
Immediate release: 4 October 2017

Judy Clements, Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive

The Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive for Higher Education Judy Clements is leaving the organisation. Ms Clements joined the OIA in April 2016 after seven years as the Independent Adjudicator for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Ms Clements said, "I am very pleased to have served as the Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive. It has been a privilege to lead the OIA through this time of uncertainty and rapid change in Higher Education, working with Government and others on the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

The fair treatment and wellbeing of students is vitally important. I am proud that the OIA plays an important role in this, and one of my priorities in office has been to lead the OIA's work on student mental health and wellbeing and to engage positively with students and providers.

I have enjoyed working with colleagues and external stakeholders. As I move on to new challenges, I wish the OIA well for the future and I would like to thank the Board for its support throughout my stewardship."

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair of the Board of the OIA said, "I am very grateful to Judy for everything she has brought to the OIA. She has been hugely committed to its purpose and determined to ensure that students who complain to us receive the best possible service. Judy's experience as an ombudsman, her integrity, and her determination to maintain performance improvements have yielded significant results and we wish her well for the future.

The Board has appointed Ben Elger as interim Chief Executive and Felicity Mitchell as interim Independent Adjudicator. Both Ben and Felicity have many years' experience at the OIA as Chief Operating Officer/Company Secretary and Deputy Adjudicator respectively. I have every confidence that the OIA will continue to go from strength to strength under their leadership."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For further information please contact Sarah Liddell, Head of Leadership Office,
mediarelations@oiahe.org.uk, 0118 959 9813.

1. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is the independent student complaints ombudsman for higher education in England and Wales. It is the designated operator of the student complaints' scheme under the Higher Education Act 2004.
2. Felicity Mitchell, interim Independent Adjudicator, joined the OIA in 2004, and became a Deputy Adjudicator in 2009. She is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and chairs the Good Practice Framework Steering Group and has oversight of the OIA's good practice and case-handling work. She also has oversight of legal claims against the OIA, including judicial review.

Felicity was called to the Bar in 1992 and, after some years in private practice, moved to the Banking Ombudsman as an adjudicator. She transferred to the Financial Ombudsman Service in 2001, where she worked as a Casework Manager.

3. Ben Elger, interim Chief Executive, joined the OIA as its first Chief Operating Officer in September 2008, combining the role with that of Company Secretary. Ben has responsibility for organisational planning, finance and people management. He has a key role in liaising with government and led the OIA's work on the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. Ben is currently a member of the UK Standing Committee and has been involved in groups relating to the Regulatory Partnership Group for Higher Education in England including the working group charged with 'mapping the Higher Education system'. He is also a member of the steering group for the Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP).

Before joining the OIA Ben spent 15 years working with students, for the last 10 years as Chief Executive of Reading University Students' Union, and before that at the Students' Unions at Winchester, King's College London and South Bank Universities and as National Secretary of NUS.