



# KCO Regulations- 2023



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The Embassy Of the State of Kuwait, Cultural Office- London

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## Introduction

The regulations of the Kuwait Cultural Office – London (KCO) are based on a combination of the work regulations of the Ministry of Higher Education and the work regulations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait. The internal bylaw booklet will define employee's roles at the KCO and provide guidance on productivity and performance expectations. The booklet will also state the rules and regulations that define employees' duties and rights.



## Office Structure

The KCO undertakes the management of scholarships offered by the Ministry of Higher Education as well as by other sponsors. This encompasses the management of relations and agreements with educational institutions in the United Kingdom.

The organisational structure of KCO aligns with its workflow; the structure is designed based on the nature of work in each department, as they are all interlinked.

To facilitate these responsibilities, the work at KCO can be classified into two main divisions: Academic and Financial. Both of divisions are directly supervised by the Head of the Cultural Office, in addition, the head of office directly supervise the Private Students, certification, IT, Reception, and the office drivers.

### Head of Office

Within the KCO, the Head of Office holds the highest position within the organisational hierarchy, he/she is responsible for overseeing all activities of the KCO. The Head of Office must receive regular reports from all Directors and Heads of Units. Furthermore, the following roles fall under the direct supervision of the Head of Office and are required to report exclusively to the Head of Office. These roles are delineated as follows:

- Head of MOHE department
- Head of Other Sponsors department
- Head of quality assurance and continuous improvement
- Director of Financial & Administrative Affairs
- Information Technology Unit
- Authentication & Private Students Unit
- Head of Office secretary

## **Division of Academic Affairs**

The Academic division is supervised directly by the Head of Department. All activities and matters related to this division will be overseen and managed by the head of the department, whilst regularly reporting to the Cultural Attaches and to the Head of Office.

This division consists of several units responsible for MOHE scholarships and other government sponsors. Each unit is led by Head of Unit who directly reports to the Head of Department.

## **Division of Administrative & Financial Affairs**

This division is supervised directly by the Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs. All matters that are related to this division will be overseen and managed by the Director of the Division, whilst regularly reporting to the Head of Office.

The Division includes two units:

- 1- Administrative Affairs Unit which handles human resources, office contracts, procurement, maintenance, logistics and related activities.
- 2- The Finance Unit which is responsible for financial affairs in the Cultural Office, including but not limited to managing all sponsors' funds, incoming and out-going payments, and the Office correspondence with external bodies i.e., sponsors, bank, and other relevant entities.

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## 1. Local Employees' Duties

Employees:

- a.** Must work to the designated work schedules and duties, perform their assigned tasks with utmost accuracy and honesty, and devote their working time to fulfilling their duties.
- b.** Must follow orders and instructions given by the management.
- c.** Shall conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, treating their superiors, colleagues, and clients with respect.
- d.** Shall protect the interests and reputation of the Embassy of the State of Kuwait and the Cultural Office, including by maintaining the confidentiality of their documents.
- e.** Must safeguard the property of the Kuwait Cultural Office, refrain from using such property for personal purposes, and avoid using any of the Office's documents, papers, or seals for personal correspondence or any other purpose.

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## 2. Attendance & Punctuality

Kuwait Cultural Office working hours are from 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

- Appropriate, regular, and timely attendance is vital and is an indication of performance for all Kuwait Cultural Office employees. To ensure adequate staffing, maintain positive employee morale, and meet expected productivity standards within the office, employees must adhere to their job description and the office schedule.
- In the event an employee is unable to meet this expectation, he/she must gain approval from their supervisor in advance of any requested changes in the schedule and should aim to make up the extra time taken. This approval includes requests to use appropriate accumulations, as well as late arrivals to work or early leave from work. Management have discretion to evaluate extraordinary.
- Members of staff are requested to take reasonable account of transport delays in arranging their journey to work, rather than planning a journey which will only see them arrive on time if there are no transport delays at all. Employees who arrive late should explain themselves to their line manager on each occasion.
- Lateness allowance of **120** minutes a month shall be reserved for emergencies and shall not be carried over the next month.
- Deductions will apply if the lateness allowance is exceeded
- Persistent lateness beyond 9:00 am will reflect negatively on performance evaluation and might lead to disciplinary action.



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- Late staff members should make up the time lost due to lateness on the same day.
- A missed clock in/out is a violation of the attendance and punctuality policy; violations include:

- Failure to clock in/out on their designated time clock at the beginning and/or end of their assigned shift.
- Failure to accurately and timely, report time worked.

All Staff members are responsible for tracking and maintaining their individual portals on the HR System. Staff members are encouraged to contest any penalties applies to their salary should they have a valid reason to avoid deductions.

## 3. Absence

An employee is considered absent when he/she is unavailable for work as scheduled and such time off was not approved in advance as required. Employees must request leave through the office HR system which can be accessed via

<http://www.kcouk.org/hr/>

If a staff member fails to show up without permitted leave for 15 days consecutively or for 30 days intermittently within twelve months, it will be regarded as an act of resignation. In this case, the Head of Office can either accept such resignation or accept that the employee return to his/her duties given the reason that is provided by the employee.

Absent employees should expect to be subjected to deductions made from their salary based on the duration of their absence and shall be deprived of all the privileges related to such periods, including the end-of-service benefits, etc.

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## 4. Productivity Policy

This policy sets out the expectations which are most likely to result in employees achieving strong levels of productivity and therefore to the office achieving its objectives, while still maintaining a healthy work life balance.

### 4.1 Working Time

An employee is considered absent when he/she is unavailable for work as scheduled and such time off was not approved in advance as required. Employees must request leave upon absence by applying on the office HR system.

- a.** Staff members are expected to meet the key performance indicators set by the management
- b.** The office welcomes social interaction between members of staff, including occasional informal interactions. However employees should guard against lengthy or too regular personal conversations which might at the expense of reasonable productivity. These interactions should mainly take place out of hours, or at lunchtime.
- c.** For the same reason, members of staff should keep any personal calls on their own mobile phones during working hours very brief, dealing only with emergencies or essential matters which cannot wait.
- d.** Personal cell phones should not distract employees, cell phones should not be used for surfing the internet or gaming during working hours

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**E.** Staff members who need to take smoking breaks should limit the break duration to no more than 15 minutes a day. Any staff members who would like to take smoking breaks should aim to make up the extra time taken after or before the official office hours, as being a smoker should not affect someone's productivity compared to other staff members.

## 4.2 Family Emergency

In the event of a family emergency, members of staff may take unpaid leave if the family member is a dependant, for the time it takes to deal with the emergency. If the family member is not a dependant, the Office may be prepared to agree to unpaid leave nevertheless, in the exercise of its discretion, but may require annual leave to be taken.

## 4.3 Strikes and Weather Conditions.

In the event of transport strikes or extreme weather conditions which are likely to severely disrupt an employee's journey into work, staff members should attempt to come to work even if the trips into work and back are likely to take much longer than usual; if that is not possible; then staff members should request to work from home 2 business days prior to the strike occurring. If staff members cannot work from home then pay is discretionary.

## 5. Annual Leave

- Employees receive 30 working days per calendar year, if any of these days are not taken during the year, they will roll over to the following Gregorian Calendar year.
- The maximum reserved holiday days is 60 days.
- Applying for holidays must be organised well within each unit, as there can be no less than 75% of total staff working in the entire office, at any time, to ensure that the work's needs and requirements are fulfilled during the absence of the employee on leave.

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To apply for holidays, employees must go through the following steps:

1. Liaise with their head of unit (if applicable otherwise liaise with the head of the department) giving at least 10 days' notice and gain approval to make sure that there will be sufficient cover during absence.
2. The maximum holiday duration is 21 working days consecutively.
3. Requests should be made in no less than 10 days prior to their leave
4. Submit application through the KCO HR system.
5. The Leave committee is responsible for academic advisors holiday approvals while the Director of Academic Affairs and Director of Administrative & Financial Affairs is solely responsible for finalising administrative staff holiday approvals.
6. Other Units that are directly supervised by the Head of Office must gain the final approval from the Head of Office before taking their leave.
7. For any day/ period of annual leave, we expect staff members to set their email on auto reply and reference in the auto reply message the name and the contact details of the colleague covering for them.
8. Employees are also expected to make sure that their work is up to date and easy to access so that their work can be covered easily, prior to their leave.
9. KCO employees are not permitted to go on holiday prior to gaining approval from the office management. Doing so is a breach of regulations and would incur disciplinary action, and possibly termination of employment.

The employee will receive a confirmation email once their holiday application has been approved/refused.

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## 6. Sick Leave

All staff members are entitled to sick leave against a duly authenticated and approved sick note in a rolling 12-month period and in the following manner:

- ✦ 15 days full paid.
- ✦ 15 days half paid.
- ✦ 15 days quarter paid.

### (Occupational Sick Pay)

- Staff members are required to complete an absence self-certification form immediately upon their return to work. This form should be returned to the HR Department as soon as possible, but in any event, no later than two working days following the return date.
- For an absence of more than seven days (including weekends), in addition to completing the absence form you must obtain a Statement of Fitness for Work 'Fit Note' from your GP or other healthcare professional and forward this to HR department within two working days of issue. If your absence continues after the expiry of the first Fit Note, further Fit Notes must be obtained as necessary to cover the whole period of absence and forwarded to the HR department within two working days of issue.
- Regardless of the duration of the sick leave, the payment of the Occupational Sick Pay is discretionary and conditional on staff members providing a Fit Note from your doctor on the first day of absence and subsequent Fit Notes to cover the whole period of absence .

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- For the avoidance of doubt Fit Notes obtained from digital doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists are not sufficient in in order to be eligible to receive Occupational Sick Pay, nor are appointment notifications.
- Future appointment scheduled by the NHS and sent through an official letter showing the employee's name, date and time of the appointment will be accepted as a proof to receive paid sick leave.
- If staff members are unable to provide a Fit Note from a doctor covering the period of sickness; payment of Occupational Sick Pay will be discretionary.
- Occupational Sick Pay will include any statutory sick pay (SSP) due. For SSP purposes, the qualifying days will be Monday to Friday (inclusive).
- Unused sick leave cannot be carried over to the next Gregorian calendar year."

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## **7. Part of the Day Leave**

Part of the day leave is an allowance of one hour leave from a full working day. Employees are entitled to 12 hours per annum, and it can be applied via the office HR system, to be approved by management. If it is taken without management approval a deduction will automatically apply and this may incur a disciplinary action.

## **8. Half Day Leave**

Half day can be applied for in the morning or afternoon hours and must be applied for at least 24 hours in advance. It is counted as annual leave and will be deducted on that basis. The morning half of the day leave will last from 9:00am until 12:30pm, and the afternoon half of the day leave will be from 12:30pm until 4:00pm.

Please note that the afternoon shift does not include the lunch break. Employees are entitled to 6 half day leaves per annum, as part of their annual leave entitlement.

## **9. Official Academic Visits**

Academic Advisors must apply for "official leave" if they plan a visit to a University/Institute to meet their students or members of staff at the University/Institute. Entitlement includes full pay for the day as well as lunch allowance and transportation.

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## 10. Ramadan Working Hours

During the holy month of Ramadan, the hours of work are reduced. Staff members will be informed of the adjusted work schedule through an internal memorandum.

## 11. Working after hours

Staff members are permitted to stay after working hours to complete unfinished work. However, all staff must vacate the building before 19:00 for security purposes.

## 12. Staff Conduct

The KCO aims to maintain a friendly productive environment. Most offices are shared by several members of staff, some office more so than other and therefore consideration of each other's workspace is vital to not cause any discomfort to one another. To accomplish this, employees must:

- Keep their workspace tidy and organised.
- Watch the volume of their voice – whether they are on the phone, talking to a colleague, or reading an email, please remember that other people are trying to work, and a loud voice may be distracting.

## 13. Incoming Telephone Calls

It is required for phone calls to be answered during working hours. If staff members are unavailable to answer the phone and a message is left by the caller, the staff member must respond to the enquiry via phone or email as soon as they can. Some callers may be difficult and in such cases the member of staff can then refer the case to their Head of Unit. Urgent calls must be responded to immediately.

To ensure quality, all phone conversations are recorded.



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## **14. Dress Code and Hygiene**

How employees dress represents the Office therefore employees should take care in their attire and their appearance to achieve a professional representation of the Office. Employees are expected to follow a dress code that is simple, formal and modest at all times.

Employees are expected to maintain a high level of personal hygiene at all times and failure to do so will be brought to the employee's attention by their line manager.

## **15. Casual Fridays**

The usual dress code does not apply on Casual Fridays. However, employees must adhere to maintaining a professional appearance and therefore must refrain from wearing T-shirts, ripped jeans, shorts, caps, etc.

## **16. Kitchen Rules**

The kitchen is available to all staff members, for accessing food and beverage during working hours. However, the kitchen must always be kept clean and tidy. Staff members are not to loiter in the kitchen during working hours, doing so may incur disciplinary actions.

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## 17. Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy

The KCO operates as part of The Embassy of the State of Kuwait– Diplomatic Mission.

KCO information is confidential and a valuable commodity and should be treated fairly, responsibly, and with respect. Therefore, staff members are expected to take the utmost care and consideration when handling information related to the Embassy of the State of Kuwait and the KCO.

The KCO data protection requires that a staff member must not disclose any information to a third party or external bodies. Staff members are prohibited from taking personal copies of official documents.

Employees who breach data protection requirements will face disciplinary action.

## 18. Prohibitions for Employees

An employee at The Embassy of the State of Kuwait and the KCO shall not:

- Perform any work for his or her own interest or for a third party, with or without salary/benefit, even if not in the official working hours of the KCO as this will be considered a violation of the Regulations of Locally Engaged Staff in the Representative Mission of the State of Kuwait and the decisions and circulars which staff members agreed to adhere to in the contract.
- Have, whether by him/herself or through a mediator, a relationship or interest with regards to a contract related to the KCO or The Embassy of the State of Kuwait.
- Keep for him/herself an original document or a copy of any work-related documents.

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- Disclose information to which he or she has access by virtue of his or her post or publish information or news about the KCO or The Embassy of The State of Kuwait, whether in newspapers or in any other media.
- Engage in a religious or political discussion while at work; raise funds or collect donations; or distribute leaflets or any such publications; or
- Receive from any person transacting with The Embassy of the State of Kuwait and/or KCO a reward or gift of whatever kind without declaring it.
- Pass their personal cell number to students.
- Contact students via their personal cell phones.
- Engage in activities that raise a potential conflict between the employee personal interest and the interest of the organisation.

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## 19. Disciplinary Sanctions

### 19.1 About this procedure

**19.1.1** This procedure is intended to help maintain standards of conduct and performance and to ensure fairness and consistency when dealing with allegations of misconduct or poor performance.

**19.1.2** Minor conduct or performance issues can usually be resolved informally with your line manager. This procedure sets out formal steps to be taken if the matter is more serious or cannot be resolved informally.

**19.1.3** This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

**19.1.4** This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

### 19.2 Investigations

**19.2.1** Before any disciplinary hearing is held, the matter will be investigated. Any meetings and discussions as part of an investigation are solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no disciplinary action will be taken without a disciplinary hearing. Investigation meetings may take place in person or remotely, using remote working platforms or technologies as appropriate.

**19.2.2** In some cases of alleged misconduct, we may need to suspend you from work while we carry out the investigation or disciplinary procedure (or both). While suspended, you should not visit our premises or contact any of our clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or staff, unless authorised to do so. Suspension is not considered to be disciplinary action.

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## 19.3 The Hearing

**19.3.1** We will give you written notice of the hearing, including sufficient information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance and its possible consequences to enable you to prepare. You will normally be given copies of relevant documents, witness statements and other evidence. If there are reasons for conducting any hearing remotely (for example, by using remote working platforms or technologies), we will provide these reasons to you and notify you of the relevant arrangements and instructions for joining the hearing. If you have any questions regarding how to join the hearing remotely, you should let us know before the hearing date. We recognise that, in some cases, the use of remote working platforms or technologies may not be appropriate (for example, where an employee has a hearing condition or does not have access to relevant equipment or software). In these cases, the hearing will take place in person where possible.

**19.3.2** You may be accompanied at the hearing by a colleague, who will be allowed reasonable paid time off to act as your companion.

**19.3.3** You should let us know as early as possible if there are any relevant witnesses you would like to attend the hearing or any documents or other evidence you wish to be considered.

**19.3.4** We will inform you in writing of our decision, usually within [one week OR [TIME PERIOD]] of the hearing.

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## 20. Disciplinary Action and Dismissal

### 20.1 The usual penalties for misconduct or poor performance are:

- **First Stage:** written warning [or improvement note]. Where there are no other active written warnings [or improvement notes] on your disciplinary record, you will usually receive a first written warning [or improvement note]. It will usually remain active for six months.
- **Second Stage:** Final written warning. In case of further misconduct or failure to improve where there is an active first written warning [or improvement note] on your record, you will usually receive a final written warning. This may also be used without a first written warning [or improvement note] for serious cases of misconduct or poor performance. The warning will usually remain active for 12 months.
- **Third Stage:** Dismissal or other action. You may be dismissed for further misconduct or failure to improve where there is an active final written warning on your record, or for any act of gross misconduct even if you have not previously received a warning. Examples of gross misconduct are given below **(20.3)** but this list is not exclusive. We may consider other sanctions short of dismissal, including demotion or redeployment to another role (where permitted by your employment contract), and/or extension of a final written warning with a further review period.

### 20.2 Appeals

**20.2.1** You may appeal in writing within one week of being told of the decision.

**20.2.2** The appeal hearing will, where possible, be held by someone [senior to OR other than] the person who held the original hearing. You may bring a colleague with you to the appeal hearing. As detailed in paragraph **19.3.1**, there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a hearing to be conducted remotely.

**20.2.3** We will inform you in writing of our final decision as soon as possible, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.

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## 20.3 Gross Misconduct

**20.3.1** Gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without warning, with no notice or payment in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).

Gross misconduct is a serious breach of contract and includes misconduct which, in our opinion, is likely to prejudice our business or reputation or irreparably damage the working relationship and trust between us. This may include misconduct committed outside of work. The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- theft or fraud;
- physical violence or bullying;
- deliberate and serious damage to property;
- serious misuse of the organisation's property or name;
- deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- serious insubordination;
- unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment;
- bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;
- serious incapability at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs;
- causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- a serious breach of health and safety rules; and
- a serious breach of confidence.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive

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## 21. Grievance Procedure

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your line manager or Cultural Attaché. If this does not resolve the problem, you should initiate the formal procedure set out below.

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended at any time and we may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case.

### **Step 1: written grievance**

- o You should put your grievance in writing and submit it to your line manager within 60 day from an event occurring. If your grievance concerns your line manager, you may submit it to the Cultural Attaché or the Director of the Office.
  
- o. The written grievance should set out the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved so that we can investigate it.

### **Step 2: meeting**

- o We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within [10 working days] of receiving your written grievance. You should make every effort to attend.
- o You may bring a companion to the grievance meeting if you make a reasonable request in advance and tell us the name of your chosen colleague, who will be allowed reasonable paid time off from duties to act as your Companion.



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- o If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should let us know as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.
- o We may adjourn the meeting if we need to carry out further investigations, after which the meeting will usually be reconvened.
- o We will write to you, usually within one week of the last grievance meeting, to confirm our decision and notify you of any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also advise you of your right of appeal.

## **Step 3: appeals**

- o If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the Head of the Office, stating your full grounds of appeal, within [one week] of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.
- o We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a [more senior] manager who has not previously been involved in the case. You will have a right to bring a companion.
- o We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.