

Routines for whistleblowing

Adopted by Forskerforbundet's Executive Board on 15 June 2021.

The purpose of this routine

The purpose of this routine is to ensure that objectionable situations experienced in the organisation become known, so that measures can be taken against the situation. Forskerforbundet facilitates that you, as a member, elected union representative or participant in activities organised by Forskerforbundet, should feel confident in notifying internally about objectionable matters in Forskerforbundet without this having negative consequences for yourself.

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is reporting objectionable matters such as violations of laws, rules, or what is considered acceptable, to someone who can do something about it.

Who can notify?

As a member, elected union representative or participant in activities organised by Forskerforbundet, you can report any situation in the organisation that you find objectionable or that you see others find objectionable. If you are contacted by a member or someone who wants to report an unwanted incident, you should know who to contact and what to do.

What can be reported?

Whistleblowing applies to objectionable matters that arise in the organisation Forskerforbundet, such as:

- bullying or harassment
- discrimination
- financial fraud
- danger to life and health

This is not intended as a complete listing.

Harassment is defined as acts, omissions or statements that have the purpose or effect of being offensive, intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating.

Anyone who experiences a situation that they wish to report should first raise this directly with the person concerned. If such action is not possible without risking reprisals or loss of interest, whistleblowing will be relevant and appropriate. Likewise, where such action has been attempted and has not led to improvement/change in what has been raised. The fact that one disagrees with a decision that has been made will not in itself be enough for the situation to be considered objectionable.

Who can I notify?

Notification should initially start at the lowest level, such as the nearest union representative, unless the union representative is the one who is conducting the objectionable act. If the whistleblower experiences that the notification is not followed up, they should notify the next level. If the notification is not followed up locally, it should be reported to Forskerforbundet's internal whistleblowing committee headed by the Secretary General.

If whistleblowers do not have a local union representative to turn to, they must notify Forskerforbundet's internal whistleblower committee.

It is important that you do not fail to notify because you are unsure of which is the correct authority. All bodies must contribute to ensuring that a notice is processed correctly and responsibly.

Notification content

Reporting misconduct should follow these guidelines:

- The notification must be given in a sober, factual, and balanced manner.
- The notification must have a sound basis.
- The report should contain relevant and specific information, including the persons involved, any witnesses and other information that enables proper handling of objectionable matters and breaches.
- Place of action, time period, date, and time, and concretely what you have observed should be included.

You can report anonymously, but if it is deemed necessary for the further follow-up of the case, you may be asked to revoke your anonymity.

Proceedings

The person notified must, without undue delay and no later than three working days after receipt of the notification, establish contact with the person who sent the notification, confirm that this has been received, and record all relevant information about the case. If the report is made anonymously, the handling of the report will be made more difficult. However, these reports shall always be registered and investigated to the extent possible.

The person to whom the report is made shall initiate a preliminary investigation. Depending on the content of the notification and who is involved, it must be assessed how and at what level the incident is to be followed up and managed.

Both sides of a case should always be heard. Throughout the case process, it is important to act with confidentiality, both for the sake of the whistleblower and the person who receives a notice against them, who should have the right to a counterargument.

Anyone who reports objectionable matters has a right to confidentiality. Those involved must be informed about how the case is being managed, including any delays in the work.

If the report can be refuted or confirmed by simple investigations, the case can be closed at the relevant level.

If the union representative cannot conclude whether objectionable matters have taken place, the matter should be raised to Forskerforbundet's internal whistleblowing committee. Likewise, the whistleblower may refer the matter to the internal whistleblowing committee if he or she believes that the matter is not being followed up correctly.

Whistleblowing committee

The internal whistleblowing committee consists of the General Secretary and the two persons who are elected members of the Audit Committee.

If the internal whistleblowing committee finds that the matter being reported cannot be denied or confirmed through simple investigations, the case can either be closed or transferred to an external whistleblowing committee led by an external lawyer for further processing.

The external whistleblowing committee is appointed at the first ordinary Executive Board meeting of the Congress period and, in addition to an external lawyer, consists of two experienced union representatives.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether there has been a violation of Forskerforbundet's Articles of Association and/or guidelines, or whether there are other objectionable matters that Forskerforbundet should investigate further for other reasons. The process should not be too lengthy and proper case management must be ensured which also ensures that the case is adequately disclosed.

The external whistleblowing committee must, after processing the notification, conclude by drawing up a final report. The final report is sent to the union's internal whistleblowing committee for follow-up at the conclusion of the case.

Completion of the case

When the case has been processed and any reaction has been given, information about this must be given to both the whistleblower and the person who receives a notice against them. If there are objectionable circumstances, Forskerforbundet has a duty to take measures so that the objectionable circumstances cease.

Measures and reactions

The measures and/or reactions that can and should be used depend on the seriousness of the case, and on what formal role the person being notified about has in Forskerforbundet. In the event of a possible violation of the law, it must be considered whether the matter should be reported to the police.

Forskerforbundet – local level

The local representative has the right to issue a reprimand and has the right to exclude the person concerned from the local branch's events. If the situation persists, the case will be forwarded to Forskerforbundet's internal whistleblowing committee for further follow-up.

Forskerforbundet – central level

The Executive Board may respond with a reprimand and/or exclusion of the person concerned from future events organised by Forskerforbundet. In addition, the Executive Board may decide to exclude the person from membership in Forskerforbundet, in accordance with §18 of the Articles of Association.