

INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS – GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

STEP 1 – WHO WILL INVESTIGATE?

Independent

Not implicated

Not involved in subsequent action/stages of procedure

Trained

May be determined by nature of complaint or allegation

Check correct procedure to use

Role (interview witnesses, seek, verify and evaluate evidence, question discrepancies, draw conclusions and report back)

Resources (time, secure storage, note taker, witnesses, documentation, private space)

STEP 2 – AGREE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Why investigate?

Who commissioned investigation?

Precise issues to be investigated?

Methodology?

How will report be used?

Resources (see above)?

Who will see report (note natural justice and data protection)?

Procedures of arranging interviews

STEP 3 – REVIEW DOCUMENTATION AND FILES

Relevant HR/student files

Correspondence/emails/notes

Policies/procedures/contracts

CCTV

STEP 4 – PLAN ORDER OF INTERVIEWS

Complainant

Witnesses and those whose names arise

Person whose behaviour is at centre of allegations

Witnesses need to be told time, location, advance notification, right to be accompanied?

STEP 5 – PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

Structure

Proforma opening and closing (but be flexible)

Read documentation and background papers

STEP 6 – CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Prepare questions (open questions, reflective and probing)

Anticipate issues

Determine what can be and cannot be disclosed

Prepare the room

Stick to facts – avoid opinion, speculation and early conclusions

STEP 7 – REVIEW DOCUMENTATION AND FILES

All documents as before

All interview notes and statements

Any investigation correspondence

Check procedure followed

Check no gaps or further investigation required

STEP 8 – PREPARE INVESTIGATION REPORT

In writing