



office of the
independent
adjudicator

OIA Complaint Form

Introduction

Our role as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is to independently review unresolved complaints from students about their higher education provider. We are an independent review scheme, not a further appeal stage of your provider.

We will first decide whether the complaint is something we can look at. If it is, we will normally consider whether the provider has correctly applied its regulations and followed its procedures, and whether the outcome is reasonable.

Please have a look at the [Students](#) pages on our website before you complete this form, to see if we are likely to be able to look at your complaint and to offer the sort of outcome you would like.

For ease of reference, we use the term “provider” throughout our Complaint Form to include all providers that are members of our Scheme. A list of all [member providers](#) can be found on our website.

Completing the form

[MyOIA](#) provides an easy way to make a complaint, track the progress of complaints and change your contact details. Please submit your Complaint Form through MyOIA if you can.

If you are completing the form as a PDF, please download this form, fill it in and send it as an attachment to enquiries@oiahe.org.uk.

If you can't send us your form electronically, please send it by post using a “signed for” service to ensure safe delivery, to OIA, Second Floor, Abbey Wharf, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB.

- ▶ **If you would like us to review your complaint you need to complete and submit this Complaint Form within 12 months of the date on the Completion of Procedures Letter issued by your provider.** If we don't receive the completed and signed Complaint Form by the 12-month deadline, your complaint will be out of time and we will not accept it. If you're concerned that you might not be able to submit the form within the 12-month deadline, please contact us before the deadline and we will try to help.
- ▶ Please complete all relevant sections of the form clearly.
- ▶ Please try to explain your complaint as concisely as possible to help us understand what you would like us to look at.
- ▶ **Please sign the declaration section of the form.** (If you are completing the form electronically, please type your name in the signature box.) We can only accept your complaint if your Complaint Form is signed.

If you don't receive confirmation that we have received your Complaint Form and given your complaint a case reference number within 10 days, please contact us at enquiries@oiahe.org.uk.

Section 1: Your details

In this section we ask for your information to help us communicate with you about your complaint.

Title (eg. Ms, Mr, Dr, etc)			
First name(s)/Given name(s)			
Surname/Family name			
Preferred name(s)			

◆ If you prefer to be known by a different name.

Your address

Address line 1			
Address line 2			
Town			
County		Country	
Postcode			

Phone number	
---------------------	--

◆ If you are providing an international number, please add a country code in the following format: +44

Email address	
----------------------	--

◆ Please give us an email address if you can, as we will need to write to you and we usually use email.

Please note: You will need to tell us about any changes in your contact details while your complaint is with us. During this time please tell us in advance if you are going to be away. If you are going to be unavailable for a long period, you may want to consider appointing a representative to deal with your complaint.

If you are under the age of 18 when you submit this Complaint Form, please enter your date of birth:

--

Section 1: Your details (continued)

We usually use email when we need to communicate in writing. If you can't access email and need us to contact you by post, please tick this box and make sure you have filled in your address above:

◆ Please tick the box if you can't use/access email and need us to contact you by post. By leaving the box unticked you are agreeing to receiving email communications from us. Please check your spam/junk folders regularly throughout the complaints process and allow up to 24 hours for emails to be received.

We want our service to be accessible to everyone who needs to use it. If you have a disability that means there are adjustments you would like us to consider making to our process or to how we communicate with you, please tell us about these here. If you would prefer to keep this separate from your Complaint Form, please contact us by emailing accessibility@oiahe.org.uk or calling 0118 959 9813.

◆ We may contact you to discuss possible adjustments in more detail.

Section 2: Representative details (optional)

It is usually better if students handle their own complaints. However, you may find it helpful to have a representative (for example a students' union representative) if you find it difficult to deal with a lot of information, or if for other reasons it may be difficult for you to deal with your complaint.

If you appoint a representative you need to make sure that they know all about your complaint, that they are willing to represent you, are available and have the time to represent you, and will keep you fully informed. Once you have appointed a representative we will normally communicate only with them. We will not contact you directly until we close your complaint.

Our procedures are informal and you should not need a legal representative. For this reason, if you do choose to have a legal representative we will not normally recommend that a provider contribute to your legal costs even if we uphold your complaint.

If you would like to appoint a representative, please give us their details here.

Title (eg. Ms, Mr, Dr, etc)	
First name(s)/Given name(s)	
Surname/Family name	
Preferred name(s)	

◆ If your representative prefers to be known by a different name, please enter it here.

Address

Address line 1			
Address line 2			
Town			
County		Country	
Postcode			

Phone number	
---------------------	--

◆ If you are providing an international number, please add a country code in the following format: +44

Email address	
----------------------	--

◆ Please give us an email address if you can, as we will need to write to you and we usually use email.

Section 2: Representative details (optional) (continued)

I confirm that my representative has agreed to represent me in bringing my complaint to the OIA. My representative understands that the OIA will only correspond directly with them.

We usually communicate by email. If your representative can't access email and needs us to contact them by post, please tick this box:

◆ Please tick the box if your representative can't use/access email and needs us to contact them by post. If you leave the box unticked we will communicate with your representative by email. We ask representatives to check their spam/junk folders regularly throughout the complaints process and allow up to 24 hours for emails to be received.

◆ **Please note:** Your representative will need to tell us about any changes in their contact details or yours while your case is with us.

Section 3: Provider and course information

In this section we ask for some information about your provider because we can only look at complaints about providers that are members of our Scheme. We also ask for some information about your course and how you were registered.

Before you can bring your complaint to us, you normally need to complete the relevant internal procedures at your provider. If you have not done this, we won't be able to accept your complaint unless there are exceptional reasons why you could not complete the internal procedures. Please [contact us](#) before you submit your complaint if you don't have a Completion of Procedures Letter but you think there are exceptional reasons for us to consider your complaint.

If you are studying at one provider for a qualification awarded by another provider you may be able to complain to one or both providers, depending on relevant procedures and which provider is responsible for the issues you are complaining about. If the provider you complain to is a member of our Scheme, it should issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter at the end of those procedures and you will then be able to come to us.

If you are or were registered to study at some providers, for example universities, you can complain to us no matter what course you are or were studying. With some other providers, for example many further education and sixth form colleges and providers of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITTs), you can only complain to us if you are or were on a [higher education course](#).

Name of the provider you are/were studying with:

◆ Please enter the provider you are/were registered with and are complaining about. (This will be the provider that sent you the Completion of Procedures Letter). You can only complain to us about providers that are [members of our Scheme](#).

Are you studying with the provider that awards your qualification?

◆ You may be studying at one provider for a qualification which is awarded by another provider. For example you may be studying at a college for a degree which is awarded by a university. If more than one provider is involved, we will look at what each member provider is responsible for.

Yes, the provider where I am/was studying awards my qualification

No, the provider where I am/was studying does not award my qualification

No, the provider where I am/was studying does not award my qualification. My qualification is awarded by an Ofqual-regulated Awarding Organisation

I'm not sure

If you answered 'No', please enter the name of the provider/Awarding Organisation that awards your qualification.

Section 3: Provider and course information (continued)

Where are you studying?

I am in England or Wales and my course involves attending in person

I am studying by distance learning at a provider in England or Wales

I am studying at a provider that is not in England or Wales for an award of a provider in England or Wales and my course involves attending in person

I am studying by distance learning at a provider that is not in England or Wales for an award of a provider in England or Wales

Which provider(s) are you complaining about?

◆ You can only complain to us about providers that are members of our Scheme. Before you bring your complaint to us, you normally need to complete the relevant internal procedures at your provider. If you are studying at one provider for a qualification awarded by another provider you may be able to complain to one or both providers, depending on relevant procedures and which provider is responsible for the issues you are complaining about. If the provider you complain to is a member of our Scheme, it should issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter at the end of those procedures and you will then be able to come to us.

The provider named above where you are/ were studying

The provider named above which awards your qualification

Course type:

If other, please specify

Course category:

Course name:

◆ Please enter the name of the course you are studying eg History. If you are studying for a PhD please enter the subject area not the title of your thesis.

Is this an apprenticeship?

Section 3: Provider and course information (continued)

Are you registered

Full-time (attending the total number of modules assigned for a year's study)

Part-time (attending a number of the modules assigned for a year's study over more than one year)

Other

When you applied for your course were you

◆ We need this information to comply with reporting requirements as the designated Alternative Dispute Resolution body for higher education. This information will not affect our review of your complaint.

Resident in the UK

Resident outside the UK

Unsure

If you are unsure, please explain your circumstances

Is your course subject to a professional or accrediting body's maximum registration period?

◆ Some professional courses may have to be completed within a certain period of time. The time limit may be set by the relevant professional or accrediting body not the provider.

Yes

No

Please tell us the date of the end of this period for your studies:

Please enter the date that you started your course:

◆ This date will be the first day of the first term of your first year. If you don't remember the exact date, select the first day of the month and year. The exact date may be more important if you are studying a short course or if when you started relates to your complaint. Please don't delay submitting your form while you try to get this information.

Please enter the date that you ended your course:

◆ This date will be the last day of the last term of your last year of studying. If you are still a student, please enter the date you expect to finish. If you withdrew or were withdrawn, please enter your withdrawal date. If you don't remember the exact date, select the first day of the month and year. The exact date may be relevant if you are studying a short course or when you finished relates to your complaint. Please don't delay submitting your form while you try to get this information.

Section 3: Provider and course information (continued)

How much are the tuition fees that you pay per year for this course?

◆ Please enter the amount in pounds. If your fees changed each year at the provider, then please enter the amount for each year in the space provided.

How are you categorised by your provider for fee purposes?

Home student - You pay tuition fees at the level set by the provider for British citizens

EU student - You pay the tuition fees at the level set by the provider for European Union citizens

Non-EU student - You pay tuition fees at the level set by the provider for international students from outside the European Union

Section 4: Completion of Procedures Letter

We will not review a complaint unless the provider has had the opportunity to look at it first. This means that normally you need to have completed the internal processes at your provider before you complain to us. When your provider has made a decision on your complaint it should issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter. Your completed Complaint Form must reach us within 12 months of the date of that letter. We will not accept a complaint which we receive more than 12 months after the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

Have you received a Completion of Procedures Letter from the provider or providers you are complaining about?

◆ Please enter the provider you are/were registered with and are complaining about. (This will be the provider that sent you the Completion of Procedures Letter). You can only complain to us about providers that are [members of our Scheme](#).

Yes

No

If yes, please provide the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter(s)

If no, please explain why you are not supplying a Completion of Procedures Letter

Section 5: Your complaint

Summary of your complaint:

◆ Please briefly tell us the main issues you raised in your complaint or appeal to the provider. You can help us understand your complaint by including a list of the key events with dates, in date order (you may find it helpful to use bullet points or a numbered list). Normally the focus of our review will be on how the provider dealt with your complaint or appeal and its final decision, before it sent you the Completion of Procedures Letter.

Why are you dissatisfied with the final decision set out in the Completion of Procedures Letter or the process followed?

◆ What is it about the final decision as set out in the Completion of Procedures Letter, or the process the provider followed, that you are dissatisfied with? Please set out the main reasons why you are not satisfied with the provider's decision or process.

Section 5: Your complaint (continued)

Potential resolution:

◆ If we uphold your complaint, how could the matter be resolved? Please see the [putting things right](#) pages on our website for information on the types of remedies we can recommend if we uphold your complaint. Any suggestions you make about how the matter could be resolved will not affect our decision about whether to uphold your complaint. We may use the information that you provide here to try to settle your complaint.

Has there been any court or tribunal action relating to your complaint (or is any planned)?

◆ Please tell us if you have started any court or tribunal proceedings relevant to your complaint. Please provide copies of the claim form, defence and any relevant orders relating to the court or tribunal proceedings. You must tell us if you decide to start any proceedings once our review has started because this may affect whether we can continue to review your complaint.

Yes

No

Has your complaint been considered by another organisation?

◆ Please tell us if your complaint has been considered by any organisation external to the provider you are complaining about. We may not be able to review your complaint if it has already been considered by another alternative dispute resolution body.

Yes

No

Section 6: Declaration

Please read the declaration below carefully and then tick the relevant boxes. We recommend you also read our [Rules](#) and our guidance about [personal information](#) before completing this section. You need to complete this part of the form, even if you have appointed a representative.

I WOULD LIKE THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TO CONSIDER MY COMPLAINT.

- ▶ I believe that the things I have said in support of my complaint are true.
- ▶ I will tell the OIA immediately if any part of my complaint is being dealt with in the courts or by another organisation.
- ▶ I can withdraw my complaint at any time and the OIA will stop considering it.
- ▶ The OIA is impartial and will not act on my behalf or on behalf of the provider.
- ▶ The OIA is a review body that provides an informal alternative dispute resolution service.
- ▶ The OIA may reach a different solution to my complaint than a court would reach. At the end of the OIA's processes, there is no legal obligation on me, or on the provider, to accept its decision. I may be able to take my complaint to a court after the OIA has completed its processes, but if I accept the remedy which the OIA recommends, this may limit whether I can seek a different outcome through a court.
- ▶ I can ask questions about the OIA's Rules and say if I am unhappy with how they are being used, but the OIA has the final say on how its Rules are applied.

By ticking this box, I confirm that I have understood and agree with these statements.

- ▶ The OIA will handle personal details about me, which could include sensitive information (for example, relating to health matters) so that the OIA can review my complaint effectively.
- ▶ The OIA may obtain this information from me, and from the provider where I was studying, and (if different) from the provider that awards the qualification I was studying for. Occasionally the OIA may also obtain information relevant to your complaint from other organisations.
- ▶ The OIA's Scheme is transparent. When I submit this Complaint Form, the OIA will share it and any accompanying information with the provider I am complaining about. Where I am/was studying at one provider for a qualification awarded by another provider, the OIA may share this form and the information and evidence I supply with one or both providers, as the OIA considers appropriate.
- ▶ The OIA may share any further information I provide about my complaint with the provider(s) involved. Where my course of study or the complaint involves more than one provider, the OIA may exchange information supplied by one provider about my complaint, with the other(s). If I have any concerns about this, I will contact the OIA for advice before I provide the information.

Section 6: Declaration (continued)

- ▶ **This paragraph only applies to students studying for qualifications awarded by Awarding Organisations that are not members of the OIA Scheme, for example City & Guilds.** If the qualification that I am/was studying for is awarded by an Awarding Organisation that is not a member of the OIA Scheme, the OIA may need to exchange information with that Awarding Organisation and/or its regulator. If that is the case, the OIA may send a copy of this Complaint Form, and supporting documentation, to the relevant Awarding Organisation and/or its regulator and we will let you know about this.
- ▶ I can withdraw my consent to the OIA handling my personal data at any time. However, this may mean that the OIA cannot look at my complaint.

By ticking this box, I confirm that I have understood the statements above and I am agreeing to them.

The OIA cannot consider my complaint without my agreement

- ▶ From time to time, the OIA seeks feedback from the people who use its services. The OIA may use my contact details to ask me for my views. My participation in these surveys is voluntary and if I choose not to participate, this will not affect how my complaint is considered.
- ▶ Sometimes, the OIA will work with an independent third party conducting research into student complaints and satisfaction with the OIA. In these cases, the third party will not use the personal data for any other purpose than to seek feedback. It will take appropriate measures to hold the data securely and will comply with relevant legislation including around my right to access and delete my personal information. Participation in this kind of survey is voluntary and does not affect how my complaint is considered. The OIA will not include me in this kind of research without my agreement.

I agree that a third party may seek feedback from me on behalf of the OIA.

I confirm that I am the student making the complaint.

SIGNATURE (Type your name here)
(Even if you have appointed a representative)

DATE

Section 7: Supporting documents

Please provide your **Completion of Procedures Letter**. We normally need this before we can start considering your complaint, so please make sure to include it to avoid delaying your complaint. If the provider sent you an accompanying letter or report with the Completion of Procedures Letter please attach that too.

You don't need to provide any other documents related to your complaint. During our review we will ask the provider for a copy of the information that is relevant to your complaint. This will normally include copies of all the documents that the provider considered and any record of how the provider considered your case before it reached its final decision set out in the Completion of Procedures Letter. This information will usually include for example, the complaint or appeal that you made to the provider as well as any relevant correspondence and records of how the provider considered your case such as the notes or minutes of any hearings or meetings that took place.

We will share details of our information request with you so that you can see what we have asked for. When the provider has given us the relevant information, we will share it with you and give you an opportunity to comment on it. If you think any information is missing or there is something else you want us to see, you can give it to us at that stage.

- ▶ Please share documents with us electronically wherever possible.
- ▶ **Please don't send us original paper documents**

Section 8: Monitoring questionnaire

We want all students who have an unresolved complaint about their higher education provider to feel able to bring their complaint to us, regardless of their age, race, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, marital or partnership status, nationality, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. To help us monitor this, we ask you to tell us about yourself.

You don't have to complete this form. We will still look at your complaint if you choose not to tell us this information. But, by filling in this form, you will help us to have a better understanding of who is using our Scheme.

If you do tell us about yourself on this form, we will not share the information with anyone else. The information you give us on this form will not be given to the case-handlers looking at your complaint. We will only use the information you give us to carry out statistical analysis of who is using our Scheme. This analysis is done on an anonymous basis and you will not be identifiable in any information we produce about who uses our service.

How do you describe your ethnicity?

Multiple / mixed ethnicity

Single ethnicity

Unable to say

Prefer not to say

Other

Please select any options which you feel are appropriate

(for multiple/mixed ethnicities, please tick all that apply):

Arab / Arab British

Arab

Asian / Asian British

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Indian

Pakistani

Another Asian / Asian British background

Black / Black British

African

Caribbean

Another Black / Black British background

White / White British

White British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh

Gypsy / Irish Traveller / Traveller / Roma

Another White / White British background

Other

Another background

If you would like to tell us something about your ethnicity that this form has not included, please tell us here:

Section 8: Monitoring questionnaire (continued)

Do you identify as?

Female

Male

Non-Binary

Prefer not to say

Other

How old are you?

Are you considered a disabled person within the meaning of the Equality Act or do you have a long term health condition or a learning difference that has a substantial and long-term impact on your ability to carry out day to day activities?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses

D/deaf or have a hearing impairment

Learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D

Long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy

Mental health condition, challenge or disorder

anxiety

depression

other mental health condition

Physical impairment, mobility or dexterity issues

Social/communication conditions such as a speech & language impairment or an autistic spectrum condition

An impairment, health condition or learning difference not listed above (specify, if you wish)

Other

We want our service to be accessible to everyone who needs to use it. If you have a disability that means there are adjustments you would like us to consider making to our process or to how we communicate with you, please tell us about these on your Complaint Form or contact us by emailing accessibility@oiahe.org.uk or calling 0118 959 9813.