SOP Template: Investigation and Information Gathering

This SOP describes the process of **investigation and information gathering**, detailing systematic methods for collecting, analyzing, and documenting relevant data and evidence. It includes steps for identifying information sources, conducting interviews, maintaining chain of custody, and ensuring accuracy and confidentiality. The goal is to facilitate thorough and objective investigations that support informed decision-making and compliance with legal and organizational standards.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized approach for conducting investigations and collecting relevant information in a manner that is complete, objective, and compliant with organizational and legal requirements.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all investigations conducted by [Department/Organization Name], including, but not limited to, compliance reviews, incident inquiries, and internal audits.

3. Responsibilities

- **Investigators:** Conduct investigations, document findings, and maintain confidentiality.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Oversee investigations and review documentation.
- **Legal/Compliance Team:** Advise on legal considerations and ensure regulatory compliance.

4. Procedure

1. **Initiate Investigation**
   - Receive and assess the need for investigation.
   - Assign investigators and define scope, objectives, and timelines.
2. **Identify and Prioritize Information Sources**
   - List all potential sources: documents, digital records, equipment, personnel, etc.
   - Assess reliability and relevance of each source.
3. **Collect Information and Evidence**
   - Gather documentation, records, and physical evidence.
   - Schedule and conduct interviews using a standard questionnaire.
   - Ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality.
4. **Maintain Chain of Custody**
   - Document acquisition, transfer, analysis, and storage of evidence.
   - Use chain-of-custody forms to record handling activities.
5. **Analyze and Verify Information**
   - Review collected evidence for accuracy and consistency.
   - Cross-verify with independent sources where possible.
6. **Document Findings**
   - Prepare report summarizing methods, evidence, findings, and conclusions.
   - Attach supporting documentation (interview transcripts, evidence logs, etc.).
7. **Ensure Confidentiality and Security**
   - Store documentation securely in compliance with applicable policies.
   - Restrict information access to authorized personnel only.
8. **Conclude Investigation**
   - Review findings with relevant stakeholders.
   - Recommend actions or corrective measures if necessary.

5. Documentation and Recordkeeping

Maintain the following records for each investigation:

- Investigation plan/scope document
- Interview notes and transcripts
- Evidence collection forms and chain-of-custody records

- Final investigation report
- Correspondence and supplementary materials

6. Review and Improvement

This SOP shall be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect changes in legal requirements and organizational best practices.

7. References

- Organizational policies & procedures
- Applicable laws and regulations
- Industry best practices