office of the independent adjudicator

'for students in higher education'

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Dear Professor Allan

Annual Letter for 2015

This is the OIA Annual Letter for Birmingham City University for 2015. It documents Birmingham City University's record in handling complaints and appeals. Explanatory notes and relevant definitions can be found on our website.

The information in this Annual Letter must be considered in the context of the many changes in the sector during 2015, including changes to the OIA's Rules which took effect in July 2015. Specifically, students now have 12 months within which to complain to the OIA having exhausted their provider's internal complaints procedures. This 12 month period has not yet expired for students issued with Completion of Procedures (COP) letters in the latter part of 2015. Therefore, in this Annual Letter, we have not included: (i) data on the number of complaints received by the OIA with a COP letter dated 2015; or (ii) data on the proportion of COP letters issued in 2015 which result in complaints to the OIA.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Judy Clements OBE
Independent Adjudicator & Chief Executive

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STATISTICS

Birmingham City University			
Year	OIA Band[1]	Number of students	Relevant HESA data year[2]
2015	F	22285	2012/13
2014	F	23440	2011/12

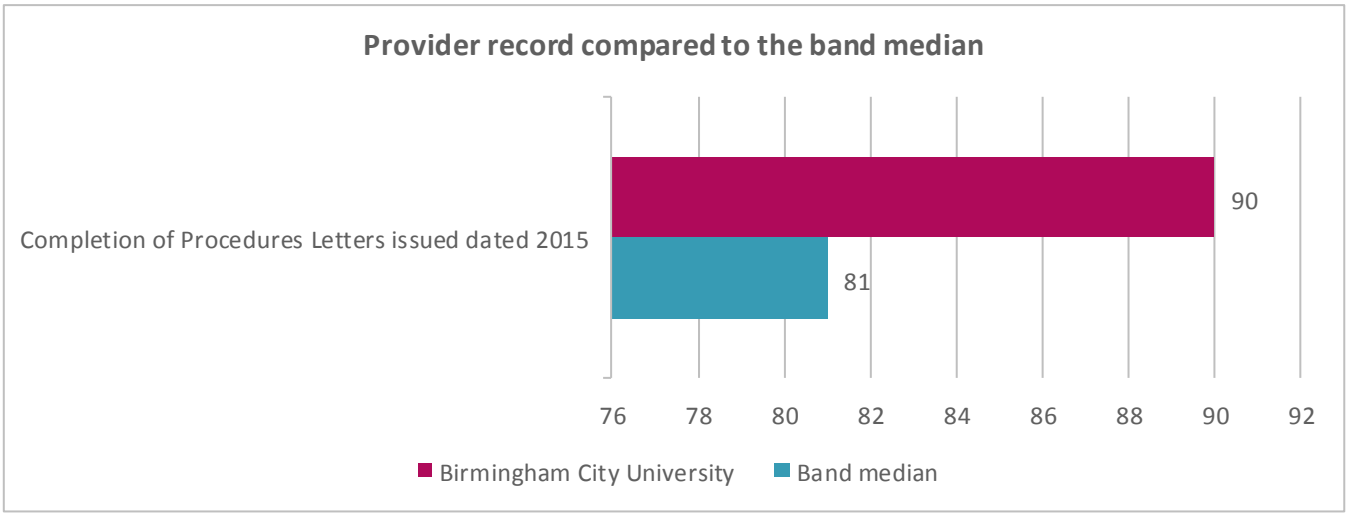
Annual Complaints to the OIA		
Year	Complaints received at the OIA	Complaints closed at the OIA[3]
2015	20	21
2014	20	36
Annual Change	None	Decreased by 15

Completion of Procedures Letters issued dated	
2015	90
2014	258
Annual Change	Decreased by 168

Birmingham City University has informed the OIA that 90 students were issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter in 2015.[4]

Charts 1 and 2 below give the comparisons between the returns from Birmingham City University and the band medians.

Chart 1



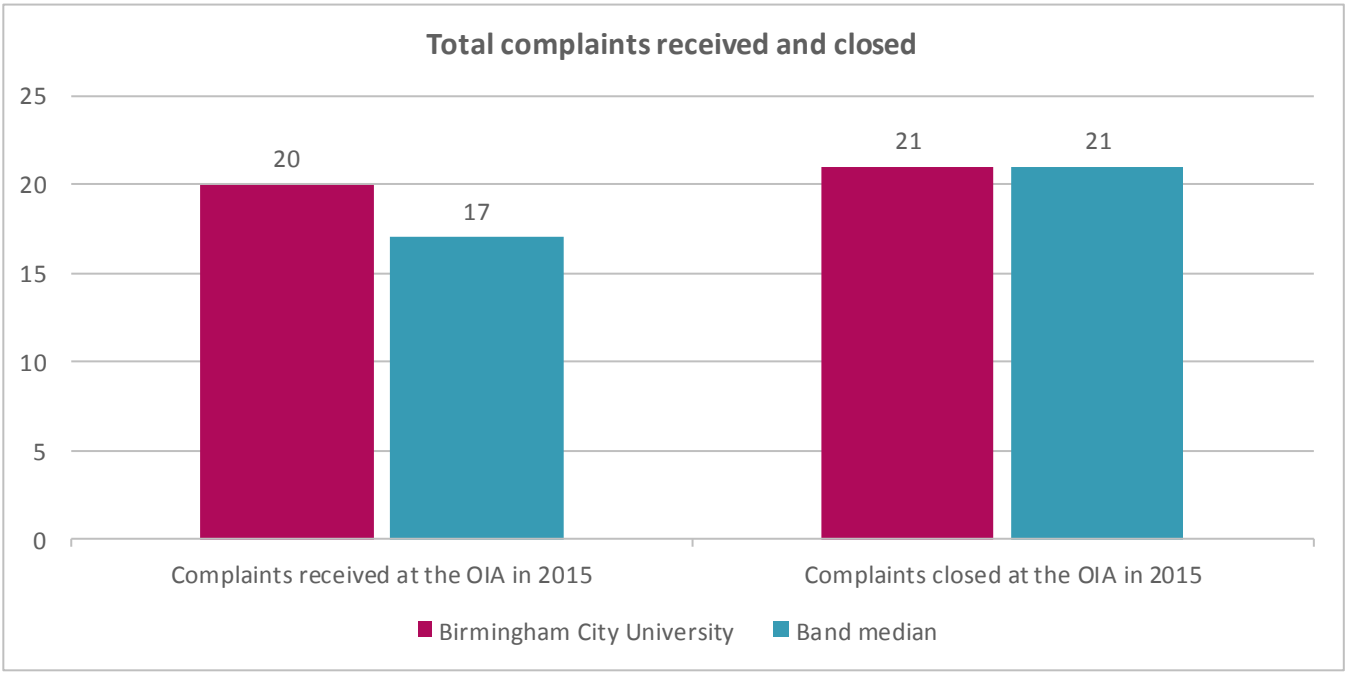
[1] The heading OIA Band refers to OIA subscription bands. The subscription bands for 2015 can be found on our website.

[2] Student numbers were obtained from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) – www.hesa.ac.uk. These numbers are the latest published available figures at the time providers are assigned to bands.

[3] Some of the complaints might have been received in the previous year.

[4] The information in this Annual Letter must be considered in the context of our Guidance on Completion of Procedures letters. In particular, it should be noted that the Guidance includes provision to issue a COP letter when a complaint has been upheld, when requested to do so by the student. The fact that a COP letter has been issued does not necessarily mean that the complaint has not been resolved. When reviewing the data it should be noted that it is difficult to compare like with like without asking all providers for a detailed breakdown of the outcome of the complaints/appeals underlying the COP letter numbers.

Chart 2



The OIA closed 21 complaints against Birmingham City University in 2015. Chart 3 below displays the outcome of the closed complaints and compares Birmingham City University figures to those of the band median.

Chart 3

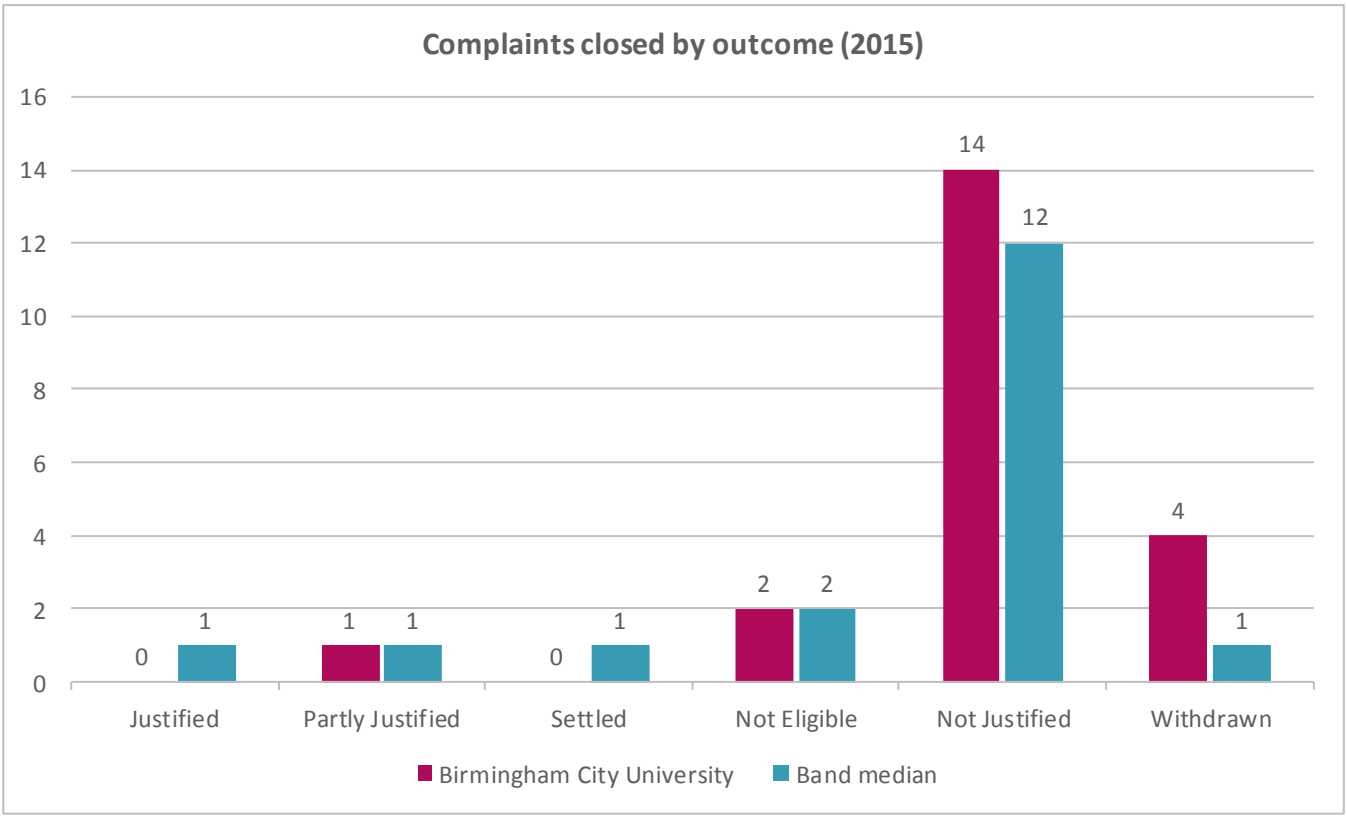


Chart 4 below breaks down the complaints about Birmingham City University closed in 2015 by subject matter of complaint. Chart 5 below illustrates the proportion of the total number of complaints about all providers closed by the OIA in 2015 attributable to subject matter of complaint. In Chart 4 actual numbers of complaints are contained in brackets.

Complaints closed by subject matter (2015)

- Academic Status
- Academic misconduct, plagiarism and cheating
- Discrimination and Human Rights
- Welfare and Accommodation
- Services issues (Contract)
- Disciplinary matters (not academic)
- Financial
- Other

Chart 4

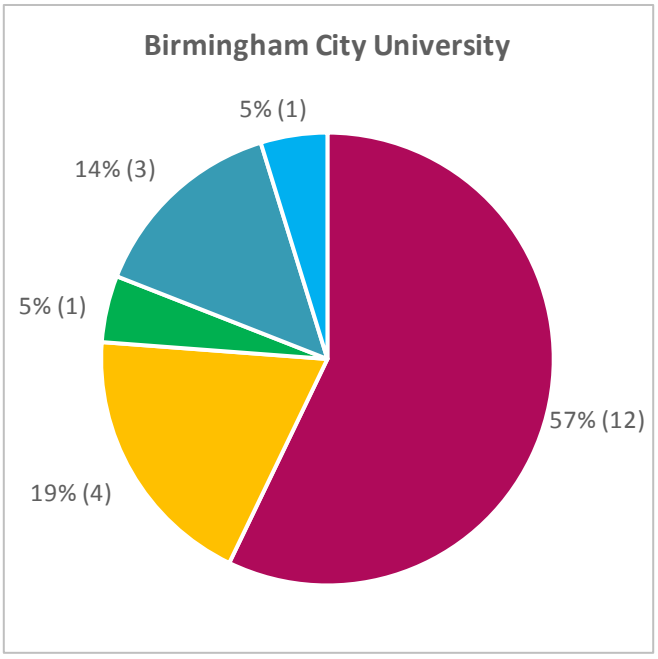
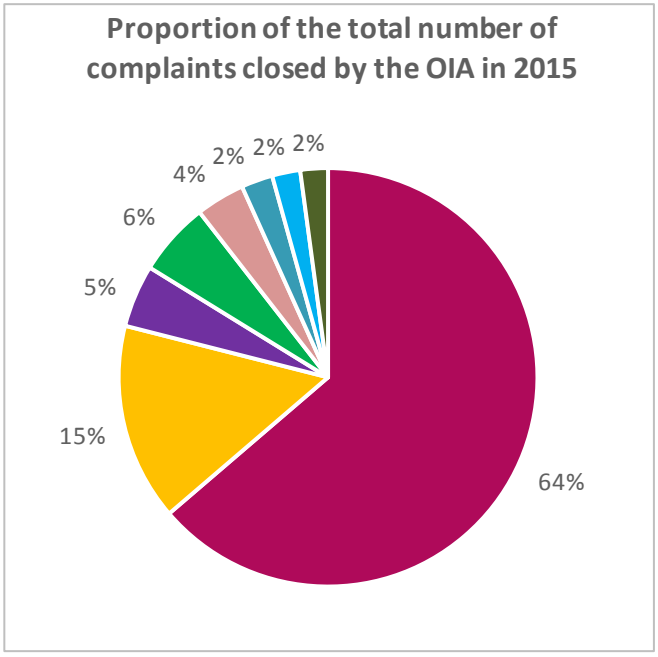



Chart 5