

### PLANNING

Good documentation requires a clear plan of action including, how you will take notes in meetings, what technologies and forms you will use to facilitate documentation, scheduling time immediately following meetings to update records, and allocating time for regular maintenance and review of records.

### INCLUSIONS

Documentation prepared by the investigator should include a timeline of investigation, a communication log, timeline of events, case synopsis, complainant's recount, responding party's recount, witness information, other evidence, and allegations, analysis of available information and evidence for decision making, including questions for deliberation. Remember to confirm the names of individuals being interviewed and be consistent in how names are reported across documents. Gather copies of any documents, electronic communications, photos, reports in the possession of the individual being interviewed as well.

### PRIVACY

Both the complainant and responding party will have questions about what is kept private in the process. You should explain that records gathered during the interview are protected under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and would not be shared without the student's written consent or except when strictly allowed by law. When explaining the process as it relates to confidentiality, remember to avoid any language that appears to restrict either party from discussing the allegations under investigation.

### RECORDINGS

If you will be recording interviews, make sure to be open and transparent about the process. The recorder should be visible, and all parties should be advised you are recording. You should include who is present, the date, time, and location. Recordings must be labeled clearly and stored in secure locations. A list of recordings should be documented in the investigation

### STORAGE

Documentation must be maintained for a period of seven years. Additional elements of documentation specifically identified in federal regulations include audio or audiovisual recordings or transcripts of live hearings, and any informal resolutions and related results. One element that is often missed is documenting training materials used for those involved in the process.

### RELUCTANCE

You may encounter that some parties in the process may be reluctant to be recorded. One approach to reduce this reluctance is to explain the benefit of accurately gathering information and not needing to revisit the same information in a follow up interview.