

University: Bangor University

## **General**

### **1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current system for handling student complaints about HEIs?**

#### Strengths

- it is completely independent
- complainants have confidence in the scheme

#### Weaknesses

- from the complainants point of view the process takes a long time
- difficulties of determining whether a complaint can be considered under the scheme where the facets of the complaint are complex

### **2. Is the current Scheme an improvement on previous arrangements?**

Yes, because of its independence

### **3. Has the existence of the OIA improved the way in which HEIs engage with students in the areas of student complaints and appeals?**

The existence of OIA has not altered our internal procedures. However, the existence of OIA has provided an opportunity to consider best practice and to learn from experiences elsewhere.

## **Funding of the Scheme**

### **4. Is the current funding model appropriate? If not, are there alternative funding arrangements you would suggest?**

Funding model is appropriate.

## **Remit**

### **5. Is there a public interest in the OIA developing its remit, for example by:**

#### a) including students studying for foundation degrees at Further Education Colleges?

It would be better if all HE students, wherever located, could have access to the OIA

#### b) reviewing individual complaints about pre-registration admissions?

I believe that it is most appropriate for OIA not to be involved with these individual complaints. They can be addressed by existing arrangements.

#### c) including in the Scheme non qualifying institutions such as private degree awarding bodies?

It would be better if all HE-level students, wherever located, could have access to the OIA

### **Accessibility**

- 6. Do you think that the current mechanisms for making students aware of OIA processes are adequate? What improvements, if any, would you suggest? Are there specific areas where students are not aware that they can bring a complaint?**

I believe that the current mechanisms are adequate although they are somewhat reliant on HEIs informing students. It would be possible for OIA to provide Student's Unions with information directly.

- 7. Do the existing arrangements ensure that the OIA is sufficiently accessible for students to make a complaint? How might the OIA improve its website and communications?**

The existing arrangements are sufficiently accessible

### **Efficiency and Effectiveness**

- 8. How might the OIA increase its operational efficiency and improve the timeliness of decision making?**

This is primarily a matter for OIA to consider its internal processes.

- 9. Do you have any comments about the way in which the OIA reviews complaints or about the quality and consistency of its decisions?**

I have no comments about this. Responses are timely and consistent. All decisions are presented in detail

- 10. Are existing OIA processes sufficiently user friendly and transparent?**

Yes from a HEI viewpoint.

- 11. Do you have any suggestions for amending the OIA Rules to increase effectiveness?**

The grounds for a complaint must be clear to students so that they don't use-up the OIA's time without reason.

### **Impact**

- 12. Does the OIA offer effective and appropriate remedies for students whose complaints are upheld?**

I cannot comment on this because we have had no upheld complaints. OIA's suggestions for the university have been appropriate.

**13. Should OIA adjudications be published?**

I don't think it would be appropriate to publish the OIA's adjudications although publishing generic summaries is valuable and informative.

**14. How might the OIA share better its knowledge and experience of complaints handling and promote good practice?**

OIA meetings/seminars are a good way to share experience/knowledge. It can also use its website for this purpose.

**Governance**

**15. Is the independence and impartiality of the Scheme safeguarded sufficiently?**

Yes - from our viewpoint it is totally independent

**16. Is the present composition of the Board appropriate? Should there be additional student representation?**

It would be good to increase the number of student representatives

**17. Have you anything further to add?**