

Workplace Relationships Policy

Objective

GiveWell strives to provide a work environment that is collegial, respectful, and productive. This policy establishes rules for the conduct of personal relationships between employees in an attempt to prevent conflicts and maintain a professional work environment.

Glossary

- Direct authority: when an employee has direct management and oversight authority over another employee.
- Indirect authority: when an employee whose role at GiveWell has influence over the supervision and evaluation of another employee without directly managing them. For example, any senior management role in a department includes the ability to input into decisions around the role, project assignments, promotions, and evaluations of subordinates within that department even when they are not under their direct chain of report.
- Personal relationship: a relationship between individuals who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic, intimate, or sexual nature.

Scope

This policy pertains to all GiveWell employees.

Terms

Employees who engage in personal relationships should be aware of their professional responsibilities and will be responsible for assuring that the relationship does not raise concerns about favoritism, bias, ethics, and conflict of interest. GiveWell reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises concerning individuals who engage in a personal relationship that may affect the terms and conditions of employment.

Consensual personal relationships between adult employees are not in general prohibited by this policy. However, personal relationships between employees, particularly those in which one has direct or indirect authority over the other are always potentially problematic.

Because of the potential for conflict of interest, exploitation, favoritism, and bias, such relationships may undermine the real or perceived integrity of the supervision and evaluation provided or provide grounds for complaint by third parties when a relationship gives undue access or advantage, restricts opportunities, or simply creates a perception of these problems.

Where such a relationship develops, GiveWell employees have two primary responsibilities - notification and recusal (when relevant).

- Notification: For reason of preventing real or perceived problems identified above, GiveWell prefers that all personal relationships are disclosed. GiveWell requires that personal relationships are disclosed when one person has direct or indirect authority over the other person. Each employee involved in the relationship individually should notify a) the Chief Executive Officer and b) the senior HR official (currently the Head of HR and Business Operations). GiveWell is committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved within reason and practicality.
- Recusal: When one person has any supervisory or evaluative function over the other person in the relationship, the person in the position of greater authority or power must recuse oneself from those responsibilities in regards to the other person in the relationship. Where such recusal is required, the recusing party must also notify their supervisor of the existence of the relationship, so that person can ensure adequate evaluative arrangements are put in place, which may involve modifying reporting structures. Where it is programmatically infeasible to provide alternate supervision or evaluation, the next level supervisor, director, or executive must approve all decisions and actions related to the more junior employee's scope, development opportunities, evaluation, and compensation.

The obligations to recuse and notify exist for past as well as for current relationships.

Where such a relationship develops, GiveWell employees are also responsible for:

- Maintaining professional behavior conducive to supporting and maintaining GiveWell's stated objectives of fostering a respectful, inclusive, and productive workplace environment, and;
- Maintaining any otherwise existing bounds of confidentiality in regards to company, donor, charity, and vendor information that may apply to either individual in their respective role(s).

Remedy

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy can result in discipline deemed appropriate, up to and including termination. If there is any doubt whether a relationship falls within this policy, individuals are encouraged to disclose the facts and seek guidance rather than fail to disclose.

Effective Date

December 22, 2019

Additional Resources

You can read more about GiveWell's approach to personal relationships in the workplace in the associated guidance document "[Personal Relationships Guidance](#)"

Point Of Contact

Head of HR and Business Operations Whitney Shinkle

whitney@givewell.org

