

GCC Employment Law Update

Jurisdiction: GCC

Date: April 2017

Impact date	Development	Impact
UAE		
March 2017	Work Visas for domestic workers	<p>The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) has taken over the responsibility for processing employment applications for the domestic workers category from the Ministry of Interior.</p> <p>Applications will be administered through the Tas'heel Service Centres The General Directorate of Residence and Foreigners Affairs will then issue the employment entry permits electronically, and endorse the employment residence permit.</p> <p>Additionally, all employment contracts must be registered on new templates provided by the MOHRE.</p>
January 2017	Emiratisation	<p>As part of the Emiratisation requirement, companies in the construction sector with 500 or more workers will have to ensure at least one UAE national is employed as an occupational health and safety officer.</p> <p>Companies registered outside of the free zones with over 1,000 employees will need to assign two UAE nationals to each data entry clerk position (Source: Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE)).</p>
October 2016	Wage Protection System	<p>The MoHRE has fully implemented Ministerial Decree No (739) requiring employees' salaries are paid on time. Penalties will apply to a failure to register on the WPS or late or non payment of salaries.</p> <p>(Source: Ministerial Decree No 739 of 2016)</p>

December 2016	Free Accommodation For Low Paid Workers	<p>The UAE's MoHRE has issued Ministerial Resolution No. 591 of 2016 requiring workers who earn less than 2,000 AED a month to be provided with free accommodation by their employers.</p> <p>The obligation applies only to companies hiring more than 50 workers.</p> <p>(Source: Ministerial Resolution No. 591 of 2016)</p>
13 July 2016	Student Placement and Training	<p>Students between the ages of 15-18 years may now be granted work permits and those between the ages of 12-18 may be granted training permits (with priority being given to UAE nationals).</p> <p>Written consent from the individual's guardian must be obtained.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to work between the hours of 8pm-6am, and cannot work for more than six hours a day. At least one rest break of an hour for every four consecutive hours worked must be given.</p> <p>(Source: Ministerial Decision No. 713/2016)</p>
Oman		
February 2017	Omanisation relating to Part- Time Employment and Minimum Wage	<p>The percentage of Omani part-time employees who will come within the Part Time Working Regulation has been increased from 10% to 20%. The key provisions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omanis must be employed for at least four hours a day and no more than 25 hours a week. • The minimum wage per hour is OMR 3. • Employees must be insured against work injuries from one of the approved local insurance companies. • Part-time employees must be registered with the Ministry of Manpower.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment contracts will have to include working hours, work days, hourly wages and the type of work. • Students between 15 and 17 will be able to work part-time between 6am and 6pm. <p>(Source: Oman Ministerial Decision No. 40/2017)</p>
January 2017	Suspension of Work Visas	<p>The Ministry of Manpower has extended the suspension on the issuing of new work visas for several categories of foreign employees for another six months from 1 December 2016.</p> <p>These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees in construction and cleaning services • Sales representatives • Procurement representatives. <p>The suspension does not apply to excellent, international and consultancy grade companies or to those companies awarded government projects.</p> <p>(Source: Oman Ministerial Decision No. 143/2016)</p>
Qatar		
December 2016	Electronic Employment Contracts	<p>Employers are now required to register employment contracts through the Ministry of Labour's electronic portal. Any additional terms and conditions which cannot be included in the available template must be prepared as an addendum which will then be reviewed by the Ministry's legal department.</p>

		<p>The entry into e-Contracts is mandatory for new employment relationships entered into after 13 December, 2016, being the effective date of the Sponsorship Law.</p> <p>(Source: Law No. 21 of 2015:)</p>
	Labour Dispute Resolution	<p>Qatar's Cabinet has approved the establishment of a Labour Dispute Resolution Committee (to be chaired by a judge from the Court of First Instance and two other members nominated by the Minister) to hear labour disputes.</p>
Kuwait		
October 2016	Salary Precondition for Family Visas	<p>The Ministry of Interior has announced that the minimum salary requirement for foreign nationals sponsoring dependent family members is 450 Dinars.</p> <p>Some employees that are exempt from the minimum salary requirement for sponsorship of dependents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doctors and pharmacists; - Teachers; - Engineers; and - Journalists.
Saudi Arabia		
March 2017	Saudisation Rules	<p>Tougher foreign worker rules will come into force on 3 September 2017.</p> <p>The aim is to force companies to hire more Saudis. Under the new policy, construction firms with between 500 and 2,999 workers will have to employ Saudis to fall into the top platinum category for Nitaqat. Those which only employ 10% will fall into a lower green category. The new policy will affect 60 industries in total.</p>

		<p>Separately, with immediate effect, all job posts advertised by employers on the Taqat portal for Saudi nationals must remain available for at least 45 days, unless a suitable candidate has been identified earlier</p> <p>(Source: Al Madina, 16 March 2017)</p>
10 July 2016	Health Insurance	<p>According to the Unified Health Insurance Policy published on 10 July 2016 on the CCHI website, and approved by a Cabinet Decision No. 103 on 14 April 2016, all Saudi nationals working in the private sector are to be covered by private health insurance.</p> <p>The Unified Policy is being implemented in phases based on the number of employees. Stage 1 was implemented on 10 July 2016 (employers with +100 employees), Stage 2 on 10 October 2016 (for employers with between 50-99 employees and Stage 3 employers with between 25-49 employees on 10 January 2017.</p> <p>Stage 4 which applies to employers with less than 25 employees, is to be implemented by 10 April 2017.</p> <p>As far as we are aware, no legislation has been published in the Official Gazette to date.</p>
Bahrain		
February 2017	Bahranisation	<p>From 1 May 2017, employers who do not comply with Bahranisation rates will be subject to additional fees when renewing work permits for foreign nationals.</p> <p>Additional governmental fees will depend on the validity of the work permit and will be imposed in addition to standard processing and insurance fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-month work permit – BD 75 • 1- year work permit – BD 150 • 2-year work permit – BD 300

		(Source: Labour Market Regulatory Authority announcement).
--	--	--