



# EMPLOYMENT IN QATAR



Qatar occupies the small Qatar Peninsula on the North-eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Of its total population of 2.5m, an estimated 88% is made up of foreign workers. While the expat population has rapidly grown since regulates the employment relationship in the the late twentieth, the Qatari population has increased only at a marginal rate. Therefore, as a means to decrease dependence on foreign labor, the Qatari government has heavily prioritised Qatarisation in recent years. This means that a Qatari national with equal qualifications and skills is likely to be given priority for employment over a foreign national. The Qatar Labour Law ratifies the minimum standard of rights and benefits for employees to which employers must adhere, as well as the obligations of employees working in Qatar.



## WORKING TIME AND OVERTIME

The working week in Qatar is typically 48 hours (eight hours per day, six days per week). The working day may decrease to six hours per day during Ramadan. Fridays are usually considered a rest day. Where an employee is requested to work overtime or work on holidays, there are maximums in the number of hours allowed and all overtime in excess of the standard working week is paid at a compensatory rate (typically 125% of average salary rate for daytime hours and 150% for hours performed at night).

## ANNUAL LEAVE

In Qatar, the annual leave entitlement is dependent on the employee's length of service, as follows:

- Under 1 years' service: a percentage of annual leave determined by the employer
- 1-5 years' service: 3 weeks' annual leave
- 5+ years' service: 4 weeks' annual leave

Employees can take annual leave in a maximum of two different periods. Any untaken leave can be carried over to the next vacation year, subject to the employer's agreement. Qatar has 11 public holidays

## TRIAL PERIOD

Probation periods in Qatar cannot be longer than six months.

## RESIGNATION AND DISMISSAL

A termination notice is mandatory to initiate the process of dismissal from either side. Notice periods are dependent on an employee's length of service:

- 1-5 years' service: 1 month's notice
- 5+ years' service: 2 months' notice

Upon completion of one year of continuous service with the employer, each employee is entitled to a severance payment upon termination based on an employee's final salary and at least three weeks of the employee's final basic salary for every year of service.

## RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

It is permissible to have restrictive covenants contained in the contract of employment to the extent necessary to protect the legitimate interests of the employer, provided the nature of the employees' work allowed them to know the company's clients and/or confidential information about the business. The covenants must be restricted in relation to duration (which must not exceed one year) and the nature of the business to be protected. Non-compete clauses and customer non-solicit clauses typically last no longer than 6-12 months. Employee non-solicits are also permissible.



### **CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT**

In Qatar, employers should provide foreign workers with a contract of employment (Service Contract), or an official letter of agreement which specifies the conditions of employment. According to Qatari law, it is not mandated that an employment contract between an employee and an employer must be in writing, where verbal agreement is possible, although written agreement is preferred. Employment contracts may be written in English, although it is the Arabic version that will be officially recognised by the Qatar Ministry of Labor. It is recommended to have any employment documents attested to by a notary, although it is not compulsory. The employment contract takes precedence over local labour laws due to greater stipulations and terms, although there are laws that provide certain protection regardless of the existence of a contract. The duration of an employment contract is typically open-ended, moving from a traditional two-year contract to one that extends indefinitely until the assigned work is done or until either party wishes to terminate the contract

### **MATERNITY AND PATERNITY LEAVE**

Expectant mothers are entitled to 50 days' paid maternity leave in Qatar, of which no less than 35 must be taken following the child's birth. In the case of a complicated birth, an employee can extend her maternity leave by an additional 60 days (unpaid) on production of a medical certificate. To be eligible for the maternity entitlement, an employee must have worked for their employer for a minimum of one year. There is no legal requirement for an employer to provide paternity leave to their employees. However, it is typical for an employer to offer five days leave to fathers following the birth of a child

### **SICKNESS LEAVE**

On completion of three months' continuous service, employees are entitled to two weeks of paid sick leave, compensated at 100% of salary. After the initial 14 days of sickness, an employee can receive another four weeks' paid leave at the rate of 50% of salary. Any sick leave beyond this is unpaid

### **SOCIAL SECURITY**

Employers are required to contribute 10% to the Qatar Labour Law / QFC Employment Regulation Monthly Contribution.

### **HEALTHCARE AND INSURANCE**

Employers, at their expense, are required to enrol non-Qatari employees and their family members into health insurance policies offered by insurance companies registered with the Ministry of Public Health in Qatar. They must be able to provide proof of such insurance coverage upon renewal of their employees' residency. Failure to maintain continuous and valid insurance coverage will result in employers being required to recompense the costs of healthcare services of the beneficiaries to the Insurance Law, and they are not entitled to recover such costs.



# EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS

Due to Qatarisation, a Qatar-based employer who wishes to hire an employee from abroad must first obtain permission from the government. For a foreigner (non-Qatari or GCC national) to legally work and reside in Qatar, they must have a residence visa and work permit under the sponsorship of their employer (which must have an entity established in Qatar.







# SALARY AND TAXES

## MINIMUM WAGE

The monthly minimum wage in Qatar is 1,000 QAR. Employers must also pay allowances of at least 300 QAR for food and 500 QAR for housing if they do not supply employees with these directly.

## INCOME TAX

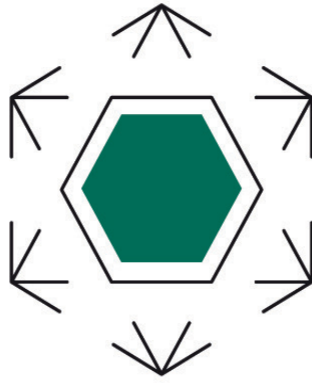
There is no tax on personal income in Qatar.

## SALARY PAYMENTS

The payroll frequency is typically monthly. The employer must make salary payments at least once a month. Employers may issue bonuses at their discretion.

## SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Employees are required to contribute 5% to the Qatar Labour Law Monthly contribution, or a 5-8% contribution towards the QFC Employment Regulation Monthly Contribution, in addition to the 10% employer contribution.



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