

Press notice: 928
24 September 2013



office of the
independent
adjudicator

Immediate release

University complaints 2012

The OIA has today (24 September) published Annual Letters for 2012 setting out the complaints record of all universities within the OIA Scheme. This is the second year that the OIA has published this information.

Rob Behrens, Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive commented:

“The value of the annual letters is in allowing students’ unions, universities, students and the wider public to review the record of universities in complaints handling. I am confident that this in turn is helping encourage earlier resolution of complaints and appeals by universities.”

The letters show the number of complaints and appeals closed by each university, the number that are then taken by the student to the OIA, and the OIA’s findings.

Different universities follow different processes in managing and closing complaints. For this reason it is not always possible to assume that the number of ‘Completion of Procedures’ letters accurately reflects the number of complaints and appeals which have been through formal university processes.

Rob Behrens added:

“There is still work to do to make sure that all universities follow OIA guidance on Completion of Procedures letters, and in understanding the reasons why cases that turn out to be Justified or Partly Justified have not been resolved at the university. The Annual Letters help to identify patterns but it is important not to make comparisons that are not supported by the data.”

Publication of Annual Letters is one of a number of steps taken by the OIA to open up complaints handling to public scrutiny. “The OIA looks at each and every complaint that reaches us” Rob Behrens said. “The sector overview this gives us is extremely helpful. What makes the real difference to students is when universities use this data to take stock of their own complaints procedures and look at where improvements can be made.”

ENDS

For further information please contact Jane Clarkson, Policy and Communications Manager, by emailing jane.clarkson@oiahe.org.uk or by phone on 0118 959 9813

Notes to Editors

1. All the Letters to OIA Scheme members are published on the OIA website at www.oiahe.org.uk.
2. The purpose of the Letters is to:
 - Increase public scrutiny of complaints handling records in universities;

- Increase complainant confidence in university complaints handling processes;

3. The OIA cannot accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties.

4. 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.

5. 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