



University of  
St Andrews

## Investigation: Meeting Format

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<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose / changes</b>	<b>Document status</b>	<b>Author of changes, role and school / unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.1	Amending the expiry date only to coincide with policy review consultation dates.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	04/07/2024

## 1. Introductions and explanations

- Introduce yourself and your colleague (this will usually be a member of HR).
- If the employee has brought an accompanying person along to the meeting, confirm their role. If the employee has not brought an accompanying person, ask if they are comfortable to proceed without a companion/representative. (*Applicable only for the subject of the investigation*)
- Confirm that no recordings should be made of the meeting and ask all parties to confirm that they are not recording proceedings and that they are aware to do so without permission is a disciplinary offence.
- State the overall purpose of your role as Investigation Manager and of HR. Confirm that HR may ask questions for point of clarity.
- Explain that the objective is to provide a fair opportunity for everyone involved to present the facts and to describe the situation under investigation as they see it.
- Discuss the parameters of confidentiality and ask if the individual understands and will comply with this requirement.
- State that the investigation is in accordance with the relevant policy, if applicable.
- Provide a high-level explanation of the allegations/complaint and explain what specific facts are required from the individual.
- Explain the structure of the meeting and state that notes will be taken and emailed to the individual after the meeting for review and approval. State that these notes will be an accurate but not a verbatim record of what was said.
- Confirm that at any point the meeting can be adjourned if required.
- Confirm that at any point throughout the investigation the individual can be re-interviewed or e-mailed further questions to clarify information.
- Explain that notes may be shared with the complainant/accused if there are subsequent formal proceedings i.e. Disciplinary Hearing. Clarify understanding on this point prior to progressing.
- State that the individual must answer the specific questions asked and provide factual recollections of events only and not opinions on the matter.
- Ask if the employee is happy to proceed with the meeting.

## 2. Collating the facts

- When an accusation has been made against an individual, advise the individual at the start what the accusation is and then give the employee the opportunity to respond.
- When an individual has been requested to provide facts on a matter under investigation, provide the individual with a brief overview of the allegation/complaint and be clear on what specific facts you want to seek clarity on.
- Use the who, what, where, when and how questions to gather a systematic picture of what has occurred. The [Investigation Manager guidance](#) lists interview questions to assist you.
- Probe thoroughly and don't close the meeting until you have a full a picture as you can obtain.
- Ask the individual if there is any other relevant information the individual can provide and if there are any witnesses that can corroborate the individual's version of events.

## 3. Conclusions

- Summarise the responses provided and seek confirmation from the individual that this summary is an accurate description of the facts stated.

- Explain what happens next: a reminder that they must not discuss the meeting with anyone else; they will be given a copy of the notes and will be required to review and approve these.
- Thank individual for their co-operation.

#### 4. Concluding the investigation

4.1 Investigation reports/outcomes must state the facts clearly to avoid misinterpretation. The report must be factual, non-judgemental and contain no evidence of bias.

4.2 Investigation managers must use the [Investigation Report template](#) to structure their outcome.

#### 4.3 Ensure when concluding the investigation that the report/outcome:

- Reflects on all the information that has been collated.
- Highlights possible patterns and how they may fit together.
- Highlights any inconsistencies and/or differences in versions of events.
- Identifies any delays to the conclusion and explain the reasons for these.
- Confirms the resolution of the investigation including any recommendations. The recommendations must be reasonable and reflect the findings of the investigation.

#### 5. Records management

5.1 Data Protection law requires that consideration is given to making use of the minimum personal data necessary to complete a specific task/activity, and to keep personal data only while there is a business need to do so. When an investigation has been completed, and the investigation report is finalised and approved, the following documentation should then be destroyed:

- Draft versions of the report.
- Emails where advice and assistance were sought on the production of the report.
- Administrative communications e.g. emails asking witnesses to attend meetings.

#### 6. Version control

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New guidance to support the Investigation Procedure	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	16/03/2022
1.1	Amending the expiry date only to coincide with policy review consultation dates.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	04/07/2024