

Sutara Learning Foundation

Personnel Policy



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1. Purpose and Categories of Personnel	

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Personnel Policy is to set down the policies, conditions, rights and obligations of Sutara employees subject to their performing of the duties and responsibilities in their respective job descriptions.

From the time of hiring, each employee will have access to this policy, so that he/she can adhere to it with full knowledge and information.

The policies described below may at any time be subject to modification if the Board of Directors of Sutara deems it necessary. In such cases, employees will be fully informed of the changes made.

1.2 Categories of Personnel

All personnel working for Sutara are classified into following types

1.2.1 Employees

Employees designate salaried individuals who, after a probationary period, are given ongoing assignments, either part-time or full-time, and are paid on monthly basis. They will be contracted on long-term basis subject to periodic evaluations and performance assessments. They will have the responsibility towards the day to day functioning and/or in any one of more ongoing/prospective projects of the organization.

All the employees of the organization are classified into categories. These categories are as follows:

1. Management Category:

- a. Managing Director
- b. Executive Director

2. Professional Category:

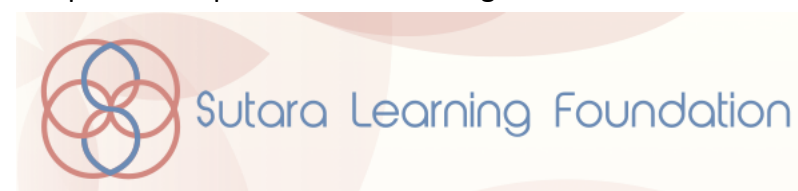
- a. Program Coordinator
- b. Researcher
- c. Software Engineer
- d. Quality Engineer
- e. Curriculum Developer
- f. Finance Officer

3. Support Category:

- a. Administrative Assistant
- b. Office Boy

1.2.2 Consultants

Consultants are professional experts hired by Sutara on short-term basis only for the completion of specific tasks and assignments related to Sutara or one or more of its projects.



Separate and limited contracts, defining their job description, timeline, deliverables, reporting procedures and payment details will be issued to consultants. They will be paid on daily/monthly/weekly basis depending upon the nature of their assignment. They will not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

1.2.3 Volunteers

Volunteers are individuals who work at Sutara out of their own choice or have been deputed at Sutara by other organizations. They will be assigned tasks from time to time as deemed necessary by Sutara. Sutara will have a limited contract with volunteers and will not provide any compensation except under special conditions. They will not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

1.3 Personnel Recruitment

Sutara believes in equal employment opportunity to each individual, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant condition. This policy applies to recruitment and advertising; hiring and job assignment; promotion, demotion and transfer; layoff or termination; rates of pay and benefits; selection for training; and the provision of any other human resources service.

1.3.1 Notice of Vacant or New Position

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to fill vacant positions as well as new regular positions and new temporary positions of a duration exceeding more than six months. The Board must make sure that the positions can be filled under the organizational budget. For all new positions, a job description shall be established and include the following elements:

- position summary
- description of duties and responsibilities
- conditions of work
- qualifications

Notice of a new or vacant position must be approved by the Board before it is released publicly.

Recruitment for a new or vacant position can be opened to internal and external competition. For external recruitment, positions in the professional category can be advertised publicly through newspapers if they are regular positions, or if there is a limited tendering process for consultation.

1.3.2 Interview and selection

As a general rule, a selection committee comprising of, at least two members shall be assembled for filling all positions.

The committee will go through the applications received, retaining those that show the best qualifications. It will evaluate each candidate's application with the help of an evaluation form created beforehand, containing well-defined criteria.

A list of the candidates chosen to be interviewed will be shortlisted by the Selection Committee. The interviews will serve to make a final choice and also to establish a database of potential future candidates.



1.3.3 Reference Checks

Sutara is committed to ensuring that all recruitment processes uphold the highest standards of **safety, integrity, and accountability**. To prevent harm and ensure a safe working environment, **safer recruitment practices** will be strengthened by implementing the following measures:

1. **Reference Checks:**
 - Require **at least two references** from previous line managers and/or HR representatives.
 - Ensure references are obtained **before finalizing any hiring decision**.
2. **Follow-Up on References:**
 - Conduct **additional inquiries** if any concerns or inconsistencies arise during the reference check process.
 - Clarify any **gaps in employment history** or potential red flags before confirming employment.
3. **Criminal Background Checks:**
 - Conduct **criminal background checks** as part of the recruitment process, especially for positions involving **direct work with vulnerable groups** such as children, marginalized communities, and survivors of violence.
 - Ensure compliance with **local legal requirements** when conducting background checks.

1.3.4 Appointment Letter

Any personnel employed with Sutara will be issued an appointment letter prior to his/her employment by Sutara. The appointment letter will officially announce his/her position within the organization, the place of assignment and the effective date of employment. The appointment letter will carry annexes, specifying the employee's job description, terms of reference, salary and benefits and other relevant terms of employment (Refer 1.4 Employment).

1.3.5 Probationary Period

A probation period of three months shall apply to all new employees from the date of hire. Exceptionally, the probation period may be extended to six months. In case, if a new employee fails to perform in accordance to expectations of Sutara staff/board, he/she will be given a notice, terminating the contract at the end of the probationary period.

1.3.6 Staff orientation

All new employees will get an orientation about the organization's mission and strategies, its structure and the staff within it, the policies and conditions of employment, the internal rules and regulations, etc.

1.4 Remuneration

Sutara believes in attracting and retaining a qualified and effective workforce through a system of payment that is both appealing and fair. All employees of Sutara are entitled to a basic salary, depending upon their skills, qualification and experience. The basic salary will be mentioned in the appointment letter.



1.4.1 Salary Increment

Salary increment will be based upon an employee's position and performance. Increment will be provided to employees on annual basis after their performance evaluation. Salary increment is calculated on the basis of basic salary of the staff.

1.4.2 Salary Benefits

(a) Provident Fund

All regular employees are expected to set aside a portion of monthly pay to his/her provident fund according to the current government regulations. Sutara will contribute the same amount on monthly basis. Both the employee's and Sutara's contributions are deposited in a savings account under the employee's name. The provident fund can only be withdrawn upon the employee's resignation from Sutara.

1.4.3 Compensation against Accident of the staff during Service

In the event that the staff succumbs to an accident while working for Sutara, i.e. during the office hours or during field trips, he/she is entitled to receive compensation amounting to a maximum of two-month salary of the individual to cover the medical expenses.

1.5 Working Days and Hours

1.5.1 Working Days

Sutara will follow a 5 days a week working schedule from Monday to Friday. Saturdays and Sundays are considered non-working days.

Unless otherwise specified, Sutara will observe the same public holidays as those prescribed by the Government not exceeding 10 days a year. The Managing Director will prepare a calendar of public holidays not exceeding 10 calendar days at the beginning of each fiscal year and circulate it to all staff.

1.5.2 Office Hours

The office shall open from 09.30 am in the morning till 05.30 in the evening. All employees are expected to complete 8 working hours daily. There will be one hour lunch-break.

1.5.3 Overtime

Various factors, such as workloads, operational efficiency, and staffing needs, may require variations in an employee's total hours worked each day. In such circumstances, the employee may have to work beyond the scheduled office hours.

Under such circumstances, the staff working overtime is entitled to payment for working overtime and is authorized by its immediate supervisor for the same. However, no overtime compensation will be provided for staff during field trips. The overtime rate will be paid on hourly basis and will be calculated on the basis of the basic salary.

1.6 Travel

Staff members may be asked to travel away from their usual workplaces on authorized missions. The policy on payment of travel allowances adopted Sutara applies to all employees regardless of job category or status. It also applies to the consultants, when mentioned in their agreement.

After reimbursable expenses are made, the person making an expense claim shall use the appropriate forms available.

The expenses will not be reimbursed if proper justifying documents (original receipts) are not attached except for per diem. Eligible expenses include:

1.6.1 Accommodation

All employees and volunteers are entitled to claim expenses incurred for accommodation for official trips outside their work location. Claim for accommodation will be reimbursed upon submission of bills/receipts.

1.6.2 Mode of Transport

Sutara will pay only surface transport as far as possible, i.e. bus. If any individual is using personal vehicle for Sutara related work, they can be reimbursed the actual fuel cost based upon the mileage. Some maintenance will also be awarded if required. However, the private transport must be shared by more than one Sutara member or employee.

1.7 Leave and Holidays

1.7.1 Leave

All employees are entitled to the following leave with pay.

(1) Annual Leave

All employees of Sutara are entitled to 20 working days off as paid leave per year. This leave is accrued monthly at the rate of 1.667 working days.

(2) Maternity Leave

All female employees are entitled to maternity leave of 180 calendar days twice.

(3) Paternity Leave

Male employees are entitled to paternity leave of 7 calendar days twice.

1.7.2 Holidays

All employees are entitled to 10 days of paid leave due to public holidays. Public holidays are specified in advance by the Managing Director in consultation with staff members.

Employees who are required to work on public holidays are entitled to compensatory day off. Sutara will keep records of number of hours/days worked by its employees on public holidays. Request for compensatory leave shall be substantiated with this record and approved in advance by the Managing Director.

In the event that a public holiday is declared by the Government on a certain day without prior notice, Sutara staff cannot consider it a holiday until and unless notified by the Managing Director or the Board. All public holidays are subject to the approval of the Managing Director or the Board.

1.7.3 Leave without Pay

- (1) Leave without pay may be granted to employees up to 60 days per year.
- (2) Leave without pay that is taken for a month or more shall not be counted as time worked, hence no benefits shall accrue to the employees during such period.
- (3) Employees on probation are not entitled to leave with or without pay but can accrue such leave during the probationary period.
- (4) Leave without pay is applicable when the employee has exhausted all his annual and sick leave.

1.7.4 Absences

- (1) An employee who is unable to come to the office is required to notify the office of the reason for his/her absence.
- (2) Unauthorized absences are grounds for disciplinary action. The following procedures shall apply:
 - i. An employee that has been absent for two consecutive working days without notice nor explanation shall be personally sought of by the Managing Director. He/she shall be asked to put in writing the reason(s) for his/her absence.
 - ii. If, after seven consecutive days of absence, the employee continues to fail to give any explanation of the cause of his/her absence, the employee will be considered to have resigned from his/her position.
 - iii. In cases where the employee cannot give any satisfactory answer to the cause of his/her absences, in the judgment of the Managing Director, the employee may be subjected to disciplinary action.

1.8 Staff Movement

(1) Assignments and Transfers

According to project needs, any employee can be transferred temporarily or permanently to any location where Sutara conducts its activities. The transfer may be the result of a promotion, a change in role due to service requirements or other reasons. A permanent transfer to a new place of work that includes a new job mandate shall result in a contract renewal. In addition, the employee concerned shall be notified one month in advance of his change in situation.

(2) Interim positions and promotions

An employee may be called on to temporarily perform a job in a higher category. That does not automatically give him the right to the salary and benefits of this position. However, after a reasonable amount of time, Sutara shall reclassify the employee in the category of the new job or return him/her to his/her former duties.

An employee who receives a promotion can be required to complete a trial period in the new position. If the trial period is successfully concluded, the employee will be reclassified in the new job category and at a salary scale level higher than his former position. If the trial period is not satisfactorily completed, the employee will be reinstated in a position at the same level as his former position.

1.9 Prohibition on Outside **Employment** and/or Engagement

Full-time regular employees of Sutara are not allowed to undertake outside employment.

1.10 Termination of Employment

1.10.1 Conditions for Termination

Employees shall lose their jobs under any of the following conditions:

(1) Voluntary Resignation

- i. Personnel wishing to resign from post may do so by giving a resignation letter to the Managing Director stating the reasons for resignation and effective date of the same. One month of prior notice is required for such resignations.
- ii. The date in which the resignation letter is received at the Sutara office is considered the date on which notice of resignation is given. Failure to provide sufficient notice may be ground for forfeiture of all accrued employee benefits.

(2) Redundancy of the Position

Depending on the nature and volume of its operation, Sutara may declare certain positions redundant. Persons occupying those positions will therefore be forced to be separated from Sutara with proper notice. While doing so, Sutara will give at least 2 months notice in advance.

(3) Termination with Cause Grounds for employee termination are the following:

- i. continuing inefficiency and gross negligence of duty.
- ii. fund embezzlement.
- iii. Misuse of office equipment, and other properties.
- iv. repeated unauthorized absences and leaves
- v. intoxication while on official business or within office premises
- vi. unauthorized disclosure of official information

(4) Retirement

When an employee reaches the age of retirement, according to the country's law, the employment relationship comes to an end. Sutara shall notify the employee by letter, stating the date the employment terminates.

The retiring employee shall receive salary up the date of departure and other allowances such as the Provident Fund, as specified in his/her agreement.

(5) Death

When an employee dies, his/her salary and benefits will automatically be paid to his/her legal heirs.

1.10.2 Procedures for Termination and/or Disciplinary Action

- i. Sutara will ask the employee for a written explanation on the offense deemed committed by the employee concerned, identifying the charges against him/her and the particulars of the facts relied upon to support it.
- ii. The employee is given 3 working days to submit his/her explanations.
- iii. Based on the written explanations submitted by the employee concerned and the strength of evidence presented, Sutara may choose to decide on the charges or pursue further investigation of the case.
- iv. Sutara can, shall it feel necessary to, suspend the employee in question from duty during

the period of investigation subject to the following conditions:

- a. should the employee be in a position to tamper with the evidence against him/her.
- b. should the employee's continuing presence in the organization be deemed inimical to the interest of the organization.

1.11 Conflict Management

1.11.1 Conflict Resolution

Whenever a dispute arises among the Sutara staff, it shall be resolved in a constructive manner, i.e. the solutions shall lead to positive changes. Employees who feel unfairly treated or who have complaints about a situation or about working conditions should notify the Managing Director immediately.

1.11.2 Staff Behavior

Sutara expects its employees to adopt attitudes and behavior that maintain the good image of the organization. Sutara employees shall display an exemplary level of professionalism and integrity.

Furthermore, besides the usual rules every good employee needs to follow (respect, courtesy, punctuality), there are particular procedures of conduct for members of the organization which must be observed.

(1) Political Activities

Since Sutara is a non-political organization, employees shall not participate in activities of a purely political nature on work premises or during working hours. It is also prohibited to use the organization's materials for these purposes.

(2) Discrimination and Harassment

Under the principles established by Sutara, no employee, man or woman, has the right to put pressure on another, make intimate advances, give preferential treatment or show sexual favoritism at work.

(3) Conflict of Interest

To avoid putting themselves in a conflict of interest with the objectives and operations pursued by Sutara, employees shall respect the following guidelines:

- It is prohibited to use Sutara property for illegal or unauthorized purposes.
- It is prohibited for any Sutara employee having confidential information to disclose it without express authorization beforehand.
- Employees cannot at any time accept a job from another employer if this job interferes with their work schedule and their duties and responsibilities.
- Employees shall avoid putting themselves in situations where they may gain profit or derive direct or indirect interest by influencing a contract award.
- Employees cannot solicit or accept tips, gifts, favors or other forms of gratuities for services rendered or required to be rendered in performing their duties within the organization.

1.11.3 Grievances

If an employee feels unfairly treated by circumstances that infringe on his/her rights or change his/her employment conditions, he/she should discuss the situation with his/her

immediate supervisor. If, after the matter has been discussed and corrective measures taken, an employee feels it has not been satisfactorily settled, he/she can submit a grievance to the Managing Director, who will discuss and provide appropriate solution. All grievances shall be handled internally because there is no recourse to external mediation or arbitration.

1.12 Performance Evaluation and Skill Training

1.12.1 Performance Evaluation System

The performance evaluation system is a means by which Sutara can increase its efficiency and that of its employees. The purpose of the system is for the organization to fulfill its mission by attaining its objectives and for employees to grow and feel fulfilled through proactive performance supervision.

The system enables, among other things, the harmonizing of individual employee objectives with those of the organization, the measuring of employee potential and work performance and the support of employee improvement by working with them on their development needs.

The annual performance evaluation seeks specifically to:

- promote communication between employees and their supervisors;
- clarify expectations concerning objectives and performance;
- improve employee performance through on-going monitoring and feedback;
- assess and reward individual performance;
- allow employees to express their career aspirations.

The performance evaluation focuses on the individual employee in relation to the tasks and responsibilities assigned to him. It is not necessarily a comparison of one employee's performance with that of another. Thus, the employee's work performance is to be assessed in relation to absolute procedures, that is, according to the evaluator's performance criteria and not according to relative procedures.

The performance evaluation also allows Sutara to assess the quality of human resources in their department or organization, note important information concerning expectations and needs and clarify decisions concerning transfers or work assignments.

1.12.2 Elements of the Performance Evaluation System

A performance evaluation system is composed of three main stages that generally take place over a period of a year:

(1) Performance planning

The performance planning stage enables employees and supervisors to come to an agreement on what is to be accomplished during the year and how it will be carried out. The following procedures and tools are used to facilitate this stage:

a) Job description or list of duties

Each employee must have an up-to-date job description defining the purpose of the work and the responsibilities involved.

b) Setting of objectives

For each key responsibility associated with a position, at least one objective should be established for a particular period. The objectives should be clear and quantifiable, and the assessment criteria should be mentioned.

c) Individual action plan



The individual action plan is a planning tool used to specify the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives set beforehand. The action plan should be prepared jointly with the immediate supervisor. It may also involve new initiatives facilitating improved productivity or personal capacity development.

(2) Performance Monitoring and Management

Staff performance and productivity should be managed on an on-going basis throughout the year. The following elements, among others, are involved:

a) On-going Supervision

This means taking the time to observe, examine sources of difficulty and seek solutions.

b) Regular Communication

This involves regular exchanges so that employees can receive feedback about their performance and receive the necessary supervision.

c) Periodic Evaluation

This involves formal, scheduled meetings between an employee and supervisor to discuss activities carried out, end results and the adjustment of the action plan and objectives, if necessary. A minimum of one meeting every six months is suggested to ensure satisfactory results.

(3) Annual Performance Evaluation

The annual performance evaluation is the analysis, based on documentation from previous stages of the process, of an employee's work record. The evaluation addresses two fundamental questions. The first relates to the past and involves verifying what was accomplished qualitatively and quantitatively during the year. The second relates to the future and consists of identifying means to be considered to ensure the employee continues to grow and develop.

The performance evaluation form should include all the sections needed for the evaluation. This includes a section relating to performance evaluation in relation to the objectives established at the outset and in relation to the responsibilities of the position, a section that specifies or targets what is needed for the employee's development and finally a section allowing the employee and the evaluator to express their comments and affix their respective signatures. The form should also include a performance level classification and a definition of each of these levels.

The annual performance evaluation does not have any financial impact on salaries. It is first and foremost a tool to evaluate the employee's performance and take remedial action if necessary.

1.12.3 Skill Training and Professional Development

Depending on available funds, Sutara should foster the professional development of its employees in order to be as effective as possible in its activities. The training programs chosen should address the actual needs identified and expressed during performance evaluation sessions.

1.13 Bond

As part of the staff and organizational development activities, Sutara may at times decide to send a designated staff person for trainings and/or further studies both abroad as well as at local level. Sutara will bear the full/partial costs of the trainings/studies for this. However,

the designated staff sponsored for the trainings/studies is required to sign a bond with Sutara that requires him/her to complete the full tenure of working with the organization.