

The SoFI Investigative Interviewer Accreditation Scheme

Introduction

The Society of Forensic Interviewers (SoFI) is a not for profit membership organisation, registered in 2013, as a company limited by guarantee at Companies House, United Kingdom.

It is governed by an elected Members Council, and its membership is drawn from a wide range of disciplines and sectors, both in the UK and internationally.

The Societies aims are:

- To promote and maintain ethical standards in forensic interviewing
- To provide opportunities for education, training & development for forensic interview practitioners
- To support and encourage research and development in the subject of forensic interviewers

One of the key objectives of SoFI is to introduce a uniform benchmark for high quality, ethical, investigative interviewing skills in the private sectors working outside of the law enforcement agencies. The cornerstone of this will be the SoFI Investigative Interviewer Accreditation Scheme.

Investigative interviewing is a high frequency activity for all investigators. In the private sectors, where the investigative resources readily available to law enforcement agencies are more scarce, it is probably the most vital skill an investigator needs.

There are many different types of investigative interviewing, but we believe that ethical techniques are the only way to obtain the quantity and quality of information that professional investigations require. They also provide safeguards for decision makers who rely upon the product of interviews to decide upon the appropriate course of action to be taken at the conclusion of the investigation.

The interviewing techniques we endorse have been thoroughly and extensively tested by psychologists and academic researchers, and robustly scrutinised by the legal system in the United Kingdom. They have repeatedly proven themselves to be efficient, effective, and ethical.

These techniques can be applied across the whole spectrum of interviewing scenarios, across all disciplines, across all sectors, across the world. This includes, but is not limited to, Human Resources, Fraud, Compliance, Audit, Internal and External investigations of whatever degree of complexity or simplicity.

The Scheme

Research has shown that interviewing skills improve with proper relevant training. However, other research has suggested that the improvement gained from interview training deteriorates over a relatively short space of time. This effect can be reduced by frequent assessment and refresher training that reinforces the original skills.

Therefore, SoFI Accreditation is not a one-off process but involves a commitment to continue working to our standards and being re-assessed on both theory and practical skills at periodic intervals. By ensuring that investigation supervisors and managers have the necessary knowledge and skills, organisations and

businesses will be able to undertake continual assessment of the interview product in the workplace. Formal re-assessment will be conducted by SoFI every two years.

This will protect the initial training investment, and prolong the benefits of that training, by reducing the effects of skills deterioration.

The Scheme has been designed to provide a thorough grounding in the interview skills that will be used most often by most investigators. It will also provide managers and supervisors with the knowledge required to confidently assess the interview product and provide feedback. A SoFI Accredited Member will retain full access to the learning materials, and any updates, and will be required to use them to re-sit the exam every two years. SoFI Accredited Interviewers will also have to complete an assessed practical interview at this time.

To be able to access the SoFI learning materials and resources, It is necessary to join SoFI, and retain membership for as long as you wish to be accredited. This also requires you to sign up to, and agree to abide by, our Code of Conduct. In return, we will allow you to use the appropriate post-nominals, the SoFI logo as a sign of our endorsement, and to show your accredited status on your CV.

SoFI has been granted Approved Centre (ALP Only) status by SfJ Awards to offer a professional vocational qualification in ethical Investigative Interviewing. This enables us to provide the SoFI Theory of Ethical Investigative Interviewing - ALP0053 course, as the benchmark standard for investigative interviewing in the private sectors.

This course is pitched at a Level 4 /Level 5 standard and covers five important aspects of interviewing:

- Ethical principles
- The memory process
- Questioning styles
- Legal issues
- The interview process

On successful completion of the course the member will be eligible to become a SoFI Accredited Member. This is suitable for all investigative interviewers, investigation managers and supervisors, and investigation decision makers.

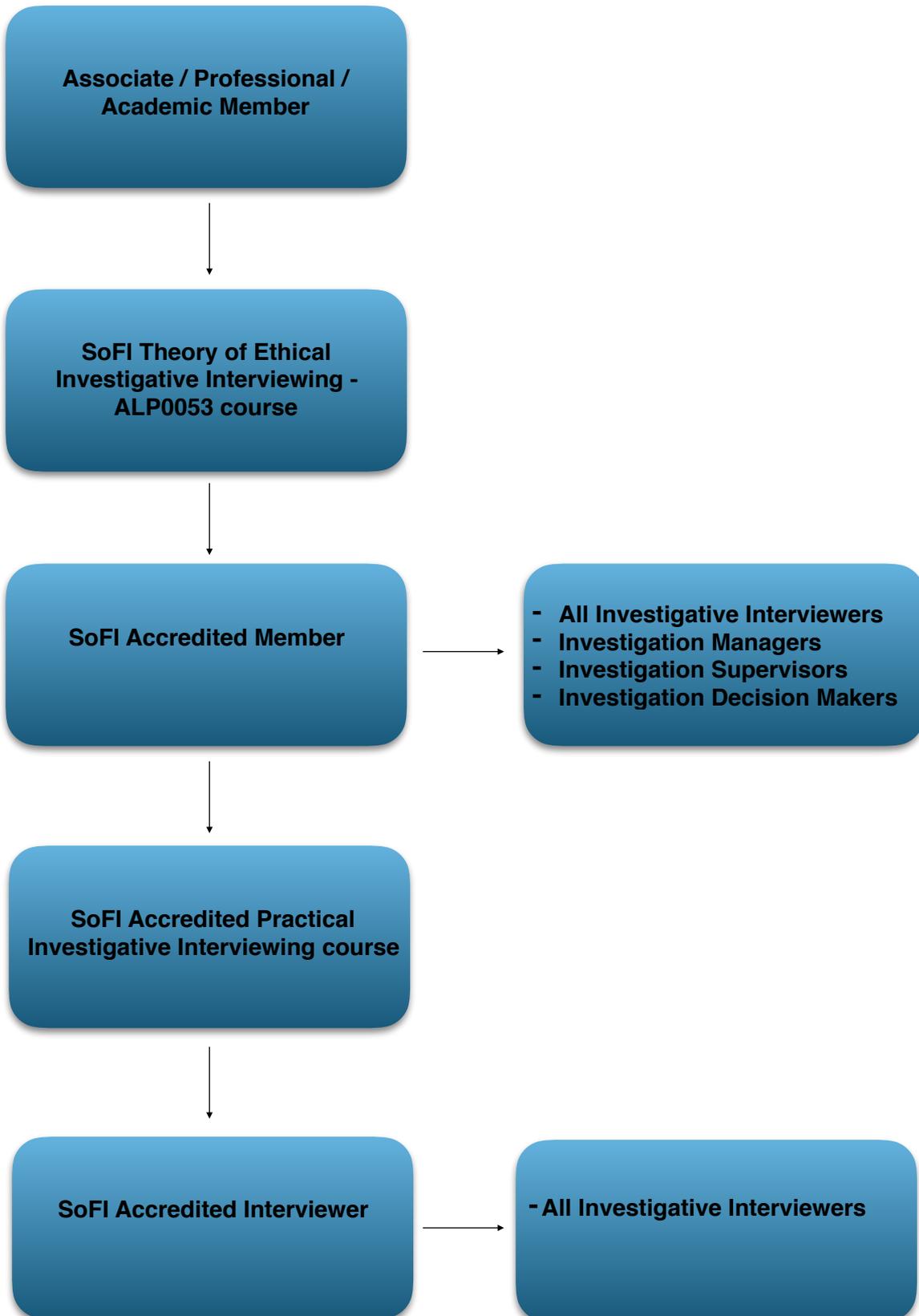
The SoFI Theory of Ethical Investigative Interviewing - ALP0053 course, can only be accessed as a distance-learning course, through the SoFI website and provides knowledge of the principles and processes required to conduct a professional interview. Managers, supervisors and decision makers will be able to differentiate between a good, reliable interview and an unreliable one, and enable them to properly assess the interview product and provide feedback

By making this available as a distance learning course unit, students can ensure they have the time to fully understand the materials and sit the on-line examination when they are fully prepared. It also enables the course to cover more subjects, and in greater detail, than a course requiring time away from the work environment.

A SoFI Accredited Member may then undertake a suitably accredited practical course with a SoFI Accredited Training Practitioner. On successful completion of this, they will be eligible to become a SoFI Accredited Interviewer. This is suitable for all practising investigative interviewers.

Any trainer who meets the criteria may apply to become a SoFI Accredited Training Practitioner which will allow organisations and business with in-house training facilities to submit their own practical course for SoFI accreditation. Otherwise, a list of SoFI Accredited Training Practitioners will be available on the SoFI website, and they will be able to tailor the practical course to meet any industry specific requirements.

Routemap for SoFI Investigative Interviewer Accreditation



Course Overview

This course is divided into five modules and should be studied in the following order:

1. Principles of Ethical Investigative Interviewing

- Principles of Ethical Investigative Interviewing
- False Confessions
- Confirmation Bias
- Minimisation
- Recording Interviews

2. The Memory Process

- Memory Process
- Memory Contamination

3. Knowledge of Questioning Styles and Interviewer Behaviour

- Rapport Building
- Mirroring
- Conversation Rules
- Active Listening
- Question Types
- Initiating a Free Narrative Account
- Evidentially Important Questions
- ADVOKATE
- NoteTaker (Not included in the exam questions)

4. Legal Issues

- Confessions
- Exclusion of Unfair Evidence
- Oppression
- Unreliability
- Unfairness
- Interview Records
- Vulnerable People
- Interviews
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
- Cautions (Not included in the exam questions)

5. The Interview Process

- Interview Planning and Preparation
- Dealing with the Interviewee
- Obtaining the Account
- Evaluation and De-Briefing

Course Costs

£400 - Non-Members (includes £70 Associate Membership)

£330 - Members

Exam Re-sit - £100

(VAT is not currently payable)

SoFI Members Code of Conduct

1. A SoFI Member shall, at all times, demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and diligence in the performance of his or her duties.
2. A SoFI Member shall not engage in any illegal or unethical conduct or any activity which would constitute a conflict of interest.
3. A SoFI Member shall, at all times, exhibit the highest level of integrity in the interviewing of victims, witnesses or suspects.
4. A SoFI Member will comply with the lawful orders of the courts and will testify to matters truthfully and without bias or prejudice.
5. A SoFI Member shall conduct interviews in an ethical and legal manner to obtain a full and accurate account from an interviewee.
6. A SoFI Member shall reveal, to any party to the investigation, all material matters discovered during the course of an interview, which, if omitted, could cause a distortion of the facts.
7. A SoFI Member shall treat all interviewees in a fair, equitable and respectful manner and without bias or prejudice. Vulnerable people must be treated with particular consideration at all times.
8. A SoFI Member shall not act in such a way as may be discreditable to SoFI.

Assessment Methods

The assessment process and assessment materials will be overseen by the Accreditation and Certification Committee who will in turn report on the process to the Members Council.

Theory of Ethical Investigative Interviewing Award

The SoFI Theory of Ethical Investigative Interviewing Award is only available to SoFI members on the SoFI website (www.so-fi.org). Learners will be supported in their learning by an online tutor selected from the Accredited Trainers list. Learners will then notify SoFI when they are ready to take the examination and they will be supplied with a Unique Learner Number. This will be no later than six months after enrolment.

The online examination will comprise of short answer questions and multi-choice questions. It will cover each of the five modules and require a pass mark of 75% for each module, and be made available to the Learner, at an agreed date and time, for a period of 70 minutes, after which, the Learner will be locked out. This period may be adjusted, if required, to comply with the SoFI Equal Opportunities policy.

On completion, the examination paper will be submitted to a SoFI Director and will only be identified by the Unique Learner Number. This will then be individually allocated to two Accredited Trainers, neither of whom will be the Learner's online tutor, who will independently assess the examination responses against the assessment materials and allocate a pass or fail, based on a percentage mark of 75%, for each module, as appropriate.

In the event of a conflict of opinion between the two assessments, the examination paper will be allocated to a third Accredited Trainer in the same way as an ordinary examination paper. This assessment will be final.

Learners and/or Accredited Trainers may appeal against the final decision through the SoFI Appeals Policy and Procedure.

The Learner will be notified of their result within 15 working days from the date of the examination. If unsuccessful, the Learner will be notified of their scores for each module and which modules(s) they failed.

On successful completion of the course, the Learner will receive a certificate endorsed by SFJ Awards and SoFI, and will be entitled to Accredited Member status, and to enrol on the SoFI Accredited Interviewer course.

Re-Takes for the Theory of Ethical Investigative Interviewing Award

If they have been unsuccessful the Learner may re-take the failed modules, up to a maximum of 2 times, at no less than 6 week intervals, within a period of 12 months since the date of enrolment. The time allowed for the re-take will be adjusted appropriately.

If they are unsuccessful on their re-take(s), the Learner will be required to recommence the whole process again, after the expiry of the initial 12 month period.

The re-taken examination(s) will follow the same procedures as above.

SoFI Accredited Interviewer

The SoFI Accredited Interviewer course will only be available to those Learners who have successfully passed the relevant Theory course. They will need to enrol on the SoFI Accredited Interviewer course within 6 months of successfully completing the Theory Award, or taking the re-assessment examination for Accredited Member.

Courses will be provided by Accredited Trainers and listed on the SoFI website. Learners will be able to select from this list to suit their requirements and ensure the practical scenarios are relevant to their work,

The SoFI Accredited Interviewer course will be classroom based, culminating in a digitally recorded final practical Interview. This will be assessed, either live or from the recording, against the Assessment Materials by the Learner's Accredited Trainer as either Competent or Not Yet Competent. A copy of the recording will be passed to the SoFI Director together with the result and reasoning behind the assessment. The recording will be allocated a Unique Learner Number and submitted to a second independent Accredited Trainer who will repeat the process.

In the event of a conflict of opinion between the two assessments, the recording will be allocated to a third Accredited Trainer in the same way as an ordinary recording. This assessment will be final.

Learners and/or Accredited Trainers may appeal against the assessment process through the SoFI Appeals Policy and Procedure.

On successful completion of the course, the Learner will receive an Accredited Interviewer certificate endorsed by SoFI, and will be entitled to Accredited Interviewer status.

Re-takes for the SoFI Accredited Interviewer Course

If they have been unsuccessful the Learner may re-take the final practical interview, no later than three months after the original final practical interview. There is no limit on how many times the Learner re-takes the final interview within this period.

If they are unsuccessful on the re-take(s), within the three month period, the Learner will be required to successfully complete the re-assessment examination for the Theory Award and re-take the SoFI Accredited Interviewer course within six months of that examination.

The re-taken final practical interview(s) will follow the same procedure as above.

Accredited Trainer Approval Policy

Professional Requirements

1. Recognised training qualification
e.g.
National UK Police Trainer
Other training qualification at a minimum of Level 4 or equivalent
PGCE
Other post graduate teaching qualification
(to include equivalents in country of residence/employment).
PLUS
a minimum of 1 years relevant training experience in the last five years

OR

Recognised interviewing qualification i.e UK Police Tier 2 or above (or equivalent)
PLUS
a minimum of 5 years relevant training experience in the last ten years

2. Successfully complete the SoFI Foundation Level
'Theory of Ethical Interviewing' Unit and/or other relevant designated Units
3. Membership of SoFI (and upgrade to Accredited Trainer on approval)
(including bi- annual assessment)

Conditions of Accreditation

- Act as on-line Tutor (email contact) for students taking the Foundation Level Theory Unit.
(To include both your own students and those introduced by third parties.)
- Act as Assessor for the on-line Theory Unit examination using SoFI assessment materials
(Excluding your students for whom you are the Tutor.)
- Provide a practical interviewing course using the SoFI Theory materials, culminating in a digitally recorded final controlled interview for assessment purposes
- Act as Assessor for final controlled interviews for your own course and for others as required, using SoFI assessment materials
- Maintain an auditable record of courses, Learners and achievements and provide details to the nominated SoFI Director.
- Take all necessary steps to protect and maintain the confidentiality of SoFI assessment materials and Learner evidence
- Conduct Quality Control assessment of other Accredited Trainers interview product.
- Submit course materials for approval as required.
- Submit randomly selected example interview products for Quality Control
- Provide suitable resources /equipment /premises where required

- Provide a copy of your current Health and Safety Policy
- Provide a copy of your current public liability insurance policy
- Maintain an Accident at Work Record and provide the nominated SoFI Director with details of any entries
- Allow access to members of the Members Council or Accreditation and Certification Committee to observe learning delivery if requested.
- Abide by SoFI Policies and Procedures
- Immediately notify the nominated SoFI Director of any occurrences which may have, or potentially have, an Adverse Effect or Conflict of Interest for any Learner, Accredited Trainer, SoFI or the Awarding Organisation (SFJ Awards).
- Use the SoFI logo only as permitted by the nominated SoFI Director
- Notify the nominated SoFI Director of any material changes that may affect your status as an Accredited Trainer