



office of the
independent
adjudicator

PN 921

13 October 2011

**PRESS NOTICE: PATHWAY 3 CONSULTATION:
TOWARDS EARLY RESOLUTION AND MORE EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS HANDLING**

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is today launching its '**Pathway 3 Consultation - Towards Early Resolution and Effective Complaints Handling**', as requested in the Government's Higher Education White Paper, **Students at the Heart of the System** (2011). The Pathway 3 Consultation seeks views from across the Higher Education sector and beyond on key and sensitive issues related to effective strategies to promote the goals of early resolution of complaints and appeals and better all-round case handling in universities.

The issues include:

- the creation of campus ombudsmen, and associated support networks;
- the development of mediation on campus;
- the creation of a good practice framework for complaints and appeals processes including the incorporation of effective time-frames for handling,
- the development of an OIA 'kite-mark' accreditation;
- the introduction of a revised funding mechanism for the OIA Scheme which contains a case-fee element.

Rob Behrens, OIA Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive commented;

"Complaints by students about universities are rising fast and make the pursuit of more effective strategies to promote the early resolution of complaints and better all-round case handling important short and medium-term objectives. This is particularly relevant in the current climate where the 'student experience' is of central importance. We are therefore consulting the sector on appropriate strategies to address these challenges.

The OIA welcomes submissions from all those with strategic and operational responsibility for the student experience and the effective handling of complaints and appeals in universities and students' unions, from university and students' union representatives and mission groups, from individual students and complainants, from those with a specialist interest in early resolution of complaints and appeals, from sector stakeholders, and those from outside the sector with a contribution to make."

Copies of the consultation document can be found on the OIA website www.oiahe.org.uk. Submissions can be made by following the link on our website or on our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) page.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. To arrange an interview with the Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive, please contact Charlotte Corrish, Policy and Communications Manager, by emailing charlotte.corrish@oiahe.org.uk or by phone on 0118 959 2733
2. The consultation document can be downloaded from the OIA website www.oiahe.org.uk. If you need the information in another format, or have problems accessing it, contact the OIA on 0118 959 9813 or pathway@oiahe.org.uk
3. Submissions to the consultation can be made by clicking the consultation link on the front page of the OIA website www.oiahe.org.uk or by writing to the OIA at Third Floor, Kings Reach, 38-50 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AA. If you need the information in another format, or have problems accessing it, contact the OIA on 0118 959 9813 or pathway@oiahe.org.uk
4. The deadline for making a submission is midnight on 16 December 2011.
5. The OIA is the designated operator of the Scheme for reviewing student complaints in England and Wales, established under the Higher Education Act 2004. All universities in England and Wales belong to the Scheme.
6. The OIA has a wide remit to review student complaints about an 'act or omission' by HEIs 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