

Disciplinary Hearing Notes and Record

Checklist · UK · Published 2026-09-08 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

Disciplinary hearing notes are the contemporaneous written record of a disciplinary meeting — who attended and in what role, what evidence was put to the employee, what the employee and their companion said in reply, any adjournment and why, whether the decision was given or reserved, and what happens next.

The notes matter because they are almost always the only account of the meeting that exists. Acas guidance on the disciplinary hearing tells the employer to make sure someone takes notes and to take a written confidential record of the hearing, and the foreword to the Acas Code of Practice says employers would be well advised to keep a written record of any disciplinary or grievance cases they deal with. Months later, when nobody remembers who said what, a thin page of half-sentences is worse than useless — it becomes the version of events you have to defend.

This template gives you a complete note-taker's form: the header to complete before the hearing opens, an opening script for the chair, a timed running record laid out as a table with blank rows to fill in, the adjournment and decision block, signatures and distribution — plus guidance on who should take the notes, whether recording is allowed, how to handle a request for a copy, and how long to keep them.

How to use this form

This form is the record of one disciplinary hearing held by [Your company]. Complete the header before the meeting starts, keep the running record live as people speak, and complete the closing block before anyone leaves the room. Notes written up from memory an hour later are not a contemporaneous record and everybody can tell.

It is a record, not a decision. The outcome is communicated separately in a disciplinary outcome letter — the Acas Code says that after the meeting the employer should decide whether disciplinary action is justified and inform the employee in writing.

The same layout works for a grievance meeting, an investigation meeting or an appeal hearing: change the purpose line in the header and leave everything else alone. Using one format across all of them means anyone reading the file later can follow it without being told how.

Header: complete before the hearing starts

- Employee: [name] — [job title] — [department or site].
- Type and purpose: [disciplinary hearing / reconvened hearing / appeal hearing] to consider [the allegations exactly as set out in the invitation letter].
- Date, start time and location: [date] — [start time] — [room or video platform].
- Invitation letter sent on [date]; evidence pack sent on [date], containing [document 1], [document 2], [document 3].
- Chair and decision-maker: [name], [job title] — the person who will decide the outcome.

- Note-taker: [name], [job title] — not the chair, not a witness, and taking no part in the decision.
- Companion: [name], attending as [a fellow worker / a trade union representative / an official employed by a trade union] — or record "attended unaccompanied; the right to be accompanied was offered in the invitation letter dated [date]".
- Others present and their role: [name] — [HR support / management witness / interpreter / note-taker in training].
- Adjustments in place: [accessible room / additional breaks / documents in [format] / interpreter booked / none requested].

Opening the hearing: what the chair puts on the record

1. Introduce everyone present by name and role, and check the header above matches the room.
2. Confirm the employee received the invitation letter and the evidence pack and had time to prepare. If they say they did not, record that and consider adjourning before going any further — the Acas Code says the meeting should be held without unreasonable delay while allowing the employee reasonable time to prepare their case.
3. Explain the companion's role: they may put and sum up the employee's case, respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed, and confer with the employee during the hearing, but the Acas Code says the companion does not have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf.
4. State the allegations in plain terms and the possible outcomes, including dismissal where dismissal is genuinely on the table.
5. Say that notes are being taken, who is taking them, that the employee will receive a copy, and whether recording the meeting is permitted. Record any request to record and the answer given.
6. Confirm the employee may ask questions, present evidence and call relevant witnesses, and may ask for a break at any point.

The running record

This table is the document. Fill it in as the hearing happens, in the order things are said. Capture the substance of each contribution rather than every word — a readable summary in the speaker's own terms. Record what is unhelpful to [Your company] as carefully as what is helpful. A record that contains only the is far more useful later than an unreliable half-transcript. Put the times of every break and adjournment in the employer's good points is the first thing an employment judge will notice.

Time	Speaker	What was said	Action or follow-up
[10:02]	[Chair name]	Opened the hearing, introduced those present, confirmed the employee had received the invitation and the opportunity to be heard.	None
[10:06]	[Employee name]	Told the employer had declined the offer of adjournment — [summarized time and evidence presented]	Chair offered a [n]-minute adjournment — [accepted / declined]
[10:09]	[Chair name]	Put the employee's case on possible outcomes including resignation or dismissal.	
[10:14]	[Employee name]	The employee's answer to the chair's question about the employee's own conduct, and explained the possible outcomes including resignation or dismissal.	
[10:22]	[Companion name]	Put the employee's case on possible outcomes including resignation or dismissal.	Chair to check [record or document] before deciding
[10:31]	[Chair name]	Adjourned to consider matters, including any admission taken into account, denial or explanation.]	Reconvene at [time]

Adjournment, decision and next steps

- Adjourned at [time]; reconvened at [time]. Reason: [to consider the evidence / at the employee's request / to check [document] / to obtain [information]].
- Further investigation required: [none] or [what, who is doing it, and by when].
- New matters raised at the hearing that were not in the invitation letter: [none] or [details] — if anything substantial is new, consider adjourning for further investigation and reconvening rather than deciding on it today.
- Decision: [given at the hearing] or [reserved]. If reserved, the employee was told the outcome would be confirmed in writing by [date].
- If given at the hearing: [no action / informal action / first written warning / final written warning / dismissal / other], for these reasons: [summary]. Confirm it in a written outcome letter in any event.
- Right of appeal explained: [yes / no]. Appeal to be made in writing to [name and job title] by [date].
- Hearing closed at [time].

Signatures and distribution

- Note-taker: [name] — [signature] — [date].
- Chair: [name] — [signature] — [date].
- Employee: [signature] — [date]. Signing confirms only that the employee has seen the notes, not that they agree with them — say so out loud when you ask.
- If the employee disputes any part of the record, ask for their comments in writing and file them with the notes. Never edit the original after the event.
- Copies to: the employee; the companion if the employee asks; the chair; and the case file at [system or location], with access restricted to [roles].

Who should take the notes

The note-taker should be someone other than the chair. Acas guidance tells the employer to make sure someone takes notes but does not say who — the practical point is that a chair who is writing is not listening, and a decision-maker who is also the only record-keeper is easy to attack afterwards.

The note-taker should not be a witness in the case, should not have carried out the investigation, and should take no part in the decision. Brief them before the hearing: record what is said, not what it means; no opinions, no editorialising, no tidying up an answer into what the speaker probably intended.

In a small organisation where there is genuinely nobody else, record that fact in the header, let the employee's companion take their own notes — Acas lists taking notes among the things a companion can do — and consider exchanging notes afterwards so that any disagreement about what was said surfaces immediately rather than at a tribunal.

Recording, copies and corrections

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Neither the Acas Code of Practice nor the Acas guidance on the disciplinary hearing mentions audio or video recording. There is no right to record and no rule against agreeing to it, so decide the position in advance, put it in the disciplinary policy and the invitation letter, and repeat it when the hearing opens.

- If a recording is agreed, record who holds it, how long it is kept and that the written notes remain the formal record. Treat the recording as personal data on exactly the same footing as the notes.
- If a request to record is refused, note the request and the refusal in the running record. If a recording is made anyway, deal with it under the disciplinary policy rather than pretending it did not happen.
- Give the employee a copy of the notes as a matter of course, with or before the outcome letter. It costs nothing and removes an argument — and GOV.UK lists the right to access personal data among individuals' data protection rights, so a refusal tends to come back as a subject access request.
- Handle corrections by addition, not deletion: file the employee's written comments alongside the original record so both accounts sit on the file.

Retention, responsibilities and review

- File the notes with the invitation letter, the evidence pack, the outcome letter and any appeal papers as a single case file at [system or location], accessible only to [roles].
- Set the retention period in your data retention policy and apply it. GOV.UK states that personal data must be kept for no longer than is necessary, so indefinite retention of disciplinary papers is hard to defend.
- Where a warning carries an expiry date, diary the date it lapses and make sure spent warnings are disregarded in later cases.
- Owner of this form: [name or role]. Reviewed with the disciplinary policy, or immediately after any case in which the notes proved hard to reconstruct.
- Last reviewed: [date]. Next review: [date].

How to use this template

1. Read the invitation letter and evidence pack beforehand and pre-fill the header, so the hearing starts on the record rather than five minutes into it.
2. Appoint a note-taker who is neither the chair nor a witness, and brief them to record substance rather than opinion.
3. Keep the running record live during the hearing, timing each contribution and logging every break and adjournment as it happens.
4. Complete the closing block before anyone leaves the room — adjournment times, whether the decision was given or reserved, and the appeal route.
5. Send the employee a copy of the notes with or before the outcome letter, and file any written comments they make alongside the original.
6. Set the retention period in your data retention policy and keep the whole case file together in one place.

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Official guidance

- › [Acas — Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures](#)
- › [Acas — Disciplinary procedure step by step: the disciplinary hearing](#)
- › [Legislation.gov.uk — Employment Relations Act 1999, section 10 \(right to be accompanied\)](#)
- › [GOV.UK — Taking disciplinary action against an employee](#)

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