

Club and Society Member Relations Procedures Guidance for Completing an Investigation

Structure of the Investigation

The key to completing an effective investigation is to plan and prepare. Investigating Officers (IOs) should use this guidance to help them through the process. The main stages of an investigation are set out below.

- Planning the investigation
- Planning and preparing for the investigation meetings
- Conducting the investigation meetings with the witnesses identified during the planning stage
- Evaluating the quality of the evidence obtained during the investigation for the report
- Preparing an investigation report

Planning the Investigation

This will involve:

- Specifying the Terms of Reference of the Investigation Report so the IO is clear as to the issues/matters they have to investigate.
- Establishing what documentary evidence the IO already has. This may include letters, statements, emails, photos, social media posts etc.
- Determining what additional documentary evidence needs to be gathered and who this should be obtained from.
- Determining who the IO will need to meet with to clarify/obtain oral and documentary evidence. The IO should ensure they meet with all relevant witnesses.
- Determining whether there are any conflicts of interest.
- Timetabling the investigation meetings.
- Obtaining the contact details of those to be met with.
- Inviting the member subject to a conduct investigation to an investigation meeting. A template invitation is attached.
- Inviting the witnesses to an investigation meeting. A template invitation is attached.
- It is important to clarify the purpose, date, time, and location of the meeting. The IO should provide the interviewees with the 'Principles for Participants' document.

Planning and Preparing for the Investigation Meetings

The IO should plot the events on a timeline and set out what information is known about the interviewee.

The IO should determine what facts/information needs to be established about the events/documentary evidence and what evidence the witness can provide in relation to both.

The IO should draw up a structure for the meeting setting out what questions need to be asked, what topics/evidence need to be covered, and in what order.

Conducting the Investigation Meeting

- The IO should welcome the interviewee and explain that the purpose of the meeting is to gather information in relation to the investigation into the matters raised. The IO should clarify that they are not the decision maker, and that their role is fact finding.
- The IO should set out the structure of the meeting.
- The IO should advise the interviewee of their right to be accompanied should they wish.
- The IO should confirm the names and roles of all present.
- The IO should remind everyone present of the requirement for confidentiality.
- The IO should remind everyone present to be careful not to make defamatory or derogatory comments, and of the duty of candour.
- The IO should confirm whether any reasonable adjustments are required.
- The IO should run through each of the questions/topics that the witness can clarify/provide information on. Information should not be shared with witnesses about issues which they do not need to know.
- The IO should give the member/witness an opportunity to respond.
- The IO should determine if there were any mitigating/special circumstances.
- The IO should summarise the information provided and remind the witness about the requirement for confidentiality. The IO should confirm that all appropriate topics and questions have been covered.
- The IO should ask the interviewee if there is any other relevant information they would like to provide.
- The IO will thank the individual for their attendance.
- The IO will ensure that all of the evidence provided is recorded, and will ask the interviewee to sign the record of the discussion.

Interview Dos and Don'ts

- Begin each interview with an open mind.
- Avoid folding your arms or slouching.
- Set out the purpose of the meeting and follow the structure set out above.
- Ask the interviewee for their version of events in their own words.
- Do not interrupt or put words into their mouth.
- Use open ended, not leading, questions and summarise the information provided to check your understanding.
- Open ended questions include:
 - Tell Me Precisely
 - Explain to Me In detail
 - Describe Exactly
 - Show me
- If answers are vague, probe for clarity.
- Keep the interviewee on track, ensuring they do not veer off in a tangent.
- Try to work through the issues in chronological order.
- Challenge any inconsistencies.
- Use a non-accusatorial tone throughout the meeting. Remember this is an information gathering session.
- Ensure all dates, times, and other details are properly recorded.
- Seek advice on how to deal with counter allegations or supplementary issues.

Evaluating the Quality of the Evidence for the Report

The IO should evaluate the documentary evidence and the evidence ascertained during the interview meetings.

The IO should consider whether the evidence fits with other accounts. If there are any inconsistencies or discrepancies the IO should consider whether these need to be investigated further, e.g. does anyone else need to be interviewed? Can the information be verified or disproved by other sources?

Preparing an Investigation Report

The IO should ensure the report is clear and follows a logical structure as set out in the attached template. The report should not assume the reader's understanding and anything that may not be clear should be clearly explained e.g. acronyms, abbreviations.

Advice and Guidance

If required, please seek advice on the operation of these procedures from the Students' Union Clubs and Societies Coordinator.

Club and Society Member Relations Procedures
Invitation to Investigation – Witnesses

Dear [witness name],

I am writing to you in my capacity as Investigating Officer of the [name of Club/Society]. This is an invitation to attend an investigation interview on [date] at [time] to be held in [location].

The purpose of the interview is purely to gather information as part of an investigation into [e.g. an alleged incident between...or...information has come to light regarding...]

My role as investigator is purely to gather information and support the decision making process. It is not my role to make decisions on any potential disciplinary sanctions.

On the day of the interview, I will be accompanied by [name] who will act as note taker and will provide you with a copy of your statement shortly after the interview schedule is complete. ***[remove if not appropriate]*** For the purposes of clarity, I would ask that on the day of the interview you speak clearly and slowly to ensure all relevant facts are recorded.

* You have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by another member of the Club/Society, or Students' Union Sabbatical Officer, or a University Chaplain. ***[to be included in invitations to complainants and those that are complained about or subject to investigation under the Conduct Procedures]***

Failure to cooperate with the investigation may constitute a misconduct offence.

I would be grateful if you would confirm your availability to attend the interview on the above date and time.

Many thanks for your anticipated participation.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Investigating Officer]

Club and Society Member Relations Procedures
Record of Interview

Investigation Title:	_____
Interviewee:	_____
Date:	_____
Investigating Officer:	_____
Note taker:	_____
Others present:	_____
Location:	_____
Time commenced:	_____
Time ended:	_____

Declaration	
<p>This is an accurate and fair record of the interview held. I understand that this record is strictly confidential. I will not discuss the content of this investigation, interview, or document with any other person, bar the Investigating Officer, unless required to do so due to legal proceedings.</p>	
Signature:	Date:
Name and position (print):	
Signature:	Date:
Name and position (print):	
Signature:	Date:
Name and position (print):	
Signature:	Date:
Name and position (print):	

Confidential

Investigation Report

Misconduct/Complaint
(delete as necessary)
Member Name

Date:	
Investigating Officer:	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Provide details of the member, including their name, when their membership commenced, and any particular roles they hold within the Club/Society.
- 1.2 Outline how the concerns arose.
- 1.3 Note any currently active suspensions, or removal of duties, to allow the investigation to take place.
- 1.4 Record the specific allegations.

2. Scope/Coverage/Methodology

This investigation has been undertaken in accordance with the [Complaints/Misconduct Procedure – delete as appropriate].

2.1 Terms of Reference

The investigation has been undertaken to determine:

- <Insert specific topic/incident being investigated>
- <Insert specific topic/incident being investigated>
- <Insert specific topic/incident being investigated>

2.2 Interviews Held

Name	Position	Date

If any identified witnesses were not interviewed please record the reasons why e.g. unwillingness to be interviewed, unavailability.

2.3 Documents Examined

The following documents were examined:

- <INSERT – e.g. Letter of Complaint>
- <INSERT – e.g. Social media post - dated DD/MM/YY>
- <INSERT>

2.4 Appendices

The following documents / evidence are included as appendices to this report

Appendix 1	<INSERT – e.g. Statement from witness XXXX>
Appendix 2	<INSERT – e.g. Statement from witness XXXX>
Appendix 3	<INSERT – e.g. Copy of social media post - dated DD/MM/YY>

3. Background / Context

Include brief details of the incident or event, including any relevant context or background information. Explain any acronyms in a glossary.

4. Findings

Organize the findings under each of the Terms of Reference. They may be further subdivided into relevant sections, e.g. dates of similar events, other relevant details..

Avoid using long extracts from witness statements. Only quote from the statements where it is necessary to illustrate the language used. It is the IO's responsibility to analyse all statements and draw out the corroborative evidence.

Explain what the evidence means.

If the evidence is inconclusive, or if there is no evidence to substantiate an allegation, record this as such.

Note any mitigating/special circumstances, or any lack of relevant training/guidance.

After you record the full name, use initials throughout the rest of the report.

Include any patterns of behaviour.

State which, if any, policies/procedures have been breached.

Allegation 1

4.1 Sub Heading 1 – From Terms of Reference

4.1.1 <INSERT - Key Evidence / Finding / Explanation of Evidence>

4.1.2 <INSERT - Key Evidence / Finding / Explanation of Evidence>

4.1.3 <INSERT - Key Evidence / Finding / Explanation of Evidence>

Allegation 2

4.2 Sub Heading 2 – From Terms of Reference

4.2.1 <INSERT - Key Evidence / Finding / Explanation of Evidence>

4.2.2 <INSERT - Key Evidence / Finding / Explanation of Evidence>

4.2.3 <INSERT - Key Evidence / Finding / Explanation of Evidence>

5. Supplementary Issues

5.1 There are no supplementary issues to this report, OR

5.2 Cover any issues which were discussed in the course of the investigation but are not necessarily directly related to the allegations or objectives of the investigation (e.g. system issues, management or policy weaknesses, or matters relating to the individual which were not part of the initial Terms of Reference).

6. Conclusions

Provide an overall evidence based recommendation on whether there is reasonable cause to support the allegations and the strength of the evidence.

Support the conclusions in a clear and concise manner, using with the relevant evidence and without repeating the text from Section 4 (where possible).

Identify any strengths and weaknesses of the evidence gathered. Emphasise any important issues, and acknowledge areas where the evidence may be open to interpretation.

Set out any pieces of evidence which demonstrate any breach of policy/procedures.

Set out any mitigating factors and explain their significance.

6.1 <Insert conclusion statements>

6.2 < Insert conclusion statements >

6.3 < Insert conclusion statements >

6.4 < Insert conclusion statements >

7. Recommendations

The IO shall either recommend that no further action is required, or that the complaint progress to a formal hearing.