

Guidance on the role of a Supporter

These guidelines have been created for University colleagues who have been asked by another colleague to accompany them at a Research Misconduct meeting.

Who can be a Supporter?

The accompanying person can be:

- A fellow Newcastle University colleague
- An official employed by a Trade Union
- A Newcastle University Trade Union representative

There may be also occasions where the colleague may require another individual to attend the meeting with them. For example, as part of a reasonable adjustment for a colleague with a disability. These individuals may be in addition to the Supporter; or if appropriate, they may hold both roles.

Although the Respondent may wish to seek legal advice, a legal representative (e.g. solicitor) may not act as a Supporter.

The role of the Accompanying person

- Your role is to support your colleague during the meeting.
- You may confer with your colleague either in the meeting or you can request a break to confer in private outside of the meeting.
- You cannot provide statements or answer questions on your colleague's behalf.
- You must not prevent your colleague from explaining their case.

Prior to the Meeting

- Make sure you have read the University's Policy and Procedure on Investigating Allegations of Misconduct.
- Make sure that the Lead Investigator knows in advance that you are attending the meeting.
- Ask your Manager for permission to attend the meeting as the accompanying person. You should give your Manager as much notice as possible
- If you are unable to attend the meeting, your colleague can request the meeting be rescheduled once within 5 working days of the original meeting date to enable you to accompany them.

Remember

- If you are unclear about anything, please ask your Manager, speak to a colleague in People Services or a Trade Union representative.
- You are under no legal obligation to take on this role if you do not feel comfortable or if you feel that it is not appropriate.
- Anyone attending a panel meeting is bound by a duty of confidentiality. Breaches of confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared in advance of the meeting. For example, any individual named in the allegation (a co-Respondent or a Witness) may not act as a Supporter. In the event of any conflicts of interest, the Lead Investigator has the right to request an alternative Supporter.