

Saudi Arabia mandates workplace training for graduates in private-sector reform - HR Katha

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Executive Summary

This article reports on a new directive issued by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development requiring private-sector companies to implement structured workplace training programmes for Saudi graduates and job seekers. The regulation targets businesses with 50 or more employees, mandating that a minimum of two per cent of the workforce receive training annually through programmes lasting two to six months. For organisations employing 5,000 or more workers, a fixed quota of 100 trainees per year applies regardless of further headcount growth. All training agreements must be formalised through the Qiwa digital platform, documenting programme timelines, competencies, responsibilities, and professional tracks. The article frames the directive as part of Saudi Arabia's broader Vision 2030 agenda, which emphasises human capital development and increased national workforce participation in the private sector. No empirical data, independent evaluation, or comparative analysis is provided; the article functions primarily as a policy announcement summary intended to inform HR practitioners of new compliance obligations.

Key Insights

1. Private-sector companies in Saudi Arabia with 50 or more employees are now required to train a minimum of two per cent of their workforce annually under a new government directive.
2. Organisations with 5,000 or more workers face a fixed annual training quota of 100 trainees, a threshold that does not scale upward with further headcount growth.
3. All training contracts must be formalised through the Qiwa digital platform, introducing a standardised accountability and transparency mechanism for workforce development compliance.

Practical Takeaways

- Organisations operating in Saudi Arabia with 50 or more employees face a new compliance requirement to establish structured training programmes and register all training contracts via the Qiwa platform.
- HR and workforce planning functions in qualifying organisations will need to account for the two per cent annual training quota and the two-to-six month programme duration when designing workforce development pipelines.

Critical Analysis

The article is a straightforward policy announcement summary with limited analytical depth. Its primary strength is clarity — it accurately conveys the key parameters of the new regulation in accessible language. However, it presents no independent empirical evidence, no assessment of implementation feasibility, and no commentary from employers, industry bodies, or affected graduates. There is no critical examination of whether a two per cent quota is sufficient to meaningfully address youth unemployment or workforce readiness gaps. The alignment with Vision 2030 is asserted rather than substantiated. The article reflects a government-aligned framing, with no dissenting or cautionary perspectives included. As a result, it functions as an informational briefing rather than analytical journalism or research.

Organizational Practice

Private-sector companies in Saudi Arabia with 50 or more employees are required to enrol a minimum of two per cent of their workforce in structured training programmes annually, lasting two to six months. Companies with 5,000 or more employees must onboard a fixed minimum of 100 trainees per year. All participants must have formal training contracts issued through the Qiwa digital platform, specifying programme timelines, competencies, development stages, and the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

Strategic Implications

The mandate signals a regulatory shift in Saudi Arabia toward formalised, compliance-driven workforce development within the private sector, moving beyond voluntary CSR-style training initiatives. The use of a digital platform for contract registration introduces a traceable compliance infrastructure that could evolve into a performance benchmarking tool for workforce development. The fixed quota model for large employers — decoupled from headcount growth — suggests a policy preference for consistent pipeline volume over proportional scaling. Over time, such mandates may influence how multinational organisations structure their localisation and talent development strategies in the Gulf region.

Validation Status: passed
