



office of the
independent
adjudicator

Data Protection and Information Governance Practitioner (Apprentice)

Candidate pack | August 2026



Welcome!



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About the OIA

The vision of the OIA

The OIA's vision is simple but powerful: higher education students are always treated fairly. We pursue this through resolving individual complaints, sharing learning from those complaints to improve policies and practices, and working with providers, sector bodies, and governments to ensure a higher education system that is just and accountable.

How the scheme operates

The OIA runs the independent student complaints scheme for higher education in England and Wales. When a student has gone through their university or college's internal complaints or appeals process and remains dissatisfied, they can bring their case to us. We review the complaint impartially, considering the evidence from both the student and the provider, and decide whether the provider acted fairly and followed its own procedures. Our approach is independent, impartial, and proportionate: we do not re-hear the case, but we look carefully at whether the provider applied fair processes and reached a reasonable outcome. Where we find that things have gone wrong, we can make recommendations to put things right for the individual student, and we share learning more widely to help improve practice across the sector.

Our history and organisational structure

We were established in the early 2000s, when we were designated under the Higher Education Act to run the independent student complaints scheme in England and Wales.

Today, we are a charity and company limited by guarantee, governed by an independent Board, with oversight, clear governance arrangements, and strategies that reflect the changing landscape of higher education.



The atrium space at our modern shared offices next to Reading station.

Our values

Our values inform everything we do. We recruit people who share our values and are committed to our vision, and we reflect our values in our work.



Integrity and independence

We act impartially, fairly, and on merit.



Service ethos

Treating everyone with respect, sensitivity and responsiveness.



Quality

We aim for timely, proportionate, and fair handling of complaints, with continuous learning and improvement.



Engagement

We engage with students, providers, and stakeholders to share knowledge and improve the sector.



Openness and accessibility

We are transparent and accessible in our communications and actions.



Equality and diversity

Both a commitment in our work with the sector and as an employer. Kindness and human-centred approaches are increasingly part of how we do things.

Culture, benefits and employee experience

Work environment and culture

As a charity, our purpose goes beyond profit, we are driven by values of fairness, independence, and service to the public good. This ethos shapes our work environment and culture: collaborative, respectful, and mission-focused. We are a supportive community where colleagues are trusted to deliver, encouraged to share ideas, and recognised for their contributions.

Our charitable status reinforces a culture of accountability and integrity, and gives staff the satisfaction of knowing that their work directly benefits students and strengthens confidence in higher education.

We are based in Reading and operate on the basis that hybrid working offers many benefits. We believe that colleagues collaborate well in person, as well as being able to manage their time through remote or home working.



The break out areas and kitchen space in the OIA office.



“Friendly, supportive team environment where views are valued and people are trusted.”

“Flexible working arrangements and a hybrid model to suit varying roles and personal circumstances.”

“Each day is different: case-handling brings new challenges; we also review processes and seek to improve how we serve students.”

Working at the OIA

- Central Reading location with good transport links.
- Modern facilities and commitment to wellbeing.
- Career opportunities and growth paths.
- Work with people who specialise in case-handling, outreach, HR, IT, operations and more.
- Opportunities for progression through specialism or leadership tracks as the organisation grows and develops.
- Mentoring and training are emphasised.



Learning and development

- Structured learning programmes and mentoring to help you build both technical and soft skills.
- Regular feedback and performance reviews to guide career development.
- Access to external training, conferences, and sector events to stay up-to-date with sector trends and best practice.



Diversity and inclusion

- We strive for a workforce that reflects the diversity of those we serve.
- Our policies aim to remove barriers, whether in recruiting, supporting, or promoting staff.
- Commitment to kindness, human-centred approaches, fairness and compassion at every stage.



Benefits

- Generous holiday allowance.
- USS Pension scheme.
- Employee assistance scheme to support staff wellbeing.
- Flexible working / hybrid-working opportunities.
- Health and wellbeing benefits, including discount schemes.

Organisation structure

Here's a snapshot of teams within OIA, and how they each contribute to our mission:

Senior Leadership (Independent Adjudicator and Chief Executive)

Sets strategy, upholds independence, quality and fairness, and ensures the whole organisation is aligned to our purpose.

Leadership, Communications and Governance

Provides governance, Board and leadership office support, risk and compliance co-ordination, and communications, so decisions are well-governed, transparent and aligned to our values.

Assessment, Resolution and Casework Support

Receives and assesses complaints, gathers information, and drives early, proportionate resolution wherever possible. Casework support ensures smooth, timely case progression. This is the frontline of our service and a key driver of accessibility and efficiency.

Public Policy

Leads on external policy engagement and stakeholder relationships, helping ensure our learning informs national discussion and that our scheme remains understood and trusted.

Adjudication

Carries out evidence-based independent reviews and issues outcomes with clear reasons. This team safeguards consistency, fairness and the credibility of our decisions.

Digital Technology and Operational Services

Keeps our case management and core systems secure and reliable, supports data and reporting, finance, office administration, and facilities that keep everything running behind the scenes. Supports value for money, so colleagues have the tools to work efficiently and safely.

Outreach and Insight

Shares learning from complaints, produces guidance and case studies, and engages with students and providers through events and training, turning case experience into sector improvement.

People and Culture

Recruitment, development, wellbeing and inclusion. Builds the capability and culture to deliver complex, sensitive work to high standards.

The role

Job title:

Data Protection and Information Governance Practitioner (Apprentice)

Reports to:

Insight Manager, with some reporting into the Head of Team who has strategic responsibility for data protection

Operational area:

Outreach and Insight Team (whilst working across the organisation)

Location:

Minimum two days per week in the Reading office. During the probation period more days are likely to be required. Some travel for work might be required, and expenses will be paid.

Hours of work:

Full-time or part time (minimum four days per week)

Salary:

Grade 2: Starting salary of £30,283



Summary of the position, impact and autonomy

Role Purpose

To support the OIA in delivering high quality data protection and information governance services, helping colleagues manage information confidently and in accordance with legal and organisational requirements.

Working as part of the Outreach & Insight team, this role contributes to good information management practice whilst developing professional knowledge and skills through a structured Level 4 apprenticeship programme alongside the role.

Apprenticeship Overview

This Apprenticeship, which typically takes around 18 months to complete, ahead of an endpoint assessment, will provide training in all aspects of Information Governance work, with a particular focus on how to manage personal data well. The apprentice will be employed in the role while completing structured learning and development with an apprenticeship provider.

Completion of the apprenticeship will result in a Level 4 qualification in Data Protection and Information Governance, aligning with professional recognition at individual member grade within the Information and Records Management Society and the British computer society.

Much of the learning will be role and project based within the workplace, with approximately one day per week spent in a virtual formal learning setting with the apprenticeship provider.

The role's main focus is to support and advise all OIA colleagues working with personal data, to ensure that we meet our obligations under UK GDPR, DPA 2018, supporting regulations, and good practice guidelines. As the Apprentice develops their knowledge and skills, they will model excellent information and records management practice and contribute to the development of good practice across the organisation.

Working closely with the senior leader with responsibility for data protection, they ensure that the OIA takes a Privacy by Design approach to our work.

Throughout the apprenticeship, the apprentice will progressively develop their knowledge, skills and professional judgement and take on greater responsibility and autonomy as their capability develops.

Impact

Contributes to the OIA's effective management and protection of information. Supports compliance, good decision making and confidence in how personal data and organisational information are handled and stored.

Autonomy

Works within established policies and procedures, initially with guidance and good support including mentoring. Autonomy and responsibility will increase as knowledge, skills, experience and judgement develop through the apprenticeship.

Organisational Values

All roles are expected to demonstrate our organisational values of **integrity and independence, quality, openness and accessibility, service ethos, engagement, and equality and diversity**. These underpin how work is carried out, decisions are made and work relationships are built.

Main responsibilities

The apprentice will carry out the following responsibilities initially with close support, with the level of autonomy and responsibility increasing as their knowledge, skills, experience and judgement develop:

- Respond to people exercising their data protection rights, particularly the rights of access, rectification and erasure. Work with colleagues to identify and collate information that should be supplied. Ensure that requests are answered within the relevant deadlines. Maintain and improve systems for tracking how we are responding to data subject rights requests.
- Act as the first responder to reports of suspected data breaches. Carry out initial fact finding and make recommendations about how to address any breaches, including whether a report should be made to ICO and/or the data subject informed. Maintain and improve systems for recording data breaches or suspected breaches. Ensure learning from breaches is fed into operational practice.
- Respond to people who have a complaint about how we have handled their personal data. Carry out initial fact finding and make recommendations about how to respond to the complaint.
- Support colleagues to complete core documentation that helps the OIA demonstrate compliance with the data protection regime including
 - The Record of Processing Activities (ROPA)
 - Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs)
 - Legitimate Interest Assessments (LIAs)
 - Appropriate Policy Documents (APDs)

Maintain a regular review cycle to ensure that documentation is up to date and accurate and that risks are monitored.

- Prepare privacy notifications that explain what we are doing with personal data in different contexts
- With support from Communications colleagues, prepare additional information for internal colleagues and external stakeholders (e.g. students who have complained to the OIA) about our approach to personal data
- Develop and deliver engaging and informative training to colleagues to ensure that everyone maintains an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding about how to handle personal data appropriately within the OIA
- Provide advice and guidance to all colleagues about handling personal data, covering casework activities (personal data of individuals within complaints files) as well as wider organisational activities (e.g. personal data of our staff or other stakeholders)

- From time to time, look at how organisations we may partner with meet their responsibilities towards personal data. Help to prepare any necessary data sharing agreements.
- Keep up to date with legislative changes and best practice guidance from ICO and other relevant professional sources. Flag any developments that may affect how the OIA goes about our work.
- Champion excellent information management practice within the OIA. Model excellent practice in creating, storing, sharing and deleting information in accordance with records management policy
- Contribute to the continuous development of records management policies, including retention policies. Monitor compliance with the records management policy, and support colleagues in developing good records management habits

Person specification

Knowledge, training, experience

Essential

- Level 2 in English and Maths (equivalent to GCSE grade 4 or above)
- Commitment to completing the Level 4 apprenticeship and applying learning within the workplace

Helpful to have

- A basic understanding of what information management means
- A basic understanding of the requirements organisations have around personal data
- A basic understanding of what the OIA does as the Student Complaints Scheme
- GCSE, A Level, or similar qualification in Law, Legal Studies or other similar subjects

Skills, qualities, attitude

Essential

- Enthusiastic and willing to learn through formal training and hands on experience
- Eager to develop new skills and expertise in information, knowledge and records management as required, including technical IT skills
- Excellent reading comprehension skills. Able to understand and summarise legal documents written in formal English and identify the sections that are most relevant to a particular task
- Keeps information confidential as required
- Good time management skills. Able to balance training commitments with day-to-day work. Meets the deadlines set by the law
- Strong communication skills, in person and in writing. Able to explain complicated ideas in simple ways
- Make suggestions for action to senior colleagues on areas for improvements. Able to explain reasons for recommending a particular course of action.
- Able to show good judgment about when to handle something alone and when to seek help
- Responds positively to constructive feedback and understands that mistakes are a learning opportunity
- Gets job satisfaction from completing work accurately with a high level of attention to detail
- Enjoys making sure that step-by-step processes are correctly followed, and seeing work through to completion
- Comfortable with technology and with the ability to learn to use new IT systems and processes. Enthusiastic about the use of technology to enable colleagues to achieve organisational goals

Helpful to have

- Confidence in delivering presentations to colleagues, online or in person.
- Interested in developing external professional networks with Data Protection, Knowledge, Information and Records specialists
- Able to influence others to change their ways of working to improve good data practice.

IT / Product knowledge

Essential

- Able to use standard Microsoft Office 365 packages (e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook)

Helpful to have

- Knowledge of Microsoft Dynamics and Microsoft SharePoint and/or other EDRMS.
- Understanding of what cyber-security measures organisations may take

How to apply

Application

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about the OIA and how to apply. The role will be recruited by **Damar Training** who will be managing applicants through [GetMyFirstJob](#), and also advertised on the [Government Apprenticeship](#) website.

Advert closing date

The closing date for applications is **Sunday 23 August 2026 at 23:59**.

Applications will be reviewed regularly and we reserve the right to close the advert earlier than the closing date.

Contact us

If you would like to discuss the role in more detail before applying, please contact recruitment@oiahe.org.uk.

What reasonable adjustments can be made if I have a disability?

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to support disabled applicants and ensure that you are not disadvantaged in the recruitment and assessment process, and to ensuring that reasonable adjustments can be made for you in the role if your application is successful.

If you need any adjustments to the process because of a health condition or disability please contact the recruitment team.



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