



Investigation Fundamentals

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**There's room
here for
beginners
and experts—
and both
contribute.**

Engagement & Flexibility



8 THINGS YOU'LL LEARN TODAY

01 Understand your job as an investigator

02 Break down the allegation

03 Know what evidence matters — and why

04 Ask better questions in investigations

05 Judge information thoughtfully

06 Listen carefully and document accurately

07 Write reports that make sense to others

08 Manage yourself through difficult cases



Mentimeter

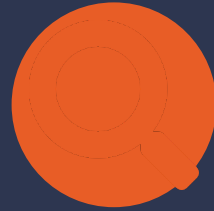


YOUR ROLE



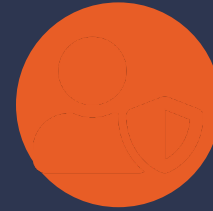
IMPARTIAL

**Check your bias.
Approach with humility.**



DILIGENT

**Thorough in gathering,
examining every angle.**



CONFIDENTIAL

**Handle sensitive information
responsibly and carefully.**

***The investigator's job is to answer three questions:
What does policy require? · What actually happened? · Misconduct or
misunderstanding?***

KNOW YOUR TIMELINE

7

15–60

5

business days

business days

business days after report

Report Filed

Investigation Period

Decision Rendered

If additional time is needed, the investigator notifies HR, and the parties of an extension —

Typically no more than 15 additional business days

Advisors
HR/Student
Conduct

EMPATHY WITHOUT ADVOCACY

The Investigator's Balance

Stay emotionally neutral · Be curious, not convinced · Let evidence — not emotion — drive decisions

Empathy

"I understand how this feels."

Sympathy

"I feel bad for you."



Remember This:
**Acknowledge
emotions**

Stay neutral

**Listen without
agreeing**

BEFORE THE FIRST INTERVIEW

1

Review the Allegation

Understand nature of the complaint

2

Review Policies & Regulations

Know the relevant rules that apply

3

Create a Plan

Outline steps, order, timeline

4

Collect Evidence

Identify & preserve all relevant material

5

Prep Interview Questions

Tailor open-ended questions per role



Remember This:
**Review the allegations/
policies**
Create a plan
Collect evidence
Prep questions.



Let's Practice



Alex's supervisor reports concerns that Alex may be misreporting work hours.

The supervisor noticed Alex frequently clocks in at 8:00 a.m. but often arrives 30-45 minutes late, and takes long lunches without recording leave.

Access logs and supervisor notes support this. Alex says he makes up time by answering emails from home and didn't know this was prohibited.

SCHEDULE

Early

Before memories fade

Fairly

No one feels targeted

Privately

Neutral, safe locations

Clearly

State purpose and limits

*Most interviews need **60–90 minutes** Rushed interviews = missed information.*

WHY WORD CHOICE MATTERS

INTERROGATING

"Why did you say that?"

"Why did you choose that approach?"

"Explain yourself."

FINGER POINT

CONVERSATING

"What led you to say that?"

"Can you share your thought process?"

"Help me understand."

OPEN DOOR



Remember This:

- **Questions signal either accusation or curiosity**
- **“Why” often feels like blame → defensiveness**
- **Curiosity language → psychological safety**
- **Safety leads to honest, useful information**
- **Swap “why” for how / what / can you share**

THE CURRENCY OF CLARITY

Words are slippery. Two people can use the same word and mean two completely different things.

"If they didn't say it, don't use it."



Remember This:

**Words don't mean the
same thing to everyone**

**Your job is not to guess
Your job is to ask**

Remember This:

Investigate actions, not assumptions.

Explain feelings with facts.

Interview Recording



Remember This:

Record only if it helps accuracy.

Respect concerns and destroy it when the case ends—unless told otherwise.



**What
Good
Listening
Looks
Like**

Remember This:

Be present. Listen without distraction. Reflect, clarify, and stay neutral.

People talk more when they feel heard — and better listening leads to better investigations.

**What is
Deception -
and what is
suspicion
good for?**

Remember This:

Suspicion is a signal, not a conclusion

**Deception cannot be determined by
body language**

**Your job is to ask, probe, and
corroborate**

**Let evidence and inconsistencies
speak, not accusations**

Let's Practice

I don't
remember
vs I didn't
do it.



What You Ask:

On October 12, did you say, "Damn, you look hot today?"

What You Hear: I don't remember saying anything like that.

What You Ask:

Did you intentionally shoulder check Justin?

What You Hear:

No. I did not touch them intentionally or otherwise.

Credibility –
Not all
differences
matter

EVIDENCE DOESN'T NEED TO BE PERFECT.

IT NEEDS TO BE SUFFICIENT, EXPLAINABLE, AND DEFENSIBLE.

Direct Evidence

*Proves a fact without inference
(admission, video, message)*

Circumstantial

*Requires inference — still valid
(patterns, timing, access)*

Corroborating

Independent sources confirming the same timeline or action

SUFFICIENCY TEST

*Before finalizing: Can you explain your reasoning to a supervisor, appeal officer, and neutral third party?
If you need to say "just trust me" — you're not there yet.*



Resistance in Interviews

What it really means.

Remember This

Resistance doesn't mean failure

It's the moment investigator skill matters most

Empathy and authority work together, not against each other

Report Writing

**What happened –
and how do we
know?**

Remember This:

A strong report clearly tells what happened, explains why the evidence proves it, and makes the conclusion feel inevitable – not announced.

55%

*of communication is
body language.
But stress ≠
deception.*

MYTH

*"They wouldn't make eye contact —
they're lying."*

MYTH

*"They looked up to the right —
deception!"*

TRUTH

*Body language reflects stress, not
truthfulness.*

TRUTH

*Use behavior to guide questions, not
conclusions.*

SIMPLE RULE: BEHAVIOR GUIDES QUESTIONS, NOT DECISIONS.

**Short
Video:**

Pivot!

INVESTIGATOR SELF-MANAGEMENT

Emotional Carryover

*Prior cases quietly bias the next one.
Start every case clean.*

Burnout Signs

*Reduced curiosity · Over-reliance on
templates · Wanting cases to wrap up*

Decision Fatigue

*Nuance decreases. Binary thinking
increases. 'Good enough' replaces fully
analyzed.*

When to Pause

*Unusual early confidence, frustration,
or evidence seeming 'clear' before
interviews*

Remember This:

**Start every case clean.
Don't let the last case
write this one.**

**Shortcuts are a warning
sign, not efficiency.**

“

**Thank you for the
work you do.**

*How we investigate matters, because real
people live with the results.*