



office of the
independent
adjudicator

Strategic Project Delivery Manager

Leadership Office

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Candidate pack | June 2026
oiahe.org.uk





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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.

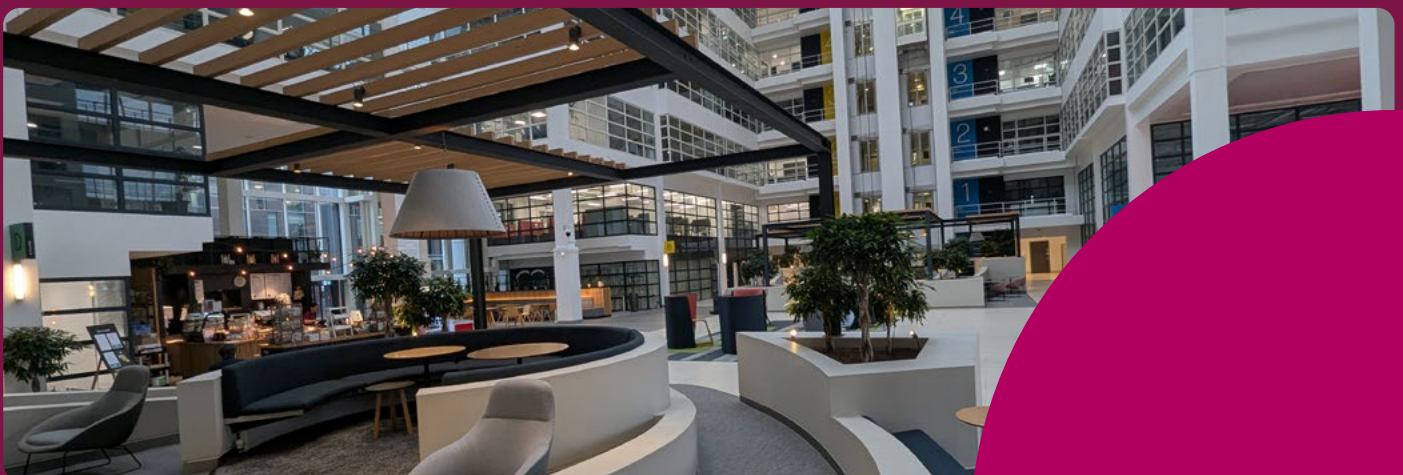
How the scheme operates

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

Established following legislative reforms in the early 2000s, 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.



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.

Our values are:



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.



“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.”

Location and Office

- Central Reading location with good transport links.
- Modern facilities and commitment to wellbeing.
- Career Opportunities and Growth Paths.
- Roles are available across case-handling, outreach, organisational support (e.g. HR, IT, Operations) and more.
- Opportunities for progression through specialist and leadership tracks as the organisation grows and develops.
- We believe in internal development: many senior-roles are filled by promotion; mentoring and training are emphasised.



Learning & 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 & 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.

Teams, Culture, and Contribution

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

Senior Leadership (Independent Adjudicator & Chief Executive)

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

Assessment & Resolution (incl. 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.

Adjudication

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

Outreach & 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.

Leadership, Communications & Governance

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

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.

Digital Technology & 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 and support value for money, so colleagues have the tools to work efficiently and safely.

People & Culture

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

The role

Job title:

Strategic Project Delivery Manager

Reports to:

Company Secretary & Chief of Staff

Department:

Leadership Office

Location:

Hybrid / Reading - a minimum of one day a week in the office.
More office attendance will be needed during probation period

Hours of work:

Full-time (35 hours) / Part-time working considered

Salary range:

Starting salary of £48,868

(Salary progression based on performance
within Grade 5 £48,868 - £57,177)



Summary of the position, impact and autonomy

Impact

The Strategic Project Delivery Manager plays a pivotal role in managing the delivery of organisational priorities with clarity, pace and discipline. The role leads the coordination of strategic programme / projects activity that underpin our organisation's strategic cycle, ensuring priorities are translated into clear plans, effective delivery mechanisms and measurable outcomes.

Working closely with the Company Secretary & Chief of Staff and the Head of People & Culture, the post holder enables the successful delivery of strategic priorities by providing oversight of key workstreams, maintaining visibility of risk and dependencies and ensuring progress reporting supports informed decision making. The role combines strategic project oversight and leads the Executive Assistant & Project Coordinator.

The postholder contributes significantly to programme delivery, organisational change, governance and organisational effectiveness. They will bring strong project management expertise, sound judgement, analytical capability and help turning strategic priorities into clear plans and practical actions. Working across teams and with leaders they will support focus on joined up delivery with momentum, coordinate activity and support change delivery in a structured and sustainable way.

Autonomy

The postholder will work with a high degree of autonomy within an agreed framework and will take ownership of significant areas of organisational delivery, governance coordination and Leadership Office Management. They will be expected to exercise initiative, make sound judgements, identify emerging risks and opportunities, and proactively drive progress across multiple priorities.

The role requires an individual who can operate confidently in a multi-faceted environment, handling sensitive matters with discretion whilst influencing and co-ordinating activities across a wide range of stakeholders. They will be expected to improve processes, strengthen delivery disciplines and act as a trusted point of coordination across Leadership Group and key organisational priorities.

Main responsibilities

Strategic Support

- Provide strategic and high-level operational support to the Company Secretary & Chief of Staff and the Head of People & Culture, enabling them to focus on organisational priorities, strategic leadership and key organisational objectives they lead on
- Prepare high-quality briefing papers, reports, presentations and supporting materials as requested
- Provide research, analysis and insight to support strategic decision making, business/team planning and successful delivery of organisational priorities
- Anticipate pressures, competing priorities, emerging issues, and provide proactive confidential support, analysis and recommendations to maintain organisational momentum and delivery

Strategic Project Delivery

- Lead the Project Coordinator and oversee the strategic review portfolio, ensuring that work across projects and workstreams is coordinated well, joined-up, visible and delivered
- Lead on project and programme documentation, including plans, milestone trackers, action logs, risk registers, dependency mapping and reporting tools
- Partner workstream and project leads to define deliverables, success measures, timelines and governance arrangements
- Oversee regular reporting on progress, risks, dependencies and decisions whilst ensuring leaders own delivery and join up work
- Lead the drafting of high-quality monthly and ad hoc reports for Leadership Group, senior leadership, Board and Committees as required
- Identify slippage, delivery risks, interdependencies and pressure points across the project portfolio, working with leads to propose mitigations and escalation routes
- Proactively ensure that delays or issues which could affect delivery are surfaced early and addressed appropriately
- Support change control and decision-making by ensuring that proposed changes to scope, timelines or deliverables are clearly documented and considered through appropriate governance routes
- Help strengthen organisational project management discipline by applying recognised methods and practical tools proportionately and consistently across the portfolio
- Work with relevant colleagues to ensure that communications relating to strategic review activity are timely, clear, aligned with organisational messaging and joined up across all teams
- Join up with the Communications team to ensure internal information/reporting pages relating to the strategic review portfolio and associated projects are kept up to date with two way communication

Leadership Office and Governance management

- Provide leadership, management and development support to the Executive Assistant & Programme Coordinator, and the Governance Officer where appropriate
- Ensure executive support, programme coordination activities, and governance where connected, operate as an integrated Leadership Office function and are joined up
- Monitor workload, priorities and service standards across a small team, and motivate team member(s) to fulfil their full potential
- Identify opportunities to improve ways of working, systems and processes to enhance organisational effectiveness

Reporting and Organisational Coordination

- Oversee the effective coordination of reporting and organisational planning processes, ensuring alignment between strategic priorities, programme delivery and decision-making forums
- Support the Company Secretary & Chief of Staff in coordinating governance and management processes linked to strategic project delivery and organisational priorities
- Contribute to the administration and effective running of Programme Board meetings and other relevant forums, including agendas, papers, notes, action tracking and forward planning
- Support the preparation of connected papers and updates for Board and Committees, ensuring clear reporting on delivery, risks, decisions and progress
- Ensure that connected governance and reporting processes are supported by accurate records, version control and clear audit trails where required

It is likely that this role will evolve over time and the postholder is expected to be flexible in taking on new responsibilities of a similar level as the need arises. This might include at times additional executive and business management support whilst handling sensitive and confidential matters with discretion and professionalism.

Organisational Values

The post holder shares our values of integrity and independence, quality, openness and accessibility, service ethos, engagement, and equality and diversity. These underpin their work and responsibilities.

Person specification

Knowledge, training, experience

Essential

- Proven track record of providing high-level business management and executive type partnering to leaders
- Proven track record of driving delivery across complex projects, programmes, organisational change initiatives and/or strategic priorities
- Applied knowledge of project or programme management approaches, tools and methodologies in practice
- Experience of preparing high-quality programme/project reports, briefings and papers for leaders, Boards and/or Committees
- Experience of analysing information and data to support planning, oversight and decision-making
- Understanding of governance processes and the importance of good corporate administration, reporting and record keeping

Helpful to have

- Experience of supporting projects or governance in a regulated, public interest, higher education, membership organisation or complex charity
- Formal project management qualification or relevant professional training
- Experience of leading and/or managing team members

Skills, qualities, attitude

Essential

- High degree of confidentiality, discretion and integrity
- Outstanding organisational and planning skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities and maintain momentum across a varied workload
- Ability to manage competing priorities and complex organisational activity whilst maintaining focus, quality and delivery
- Excellent project management and delivery skills, with the ability to track progress, identify risks and support timely completion of work
- Strong analytical skills, with the ability to interpret information and data and present insights clearly
- Strong written communication skills, including the ability to draft clear reports, briefings and papers for senior audiences.
- Strong relationship building and stakeholder management skills, with the ability to work collaboratively across teams and organisational boundaries
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with the confidence to work effectively with senior colleagues and challenge constructively where appropriate
- Sound judgement, including knowing when to act independently and when to escalate
- Ability to anticipate issues, solve problems and develop practical solutions
- Resilient, adaptable and comfortable working in a changing environment
- An eye for developing process improvements or introducing more effective ways of working.

Helpful to have

- Regularly evaluates own development to continuously learn and improve
- Innovative mindset to use technology to build processes and workflows

IT / Product knowledge

Essential

- Excellent knowledge of Microsoft Windows, Sharepoint and Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, Adobe Acrobat Pro, Powerpoint)
- Able to develop and use Microsoft suite to aid project management (eg development of project plans, timelines, dependencies, exception reports)

Helpful to have

- Track record of using project, programme or portfolio reporting tools to monitor progress, risks and performance

How to apply

Application

To apply please visit our [website](#) and submit your application online.

At the OIA, we use Applied for our recruitment.

Advert closing date

The closing date for applications is by **Monday 6 July 2026 at 10am**.

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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