

IAS 19 *Employee Benefits*

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This extract has been prepared by IASC Foundation staff and has not been approved by the IASB. For the requirements reference must be made to International Financial Reporting Standards.

Employee benefits are all forms of consideration given by an entity in exchange for service rendered by employees.

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the accounting and disclosure for employee benefits. The Standard requires an entity to recognise:

- (a) a liability when an employee has provided service in exchange for employee benefits to be paid in the future; and
- (b) an expense when the entity consumes the economic benefit arising from service provided by an employee in exchange for employee benefits.

This Standard shall be applied by an employer in accounting for all employee benefits, except those to which IFRS 2 *Share-based Payment* applies.

Short-term employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits are employee benefits (other than termination benefits) that are due to be settled within twelve months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service.

When an employee has rendered service to an entity during an accounting period, the entity shall recognise the undiscounted amount of short-term employee benefits expected to be paid in exchange for that service:

- (a) as a liability (accrued expense), after deducting any amount already paid. If the amount already paid exceeds the undiscounted amount of the benefits, an entity shall recognise that excess as an asset (prepaid expense) to the extent that the prepayment will lead to, for example, a reduction in future payments or a cash refund; and
- (b) as an expense, unless another Standard requires or permits the inclusion of the benefits in the cost of an asset (see, for example, IAS 2 *Inventories* and IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment*).

Post-employment benefits

Post-employment benefits are employee benefits (other than termination benefits) which are payable after the completion of employment. *Post-employment benefit plans* are formal or informal arrangements under which an entity provides post-employment benefits for one or more employees. Post-employment benefit plans are



classified as either defined contribution plans or defined benefit plans, depending on the economic substance of the plan as derived from its principal terms and conditions.

Post-employment benefits: defined contribution plans

Defined contribution plans are post-employment benefit plans under which an entity pays fixed contributions into a separate entity (a fund) and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods. Under defined contribution plans:

- (a) the entity's legal or constructive obligation is limited to the amount that it agrees to contribute to the fund. Thus, the amount of the post-employment benefits received by the employee is determined by the amount of contributions paid by an entity (and perhaps also the employee) to a post-employment benefit plan or to an insurance company, together with investment returns arising from the contributions; and
- (b) in consequence, actuarial risk (that benefits will be less than expected) and investment risk (that assets invested will be insufficient to meet expected benefits) fall on the employee.

When an employee has rendered service to an entity during a period, the entity shall recognise the contribution payable to a defined contribution plan in exchange for that service:

- (a) as a liability (accrued expense), after deducting any contribution already paid. If the contribution already paid exceeds the contribution due for service before the end of the reporting period, an entity shall recognise that excess as an asset (prepaid expense) to the extent that the prepayment will lead to, for example, a reduction in future payments or a cash refund; and
- (b) as an expense, unless another Standard requires or permits the inclusion of the contribution in the cost of an asset (see, for example, IAS 2 *Inventories* and IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment*).

Post-employment benefits: defined benefit plans

Defined benefit plans are post-employment benefit plans other than defined contribution plans. Under defined benefit plans:

- (a) the entity's obligation is to provide the agreed benefits to current and former employees; and
- (b) actuarial risk (that benefits will cost more than expected) and investment risk fall, in substance, on the entity. If actuarial or investment experience are worse than expected, the entity's obligation may be increased.

Accounting by an entity for defined benefit plans involves the following steps:

- (a) using actuarial techniques to make a reliable estimate of the amount of benefit that employees have earned in return for their service in the current and prior periods. This requires an entity to determine how much benefit is attributable to the current and prior periods (see paragraphs 67–71) and to make estimates (actuarial assumptions) about demographic variables (such as employee turnover and mortality) and financial variables (such as future increases in salaries and medical costs) that will influence the cost of the benefit (see paragraphs 72–91);
- (b) discounting that benefit using the Projected Unit Credit Method in order to determine the present value of the defined benefit obligation and the current service cost (see paragraphs 64–66);
- (c) determining the fair value of any plan assets (see paragraphs 102–104);
- (d) determining the total amount of actuarial gains and losses and the amount of those actuarial gains and losses to be recognised (see paragraphs 92–95);
- (e) where a plan has been introduced or changed, determining the resulting past service cost (see paragraphs 96–101); and
- (f) where a plan has been curtailed or settled, determining the resulting gain or loss (see paragraphs 109–115).

Where an entity has more than one defined benefit plan, the entity applies these procedures for each material plan separately.

Other long-term employee benefits

Other long-term employee benefits are employee benefits (other than post-employment benefits and termination benefits) that are not due to be settled within twelve months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service.

The Standard requires a simpler method of accounting for other long-term employee benefits than for post-employment benefits: actuarial gains and losses and past service cost are recognised immediately.

Termination benefits

Termination benefits are employee benefits payable as a result of either:

- (a) an entity's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date; or
- (b) an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits.

An entity shall recognise termination benefits as a liability and an expense when, and only when, the entity is demonstrably committed to either:

- (a) terminate the employment of an employee or group of employees before the normal retirement date; or
- (b) provide termination benefits as a result of an offer made in order to encourage voluntary redundancy.

Where termination benefits fall due more than 12 months after the reporting period, they shall be discounted.

In the case of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy, the measurement of termination benefits should be based on the number of employees expected to accept the offer.