
OIA publishes Annual Statements for 2017

We have today (14 May) published our Annual Statements for 2017 for higher education providers that are members of the OIA Scheme.

The Annual Statements include information about the number of complaints we received, and the type and outcomes of complaints we considered, in 2017. They also include some information on providers' engagement with us during the year. We publish this information to allow providers to look at their own record alongside that of similar providers. The Statements also enable increased public scrutiny of complaints handling records in higher education providers.

Felicity Mitchell, Independent Adjudicator said:

“The Annual Statements are part of our commitment to be open about the work that we do and through this openness to promote public confidence in the higher education sector.

We encourage all higher education providers to scrutinise their record in handling complaints and appeals and to consider how they can improve what they do. Our Annual Statements help providers, including their governing bodies, and student representative bodies, to see their own record alongside that of similar providers. Our Annual Statements can also increase students' confidence in the internal processes of their higher education provider.”

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Notes to Editors

1. The Annual Statements for 2017 are available on our website at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/news-and-publications/annual-statements.aspx>.
2. The purpose of publishing the Annual Statements is to:
 - 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 similar providers; and
 - Make our own processes more transparent.
3. The Statements provide useful information about complaints and appeals that have reached the end of internal processes at higher education providers and been escalated to the OIA. However they do not give a full picture of complaints and appeals within a provider:
 - a. They do not set out the overall number of complaints and appeals that are made by students to their providers, many of which are likely to be resolved through the internal processes.
 - b. The data on Completion of Procedures (“COP”) Letters issued must be interpreted with some caution. The fact that a COP Letter has been issued does not necessarily mean that the student is dissatisfied with the outcome. The OIA’s [Guidance on COP Letters](#) says that providers should issue a COP Letter when a complaint (or appeal) has been upheld, if the student asks for one. Equally, a very low number of COP Letters in comparison to other providers in the same OIA subscriptions band might indicate that a provider is not following the OIA’s Guidance on COP Letters correctly.
4. When reviewing the data in the Annual Statements, it is therefore difficult to compare “like with like”. We cannot accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data published in the Annual Statements by third parties.
5. The OIA is the independent student complaints ombudsman for higher education in England and Wales. Our Scheme is free to students. We have a wide remit to review student complaints about higher education providers in England and Wales, as set out in our Scheme Rules. You can find further information about the Scheme and our work at www.oiahe.org.uk.
6. For further information please contact mediarelations@oiahe.org.uk.