

Investigations at work

Step 1: Deciding to investigate

When there is a possible work [disciplinary](#) or [grievance](#) issue, the employer should do an 'investigation'. This is where they find out all they reasonably can about the issue.

An investigation is to:

- see if there is a case to answer
- make sure everyone is treated fairly
- gather evidence from all sides
- help the employer to see what should happen next

At any stage the employer can still look at whether:

- the formal procedure needs to carry on
- the issue can be resolved informally instead

Following a fair procedure

To protect everyone involved in a disciplinary or grievance case, the employer must make sure they follow a fair procedure. The investigation is an important part of this.

If the employer does not carry out a reasonable investigation, any decisions they make in the disciplinary or grievance case are likely to be unfair. This could risk legal action.

Investigations are covered by the [Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures](#), which is the minimum an organisation must follow. Your organisation might have its own policy or procedure.

If a disciplinary or grievance case reaches an [employment tribunal](#), judges will look at whether the employer has followed the Acas Code of Practice in a fair way.

Training for employers and managers

You can get [Acas training on conducting investigations](#) and following a fair disciplinary or grievance procedure.