

Wednesday 13 July 2016

Student Complaints 2015

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) has today (13 July) published its annual letters to higher education providers. The letters are addressed to all providers that were members of the OIA Scheme throughout 2015.

The letters include the number of complaints received by the OIA, the issues complained about, and information about the outcomes of complaints considered by the OIA. They also set out the number of Completion of Procedures (COP) letters issued by providers to students at the end of their internal processes.

The OIA is committed to openness and transparency, and collects and publishes the information to help providers develop good practice in handling complaints and academic appeals.

Commenting on the letters, Ben Elger, Chief Operating Officer, said:

“The annual letters are valuable to providers and their students as they allow them to review their own complaints record against others of a similar size. Many providers use the letters to inform development of their complaints and appeals processes.”

The OIA’s Good Practice Framework sets out the expectation that providers record complaints and academic appeals. This information will allow for the development of better contextual information for the future.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. All the Letters to OIA Scheme members are published on the OIA website at <http://oiahe.org.uk/news-and-publications/annual-letters.aspx>
2. The purpose of the Letters is to:
 - Increase the transparency of the OIA Scheme
 - Increase public scrutiny of complaints handling records in higher education providers;
 - Increase students’ confidence in complaints handling processes;
 - Allow providers to look at their own record alongside that of other providers of similar size.
3. Providers are required to issue Completion of Procedures (COP) letters at the conclusion of any internal processes where the student’s complaint or appeal is not upheld. Students may also request a COP letter if the complaint or appeal is upheld but they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.
4. The data in the Annual Letters must be considered in context. The letters provide useful information about complaints that have reached the end of internal processes at higher education providers and been escalated to the OIA. They do not take account of the overall number of



complaints and academic appeals that are made by students to their providers, which is not collected centrally. The OIA cannot accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties

5. The 2015 Annual Letters cover only those providers that belonged to the OIA Scheme throughout 2015.
6. The OIA has wide discretion to review student complaints about an 'act or omission' by HE providers in England and Wales. It does not review academic judgment or admissions issues. The Scheme Rules and all details related to OIA operations can be found at www.oiahe.org.uk.
7. For further information please contact jane.clarkson@oiahe.org.uk