
Employee relationships in the workplace policy

Customize this workplace romance policy based on your company's attitude toward employee dating. Add or delete parts to communicate applicable rules regarding romantic relationships in the workplace and preserve harmony and fairness among all employees.

Policy brief & purpose

Our workplace dating policy provides guidelines our employees should follow when they're romantically or sexually involved with a colleague. We also set some standards for acceptable behavior when flirting with colleagues.

We don't want to place undue restrictions on employees dating each other, as everyone should be free to choose their partners. But, we want to make sure that relationships won't cause awkwardness or problems in our workplace.

Scope

This policy applies to all our employees regardless of gender, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

In the context of this policy, "employee dating" includes consensual romantic relationships and sexual relations. We explicitly prohibit non-consensual relationships.

Policy elements

Before you date a colleague

Before you decide to date a colleague, please consider any problems or conflicts of interest that may arise. For example, if you're working with a colleague on an important project, a relationship between the two of you (or a possible breakup) could affect your work. Make sure you've thought about all parameters before making a decision.

Acceptable behavior

While we don't object to employee relationships, our workplace is still a professional setting. We expect our employees to treat each other with respect and avoid hindering other people's work. If you want to express your romantic interest in a colleague, don't do anything that may embarrass or expose them and always respect their time and choices. [*You're allowed to ask a colleague on*

a date only once. If they say 'no' or give an ambiguous answer, don't ask again.]

If a colleague is persistent in flirting with you and becomes annoying or disturbs your work, ask them to stop and inform your manager [*if they continue*]. Please report them to HR if they make unwanted sexual advances. Sexual harassment is prohibited, including seemingly harmless actions. For example, an employee who keeps flirting when their colleague doesn't respond favorably is breaking our sexual harassment policy. In this case, they will face disciplinary action. For more details on what constitutes sexual harassment and how to report it, please refer to [our anti-harassment policy](#).

When you begin dating a colleague

HR won't get involved in your private lives and will always be discreet. You don't need to tell us if you go on a few dates with a colleague or become involved for [*less than two months*], as long as there's no disruption in the workplace or your own work. But if your relationship lasts longer than [*two months*], please inform HR. We want to be aware of these relationships so we can better handle gossip or conflicts of interest.

Also, make sure to:

- Keep your personal issues and discussions out of the workplace.
- Be productive and focused as always. If you find that your work is affected by dating a colleague, seek counseling from your manager, HR or specialized employee (e.g. company psychologist).

Acceptable behavior

We expect you to always behave appropriately and follow our [Code of Conduct](#). This means you and your partner shouldn't behave in a way that:

- Hinders our operations.
- Embarrasses your colleagues
- Distracts your colleagues from their duties

Examples of acceptable behavior are:

- Passing by your partner's office to talk to them for a short time.
- Discussing your joint vacation plans during breaks
- Coming to and leaving from work together

Examples of unacceptable behavior are:

- Arguing in the workplace.
- Kissing or touching inappropriately in front of colleagues or clients
- Exchanging an excessive number of instant messages or calls during working hours
- Boasting about or discussing your relationship in your colleagues' presence

Employees who exhibit unacceptable behavior will face [progressive discipline](#).

After you stop dating a colleague

If your relationship ends, maintain professionalism and ensure you won't disrupt our workplace. You mustn't badmouth your former partner, sabotage their work or reveal any intimate details. All these break our code of conduct about respect in the workplace and you will face disciplinary action. If your former partner behaves this way, report them to HR and we will investigate as soon as possible.

If you're facing emotional or psychological issues, [*ask HR about our employee assistance program*]. [*You could also ask whether your insurance provider covers any therapy sessions with an external mental health professional.*]

Dating managers

To avoid accusations of favoritism and abuse of authority, we strictly prohibit supervisors from dating their team members or those who report to their team members (directly or indirectly). If they do, they'll face disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- Managers who are from the level of [*senior director*] and above are also forbidden from dating anyone who is below the same level, even if they're in another department.
- Managers who are below the level of [*senior director*] may have a relationship with colleagues from other teams or departments, as long as that person is at the same level or within two levels below them. For example, a [*department head*] can date a [*senior manager*] from another department but they can't date an intern who's more than two levels below them in rank.

If you broke our rules by dating someone who's a direct report or below the acceptable level of seniority, it's in your best interest to disclose your relationship as you may face more severe disciplinary action when you're discovered.

Employees will not face demotion, victimization or loss of benefits. Managers may receive a reprimand depending on the circumstances. We may terminate those who repeatedly disregard this restriction.

When one of the former partners becomes a manager

If an employee gets promoted or transferred from another department, they may find themselves managing a colleague they used to date. In this case, either of the two should let us know.

When managing a former partner, you must be extra careful with how you behave towards them. You're not allowed to favor or retaliate against them. You should do everything possible to prove that you're treating every team member in a fair and professional way. Document every information or incident necessary for performance reviews and ask for your manager or HR's advice if you need to discipline or reward your former partner.

Couples who are married or in a domestic partnership

The following guidelines address employees who are already married, have a domestic partner or other long-term relationship.

If you're the hiring manager for your team, you're not allowed to consider your spouse or partner for hiring. Doing so might raise questions of favoritism in the hiring process. You are allowed to refer your partner to other teams or departments where you don't have any managerial authority.

If we find out that you hired your partner for your team, you will receive a reprimand and you'll have two choices:

- One of you should transfer to another team or department. If you choose this option, HR will try to ensure that the transfer won't negatively affect your salary or benefits.
- One of you should quit. This option will be the only solution if a transfer isn't possible (like in cases where there's no position relevant to your own in another department). HR won't have a say in who will eventually quit, make this decision between yourselves.

Our company's commitment about romantic relationships in the workplace

Just like we expect employees to comply with our policy, we have responsibilities that we're committed to fulfil. We will:

- Enforce this policy equally to all employees including HR and senior management
- Treat everyone equally when taking disciplinary action without discriminating against protected characteristics
- Prohibit victimization, [violence](#) and [retaliation](#) of any kind
- Examine each case separately and consider all aspects and perspectives before making decisions

All of us must follow our [equal employment opportunity policy](#) at all times. For example, HR must not penalize a homosexual couple differently than a heterosexual couple when they both have violated our employee relationships policy in the same manner.

At any point, we will keep our employees' freedom and individual rights in mind and follow the law.

Disclaimer: This policy template is meant to provide general guidelines and should be used as a reference. It may not take into account all relevant local, state or federal laws and is not a legal document. Neither the author nor Workable will assume any legal liability that may arise from the use of this policy.