



**PN 926**

## **Concerns and complaints: UK HE regulatory partners sign agreement**

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that recognises their complementary and distinctive roles, and commits both sides to sharing information relevant to developing the risk-based approach to regulation in higher education.

Both QAA and OIA are members of the Regulatory Partnership Group created after the publication of the Higher Education White Paper in 2011.

The OIA reviews complaints brought by students about 'acts or omissions' of higher education institutions, while part of QAA's remit is to investigate wider concerns about academic standards and quality, where these indicate serious systemic or procedural problems.

Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive of QAA, said:

'Both organisations have seen an increase in the numbers of concerns and complaints we've had from students about their higher education experience. This agreement recognises our respective roles and responsibilities, and the independence of our remits. It commits us to setting clear expectations for service users and helps to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.'

Rob Behrens, Chief Executive of OIA, said:

'Complaints brought to the OIA by students about their university experience have doubled in the last three years. The Memorandum clarifies the respective roles of OIA and QAA in addressing student dissatisfaction and promotes information sharing so that better informed decision-making can take place.'

**Ends**

### **Notes to editors**

1. For further information about QAA, contact Joanna Wynn, Media Relations Officer, on 01452 557074, email [j.wynn@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:j.wynn@qaa.ac.uk).

2. For further information about the OIA, contact Jane Clarkson, Policy and Communications Manager, on 0118 959 9813, email [jane.clarkson@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:jane.clarkson@oiahe.org.uk).
3. The Memorandum of Understanding between QAA and the OIA is available at [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk) or [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)
4. QAA safeguards the public interest in the quality and standards of UK higher education. Details of QAA's Concerns scheme are available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/Complaints/concerns](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Complaints/concerns). Formal applications to the scheme increased by 38 per cent in 2011-12 compared with the previous year's figures.
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](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

06 December 2012