



Investigative Interview Sample Questions for Complaints of Discrimination

Guidelines for Interview Questions

Questions should be developed ahead of time in the planning stage, although additional questions will be added throughout the investigation as more evidence and information are shared. Flexibility is key to ensure that the process is not so stringent that critical information is missed.

Closed ended questions or confirmation questions regarding background information is a good place to begin to set the interviewee at ease.

More difficult questions can be discussed later on. These questions should be designed to draw out facts without leading the interviewee; therefore, they should be open-ended to elicit as much information as possible.

The following are some sample questions that can be used and considered for various interviews that are conducted. While these questions provide a great basis for starting the conversation and covering the basics of what happened, again, the plan should not be limited to only the questions below. Asking probing questions that arise from what is revealed, will uncover the truth.

Interview Questions

Sample Questions for the Complainant

The complainant is usually the first person interviewed in the investigation.

1. What happened?
2. What was the date, time and duration of the incident or behaviour?
3. How many times did this happen?
4. Where did it happen?
5. How did it happen?
6. Did anyone else see it happen? Who? What did they say? What did they do?
7. What is your relationship with the respondent?
8. What did you do in response to the incident or behaviour?
9. What did you say in response to the incident or behaviour?
10. How did the respondent react to your response?
11. Did you report this to anyone other than through the complaint intake process? To whom? When? What did they say and/or do?
12. Did you tell anyone about the incident or behaviour? Who? When? What did they say and/or do?
13. Do you know if the respondent has been involved in any other incidents?
14. Do you know why the incident or behaviour occurred?
15. Do you know anyone else who can shed light on this incident? What information do they have that would be relevant to this discussion?





16. (If any delay in reporting the incident) – Why was there a delay in the reporting?
17. Are there any notes, documents, or other evidence to support your claims? Did the respondent give you anything in writing?
18. How did the situation make you feel?
19. Is there anything else you want to tell me that I haven't asked you?
20. How would you like this matter resolved / What outcome would you like to see from this process?

Sample Questions for the Witnesses

The next step in the process is to interview any witnesses to the incident. Witnesses may help to corroborate or repudiate a complainant's reported details of what happened and may also fill in any gaps or shed light to further details about the incident itself. Witnesses can be provided by both the claimant and/or the respondent. Ensure that confidentiality is maintained by not disclosing more information than necessary pertaining to the complaint.

Some sample questions for any witnesses could include:

1. What did you witness?
2. What was the date, time and duration of the incident or behaviour you witnessed?
3. Where did it happen?
4. Who was involved?
5. What did each person do and say?
6. Did anyone else see it happen? Who?
7. What did you do after witnessing the incident or behaviour?
8. Did you say anything to the parties involved in response to what you witnessed?
9. Did you report this to anyone? To whom? When? What did they say and/or do?
10. Did you tell anyone else about the incident or behaviour? Who?
11. Do you know why the incident or behaviour occurred?
12. Have you ever seen this type of behaviour previously from the respondent? If so, when? What happened?
13. Do you know anyone else that could shed light on this incident?
14. Are there any notes, documents, or other evidence to support this reported incident?
15. Is there anything else you want to tell me that I haven't asked you?

Sample Questions for the Respondent

Questioning the subject of the complaint (known as the respondent), will likely be the most sensitive of all of the interviews conducted. Caution should be taken to ensure that the investigation is conducted without bias and to keep an open mind to avoid making any assumptions based on the information that has already been provided.





Below are some sample questions to ask to the respondent:

1. What happened?
2. Where were you when the incident took place?
If the respondent does not deny that the incident occurred, ask:
3. When and where did it happen?
4. What were the circumstances leading up to the incident?
5. Who else was involved? How were they involved?
6. What is your connection or relationship with the complainant?
7. If you could recount the dialogue or exchange of words that occurred in order of what was said?
8. What did the complainant say or do?
9. Is there any evidence to support your account of what happened?
10. Is there anyone else that we should talk to that may have knowledge of the incident? What information do they have that would be relevant to this discussion?
11. Have you talked to anyone about the incident? Who? When? What did you tell them?
12. Are there any notes, documents, or other evidence to support your version of the facts?
13. Is there anything else you want to tell me that I haven't asked you? Is there anything else you believe to be relevant to this situation that you would like to share with me?

