



HR Acronym and Terminology Glossary

Article Owner	HR Operations Team
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Review Cadence	Quarterly
Applies To	All employees and people managers
Related Documents	Employee Handbook Benefits Guide Performance Review SOP

Overview

This glossary provides plain-language definitions for common HR terms, acronyms, and system names used across the organization.

It is intended as a quick reference for all employees, with particular value for new hires and those moving into people manager roles. If a term is missing or a definition needs updating, contact HR Operations.





HR Acronym and Terminology Glossary

A – E

Term / Acronym	Definition
ATS	Applicant Tracking System. The software platform used to manage job postings, applications, and candidate pipelines (e.g., Greenhouse, Lever).
COLA	Cost of Living Adjustment. A pay increase tied to changes in the cost of living index, typically applied annually.
COBRA	Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. A US federal law that allows employees to continue health insurance coverage after leaving employment, at their own expense.
EAP	Employee Assistance Program. A confidential counseling and support service available to all employees and their immediate family members at no cost.
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity. The principle that all employees and applicants are treated without discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, or other protected characteristics.
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The US federal agency that enforces federal employment discrimination laws.



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F - L

Term / Acronym	Definition
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act. US federal law establishing minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor standards.
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave Act. A US federal law entitling eligible employees to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year for qualifying family and medical reasons.
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent. A unit of measurement representing one full-time employee's scheduled hours. Used in workforce planning and headcount reporting.
HRBP	HR Business Partner. An HR professional aligned to a specific business unit or department who provides strategic HR guidance to leaders.
HRIS	Human Resource Information System. The organization's HR data platform (e.g., Workday, BambooHR) used to manage employee records, payroll, and benefits.
I-9	Employment Eligibility Verification Form. A US government form required to verify the identity and employment authorization of every person hired in the United States.
LOA	Leave of Absence. An approved period of time away from work, which may be paid or unpaid depending on the type and company policy.



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M – R

Term / Acronym	Definition
MBO	Management by Objectives. A performance management approach in which managers and employees collaboratively set measurable goals for a defined period.
OKR	Objectives and Key Results. A goal-setting framework used to define ambitious objectives and the specific, measurable results that indicate progress toward them.
OOF / OOO	Out of Facility / Out of Office. Commonly used in calendar and email to indicate an employee is unavailable.
PEO	Professional Employer Organization. A third-party organization that co-employs staff, typically used by smaller companies to manage HR, payroll, and benefits administration.
PIP	Performance Improvement Plan. A formal, documented process used to address and correct specific performance deficiencies, with defined goals and timelines.
PTO	Paid Time Off. Accrued or allocated time employees may take for vacation, personal days, or other non-illness absences, as defined in the Time-Off Policy.



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S – Z

Term / Acronym	Definition
SOC	Separation of Concerns (HR context: used in access control). Also references SOC 2 compliance (System and Organization Controls), relevant to data-handling vendors.
T&A / T&E	Time and Attendance / Travel and Expense. Systems or policies governing how work hours are tracked (T&A) or how work-related expenses are submitted and reimbursed (T&E).
TM	Talent Management. The strategic process of attracting, developing, retaining, and deploying employees to meet organizational goals.
W-2	Wage and Tax Statement. A US tax form issued by employers to employees showing annual wages and taxes withheld.
W-4	Employee's Withholding Certificate. A US tax form completed by an employee to indicate their federal income tax withholding preferences.
YTD	Year to Date. Refers to the period from the beginning of the current calendar or fiscal year up to the present date, commonly used in payroll and benefits statements.

Related Articles and Resources

1. Employee Handbook (current version available on the HR SharePoint page)
2. Benefits Enrollment Guide
3. Performance Review Process and Timeline
4. Leave of Absence Request Process
5. Contact HR Operations: hr@company.com | [#hr-help](#) on Slack