office of the independent adjudicator

Terms of Reference

OIA Student Panel

1. Purpose

The OIA Student Panel exists to provide a student perspective on aspects of the OIA's work where insight into student experience, understanding, accessibility and communication would be valuable.

The Panel supports the OIA in developing, testing and improving its work through constructive engagement with students and recent graduates. The Student Panel is consultative and advisory in nature. It does not have a governance or campaigning function, nor will it be involved in individual casework decisions.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Student Panel are to:

- provide informed student perspectives on areas of the OIA's work
- help improve the accessibility, clarity and effectiveness of OIA communications and engagement
- support the testing and development of policies, guidance, processes and service improvements
- help the OIA better understand how students experience and interpret its role, remit and communications
- provide a constructive "student lens" on projects and workstreams across the organisation
- support the OIA's commitment to meaningful engagement with students.

3. Scope of Activity

The Panel may be asked to contribute to work across a broad range of the OIA's operating and strategic plans. The Panel will not: have any involvement in individual casework decisions, act as an advocacy or lobbying body, determine OIA policy positions, or represent the views of all students or the wider sector.

4. Membership

The Panel will seek to reflect the diversity of our Scheme membership and include a broad and diverse range of:

- current students
- recent graduates
- students from different backgrounds and modes of study
- students from across England and Wales
- students with a range of lived experiences relevant to higher education

Members will normally be appointed for an initial term of one year, with the possibility of extension for a further year.

Membership numbers will normally be between 5-10 members.

5. Expectations of Members

Panel members are expected to:

- contribute constructively and respectfully
- engage with issues beyond their own individual experiences where possible
- maintain confidentiality where required
- declare any conflicts of interest (including if they have submitted a complaint to our Scheme for review)
- support an inclusive and collaborative environment
- provide feedback in line with the Panel's consultative role

Members act in an individual capacity and not as formal representatives of institutions, students' unions or other organisations.

6. Chairing and Secretariat

The Panel will be chaired by an OIA colleague nominated by the Leadership Group.

Administrative and operational support for the Panel will be provided by Governance Services.

7. Fees and Expenses

Panel members will receive payment for their participation at rates aligned with existing OIA panel arrangements, including HEAP and DEP. Reasonable expenses will also be reimbursed in line with OIA policies.

8. Review

The effectiveness and operation of the Student Panel, including these Terms of Reference, will be reviewed after the first year of operation and periodically thereafter.

July 2026