



University of
St Andrews

Guidance for Investigation Managers

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1. The role of an Investigation Manager

- 1.1 The role of an investigation manager is to be fair and objective so that they can establish the facts and reach a conclusion on what did or did not happen. An investigation manager should do this by looking for evidence that supports the allegation and evidence that contradicts it. In potential disciplinary matters, it is not an investigator's role to prove the guilt of any party but to investigate if there is a case to answer.
- 1.2 The below steps will ensure that Investigation Managers are equipped with knowledge and guidance to be able to lead and co-ordinate an investigation from preparation through to conclusion. If the Investigation Manager needs clarity or further guidance at any stage of the process, they should speak with the HR representative assigned to the case.

2. Investigation preparation

- Complete the [Investigation Action plan](#).
- Read the Investigation Procedure to ensure adherence to the process.
- Read the policies/procedures that may be relevant to the matter.

3. Reluctant witnesses

- Some individuals may be reluctant to provide evidence for an investigation. An Investigation Manager should explore why an employee is reluctant to give evidence, provide reassurance and seek to resolve any concerns they have.

4. Handling an investigation meeting

- Notify individuals involved in the investigation and brief them on the purpose of the meeting beforehand (where appropriate) ensuring appropriate notice is provided (normally 2 working days).
- Keep line managers of individuals involved in the process informed of logistics in advance of meetings taking place.
- Book an appropriate venue (if not on Microsoft Teams) and allocate a reasonable time for each meeting.
- Ensure [notes](#) are taken at the meeting and shared with the individual.
- Be calm and conduct the investigation with thought and care.
- Use verbal (“Thanks for that”, “Help me understand”, “I’d really like to know”) and non-verbal language (open, attentive body language, relaxed body posture e.g. avoid folding arms, steady nods, held but not constant eye contact).
- Use clear, concise, relevant and understandable questions.
- Pay equal attention to different versions of events and avoid making assumptions.
- In circumstances where the individual is argumentative/aggressive, resist getting drawn into the argument and reiterate the purpose of your role.
- Slow the pace down when a lot of information is being given.
- Don't be afraid to pause or have a moment of silence to reflect on what has been said.
- Ask the individual to repeat their response to you if you do not understand what has been said.
- Move the individual forward if they start to repeat information already covered or not relevant.

5. Interviewing techniques

- Listen and concentrate to what the individual is saying and respond appropriately.

- Ask questions about sensitive and personal matters with delicacy and empathy.
- Keep questions short and clear.
- Start with open questions and give reasonable opportunity for the individual to respond.
- Use closed questions to establish meaning and to seek a specific response i.e. yes or no.
- Use focused, probing questions, not prying questions.
- Avoid blaming and leading questions.
- Probe responses if the individual has not clearly or accurately answered the question asked.
- Acknowledge the individual's viewpoint and have an open mind to anything that is said.

5.1 **Below are some examples of useful interview question techniques for Investigation Managers to use to support them with their investigation.**

Examples of different interview techniques	
Open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk me through what you witnessed/heard • Tell me your version of events about the incident on [DATE] • In your view, XX is not a good manager. Can you elaborate? • How did it make you feel? • Who else may have relevant information? • What happened? Where/when did it happen? Who did it? • Are you aware of any other information that might be relevant?
Focused/probing questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you tell me more about XX? • How would you describe your relationship with XX? • Describe XX behaviour towards XX? • What did the complainant tell you? • When you say XX was aggressive, what do you mean by this? • You said that this has impacted on your work. In what way? • What exactly did you mean by XX? • When did the complainant tell you this? • Tell me more about this....
Closed questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you hear what was said? Did you see what happened? Has it happened before? • When did this occur? What time did you leave? • Did you speak to your manager about that? • Who was present? How many people were involved in the incident? • Is there anything else you would like to tell me? • Do you know of any reasons that might have prompted this incident? • "Do you know of others who might have information that is relevant?"

5.2 **Below are some examples of interview questions that Investigation Managers must avoid**

Examples of questions to avoid	
Interrogative/blame questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you do that? • Why did you make that error? • What was the reason for the aggression towards XX at the party night? • Why did you react like that when XX is such a nice person?
Leading questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you agree that the reason why XX went off sick was because XX was not capable of doing the job? • Do you think you are overreacting? • Did you touch XX leg or just happen to bump into them? • Did you call them a XX out of anger or were you just joking around?
Discriminatory questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see you have a mobility impairment. Do you think this is the reason why you are underperforming in your role? • I am aware that you have 5 children and I have heard you are struggling for cash. I have been made aware that £XX has gone missing out of the petty cash and people are saying it can only be you. Can you give the money back?
Multiple questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you see XX? Where were they? What was XX wearing?

6. **Version control**

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1.0	New guidance to support the Investigation Procedure.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	15/03/2022
1.1	Amending the expiry date only to coincide with policy review consultation dates.	Published.	Lisa Stewart HR	04/07/2024