

CAREER CREED HR SERVICES PVT. LTD.

STARTUP HR READINESS CHECKLIST

Build the HR foundation your startup needs to scale with confidence.

A PRACTICAL HR READINESS TOOL FOR INDIAN STARTUPS AND GROWING BUSINESSES

Use this checklist to identify gaps across people, process, documentation, payroll, compliance, technology and employee lifecycle management.

Career Creed HR Services Pvt. Ltd.

Build HR. Run HR. Protect HR. Digitize HR. Develop People.

Deliver Better Experiences.

www.careercreed.com

Executive Overview

Startup growth changes the HR operating model. What works when a founder manages a small team can become difficult to control as hiring accelerates, payroll becomes recurring, employee records multiply and compliance responsibilities become more structured.

This checklist is designed as a practical self-assessment for founders, CEOs, operations leaders and HR teams. It follows the employee lifecycle and the operating model Career Creed uses across its HR foundation, HR operations, payroll & compliance, HRMS, recruitment, performance and advisory solutions.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Mark each item as Not Started (NS), In Progress (IP) or Completed (C). Assign an owner, record the action required and use the priority coding to sequence implementation.

Priority Key

CRITICAL

Address early where exposure or operational dependency may be significant.

IMPORTANT

Build for structured and scalable HR operations.

RECOMMENDED

Improve maturity, employee experience, visibility or efficiency.

Status Definitions

- Not Started — no defined process, owner or implementation evidence.
- In Progress — process exists or implementation is underway but is not yet consistently completed.
- Completed — process is documented, assigned, implemented and supported by appropriate records/evidence.

01 HR FOUNDATION & ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Establish the basic architecture, ownership and operating rhythm for HR.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Define organisation structure and reporting relationships.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Document key roles and responsibilities for leadership, managers and HR.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Create job descriptions for active roles.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
4	Define designation and role levels where relevant.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
5	Maintain an employee master data register.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
6	Assign clear HR ownership / SPOC.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
7	Create an HR calendar for recurring activities.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Define HR escalation and query-routing mechanism.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
9	Document core employee lifecycle processes.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
10	Create a responsibility matrix for recurring HR activities.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		

02 RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING

Create a consistent hiring and joining process from manpower need to productive onboarding.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Define manpower / hiring approval workflow.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Use standardised job descriptions and approval records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Define sourcing and candidate evaluation process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
4	Maintain interview evaluation / selection records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Document offer approval and issuance process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
6	Maintain joining checklist and required documents.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
7	Run structured induction / onboarding.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Track probation dates and confirmation decisions.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
9	Communicate key policies and employee expectations at joining.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
10	Capture onboarding completion and pending actions.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		

03 EMPLOYEE DOCUMENTATION

Build a secure, consistent and retrievable employee record system.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Maintain employment / appointment documentation.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
2	Maintain employee identity and contact records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
3	Capture bank and emergency contact details.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
4	Maintain nominee information where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Store education / professional documents where relevant to the role.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
6	Maintain confidentiality / NDA documentation where required.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Record policy acknowledgements.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Maintain statutory records where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
9	Define physical/digital personnel-file ownership and access.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
10	Establish a document retention and retrieval process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

04 HR POLICIES & HANDBOOK

Move from informal founder practices to documented, consistently communicated HR processes.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Maintain an employee handbook or central policy repository.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Document code of conduct / workplace behaviour expectations.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
3	Define attendance and working-hours rules.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
4	Define leave and holiday process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
5	Document WFH / hybrid / remote-work guidelines where relevant.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
6	Document probation and confirmation process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Define travel and expense reimbursement rules where relevant.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
8	Define grievance and employee concern process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
9	Define disciplinary process and escalation principles.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
10	Review policies periodically for business and legal changes.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

05 PAYROLL & STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

Create repeatable controls for accurate payroll, statutory deductions and compliance tracking.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Define monthly payroll calendar and responsibility matrix.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
2	Validate attendance and leave inputs before payroll closure.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
3	Maintain salary structure and approved compensation records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
4	Issue salary slips / payroll statements as applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Track TDS and applicable payroll tax obligations.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
6	Assess PF applicability and maintain processes where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
7	Assess ESIC applicability and maintain processes where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
8	Assess PT / LWF obligations based on location and applicability.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
9	Review gratuity / bonus and other statutory benefit applicability.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
10	Maintain compliance calendar, filing evidence and payment records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
11	Define full & final settlement controls.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

06 LABOUR LAW & REGULATORY READINESS

Review the HR framework against applicable Indian labour laws, rules, notifications and establishment-specific requirements.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Map applicable central and state labour requirements to the establishment.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
2	Review wage structures against applicable wage requirements.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
3	Review social-security coverage and processes where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
4	Review employment documentation against applicable requirements.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Review working conditions, health and safety requirements where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
6	Review standing-order / industrial-relations requirements where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
7	Maintain a regulatory change-monitoring process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Document compliance ownership and escalation.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
9	Keep evidence of registrations, returns, payments and records where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
10	Obtain professional advice for fact-specific legal questions or implementation decisions.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

07 ATTENDANCE, LEAVE & HR OPERATIONS

Bring recurring employee operations into a controlled, visible workflow.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Use a defined attendance tracking method.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
2	Maintain approved leave records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
3	Publish annual holiday calendar where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
4	Define shift / overtime process where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Track absence and exception cases.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
6	Create monthly HR input checklist.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Define employee query / HR support process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Maintain HR MIS / recurring management reports.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
9	Define access controls for employee data.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		

08 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Create a structured approach to goals, feedback, review and performance decisions.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Define performance management philosophy and review cycle.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Set KRAs / KPIs or role goals where appropriate.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Document probation performance review.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
4	Conduct periodic performance discussions.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Maintain performance records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
6	Define performance improvement process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Document promotion / increment decision process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
8	Train managers on objective feedback and documentation.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		

09 COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Create transparent, controlled compensation practices that can scale with the organisation.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Maintain approved CTC / salary structures.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
2	Document fixed and variable components where relevant.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Define incentive / commission rules where relevant.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
4	Maintain approved increment / revision records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Review internal consistency of compensation decisions.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
6	Document benefits and eligibility rules.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Align compensation records with payroll and employee documentation.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		

10 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & EXPERIENCE

Build predictable communication, feedback and employee support mechanisms.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Define regular employee communication channels.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
2	Provide a mechanism for employee feedback.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Run recognition / appreciation initiatives where appropriate.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
4	Track employee concerns and resolutions.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
5	Define manager-employee communication expectations.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
6	Conduct exit feedback / interviews where appropriate.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
7	Review recurring employee-experience themes.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		

11 POSH & WORKPLACE ETHICS

Maintain workplace conduct and POSH readiness based on applicable legal requirements.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Maintain a workplace conduct / anti-harassment framework.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
2	Assess POSH applicability and required governance.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
3	Constitute Internal Committee where legally applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
4	Maintain POSH policy and employee awareness process where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
5	Provide required awareness / training where applicable.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
6	Maintain a confidential complaint-handling mechanism.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
7	Protect confidentiality and records relating to complaints.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		

12 HR TECHNOLOGY & DATA

Use connected systems to improve accuracy, visibility and control as the workforce grows.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Maintain a central employee database / HRMS.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Digitise attendance and leave workflows where appropriate.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Integrate or reconcile payroll data with HR records.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
4	Use ATS / recruitment tracking for active hiring.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
5	Maintain digital employee-document repository with access controls.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
6	Define data backup and recovery approach.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Review user access periodically.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Use HR analytics / dashboards for management visibility.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		

13 SEPARATION & EXIT MANAGEMENT

Close the employee lifecycle with clear approvals, documentation and access controls.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Document resignation and notice-period process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Define exit approval and knowledge-transfer process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
3	Recover company assets and access credentials.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
4	Complete full & final settlement process.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
5	Issue applicable relieving / experience / separation documents.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
6	Conduct exit interview where appropriate.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
7	Reconcile payroll, leave and statutory records at exit.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
8	Revoke system access promptly.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
9	Archive employee records according to applicable retention practices.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

14 HR GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT REPORTING

Give leadership visibility over people, cost, hiring, compliance and operational health.

No.	Checklist item	Status	Priority	Owner	Remarks / action
1	Maintain headcount report.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
2	Track open positions and hiring pipeline.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
3	Track time-to-hire / hiring cycle where relevant.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
4	Track attrition / turnover.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
5	Monitor absenteeism and leave patterns.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Recommended		
6	Review payroll and employee-cost trends.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
7	Maintain compliance status dashboard.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Critical		
8	Track HR actions and overdue items.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		
9	Conduct periodic HR review with leadership.	☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C	Important		

HR Readiness Score

Use the following simple scoring method after completing the checklist:

Completed	2 points
In Progress	1 point
Not Started	0 points

Indicative maturity stages

Indicative stage	What it suggests	Suggested next focus
HR Foundation Stage	Core HR controls are still being established.	Prioritise documentation, ownership, payroll and compliance basics.
HR Building Stage	Several processes exist but may depend on people or spreadsheets.	Standardise workflows, policies, records and recurring controls.
HR Structured / Scaling Stage	HR has a broader operating framework and defined controls.	Strengthen automation, analytics, manager capability and continuous review.

IMPORTANT

This score is an indicative HR maturity assessment only. It is not a legal, statutory or compliance certification.

90-Day HR Action Plan

Convert checklist findings into an implementation plan. Focus first on high-priority gaps that affect payroll accuracy, employee records, statutory obligations, workplace conduct and operational continuity.

Priority	HR Gap	Recommended action	Owner	Target date	Status
					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
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					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
					☐ NS ☐ IP ☐ C
IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE					
IDENTIFY → PRIORITISE → ASSIGN → IMPLEMENT → REVIEW					

Need Help Building Your HR Foundation?

Career Creed helps startups and growing businesses build, manage and scale HR through an integrated model covering people, processes, technology and compliance.

BUILD HR

Policies • Documentation • Processes • HRMS Setup

RUN HR

HR Operations • HR Control Desk™ • Onboarding • HR MIS

PROTECT HR

Payroll • Compliance • Labour Code Readiness

DIGITIZE HR

HRMS • Attendance & Leave • Payroll • Analytics

DEVELOP PEOPLE

PMS • POSH • Engagement • Training • Advisory

HIRE & GROW

Recruitment • TA • RPO • Leadership Support

FREE HR HEALTH CHECK™

If your startup is growing faster than its HR systems, use this checklist as the starting point for a structured HR review. Career Creed can help identify priorities across HR operations, payroll, compliance, HRMS, policies and employee lifecycle management.

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Important Note & Disclaimer

This checklist is intended for general HR planning and readiness purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice, statutory certification, or a substitute for professional legal or compliance advice.

Applicability of laws, rules, registrations, thresholds and employer obligations may vary based on the organisation's location, establishment type, workforce, industry, employment arrangements and other circumstances. Organisations should obtain appropriate professional advice before relying on specific legal or compliance conclusions.

References to labour codes and regulatory areas are intended to prompt review of applicability and implementation requirements. Organisations should verify the latest applicable Central and State rules, notifications and official guidance before taking action.

Career Creed HR Services Pvt. Ltd. provides HR outsourcing, HR operations, payroll, compliance, HRMS, recruitment and advisory services. Engagement scope and legal responsibility depend on the agreed service arrangement.

RESOURCE OWNER

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