

FACT SHEET

Role of a Witness in a University Investigation

Division of People and Culture (Fact Sheet reviewed July 2026)

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Role of a Witness in a University Investigation

This fact sheet provides guidance for staff who may be asked to act as witnesses in a university investigation. Witnesses play an important role in helping the University manage complaints and confidential matters fairly and lawfully.

About University witnesses

- When the University receives a complaint or becomes aware of inappropriate conduct, an investigation may be initiated.
- The purpose of the investigation is to establish what occurred and ensure the University meets its legal and policy obligations.
- Staff who may have seen, heard, or hold relevant information are interviewed as University witnesses. Their evidence assists the University in managing the matter appropriately.

How will I know if I am a University witness?

- Most investigations involve sensitive and confidential information. The Division of People and Culture (DPC) treat these issues with discretion and care.
- If you are required as a witness, a DPC staff member will contact you to arrange a private interview.
- Witness interviews are conducted individually, not in groups.
- You may bring a support person if you wish. See the [Support Person Fact Sheet](#) for further information regarding this.
- Due to confidentiality, DPC may only provide limited information about the broader investigation.

What is expected of a University witness?

- To speak openly, honestly, and transparently about your experiences.
- If you forget details or later recall new information, you may provide corrections or additions after the interview.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, simply state that you are unsure.
- You may be asked to provide supporting evidence such as emails, documents, or other relevant materials.
- DPC staff may take notes during the interview.

University witnesses in serious misconduct matters

- Serious misconduct matters are managed under Clause 38 of the University's Enterprise Agreement.
- Witnesses may be required to:
 - a) Prepare a written statement outlining their experiences.
 - b) Attend a committee of enquiry, where they may be asked questions by an independent investigator, University representatives, or the staff member subject to the matter (or their representative).
- DPC will advise you if this applies and will provide additional support.

What will happen with the information I provide as a University witness?

- Your information is used to investigate and manage the matter.
- If an investigation report is prepared, it may include witness names and evidence provided.
- Reports are confidential and usually shared only with the complainant and the staff member subject to investigation.
- Witnesses do not receive a copy of the report.

What if I don't want to get anyone in trouble?

- Witnesses sometimes hesitate to share information. Remember: investigations focus on whether conduct occurred, not on punishing individuals unnecessarily.
- Staff who act in line with university values, the code of conduct, and policies have no reason to be concerned.
- Investigations are conducted with procedural fairness, giving all parties the opportunity to respond.

What if I don't want to participate?

- The University relies on staff involvement to uphold standards of research, teaching, and workplace conduct.
- While participation may feel uncomfortable, DPC staff are there to support you throughout the process.
- In limited circumstances, the University may direct staff to provide information.
- The University has strong anti-victimisation protections. Witnesses must not be treated unfairly because of their role, and DPC takes any threats or inappropriate behaviour very seriously.

Confidentiality

- Discussions with DPC, whether you are a complainant, respondent, or witness; are confidential. You should not share the content or existence of these discussions with other staff members (unless they are responsible for investigating the matter or providing counselling and support on behalf of the University). Maintaining confidentiality helps ensure a safe, respectful, and fair process for everyone involved.
- You may, however, discuss matters with your trusted support people external to the University.
- The University and DPC have legal obligations, including a duty of care. Personal information will only be disclosed when necessary to manage the complaint, when required by law, or if there is a serious threat to health or safety. You will be informed whenever possible if information needs to be shared.

Further information

Relevant documents include:

- [Complaints Management Policy](#)
- [Complaints Procedure – Workplace](#)
- [Charles Sturt University Enterprise Agreement 2023-2025](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)

Support services

- The University recognises that discussing complaints can be difficult. Staff are encouraged to contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) by calling 1300 687 327.
- The EAP provides confidential counselling, support, and specialist helplines. More information is available at [Employee Assistance Program](#).

What if I have further questions?

If you have further questions:

- Contact the DPC staff member who has reached out to you.
- If you are unsure who to contact, email workplacerelations@csu.edu.au and a case manager will respond.