

# Workplace Investigations

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## 19. What if the employee under investigation raises a grievance during the investigation?

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As discussed in question 11, an employer owes an implied obligation of trust and confidence towards its employees under common law. This means that an employer cannot disregard a genuine complaint made by an employee even if the employee is under internal investigation. The employer may have put in place an employee grievance handling policy, which should be followed when handling the employee's grievance.

If the grievance raised relates to how the workplace investigation is being conducted (for example, it is alleged that the investigator has a conflict of interest or is biased), the employer should consider suspending the investigation until this grievance is properly addressed to ensure fairness. However, if the grievance is nothing but an attempt to delay or hinder the investigation, the employer may be entitled to proceed with the investigation regardless. The employer should therefore carefully assess the nature and validity of any grievance raised in each case. The employer should also consider its rights under the employment contract if the employee is being uncooperative or obstructive.

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