



office of the
independent
adjudicator

An Introduction to the OIA for Students' Unions

General

Only three of the delegates had had dealings with the OIA previously. None of the delegates had represented students at the OIA.

Pathway

In response to a question from a delegate, RB said the next round of questions for Pathway would be issued in October and that the 'Issues Paper' would be sent to the Students' Unions.

Rules & Guide/Compliance

Delegates said that rule 6.6 is not clear and needs clarification.

The delegates were concerned generally about their duties as the third party in cases.

Compliance

Delegate asked how the OIA can ensure compliance with suggestions.

CP responded that our suggestions are not binding but are meant as good practice guidance. As a result, we do not check for compliance. However, the OIA hopes that universities act on suggestions and we may refer to them in a later case related to the same area.

Case Studies / Open forum

There was a general discussion regarding personal tutors' duty to advise students of the university's mitigating circumstances procedure, academic appeals etc. The delegates' position was in contrast to OIA's general position ie it is an individual student's responsibility to be aware of the procedures.

Open forum:

Q: What is the OIA's position on universities threatening students with notes on their record or telling complainants they should wait to complain after their degree has been awarded?

A: RB confirmed that the OIA will find in favour of a complainant in such a situation. One delegate stated that panels can be intimidating. The system may be open but not the process!

RB recommended that delegates look at the JR case of Clarke.

Q: Can the OIA change an offer from a HEI e.g. can OIA reduce an offer?

A: Yes.

One delegate confirmed that they use the OIA's Code of Practice Guidelines.