the business

11. Is the Ministry of Labour employment contract mandatory in the QFC?

The Ministry of Labour employment contract is not mandatory in the QFC. Under the QFC Employment Regulations, the Employer must provide the Employee with a written employment agreement that must comply with the minimum requirements stated in the QFC Employment Regulations.

Employment agreements in the QFC must be in English, which is the QFC official language.

Please visit the [resources section](#) on the ESO web page to get the QFC employment agreement template.



12. Is there a specific employment contract in the QFC?

While it is mandatory that Employer and Employee sign a written employment agreement, the employment agreement template provided by the Employment Standards Office, which contains the minimum requirements set out by the QFC Employment Regulations, is not a mandatory template. Employers and Employees may choose a different form/structure and include additional terms and conditions of employment provided that these are not in contravention with the QFC Employment Regulations.

To access the ESO Employment Agreement Template, please [click here](#).

13. Is attestation of employment agreements mandatory in the QFC?

Attestation of employment agreements is not mandatory in the QFC. It is provided by the Employment Standards Office (ESO) upon request, free of charge.

14. What do I need to submit to attest my employment agreement?

Attestation of employment agreement requires the following documents:

1. Copy of the employment agreement signed by authorised signatories
2. Copy of company establishment card
3. Copy of Employee's QID

Please send the above documents to eso@qfc.qa and will proceed within three working days. You will be notified once the attestation is completed.

EMPLOYMENT TERMS

15. What is the duration of the probation period?

The duration of the probation period can be a maximum six months, including its renewal (i.e., for a probation period of the initial duration of 3 months, the extension can be for a maximum of 3 months).

16. Can the Employer extend the probation without consent of the Employee?

If the extension of the probation period is agreed between the parties in the employment agreement, the Employer can extend the probation period up to a total of 6 months, including the initial probation period already worked.

If the extension has not been agreed between the parties, the Employer needs to obtain the written consent from the Employee.

17. Can the Employee have more than 2 probation periods with the same Employer?

The Employee can only have one probation period during the same employment relationship with his Employer.



PAYMENT OF SALARY

18. Is Wage Protection System (WPS) mandatory in the QFC?

The WPS has been introduced by the State Law No. 1 of 2015 as amendment to the State Labour Law No. 14 of 2004, which is not applicable in the QFC.

QFC Employers are not obliged to comply with WPS requirements, and the Employment Standards Office verifies the payment of salaries through regular monitoring activities and labour inspections.

19. What are the QFC requirements for payment of salary?

The Employer must pay the Employee's salary at least monthly and must give the Employee a written pay slip that includes:

- A. the amount of wages and allowances;
- B. the amount of any variable and fixed deductions, if any; and
- C. the purposes for which the deductions are made.

WORKING HOURS AND LEAVE

20. What are the working hours in the QFC?

The maximum normal working hours in the QFC is 48 hours per week.

The daily working hours cannot be more than 10 hours a day inclusive of overtime, depending on the normal working hours applied in the company in compliance with Article (30) of the QFC Employment Regulations.

An Employee who works at least 6 hours per day is entitled to one or more intervals for prayers, meals, and rest of at least 1 hour in the aggregate, which is not included in the calculation of the Employee's working hours.

The Employee is entitled to a weekly paid rest of a minimum of 24 consecutive hours. If work circumstances require that the Employee works during the rest day, the Employee will be entitled to a compensatory rest day.

21. Is Overtime allowed in the QFC? Can the Employer request the Employee to work overtime?

Employees may be required to work additional hours to the usual daily working hours provided that the actual working hours per day do not exceed 10 hours.

22. What is the Overtime pay?

In case of overtime, the Employee is entitled to overtime pay at the rate agreed with the Employer (which comprises the usual pay rate plus an additional amount) or to compensatory time equal to the additional time worked.



23. What are the public holidays in the QFC?

QFC Employees are entitled to the following paid holidays each year:

- A. Three (3) working days for Eid El-Fitr;
- B. Three (3) working days for Eid Al-Adha;
- C. One (1) working day for Qatar National Day;
- D. Three (3) working days to be specified by the Employer;
- E. One (1) working day for National Sport Day; and
- F. any other day declared by the State as a public holiday and announced by the QFC Authority as applicable to the QFC.

24. What is the annual leave entitlement in the QFC?

The Employee is entitled to paid annual leave of not less than twenty (20) working days, to be accrued pro-rata from the first day of employment.

The Employer must ensure that Employees use all their annual leave during the year of entitlement.

25. Can the Employee carry forward untaken annual leave?

The Employee can agree with the Employer to carry forward up to half of the annual leave accrued.

26. What is the sick leave entitlement in the QFC?

The Employee is entitled to a maximum of 60 working days of paid sick leave in any 12-month period. During sick leave, the Employee is entitled to the usual salary, inclusive of basic and allowances.

27. What is the maternity leave entitlement for QFC female Employees?

Female Employees who have completed one year of service with the Employer before the expected week of childbirth are entitled to paid maternity leave of 14 weeks. Female Employees whose period of employment is less than a full year preceding the expected week of childbirth are entitled to 14 weeks of unpaid maternity leave.

The maternity pay is calculated as follows:

- Full pay (usual salary inclusive of basic and allowances) for the first 7 weeks of maternity leave; and
- 50% of the usual salary for the subsequent 7 weeks of maternity leave.

Same maternity rights are granted to female Employees adopting a child under three months old.



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TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

36. How can an employment relationship be terminated in the QFC?

An employment relationship can be terminated with notice or without notice (for cause).

37. What is “termination with notice”?

Employer or Employee can terminate the employment by giving the other party a written notice equal to the duration stipulated in the employment agreement.

38. What is “termination without notice”?

The Employer can terminate the Employee's employment with immediate effect, without notice, if the Employee commits an act of gross misconduct. Examples mentioned in Article 24 of the QFC Employment Regulations include: assuming a false identity or nationality, submitting false documents, committing an act which causes gross financial loss to the Employer, disclosure of confidential information and if the Employee is found to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs during working hours.



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH OBLIGATIONS, HEALTH AND DISABILITY INSURANCE

39. What are the Employer's safety and health obligations in the QFC?

Employers must ensure the health, safety and welfare of their Employees and are obliged to:

- A. provide and maintain a workplace that is safe, presents no risks to an Employee's health and is free of harassment;
- B. ensure adequate systems are in place that minimise risks to health and safety and the use, handling, storage and transport of dangerous articles and substances;
- C. provide information, instruction, training, and supervision to Employees in English, Arabic, or any other language, if appropriate, to ensure their health and safety at work; and
- D. provide and maintain adequate and safe access to and from the workplace.

40. Are QFC Employers required to provide health and disability insurance to their Employees?

QFC Employers are required to obtain and maintain insurance cover for health and disability income.

EMPLOYMENT COMPLAINTS

41. How can an Employee file an employment-related complaint?

The Employee can submit a complaint form to the ESO, and send it to eso@qfc.qa

42. Who can file a complaint?

QFC Employees, former Employees, or other persons, including Employers, can file a complaint before the Employment Standards Office to report a contravention of QFC Employment Regulations.

43. Which matters can the Employment Standards Office investigate?

The Employment Standards Office can investigate any contraventions of QFC Employment Regulations.

44. Can the Employment Standards Office refuse to accept a complaint?

The Employment Standards Office may refuse to accept, review, mediate, investigate or otherwise resolve a complaint if:

- The QFC Employment Regulations do not apply to the complaint;
- The complaint is frivolous, trivial, or is not made in good faith;
- There is not enough evidence to prove the complaint;
- The Employment Standards Office, the Civil and Commercial Court or the Regulatory Tribunal has previously made a decision or an order relating to the subject matter of the complaint;
- The complainant has not taken the requisite steps specified by the ESO to facilitate resolution or investigation of the complaint, or
- The dispute that caused the complaint is resolved.



45. What is the process after submitting the complaint?

After receipt of the complaint, the Employment Standards Office conducts a preliminary assessment of the documents, evidences, or grounds on which the complaint is based. If the Employment Standards Office accepts the complaint, it may propose the conciliation of the dispute or, depending on the circumstances, exercise its investigative powers to determine the sequence of the proceeding.

At any stage of the proceeding, the ESO may discuss with the parties to explore the possibility to settle the dispute. If parties do not reach an agreement, the ESO will proceed with the investigation and make the determination, giving both parties time for submissions before the determination is made. Copy of the determination is notified to both parties to their address for service.

46. Can an Employer or Employee appeal the Employment Standards Office determination/ decision?

The person directly affected by any Employment Standards Office's final determination, decision or fine may appeal the matter to the Regulatory Tribunal within sixty (60) days from the date in which the determination, decision or fine is notified to it.

WHISTLEBLOWING

The Employment Standards Office can accept whistleblowing exclusively related to contraventions of the QFC Employment Regulations.

Contraventions of other QFC Regulations and legislation other than QFC Employment Regulations must be filed with the relevant authority/department (i.e. contraventions of Financial Services regulations with the QFC Regulatory Authority, contraventions of the Data Protection Regulations with the QFC Data Protection Office etc.).

For more information, please contact: eso@qfc.qa



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