



## INVESTIGATION & RESOLUTION

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### OIR INVESTIGATIONS INFORMATION FOR WITNESSES

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In accordance with [OIR's Mission Statement](#), OIR “investigates and resolves reports of university policy violations in an impartial, thorough, and prompt manner to foster a productive and professional environment for learning and working.” Witness information is often critically important to OIR’s ability to conduct thorough investigations and reach well-informed decisions.

#### **IMPARTIALITY**

OIR investigators do not represent or advocate for one Complainant or Respondent over any other Complainant or Respondent during an investigation. OIR investigators gather as much evidence as possible to ensure a thorough and impartial review of the allegations in a Report or Complaint.

#### **PRIVACY<sup>1</sup>**

OIR is not a confidential resource, but information communicated to OIR, and all subsequent OIR documentation, is kept private to the extent possible while resolving a Complaint or Report. OIR may instruct a Complainant, a Respondent, and/or a Witness not to disclose private information learned through engagement with OIR in order to protect the integrity of an OIR investigation. *See Section 4.5 of OIR’s procedures for details.*

#### **EVIDENTIARY STANDARD**

OIR uses the “Preponderance of the Evidence” standard when evaluating whether a Respondent engaged in a violation of campus policy. OIR defines “Preponderance of the Evidence” as “evidence demonstrating that it is more likely than not that a violation [occurred].” *See Section 2.9 of OIR’s procedures for details.*

#### **WITNESS PARTICIPATION IN THE INVESTIGATION**

- Witness Scheduling Letter: Generally, OIR’s first contact with a Witness is through the issuance of a letter to schedule a Witness interview. It is a university expectation that you attend this interview.
- Interview: During a Witness interview, a Witness may ask questions about OIR’s process and respond to OIR investigator questions. Information shared during a Witness interview may be included in OIR’s Investigation Report.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that Tennessee citizens may request certain records under the Tennessee Public Records Act. Such requests are reviewed by [UT System Administration](#), and OIR makes every effort to limit responses to only what is required by law.

## **OUTCOME INFORMATION FOR WITNESSES**

Generally, OIR's interaction with Witnesses ends after the interview process, as Witnesses are not routinely entitled to receive OIR's Investigation Report or other case outcome information. Complainants and Respondents receive the Investigation Report, information about appealing OIR findings, and information about any possible disciplinary action(s) taken by the appropriate vice chancellor or dean in response to the investigation.

A Respondent may participate in an informal or formal hearing process to contest disciplinary actions imposed by the university. Please note that in some rare instances, the university may contact a Witness to participate in the disciplinary hearing process.

## **RETALIATION**

OIR's office procedures prohibit Retaliation against any Complainant, Respondent, or Witness engaged in an OIR investigation. Please note that Retaliation is prohibited regardless of whether the original Complaint or Report is substantiated. Contact OIR to report possible Retaliation. See *Section 2.14 of OIR's procedures for details.*

***This sheet is a summary of information and serves as a resource for Witnesses.  
Please see [OIR's office procedures](#) for a complete review of  
OIR's investigation procedures.***