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OIA publishes new guidance on supporting disabled students

The OIA has published a new section of the Good Practice Framework: **Supporting disabled students**.

The guidance is drawn from the OIA's broad experience of handling complaints, and was put together by the OIA in consultation with the Good Practice Framework Steering Group and the OIA's Disability Experts Panel.

The **Supporting disabled students** section has a wider scope than previous sections of the Good Practice Framework which have focused on handling complaints and academic appeals. It includes guidance on removing obstacles to learning, and on supporting students before and during their studies, as well as on what to do when things go wrong.

The draft guidance was published for consultation in March 2017 and submissions were received from providers, student representative bodies, other higher education bodies and stakeholders, and interest groups.

Felicity Mitchell, Interim Independent Adjudicator, said:

“An important part of our purpose is to share good practice in preventing as well as handling complaints. The Good Practice Framework is a cornerstone of this work.

Providers and student organisations have been asking us to develop guidance for supporting disabled students since the first section of the Framework was published for consultation in 2014. We have built up a considerable bank of learning from reviewing complaints from disabled students, and supporting students through our own processes.

We are very grateful to all of those who contributed to the development of this section. We believe it gives practical operational guidance which will be helpful to providers, building on many excellent resources already available.”

The guidance will inform the way that the OIA considers complaints relating to disability issues from the 2018/19 academic year.



The **Supporting disabled students** section of the Good Practice Framework is available on our website at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers-and-good-practice/good-practice-framework/supporting-disabled-students.aspx>.

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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. The Good Practice Framework: Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals is a guide to handling complaints and academic appeals in higher education in England and Wales. It sets out overriding principles and operational guidance to support providers in areas including timeframes, progression between informal, formal and review stages, and record-keeping. Further information can be found on our website at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers-and-good-practice/good-practice-framework.aspx>.
3. The Good Practice Framework is one element of the OIA's good practice work. We also provide guidance through a range of webinars, podcasts, workshops and visits. Details of our upcoming outreach programme can be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers-and-good-practice/workshops-and-events/upcoming-workshops-and-events.aspx>.