



# Investigation questioning tips

## Ask for Specific Examples of Behaviour/Substantiated Description:

Encourage witnesses to provide concrete examples and detailed descriptions.

- Example: "Can you give me a specific example of when you saw Jane take the supplies?"

## Use open questions:

Open questions encourage detailed responses, provide more information and prevent yes and no answers.

- Example: How, what, when, where, why. "How did the incident make you feel?"

## Avoid leading questions/statements:

Leading questions can bias the response and should be avoided.

- Example: Instead of "You saw Jane take the supplies, didn't you?" ask "What did you see Jane do?"

## Reflect information gained during investigation:

Tailor your questions based on the information you have already gathered.

- Example: "Based on the inventory records, there were discrepancies on 15<sup>th</sup> April. Can you explain what happened that day?"

### **Repeat words the individual has used:**

Reflecting the individual's own words can help build rapport and ensure accuracy.

- Example: "You mentioned feeling 'pressured'—can you elaborate on that?"

### **Summarise what you have understood:**

Summarising what you have heard and understood will help to clarify your understanding

- Example: Thank you for sharing the details so far. To make sure I've understood everything correctly, I am going to summarise your account of what happened"

# Harassment questioning tips

**For investigations involving allegations of harassment, consider the following key points:**

## Was there unwanted conduct?

Determine if the behaviour was unwelcome.

- Example: "Can you describe the conduct that you found unwelcome?"

## Was any objection made?

Check if the complainant objected to the conduct.

- Example: "Did you express your discomfort to the person involved?"

## If not, was the conduct of a nature that it should be assumed to be unwanted?

Assess if the conduct was inherently inappropriate.

- Example: "Was the behaviour such that it would generally be considered inappropriate?"

## Was the conduct contrary to University policy?

Evaluate if the behaviour violated any University policies.

- Example: "Did the conduct violate any workplace policies or standards?"

## Did the complainant participate in the conduct or appear to welcome or tolerate it?

Determine if the complainant's actions indicated acceptance.

- Example: "Did you ever participate in or appear to tolerate the behaviour?"

### **Did the complainant feel pressured or afraid to object?**

Check if the complainant felt unable to object.

- Example: "Did you feel pressured or afraid to speak up about the conduct?"

### **Is there a relevant power balance?**

Consider if a power imbalance influenced the situation.

- Example: "Was there a power dynamic that made it difficult for you to object?"

### **Is it reasonable to categorise the behaviour as creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading etc environment?**

Assess if the behaviour created a negative work environment.

- Example: "Did the behaviour create a hostile or intimidating work environment for you?"