



# TEAM INVESTIGATIONS: ROLES, COORDINATION, AND QUALITY CONTROL

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February 20, 2026

# MEET THE FACILITATORS



Jessica Brown

Jessica Brown is a member of the Coordinator & Director Services Team at Grand River Solutions. Jessica serves in a Quality Assurance role and as the Request for Proposal Coordinator. Jessica has previously provided services as a civil rights investigator, hearing officer, training facilitator, and Title IX coordinator with Grand River Solutions.



Dawn Barker Floyd

Dawn Floyd is a Senior Solutions Specialist with more than 25 years of law, compliance, and equity experience in private law practice and at public and private colleges and universities.

She previously served as Director of Compliance and Title IX Coordinator at Lenoir-Rhyne University. Dawn also served as the Title IX Coordinator at UNC-Charlotte.

# ABOUT US – GRAND RIVER SOLUTIONS

## Vision

We exist to create safe and equitable work and educational environments.

## Mission

To bring systemic change to how school districts and institutions of higher education address their Clery Act & Title IX obligations.

## Core Values

- Responsive Partnership
- Innovation
- Accountability
- Transformation
- Integrity

# AGENDA

● | *Team Investigation Experiences*

● | *Navigating Team Investigations*

● | *Pitfalls and Solutions*

● | *Scenarios*

● | *Questions and Processing*



# ***GROUP ACTIVITY: DRAFT YOUR DREAM TEAM***

You've been assigned a complex, high-risk case. You can "draft" three teammates (real or fictional).

What skills do you prioritize and why?

Who do you draft and why?

***Breakout Rooms (7-minutes)***



## ***TEAM INVESTIGATIONS***

*Investigations involving two or more investigators.*

*Team Investigations may be used for cases in Title IX, Title VI, Title VII, ADA/504, etc.*

# WHY CONSIDER TEAM INVESTIGATIONS?

*A team of investigators can provide:*

- accountability and support while reducing bias*
- broader perspectives on cases*
- ability to handle a heavier workload*
- ability to offer a wider range of skills to the client*



# TEAM INVESTIGATION EXPERIENCES

*Have you used a team approach to investigations in the past?*

- *What type of cases?*
- *How many investigators?*
- *What were the challenges?*
- *Were the cases successful?*



NAVIGATING TEAM  
INVESTIGATIONS:  
**HOW DO WE BEGIN?**

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# NAVIGATING TEAM INVESTIGATIONS: **HOW DO WE BEGIN?**

- | *Identify Team Needs*
- | *Potential Team Roles*
- | *Discuss Team Relations*
- | *Set Expectations for Teamwork*
- | *Create a Team Investigation Plan*
- | *Establish Timelines*



# IDENTIFY TEAM NEEDS:

- *Identify the skills and experience needed by the team*
- *Determine the number of investigators on the team based on roles and case data*
- *Ensure appropriate people are assigned to the team*



# POTENTIAL TEAM ROLES:

- **Lead Investigator** – Person who will coordinate and direct the investigation
- **Team Investigators** – Investigators who will conduct interviews, draft summaries, and collect and analyze evidence
- **Subject Matter Experts** – Investigators with specialized knowledge for the case
- **Technical Support** – IT person for assistance with case management and electronic evidence



# DISCUSS TEAM RELATIONS:

- *Discuss how the team will resolve internal questions and disagreements*
- *Discuss how anticipated or unanticipated issues that arise during the investigation will be handled*
- *Discuss who will handle these issues*



# SET EXPECTATIONS FOR TEAMWORK:

- Set up “introductory” meetings with co-investigators
- Set expectations for effective and efficient teamwork
- Communicate what is expected of each team member based on their identified roles



# CREATE A TEAM INVESTIGATION PLAN:

- *Clearly assign specific roles and responsibilities to team members*
- *Identify the scope and objectives of the investigation*
- *Identify activities needed to complete the investigation*
- *Review applicable policies to ensure all requirements are considered and implemented in the investigation plan*



# CREATE A TEAM INVESTIGATION PLAN:

(CONTINUED)

- Review and discuss case file as team
- Outline the steps and methods for gathering evidence and conducting interviews
- Establish the accepted work product
- Agree on the file storage and sharing system the team will use for investigation materials and work product



# ESTABLISH TIMELINES:

- Determine investigation due dates
- Establish a timeline for each phase of the investigation
- Schedule regular communications with the parties and others
- Discuss how requests for time extensions and/or delays will be handled
- Schedule strategic team check-ins



# PRACTICE SCENARIO

## Who Owns This?

You've been assigned to an investigation team. Below are the team roles and tasks that need to be assigned. Assign each task to a role and explain why.

Team roles:

- Lead investigator
- Team investigator
- Subject Matter Expert
- Technical Support

Task list:

- Draft party communications
- Save and label evidence
- Schedule interviews
- Update leadership
- Draft party/ witness statements
- Manage report revisions

# PRACTICE SCENARIO PART 2

## What's missing?

What tasks are missing from the provided list? How might you anticipate and assign those?

Task list:

- Draft party communications
- Save and label evidence
- Schedule interviews
- Update leadership
- Draft party/ witness statements
- Manage report revisions

CONDUCTING THE  
TEAM INVESTIGATION:  
***WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS?***

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# CONDUCTING THE TEAM INVESTIGATION: **WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS?**

● | *Communications*

● | *Preparing for Interviews*

● | *During Interviews*

● | *After Interviews*

● | *Documentary Evidence*

● | *Prepare for Report Writing*

● | *Report Writing and Quality Control*

● | *Final Investigation Steps*

# COMMUNICATIONS:

- *One team member may be assigned to draft communications and send written updates to the parties on behalf of the team*
- *If more than one team member will draft communications, share all communication with the lead investigator for continuity and consistency*



# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS:

- Send introductory email to interviewees
- Determine the order of interviews
- Develop a standard set of open-ended questions for parties and witnesses
- Determine if the interviews will be recorded (consider the policy)
- If interviewing with multiple team members, certain people may ask questions while others take notes, or all co-interviewers may ask questions



# DURING INTERVIEWS:

- Explain the team investigation format to the party or witness and provide the names of all investigators
- Discuss the process of sharing interview summaries or transcripts with the interviewee for review
- Let interviewees know that a follow-up interview may be necessary



# **AFTER INTERVIEWS:**

- *Decide on a specific format for interview summaries to ensure consistency*
- *Draft interview summaries or utilize transcripts, if allowed*
- *Send the summaries and/or transcripts to interviewees for review*



# DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE:

- *Assign a team member to manage all documentary evidence*
- *Collect, sort, and organize evidence so the entire team is aware of what has been collected*
- *House the evidence in a manner that is easy to access, well-organized, and readily available to the team*



# PREPARE FOR REPORT WRITING:

- Collaborate with team members by reviewing notes and evidence before writing the report
- Evaluate the plausibility and consistency of each witness's testimony as a team
- Determine as a team who needs to be re-interviewed for additional information
- Identify which team member will conduct the additional interviews



# REPORT WRITING AND QUALITY CONTROL:

- *If possible, the report should be written by one team member*
- *If drafted by more than one team member, have an appropriate third-party review the report to ensure it is written in one common voice with no demarcations between investigators*
- *All team members should read and edit the report for discrepancies and inaccuracies*



# FINAL INVESTIGATION STEPS:

- *Ensure all evidence has been preserved/archived consistently within the team*
- *Determine who will send the final report to the parties*
- *Complete any additional steps based on policy (closure emails, file preservation, etc.)*
- *Debrief as a team to identify what worked, what did not work, and what can be done better next time*



# PRACTICE SCENARIO

## Evidence Triage

You are investigating an allegation of sexual assault that occurred after the Complainant and Respondent were drinking at a party. You have gathered the following items of evidence:

- Screenshots of conversations between two people at the party
- Rumors from students who heard about the party
- Anonymous report
- Time-stamped email from Complainant to their professor requesting an extension because of a difficult situation
- Group chat log between Respondent and friends the day following the party
- Social media post about the party
- Witness statement from friend who attended party with Complainant
- Second-hand account
- Video clip of Complainant after drinking at the party
- Academic article about the effects of alcohol
- Screenshots of messages between Complainant and Respondent making plans to attend the party

Sort evidence into:

- Must review immediately
- Helpful but secondary
- Not relevant (yet)



# *Pitfalls and Solutions for Team Investigations*

# PITFALLS AND SOLUTIONS:



**Without a clear plan, investigators may:**

- duplicate efforts
- pursue the same leads
- overlook crucial steps

**Infrequent or inefficient communication may:**

- lead to missed connections between different pieces of evidence
- cause frustration with the parties

# PITFALLS AND SOLUTIONS:



**Without a cohesive strategy, investigators may:**

- conduct interviews out of order
- pursue conflicting theories

**Complex cases often generate large amounts of evidence. Without a structure to manage evidence, investigators may:**

- become inundated by details
- miss important insights

# PITFALLS AND SOLUTIONS



**Investigation teams may be susceptible to:**

- confirmation bias
- group think
- other influences that can undermine fairness and objectivity

**Watch for team members who may:**

- unconsciously favor certain parties
- gravitate toward a predetermined conclusion

# BENEFITS OF USING A TEAM



**Efficiency:** Objectives can be completed in less time, leading to a streamlined workflow.

**Impact:** Working with others can create a strong impact due to the combined effort.

**Perspectives:** More people involved provides a wider range of perspectives.

**Stronger accountability:** Team investigations can produce more comprehensive and impactful reports.

# SCENARIOS:



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# SCENARIO 1

A team of five investigators was recently appointed to investigate a student organization. The organization has about fifty members and each one will likely need to be interviewed. Also, you learn that they have a secret social media site where they documented some of the alleged behavior.

You are a member of the investigation team, and you are meeting with the other team members to get started.

Since the behavior is allegedly ongoing, the investigation must be completed as soon as possible.

Please discuss the following:

- How should the roles be assigned?
- Will you have a lead investigator? How will they be chosen?
- What are the key investigation activities?
- What is your strategy for conducting those activities?
- How should you distribute the work?
- What is your communication plan with each other and with the parties?

## SCENARIO 2

You are a part of a two-person team investigating a serious violation of school policy. You have met with the other investigator and discussed a general plan for the investigation, but you noticed during the investigation that the other investigator is conducting investigation activities of which you were not aware and that seem duplicative of some of your work.

The other investigator also recently expressed their desire to have only you write the report even though they are conducting half of the interviews and collecting evidence.


Please discuss the following:

- How would you address the other investigator's activities?
- What steps would you implement to prevent the duplication of effort moving forward?
- What are the options for report writing in this case?
- How would you ensure the quality of the report is maintained?



**QUESTIONS?**


# COMPLIMENTARY SUBSCRIPTION



**THE RIVER**  
CONNECT

A place to  
*communicate*  
*share*  
*educate*  
*learn*

for HIGHER EDUCATION  
PROFESSIONALS working in  
**Title IX, Equity & Clery**

A top-down view of a desk with a pair of glasses, a glass of water, a cup of coffee on a saucer, and a blue notebook with a white pen.

# THANKS FOR JOINING US!

## CONNECT WITH US

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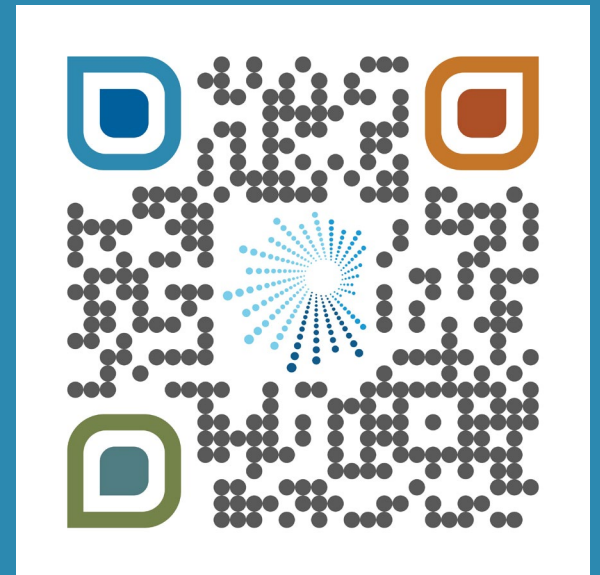
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