

Nishith Desai Associates announces new leave policy for entire firm

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Nishith Desai Associates

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Nishith Desai Associates has scrapped its leave policy for all members of the firm, who will now be free to take *whatever amount of vacation or leave as they deem appropriate*.

The firm had implemented such a policy back in 2017 for lawyers who had been with it for at least 1,000 days. As per that policy, lawyers with the requisite experience at the firm were free to take their own calls on what, why, when, how much time they took off, without having to toe a compliance-seeking pre-set policy line. While doing so, the firm had said that the policy would be implemented for all its lawyers by 2020.

And now, the firm has come good on its promise. Effective January 1, 2021, the leave policy stands cancelled for all lawyers at the firm.

"From day one, a member of the firm is at liberty to manage his or her time off, without any approval formalities. It means its members are free to take whatever amount of vacation or leave as they deem appropriate."

Press release by Nishith Desai Associates

Commenting on the move in a press release, founder **Nishith Desai** said,

"We believe our firm members are adults, responsible and accountable for their actions. Over the last three years, our people have shown relentless responsibility, work excellence and client centricity, despite availing of the freedom to balance their lives, health and well-being. Their passion for their profession, work and clients has ensured a collaborative, supportive culture that supports individuals' decisions on time off."

The press release also highlights how lawyers can make their own decisions as regards leave.

"Firm members are advised to consider: one, how their absence will impact their colleagues and clients – and plan accordingly; and two, if they have a complex problem, they should consult some wiser person, and then take a call. In other words, even without a rule-book, the people are nudged to look up and collaborate with those who are connected to their work, and ensure the ends are achieved."

Elaborating on the rationale behind the new system, Senior Leader **Gowree Gokhale** said,

"Our people have always been diligent and our experiment in the past has worked well and hence we have decided to scrap the leave policy for all members. We trust our people. We believe, as responsible, trustworthy and competent professionals, each of them is considered able enough to chart their own course of action on their time away from work. They can organize their leave in a manner that best fits their personal and professional needs - and least unsettles their deliverables, clients and colleagues."

NDA recently announced a [reworked compensation structure](#) for its lawyers. The total annual compensation for entry level lawyers has now been increased from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 17.4 lakh.