



office of the
independent
adjudicator

Communications Apprentice

Leadership, Communications and Governance Team

Candidate pack | August 2026



Welcome!



Helen Megarry
Independent Adjudicator



Adam Waddingham
Chief of Staff



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Communications Manager



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Chief Executive

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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 set up during 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 re-inforces 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 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 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.

The role

Job title:

Communications Apprentice

Reports to:

Communications Manager

Operational area:

Communications Team

Location:

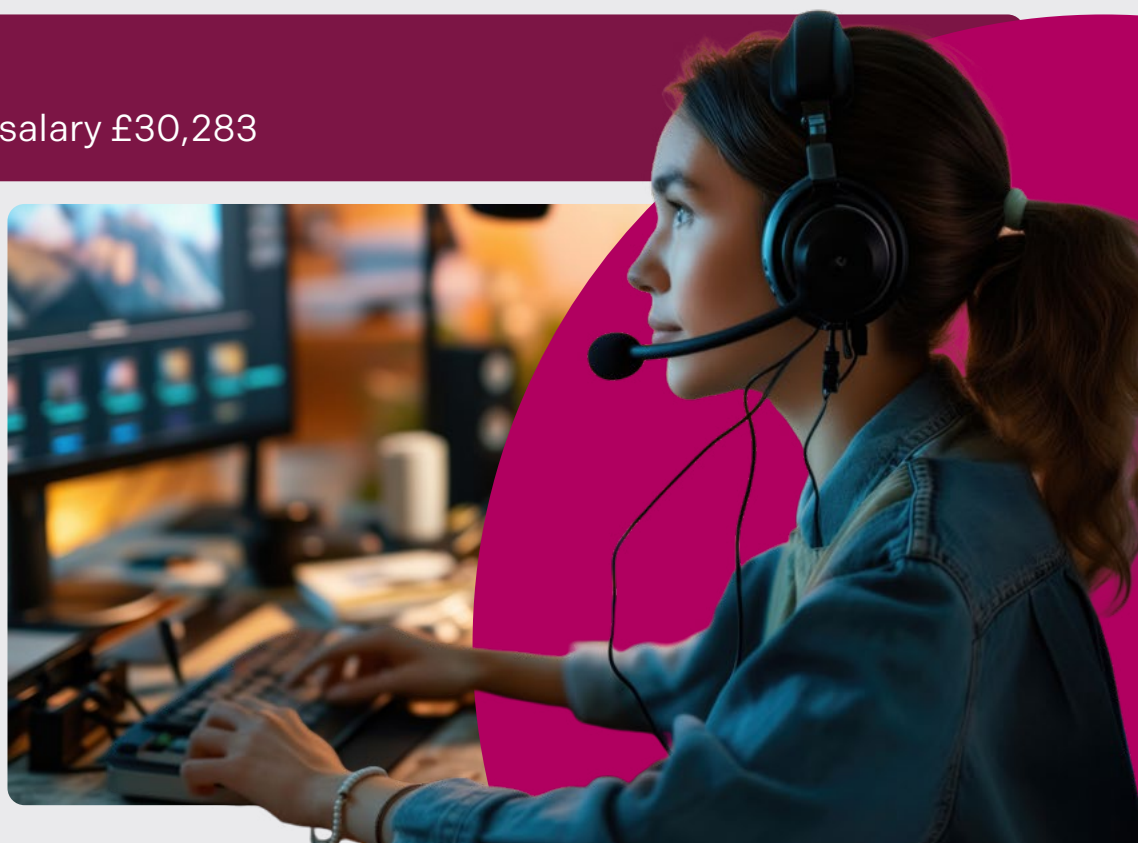
Minimum two days per week in the Reading office. During the probation period more days are likely to be required. Some travel for work might be required, and expenses will be paid.

Hours of work:

Full time or part time (minimum 4 days per week)

Salary:

Grade 2: Starting salary £30,283



Summary of the position, impact and autonomy

Role Purpose

To support the OIA in delivering effective, interesting and accessible communications. You will help us to connect with colleagues, students, students' unions, and people working in universities and colleges.

You will be part of a communications team delivering internal and external communications activity. You will help and support members of the team as well as having your own projects to work on which support the team's overall mission. The team's role is to show the outside world what we do and making it as easy as possible for students to use our complaints scheme.

As well as working within the communications team, there may also be opportunities to work with or be seconded to other teams. This will help you build a wider experience of higher education, external and internal engagement and case-handling.

Apprenticeship Overview

This Apprenticeship, which typically takes around 14 months, plus an endpoint assessment (typically an additional 5 months), will provide training in all aspects of Communications, with a particular focus on supporting the planning, creation and delivery of effective communications across a range of channels and audiences. 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 Public Relations and Communications, aligning with professional accreditation by the Public Relations and Communication Association.

Much of the learning will be role and project based within the workplace, with approximately one day per week spent studying or developing a portfolio, which can be carried out at home or as an extra day at work.

Impact

Contributes to the delivery of effective and engaging communications and supports engagement across a range of channels.

Helps strengthen the OIA's reputation by creating relevant and engaging content for our audiences, contributing ideas and identifying emerging communications opportunities.

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:

- Creating regular video and animation content for our website, LinkedIn and Instagram channels, helping drive engagement. This includes supporting content in front of or behind the camera where appropriate.
- Carrying out basic analysis of how our content performs and making evidence-based suggestions for material which we could create and use.
- Creating convincing and easy to follow advice and guidance including traditional written material and visualised content.
- Editing existing documents or webpages to improve how easy they are to follow.
- Assisting with the management of our website and SharePoint intranet sites through building pages, proof reading and gathering data.
- Designing graphics.
- Supporting the running of our student sounding board and other student-facing activities.
- User-testing our processes and providing feedback and recommendations on how to improve.
- Arranging photoshoots, finding suppliers, attending meetings and recording actions, distributing key documents by email, managing contacts and assisting with the wider operation of the team
- Work collaboratively with teams across the OIA on communications activities, helping to identify opportunities, support them with content creation where appropriate and ensure communications are informed by insight from our audiences.
- In addition to the above, the employee will be expected to carry out any other reasonable tasks delegated by their line manager, which are in line with the salary grade and experience.

Person specification

Knowledge, training, experience

Essential

- GCSE qualifications at grades 5-9 in English, Maths and a creative or digitally led subject.
- At least two A-levels / GNVQ or similar qualification with experience of carrying out basic research and analysis.
- Confidence and experience in making interesting social media content for a personal platform. (We use Instagram and LinkedIn)
- Experience in a role which broadly is relevant to communications work.
- Commitment to completing the Level 4 apprenticeship and applying learning within the workplace

Helpful to have

- Regular experience of creating and publishing social media content.
- Website content creation, editing and management (including personal blogs).
- Experience of shooting and editing video and photographs.
- Understanding of the higher education sector, from either a university, college or student representation perspective.

Skills, qualities, attitude

Essential

- Enthusiastic and willing to learn through formal training and hands on experience.
- Confident, creative and curious.
- Able to think ahead and forward-plan your day-to-day work, and to organise projects.
- Responds positively to advice and guidance from others and understands the importance of continued learning.
- Open-minded, appreciates that others may have more experience, whilst able to share your own knowledge to add to theirs with your ideas.
- Confident at talking to people and explaining how and why you are doing things.
- Takes initiative and demonstrates good judgment about when to handle something alone and when to seek help.
- Has a high level of accuracy and attention to detail.
- Confident in challenging when you can see a better way of doing things.
- Able to take responsibility for yourself and your work.
- Good verbal, in person and written communication skills. This includes a good understanding of how to use different types of language and how to write or make content in different styles for different audiences without using AI tools.
- Able to use information to make an evidence-led decision.
- Able to show good judgement about when to work independently and when to seek help.
- Respects confidentiality, demonstrates discretion, has integrity and treats others with kindness, courtesy, dignity and respect.
- Confident in self-study techniques and able to balance apprenticeship learning commitments with day-to-day work.

Helpful to have

- Interested in developing external professional networks with Communications specialists

IT / Product knowledge

Essential

- Good knowledge of using social media platforms and managing an active personal account or work account.
- Confident in using Instagram filming and editing tools or other app-based editing tools.
- Able to work within the Microsoft Office suite, especially Word, MS Teams and One Drive

Helpful to have

- Affinity with website management platforms eg wordpress
- Confident in using Canva or Adobe suite

How to apply

Application

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about the OIA and how to apply. The role will be recruited by the [Public Relations Communications Association \(PRCA\)](#) through the the [Government Apprenticeship](#) website.

Advert closing date

The closing date for applications is on **Sunday 23 August 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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