

SOP Template: Conducting Hearings or Investigative Meetings

This SOP outlines the process for **conducting hearings or investigative meetings**, including preparation steps, participant roles and responsibilities, evidence presentation, confidentiality protocols, questioning techniques, documentation requirements, decision-making criteria, and follow-up actions. The goal is to ensure a fair, transparent, and efficient investigation or hearing that upholds organizational policies and legal standards while protecting the rights of all parties involved.

1. Purpose

To provide a clear, standardized approach for conducting hearings or investigative meetings, ensuring fairness, transparency, and legal compliance.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in organizational hearings or investigative meetings, including managers, investigators, participants, and observers.

3. Preparation Steps

- Review relevant policies, regulations, and case background.
- Define objectives and agenda for the hearing or meeting.
- Identify and notify involved parties in writing, providing clear information about date, time, location, and purpose.
- Secure a private and neutral meeting venue.
- Prepare necessary documentation and materials (evidence files, forms, recording tools).
- Assign roles and ensure availability of required personnel (e.g., HR representative, legal advisor, note-taker).

4. Participant Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Chair/Lead Investigator	Oversees proceedings, ensures process integrity and neutrality.
HR Representative	Ensures compliance with organizational policy and legal requirements.
Note-Taker/Recorder	Documents the meeting accurately and maintains records.
Participants (Complainant/Respondent/Witnesses)	Present evidence, answer questions, and cooperate with the process.
Legal Advisor (if applicable)	Advises on legal aspects and ensures rights are protected.
Observers (if permitted)	Observe proceedings without active participation.

5. Evidence Presentation and Management

- Accept relevant evidence only; determine admissibility beforehand if possible.
- Label, log, and store evidence securely.
- Allow all parties the opportunity to review and respond to evidence presented against them.

6. Confidentiality Protocols

- Limit attendance to those with a legitimate need to be present.
- Instruct all participants regarding confidentiality responsibilities.
- Store meeting records and evidence securely; restrict access to authorized personnel only.

7. Questioning Techniques

- Use open-ended, non-leading questions to encourage detailed and accurate responses.
- Ensure questioning is respectful, impartial, and does not intimidate participants.
- Allow each party the opportunity to ask questions or rebut testimony, subject to chair approval.

8. Documentation Requirements

- Prepare and maintain accurate minutes or transcripts of proceedings.
- Record all evidence, exhibits, and witness testimony.
- Document all procedural steps, participant attendance, and decisions made.

9. Decision-Making Criteria

- Base decisions on objective analysis of evidence and testimony.
- Follow organizational policies and legal regulations in reaching conclusions.
- Clearly document rationale for any decision made.

10. Follow-Up Actions

- Notify involved parties of outcomes and next steps in writing.
- Implement any corrective or disciplinary actions as determined.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of actions taken (where applicable).
- Update records, close investigation file, and ensure secure, confidential storage.

11. Review and Continuous Improvement

- Periodically review the SOP for relevance and update as necessary.
- Solicit participant feedback to improve future processes.