



office of the
independent
adjudicator

Annual Report 2024

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Contents

Foreword from the Chair.....	3
Introduction to the Annual Report for 2024.....	4
Headlines of the year	5
Performances and successes.....	6
Trends in complaints	7
Themes in our casework	13
Putting things right	28
Sharing learning	35
Working with others	40
Improving what we do	42
Our people	45
Our organisational structure.....	48
Our Board of Trustees/Directors.....	49
Our strategy and Operating Report.....	51
Subscriptions.....	52
Statement of financial activities	54



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Foreword from the Chair

Our vision is that students are always treated fairly. A shared commitment to fairness for students must be at the heart of a successful higher education sector that delivers for young people and for our wider society. The OIA has a unique and valuable role to play in this. In these challenging times it is vital to keep students' experiences and wellbeing at the forefront of thinking about higher education.

Our Annual Report for 2024 reflects the breadth and depth of our work through the year. We handled more complaints than ever before, providing access to independent, impartial review of students' unresolved complaints. Maintaining our focus on making our services accessible remains a priority for the organisation going forwards. We continued to work with students and their representative bodies, providers, sector organisations and governments to share learning from complaints and contribute to policy developments. Equality, diversity and inclusion is vital to the OIA and important to me and I am pleased to report that we are advancing our work in this area.

We successfully agreed and adopted our new Articles of Association and governance arrangements this year and these came into effect on 29 October 2024.

These achievements are made possible by the commitment and skill of colleagues across the organisation and on the Board. The results from the staff engagement survey highlight the strength of our organisation and the commitment of all our people. We are fortunate to have an excellent staff team, jointly led by Ben Elger, Chief Executive and Helen Megarry, Independent Adjudicator and an effective Board. I thank them all for their work and support over the year.

A portrait of Sim Scavazza, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink and black patterned top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a mix of white and purple geometric shapes.

Sim Scavazza

Chair of the Board of Trustees/Directors

Introduction to the Annual Report for 2024

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2024. The Report gives an overview of our work during the year and reflects on our wider context and relevant developments as we progressed our strategic priorities and delivered against our Operating Plan for 2024.

2024 was another complex and challenging year in the higher education sector, with increasingly acute financial pressures in providers, the continuing high cost of living, housing issues, and ongoing concerns about student mental health and wellbeing.

Against this backdrop, and with complaint numbers still rising, we continued to provide an effective service for reviewing and resolving students' complaints. We made significant improvements in the timeliness of our case-handling process and exceeded all our key performance indicators. We closed 94% of cases within six months of receipt, far exceeding our KPI of 75% and reduced the average number of days to close which is a dramatic improvement in our service to students. We achieved all this whilst also reducing our unit cost.

There is huge value in using learning from complaints to improve students' experiences of higher education. In 2024 we delivered a full outreach programme to share learning from complaints and to engage constructively with students, their representative bodies and providers.

We also worked extensively with others in the regulatory landscape to contribute to thinking around relevant policy developments, to help promote a joined-up approach and a focus on key issues affecting students. We continued preparations for the expansion of our remit in Wales to further education students, which will give more students the benefit of access to independent redress for their unresolved complaints.

2024 was an important year for developments in our organisation. Our strategic review enabled us to stand back and consider what we need to focus on to improve students' experiences. This has resulted in revised strategic objectives and priorities which are summarised in our [updated strategy for 2025](#).

We would like to thank our colleagues for their outstanding commitment to our work again this year and our Board for their continued support and valued advice.



Helen Megarry

Independent Adjudicator

Ben Elger

Chief Executive

Headlines of the year



We published the revised Good Practice Framework: Delivering learning opportunities with others, as well as five sets of case summaries and accompanying casework notes.



We continued our work with the Welsh government, Medr and others towards making our service available to students across the post-compulsory education and training sector in Wales.



We worked closely with governments, sector bodies, National Union of Students and other organisations to contribute to relevant discussions and developments.



We launched a strategic review alongside colleagues to build on our performances in 2024. This led to us agreeing a new strategy for 2025.



We successfully agreed and adopted new Articles of Association and our planned new governance arrangements came into effect.



We ran an extensive outreach programme of over 50 events with over 900 participants as well as in-person visits to providers and student representative bodies, and contributed to a host of sector events. We also held discussion groups with students and student advisors.

Performances and successes

3,613

complaints received
▲ **15% up** on 2023

3,645

complaints closed
▲ **9% up** on 2023

94%

94% of cases closed
within six months of
receipt



We **reduced** the age of
our open complaints

125

82

2023 2024

Average of **82** days to
close a case
(reduced from 125 in 2023)



70% of complaints were
closed within three
months and only **1%** of
complaints were nine
months or older when
closed

99%

We responded to **99%**
of enquiries within two
business days



We focused on cross-
team working, which is
helping **efficiency**



We triaged more cases
than **ever** before



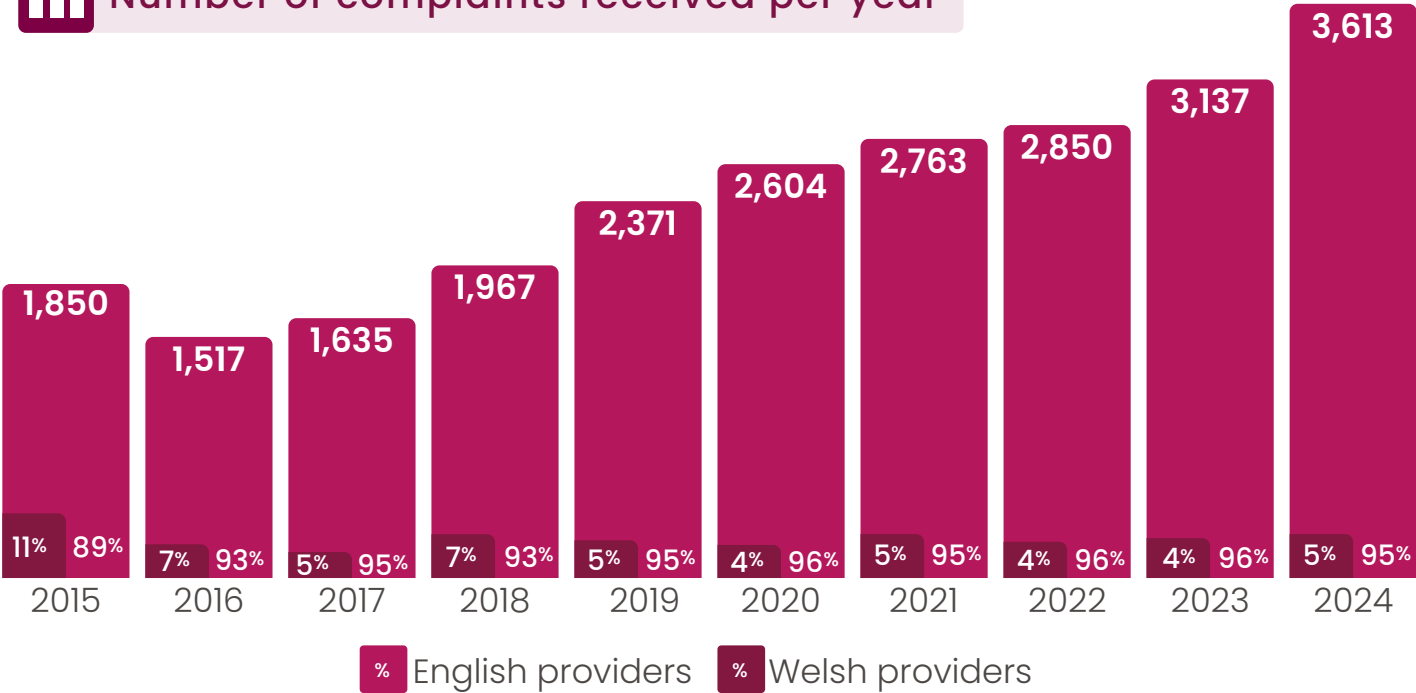
We continued **focus**
on quality and kind
and compassionate
communication

Trends in complaints

The complaints we review reflect the diversity of students’ experiences in higher education in England and Wales, and the wide variety of how teaching and learning is delivered. We describe the complaints we have reviewed under several broad categories, and we identify trends and patterns within the issues that different groups of students may raise. Although each student’s experience is unique, trends and data can help providers to identify interventions that may reduce the need for students to raise complaints.

Complaints received

 Number of complaints received per year



In 2024 we received 3,613 complaints, an increase of 15% on 2023. This is the ninth consecutive year that complaints have increased. The increase of 476 complaints is the largest year-on-year increase in the last decade. The proportional rise we have seen in complaint receipts is greater than that in the total student population. The increase in complaints coming to us does not necessarily indicate an overall rise in student dissatisfaction. It could equally indicate improvements in the accessibility of internal complaints processes, or in signposting to us. We will continue to monitor overall numbers of complaints, particularly in the light of financial challenges in the sector that may impact on students’ experiences.

The proportion of complaints about providers in England and Wales remains consistent with previous years.



Complaints received by area of study – Top 10

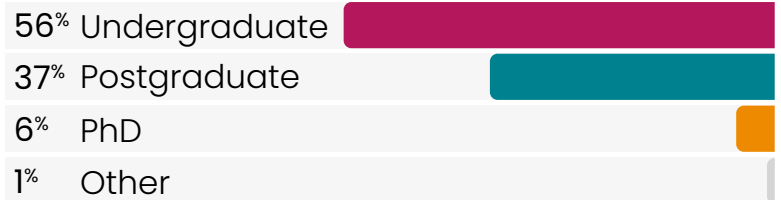
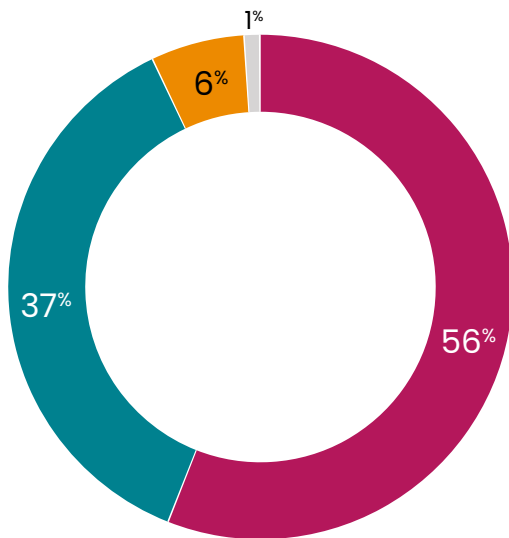


The distribution of complaints across different areas of study has strong correlation to the number of students studying within those fields. We see a higher volume of complaints from students whose courses are linked to a particular career path, where their studies may involve work placements or where providers may have to take account of professional standards. Some areas of study rely upon more specialist materials and resources, and this can result in more complaints if these are in short supply or if some students find it difficult to access them. Some areas of study may also have higher numbers of postgraduate or international students.

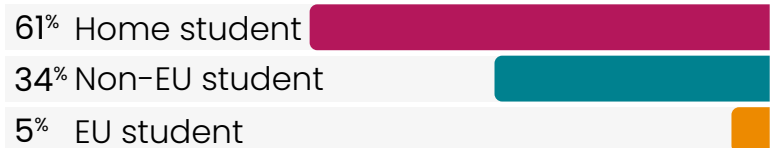
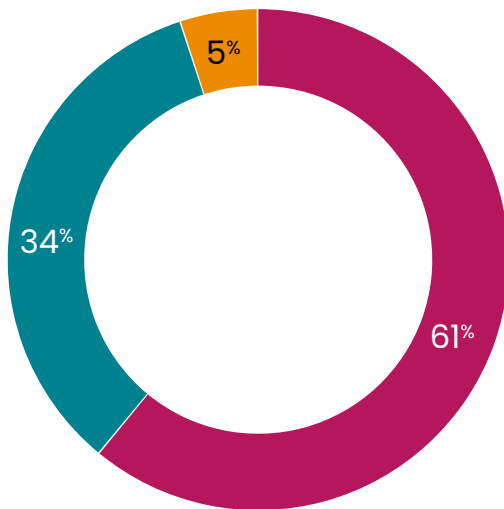




Complaints received by level of study



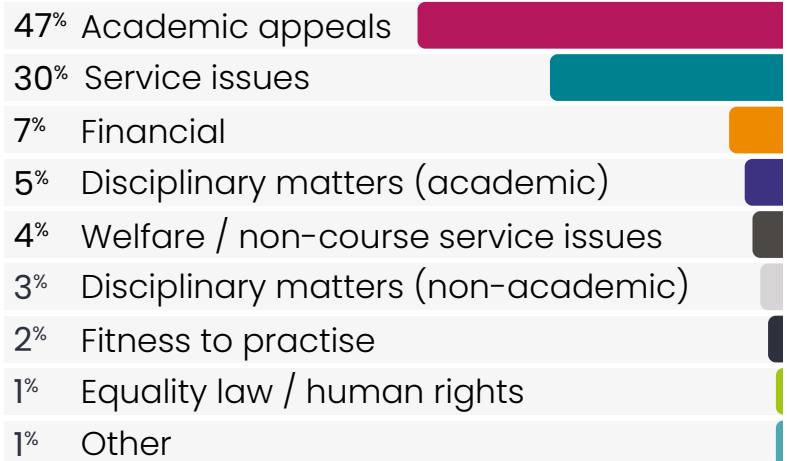
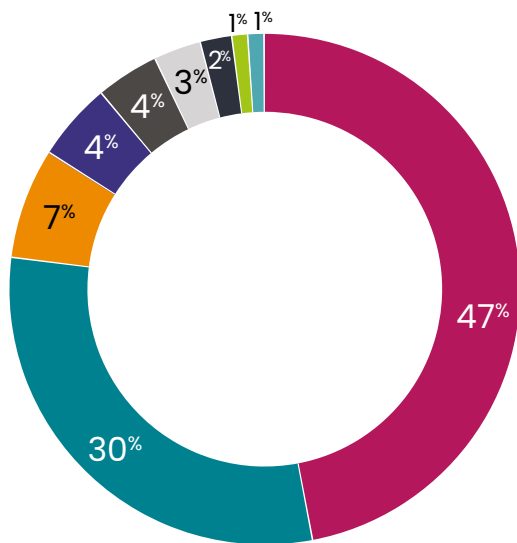
Complaints received by student domicile



As in previous years, international students continue to be over-represented in the complaints that we received in 2024. Although there have been some changes to the visa system for international students and fluctuations in how successful English and Welsh providers have been in attracting international students, we have not seen any direct impact within our casework yet. International students continue to place a high value on the opportunity to study in the UK and the opportunity to work here following the successful completion of their studies. The financial and personal costs to international students of not completing their studies successfully can be very high. It is important that providers reflect upon international students' complaints and identify opportunities to improve the clarity of the information given to support successful outcomes from their studies.



Complaints received by category



We categorise complaints under nine broad headings. Complaints about the outcome of an Academic appeal process include a range of decisions about progression on to the next part of a course, whether a student may be permitted a re-sit opportunity, and the calculation of degree classifications. The category of “Service issues” includes a variety of complaints about the delivery of teaching and learning opportunities, including arrangements for students undertaking time in placement settings and support for disabled students. Over the last ten years, between 73% and 79% of our complaints have fallen within these two categories.

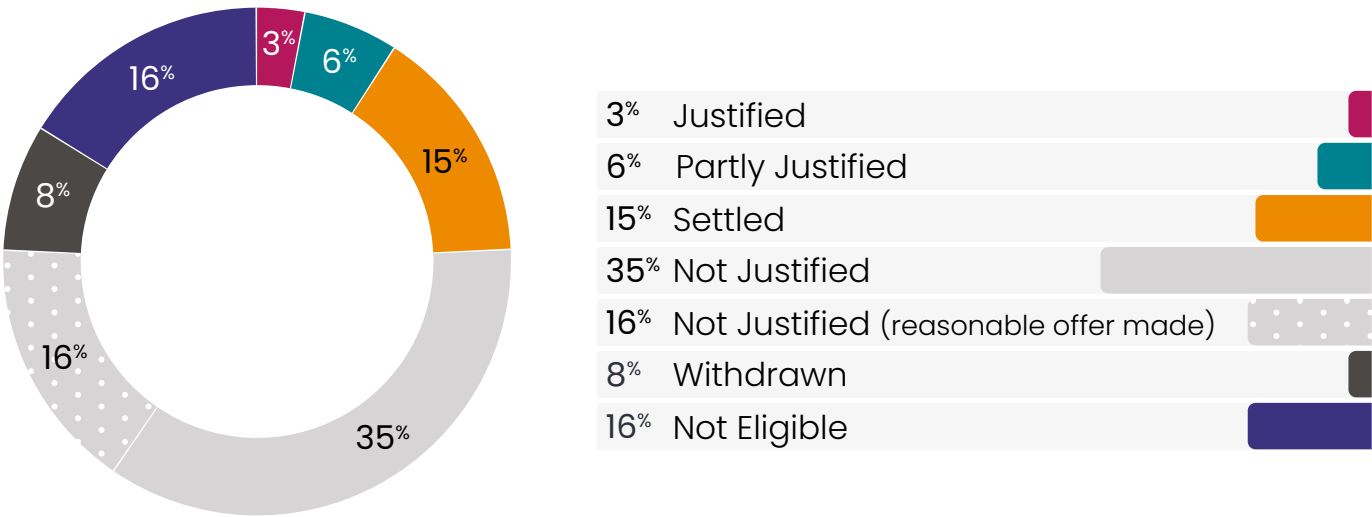
Until 2019, academic appeals were consistently the largest category of complaints. Between 2020 and 2022 complaints about service issues were in the majority, driven by the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and student dissatisfaction following industrial action. In 2023 and 2024, we have seen a return to the more familiar distribution of complaints.

Most complaints we review are brought to us by individual students. We have continued to receive a small number of complaints brought by students acting as a group. Most group complaints are categorised as being about “service issues”. In 2024 we received 24 group complaints. Most of these groups consisted of fewer than ten students. We did not receive any group large enough to require use of our [large group complaints process](#).



Complaints closed

The outcome of complaints



We upheld all or part of the student’s complaint or negotiated a settlement that was acceptable to the student in 24% of our cases. In a further 16% of cases, the provider had made an offer to resolve the complaint that we considered reasonable, and in these cases the offer was usually still open to the student at the conclusion of our review. We are pleased that most providers engage constructively with conversations to explore settlement, recognising the benefits to students and to the provider of reaching an outcome swiftly and informally.

There are some significant differences in the distribution of complaint outcomes within our case categories. For example, we did not uphold 78% of the academic appeal cases that were eligible for review, deciding that they were Not Justified. This was similar for academic disciplinary cases, where 76% of eligible cases were not upheld. In general, we consider that academic appeal and academic misconduct processes are well established and understood by the staff operating them.

Complaints within these categories are also more likely to be focused on a limited number of events or events that took place within a short timeframe. In a high proportion of these cases, we conclude that the decision the provider reached was in line with its regulations and procedures and was a fair outcome.

For complaints about financial matters, we did not uphold 75% of the eligible complaints. However, we agreed a settlement in slightly more than 20% of the eligible complaints. This may reflect that it is usually relatively simple to establish facts as to a student’s financial status and to identify and apply the relevant rules. Where we identify an error in the process, providers will rapidly agree to put the matter right.

In contrast, complaints about service issues, welfare issues and non-academic disciplinary issues are often wide ranging and highly complex. In some cases, students' circumstances have been considered under several different processes over several months which leads to increased likelihood of delay or procedural errors. Of the complaints about service issues that were eligible for review, just over 17% were upheld in full or in part, and just under 30% were settled. A further 20% of cases were found to be Not Justified because a reasonable offer had been made by the provider, either at the end of the internal complaints process or during our review. This means that two-thirds of students who complained to us about service issues received some remedy in response to their original complaint.



"I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you and the entire OIA team for taking up my complaint and resolving it so swiftly. After waiting for three years, I am overjoyed that my issue was resolved in just a few weeks with your involvement. Your dedication and efficiency are truly commendable. Thank you once again for your wonderful support."



"Thank you so much for your patience, for listening to my concerns, and for your dedication in what was a very challenging case. Thanks to your work, I can finally put this difficult chapter behind me. I am truly grateful for the clarity and resolution that was achieved. Please know that your efforts have had a significant impact, and I sincerely appreciate everything you did to bring this matter to a fair conclusion."



Themes in our casework

In this section we explore in more depth complaints from students at the end of an academic appeals process, complaints from disabled students and complaints about bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct.

Academic Appeals

In our reporting, the category of “Academic Appeals” includes complaints students have brought to us at the end of various processes that make decisions about a student’s progression on their course of study, and about their assessments. Most academic appeals cases are brought to us by students who feel their performance in particular assessments has been affected by circumstances beyond their control, and who are unhappy about how their provider has taken their circumstances into account. We also receive complaints about procedural irregularities in how an assessment was run, and a small number that allege bias in the assessment process. Complaints about bias are more common in assessments that cannot be submitted anonymously, for example postgraduate research vivas or assessment of practical skills on placements.

It is relatively unusual for students to complain to us about the specific marks awarded for a single assessment. Many of the academic appeals decisions we review are about whether a student is permitted to continue with their studies at all. For undergraduates this usually relates to achieving too few credits before the start of the next academic year. Postgraduate research students’ complaints often concern decisions about whether they have made sufficient progress in the early stages of their research.

The “Academic Appeals” category also includes complaints from students who have not been allowed to continue with their studies because they have not met the requirements of their provider’s attendance or engagement regulations. Providers often take a firm line on attendance requirements, reflecting both their responsibilities as a visa sponsor to monitor the attendance of international students, and the view that regular attendance and engagement gives all students the best opportunity to succeed in and benefit from their studies. It is important that providers have reliable mechanisms to monitor attendance accurately. Students also benefit from early warnings if their attendance is not at the level expected, and clear opportunities to discuss any welfare issues that may be relevant.

We don't uphold most complaints relating to [academic appeals](#). We rarely see examples of academic appeals processes that are incompatible with the [Good Practice Framework](#), and we usually conclude that the provider has followed a fair process. Students' complaints to us about academic appeals don't always try to establish that a provider has not acted in accordance with its own regulations. In many cases the student is simply expressing the hope that a provider might be persuaded to reach a different decision.

Students make a significant personal and financial investment in pursuing higher education studies, and many tell us about the immense pressure they feel to succeed. For some of these students, knowing that they have taken every opportunity to make their case and having the reassurance of an independent perspective will help them move forward on an alternative plan.

We know that some providers are addressing increasing numbers of academic appeals, and that using templates for correspondence can help provide the necessary information to large volumes of students in a timely way. In our experience, students benefit from correspondence that goes beyond providing a series of results codes and a link to the relevant provider regulations. Students prefer clear explanations about what this means for them, and value acknowledgement where they have experienced particularly difficult circumstances. Some students who might otherwise have accepted an outcome from their provider are motivated to complain to us by a perceived lack of humanity and compassion in the provider's response. Similarly, students complain to us where inaccuracies in the provider's correspondence undermine their confidence that their circumstances have been carefully considered.





Case summary 1

A student nurse had several periods of interruption to their studies because of ill-health, non-payment of their tuition fees, and delays in obtaining an up-to-date DBS certificate. When the student returned to their studies, they expected to complete approximately 400 placement hours. At a return-to-study meeting, the provider told the student that they needed to complete a further 1,300 placement hours. The student disagreed with this, and the provider considered their objections using its academic appeals procedure.

The provider said that the rules around placement hours are set by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (the NMC). The NMC rules say that if a student takes a long time away from their studies, some earlier placement hours cannot be carried forward. At the end of its review the provider said again that the student needed to complete another 1,300 hours because they had been away from their studies for two years.

The student remained dissatisfied and complained to us.

We upheld part of the student's complaint (we decided it was **Partly Justified**). The provider had correctly applied the NMC rules, and the student was required to complete a further 1,300 placement hours. The provider was not able to change these requirements.

But the provider had not clearly explained to students how any periods of absence might affect the requirements around placement hours. The return-to-study meeting had not given the student enough information to understand the requirements. After that meeting, the provider had asked the student to write an email summarising what they had understood which the provider would then amend. This was not good practice. It was the provider's responsibility to provide a clear note of the meeting, outlining exactly what the student needed to do to complete their qualification. The provider had also undermined the student's faith in the fairness of the process by repeated inaccuracies when describing how long the student's time away from study had been for different reasons.

We recommended that the provider should apologise to the student for the distress caused by a lack of clarity in its communications and pay £500 in compensation. We also suggested that the provider should add more information to the programme handbook about circumstances when some placement hours might be discounted.

Some of the complaints we review give us insights into the challenges students face in balancing their studies with their other commitments. Students who are time-poor may find it difficult to seek out help until it is too late.



Case summary 2

A student studying for a Postgraduate Diploma via distance learning was withdrawn after they were unsuccessful in a module for the second time. The student appealed on the basis that they had been disadvantaged when the provider changed their virtual learning environment (VLE) platform. The student included screenshots of the new VLE system that showed failed login attempts, and screenshots from WhatsApp conversations with other students about problems with the new VLE.

The provider invited the student to an appeal hearing to hear more about how they used the VLE. The student said that they accessed it on their phone because they only had time to study when commuting to their paid employment or when walking in the evenings. The student confirmed that they had not asked for any help to access the new VLE.

The provider looked at the access logs to the VLE. This showed that the student only had failed login attempts when they had entered the wrong password and there were no other problems with the student's account. The student's pattern of accessing the VLE was similar for the old and new systems. The provider noted that students were advised not to try to complete their studies only using a mobile phone.

The provider rejected the student's appeal, and the student complained to us. The student suggested that the provider shouldn't have looked at the access logs but should only have considered the screenshots they had supplied.

We did not uphold the student's complaint (we decided it was **Not Justified**). It was reasonable for the provider to look at the information it had about VLE access to see if anything was wrong with the way the student's account had been working. It was also reasonable to expect that the student should have asked for help at the time they were experiencing any difficulties with the VLE.



"Because of your dedicated efforts, I have been given the opportunity to resubmit my dissertation. This opportunity is incredibly meaningful to me, and I am profoundly grateful for the pivotal role you played in making this possible."

Some of the complaints we see illustrate how students who have been experiencing difficulties may make poor choices about how to continue with their studies.



Case summary 3

An international student was unsuccessful in three modules and was required to re-submit assessments. The student made an academic appeal asking to be allowed to re-submit work for a fourth module, in which they had received a low pass mark. The student supplied a letter describing mental health issues they had been experiencing. The letter appeared to be from a local NHS Trust.

The provider's regulations set out that it would take steps to verify evidence supplied with academic appeals. The NHS Trust confirmed that it had not issued the letter and that it appeared to be a forgery. The provider paused the academic appeals process and considered the issue of the forged letter under its academic misconduct processes. The student said that the letter was not forged but blamed errors in translating and transcribing documents from the language they were originally written in. The provider was not persuaded by this explanation. As a result of these processes, the student's studies were terminated. The student did not complain about this decision to us.

The provider then confirmed to the student that it would not be proceeding with the academic appeal. The student complained to us about this decision. The student wanted to supply new evidence in support of their academic appeal.

We decided the complaint was **Not Justified**. Since the initial evidence supplied by the student was not genuine, their submission had not clearly established any grounds for the provider to consider their appeal. The student had not given any good reason as to why they had not been able to supply genuine evidence at the correct time. We explained to the student that even if the decision about the module the student had passed was different, this would not have altered the fact that the student's studies had been terminated for misconduct.

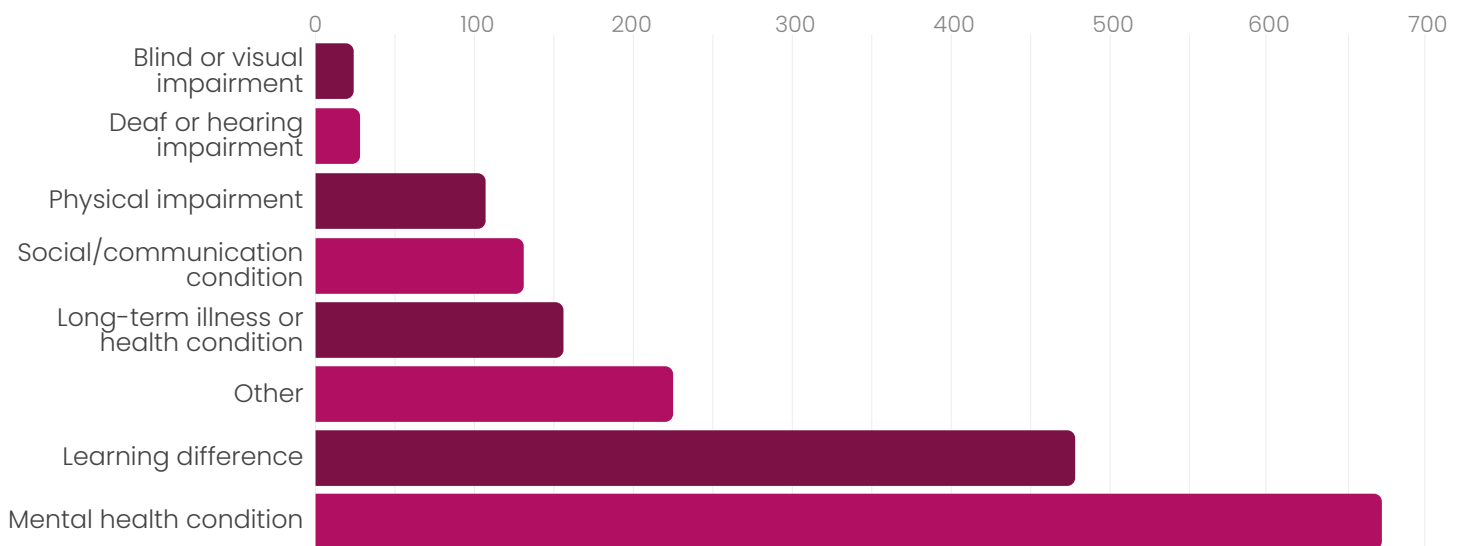
Complaints from disabled students

In our [2023 Annual Report](#) we highlighted that disabled students were over-represented in complaints to us, making up around one-third of our caseload. In 2024, the proportion of complaints brought to us by students who tell us they are disabled has risen again, to just over 40%. It is possible that some of these students' conditions may not meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010, for example because the condition is likely to be of a short duration. Some other students may be disabled but choose not to tell us. While this means we can't be exact about the number of complaints we have received from disabled students using the legal definition, a significant number of students feel it is relevant to mention their health and wellbeing in the context of their complaint.

Some students choose not to disclose details of their disability or health condition. Of those who did describe their disability, the largest category selected by students was "mental health issues" (46% of the total who provided details). This continues the trend we have seen in recent years and is consistent with sector-wide data. Specific learning differences accounted for 33%. Just under 40% indicated that they are affected by more than one condition. Neurodivergent students described their condition using a variety of options, which may reflect a variety of different routes to diagnosis.



Breakdown of reported disability types



What disabled students complain about

We have reviewed complaints from disabled students and the distribution of complaints within the categories we use is very similar for disabled and non-disabled students.

Not every complaint from a student who identifies themselves to us as disabled begins with an experience directly connected to their disability. But in our experience, the complaints that are prompted by events that have only taken place because the student is disabled are likely to have had a significant and lasting impact.

We continue to receive complaints from students about the implementation of support and reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment. In some cases, it has taken a long time to identify what support will work best for the student for their course of study. This can be because of significant delays in the process once a student has applied for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). In other cases, academic staff have not fully understood what is required and default to standard practices that don't meet disabled students' needs. It is important that providers train and support academic staff in meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. 15 years after its implementation, we still see instances where there is no clarity for students or staff within course documents about what competence standards will be assessed. We welcomed the [advice note](#) published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in July 2024 which explores what compliance may look like.

It is not our role to make findings about the actions of individual members of staff working at providers. But we are concerned that in some instances, there is no culture of accountability in place to ensure that disabled students receive the support that is necessary to place them on an equal footing for success with their peers. We are also concerned about the resourcing of support for disabled students in the context of wider financial pressure and delays in the DSA system.





Case summary 4

A partially sighted student enrolled on a one-year taught Masters course. Students could access their core texts and additional reading using an online database. In October, the student told the provider that they were having some difficulty using the online database. In January, the student explained that their assistive software could not read the text at all. The provider contacted the database supplier to try to find a solution. The provider also supplied the student with digital copies that were accessible and printed versions of texts when the student asked for them.

At the end of the year, the student complained that the provider had not made reasonable adjustments effectively or quickly enough, and that this had affected their academic performance and overall experience. The provider rejected the student's complaint, saying that it had responded promptly and provided alternative versions of the texts for the module that was affected. The student remained dissatisfied and complained to us.

We upheld the complaint in part (we decided it was **Partly Justified**). Unfortunately, the student had not made clear the extent of the problem with the database and the assistive software when they first mentioned experiencing difficulties. Once the provider understood the impact of the problem, it had acted promptly and tried hard to find a long-term technical solution. But we thought it was not reasonable for the provider to conclude that only one module had been affected. The provider had access to the reading list for the course which showed that access to many texts in the database was required across all the modules. The provider could have provided these in an alternative format proactively rather than waiting for the student to request them one by one.

The student did not want to engage in any further study opportunity at the provider. We recommended that the provider apologise and offer compensation of £2,500 for the distress and inconvenience caused by the failings we had identified.



"Before the OIA's independent recommendation I did not have a real voice in the matter as I was only given forms and deadlines which I personally find very challenging to navigate. The independent recommendation of the OIA allowed me to speak [...] directly via a hearing where as a disabled person I was able to better communicate the truth of the situation. Consequently, I have a real chance at completing my studies and continuing my career."



Case summary 5

A disabled student complained to their provider that the reasonable adjustments they needed to support them in their studies had not been put in place for most of the academic year. They complained that this amounted to discrimination and was a form of bullying and victimisation. The student also complained about support in arranging a placement.

The provider investigated the complaint. It concluded that staff had been willing to support the student but there had been a lack of information about some of the student's requirements and that this had contributed to the adjustments not being made. It partly upheld the complaint, apologised and offered the student £100 compensation. It also said it would take steps to put the reasonable adjustments in place going forward. The student was dissatisfied and complained to us.

We upheld some parts of the student's complaint (we decided it was **Partly Justified**). We decided that the provider's conclusion, that staff had been willing to make adjustments but that there had been a lack of information about what was required, was not supported by the evidence. It was clear that some academic staff had refused to make adjustments that had already been agreed in the student's support plan. The provider was wrong to conclude that the student's requests had changed.

We were also critical of the provider because it had not addressed the student's claim that they had been bullied.

We were satisfied that the provider had acted reasonably in providing the student with support to arrange a placement.

We recommended that the provider should apologise for the failings we had identified and pay the student £5,000 in compensation, recognising the significant impact that the lack of adjustments had received. We also recommended that it apologise and offer to begin a new investigation into the student's complaint about bullying.



Case summary 6

A student had a long-term health condition which caused pain and mobility issues, and which was subject to flare ups. Before enrolling on the course, the student was told that they could access teaching remotely during flare ups. Shortly after the student enrolled on the course, they had a flare up of their ongoing condition. After one month staff raised concerns with the student about their attendance. Staff said that remote attendance was not permitted because of the requirements of a professional regulatory body. The student withdrew from the course before the end of the first term.

The student made a complaint about their experience saying that the provider had failed to make reasonable adjustments for them as a disabled student. The provider rejected the complaint, describing the student's claims as "false" and writing that the student was "feeling entitled" based on "poor understanding". The student complained to us.

We upheld the complaint (we decided that it was **Justified**). The course was not directly accredited or regulated by the professional body, although graduates might choose to register with it. The information provided to students about this was unclear. It was incorrect for the provider to say that the requirements of the professional body prevented it from considering making a reasonable adjustment to its in-person attendance requirement. We were also critical of the tone of the provider's communications with the student.

We recommended that the provider apologise to the student and pay £2,500 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused by its failure to properly consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and that it should cancel the student's tuition fees. We also recommended that the provider should review its procedures and practise to ensure that there is a formal mechanism for deciding what adjustments can be put in place to support disabled students and to ensure that these decisions are documented.



"Thank you for dealing with my complaint so efficiently and for keeping me informed each step of the way. Whilst it was not entirely the outcome I desired, I have somewhat had my faith restored in a complaints process. I have also been impressed with the accommodations available for those who are neurodivergent. I especially found the decision outcome to be clearly written and structured."

In some cases, disabled students do not raise any concerns about how they have been supported until after receiving their results when they make an academic appeal. In general, we have seen providers directing students towards support services when students share information about the difficulties they are experiencing, and these services are also usually well-publicised on providers' websites. In our experience, students facing challenges with their mental health may not take up this support, either because they do not realise how much they are struggling, or because it seems too overwhelming to do so. For some students, there is still some stigma attached to seeking help.



Case summary 7

A student on a one-year postgraduate taught course was living with depression which affected their ability to meet some coursework deadlines. The provider agreed several extensions to deadlines. 14 months after beginning the course, the student had one piece of coursework outstanding, which they were attempting for the second time. On the submission date the student asked for their circumstances to be considered because they were not able to submit the work in full. The provider responded by email on the same day saying that the request was refused. The student submitted their unfinished essay. Three weeks later, the provider told the student that they had not passed the module, and that their studies would be terminated.

After three weeks the student made an academic appeal. The provider responded the next day accepting the appeal and saying it had made a mistake when rejecting the student's earlier request. It confirmed that the student could continue their studies and have a further attempt at the outstanding coursework.

The student made a complaint about how the mistake had affected them. The provider again accepted that it had made a mistake. It apologised to the student and offered them £500 compensation in recognition of the distress this had caused.

The student remained dissatisfied and complained to us. The student explained that the error had caused them very serious distress and that they had been suicidal for several months afterwards. They said that they had lost a job offer because they had not been able to complete the course and obtain the required professional registration in time to accept it. The student requested £20,000 in compensation.

We did not uphold the complaint (we decided it was **Not Justified**) because we thought that the provider had already offered the student a reasonable remedy that was proportionate to the mistake it had made. It had acted quickly to tell the student they could continue with the course. The mistake had not delayed the student in achieving their professional registration; unfortunately, because the student wasn't able to meet the original deadline it would never have been possible for the student to achieve professional registration in the timeframe required to take up the job.

In recent years we have seen several changes to providers' approaches that have benefitted disabled students. For example, we have seen fewer examples of disabled students needing to repeatedly supply medical evidence about the same condition. Many providers have introduced policies that allow all students to self-certify for short periods of ill-health that affects attendance or assessments, and that are like policies commonly used for employees. We have also seen improvements to practices in communicating a student's support needs when they have been agreed.

It is important to remember that disabled students' conditions affect their daily lives and student experience in the round. Providers must be alert to students who may need additional support engaging with a range of formal processes and respond to students as individuals.



Case summary 8

An apprentice enrolled on a degree apprenticeship in a regulated profession needed to successfully complete a maths functional skills qualification before they could progress to the end point assessment. The apprentice complained that there had been a lack of support for them as a person with dyslexia and ADHD and asked that the level of the qualification be lowered as a reasonable adjustment. The provider initially rejected the complaint. Under the "Apprenticeship Funding Rules for main providers" set by the government, higher education providers are permitted to lower the maths functional skills requirements for apprentices who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, a statement of special educational need (SEN) or a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA). The apprentice did not have any of these documents.

The apprentice asked for the decision to be reviewed. The apprentice had undertaken initial screening earlier in their studies and had then been evaluated by a psychologist that was on a list of approved needs assessors supplied by the provider.

The provider decided to accept the psychological assessment, in the light of very long waiting times for further assessment to obtain more formal documentation. It reduced the level of maths functional skills qualification that the apprentice would need to achieve. It also offered the apprentice £1,000 in compensation, recognising that the delivery of maths support tuition had been disrupted.

The apprentice was dissatisfied and complained to us. The provider made a revised offer of £5,000 to settle the complaint. The apprentice rejected this offer. They argued that the issues had caused delays in completing their qualification, and that because of this they had lost out on an increased salary.

We did not uphold the complaint (we decided it was **Not Justified**) on the basis that the offer the provider had made was a reasonable remedy for the complaint. The apprentice's claim for lost earnings was speculative; it was not possible to say that if the provider had acted differently, they would have successfully passed the end-point-assessment at an earlier date.

Complaints about bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct

In 2024 we continued to see an upward trend in the number of complaints we received that contained some element of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, although overall numbers remain below 5% of our total caseload.

In some cases, these kinds of behaviours are not the focus of the complaint. For example, in a small number of cases, we have reviewed a provider's response to an academic appeal which included disclosures from students about their mental health, connected to their experiences of domestic abuse or sexual assault perpetrated by individuals outside the provider's community. We think the reason that we may be seeing more of these examples is because students are feeling more confident in sharing these experiences with their provider.

We have reviewed complaints from students who have reported the behaviour of others, and from students whose own behaviour has been the subject of a complaint. Most of the complaints we reviewed in 2024 at the end of a non-academic disciplinary process were from reported students about their behaviour towards others, with a smaller proportion relating to more general misbehaviour (for example theft, drug use or failure to respond to fire alarms). A larger proportion of these disciplinary complaints related to sexual harassment, gender-based harassment or misogyny than to any other protected characteristic and most reported students were male.

Most students who brought a complaint to us about the behaviour of others were female. The majority were complaining about the behaviour of other students, although some complaints involved the actions of members of staff. It is the nature of our Scheme that students who are satisfied with how a provider has responded to a report about bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct would not approach us. The students who did complain were dissatisfied with a range of issues. One area which has proved very challenging for providers is managing a disciplinary process for the reported party with an appropriate degree of confidentiality, while providing the reporting party with sufficient information for them to feel confident in the fairness of the process. Our view remains that reporting parties must receive an outcome to their complaint that enables them to understand the process that has been followed and have confidence in the fairness of decisions that have been reached. It is also essential to provide all parties with support for their welfare.

We have upheld or settled a higher proportion of complaints involving bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct than other complaints. These complaints are often complex, multi-faceted and providers may not be able to fully control events where outside agencies including the police or placement providers are involved. It can be challenging for providers to meet the expectations of all parties involved in these cases. It is important that providers give clear information to reporting and reported students about what the process can and can't achieve. We welcome the new regulatory requirements coming into force in 2025 for providers on the OfS register about providing students with clear information and training staff.

In some cases, providers have not been able to demonstrate that they have undertaken a fair process due to failures in record keeping and in giving clear reasons for decisions.



Case summary 9

A student on a professional healthcare course complained about the behaviour of other students on the same course in connection with a piece of group work. They said that they had received inappropriate messages from one member of the group, had been excluded from meetings about group work, locked out of critical documents and there had been disagreements about how to approach the work. The student initially asked for an apology from the rest of the group but didn't want the matter to be formally recorded on the other students' records. But the student then said that this was because they were worried about reprisals. On reflection, the student felt that the behaviour was a form of harassment connected to their disability, and that the other student's behaviour ought to be considered under the provider's fitness to practice regulations.

The provider investigated using the student complaint process. It decided not to use either the student disciplinary processes or the student fitness to practise processes. It concluded that there was evidence that the student had been excluded from discussions and locked out of key documents, but it did not see evidence that this was related to the student's disability. It invited the student to speak to a member of staff with expertise in equality, diversity and inclusion and to submit a further complaint if they felt that they had experienced disability-related harassment. It asked the other students to write an apology. It encouraged those students to also write a reflective piece, but did not make this mandatory, taking account of the proximity of the students' final assessments.

The student asked for the outcome of their complaint to be reconsidered. They were not satisfied with the apologies and felt that the provider's actions were very lenient towards the other students and were not consistent with its stated "zero tolerance approach" towards bullying and harassment. The provider concluded that it had taken a reasonable approach. The student complained to us about the outcome and about how long the process had taken.

We decided to uphold part of the complaint (we decided in was **Partly Justified**).

We were satisfied that the provider had addressed the complaint in a timely way, taking just over the 90-day timeframe set out in our Good Practice Framework. But we did not think that the provider had clearly explained to the student why it did not consider the other students' conduct under the formal disciplinary procedures. This was confusing in the light of its findings that the group had excluded the student. The provider said that it could not compel the other students to reflect on their behaviour or apologise because it had not made formal findings under the disciplinary processes, effectively leaving the student without a resolution to the complaint. It was also not appropriate to ask the student to make a new complaint about harassment when this related to the same behaviours that were the subject of a complaint that had not yet exhausted the provider's processes.

We recommended that the provider provide refresher training for staff on the operation of its policy for addressing bullying. We also recommended that the provider pay the student compensation for the distress caused by its handling of the complaint.



Case summary 10

A student beginning a healthcare course at an overseas campus was required to undertake an occupational health assessment. Shortly after the assessment, the student reported to the provider that they had been sexually assaulted by a medical professional employed by the occupational health firm. Around four months later, the student withdrew from the course and made a complaint about the way the provider responded to their disclosure.

The provider investigated the complaint and gave a formal response after five months. The student requested that this be reviewed. The provider took a further eight months to complete its review. It upheld several aspects of the student's complaint. It accepted and apologised for unreasonable delays in its processes. It acknowledged that some communications from members of staff that were intended to convey that the provider was taking the situation seriously, were abrupt in tone. It accepted that the student found this hurtful. It also concluded that although staff had intended to be supportive towards the student, there was no evidence that they had provided specific advice about local specialist support services. The provider concluded that it had taken the actions it could to address the conduct of the medical professional, who was not one of its own employees. It had raised the issue at a senior level with the occupational health provider and ensured that the specific member of staff would not have any future interactions with its students. It also told the student how they could make a complaint directly to the occupational health firm. In its review, the provider decided that it could have given the student more information about what this process might look like or what it might achieve.

The provider apologised to the student for the issues identified and offered them £4,000 in compensation. The student was dissatisfied and complained to us. They said that the compensation did not reflect the severity of the impact of what had happened.

We acknowledged that the student had been severely impacted by their experience. But it was relevant to separate the impact of the assault itself from the impact of the provider's actions after the student had reported what had happened. We concluded that the provider had undertaken a careful review, and was applying learning from the complaint, including considering whether it needed to amend its policies to be clearer about non-provider employees with whom students come into contact during their studies. The apology and offer of compensation were a reasonable response to the flaws it had acknowledged in responding to the student's complaint. We did not uphold the student's complaint (we decided it was Not Justified) on the basis that offer the provider had made was reasonable.

We will be continuing our focus on harassment and sexual misconduct in 2025, when we will consult on a new section of the [Good Practice Framework](#).

Putting things right

Where we uphold all or part of a complaint, we try to identify an appropriate remedy that puts the student back into the position they would have been in if the problem had not occurred. When students complain to us, they may have a clear idea about what outcome they are looking for. Often this relates to continuing with their studies, for example being allowed to rejoin a course, have another attempt at an assessment, or progress with different support in place. For some students the opportunity to be heard and to be offered a clearer explanation or an apology is very important. Students often say that they hope that their provider will act differently towards other students in the future.



"Thank you. I felt a profound sense of relief upon reviewing the outcome of my complaint. The moment I read it; it was as if I was finally able to breathe freely for the first time since the beginning of my ordeal. When I read the sections where my complaint was summarised, I sensed that you truly grasped my lived experience throughout this challenging period. Seeing my feelings and experiences accurately reflected back to me in writing made me feel genuinely heard and understood. I am deeply grateful for this."



Some students might not be certain what is possible or what would be helpful before they make a complaint. During our review process we can explore this by discussing what they are hoping to achieve by making their complaint.

We have a broad discretion to consider the outcomes that are most appropriate for the individual circumstances. We take account of what students tell us they would like, and what providers tell us is practical. Where we have been able to facilitate an agreed resolution to a complaint, we record it as a settlement.

Reaching a settlement can be beneficial to both parties. It can offer a quicker route to addressing the student's concerns. It may feel like a less adversarial process, which can be the starting point of rebuilding a more positive relationship. We can suggest the same wide range of actions to put something right for the student in settled cases as we can in complaints that are resolved with a written decision.





"This is a swift result, and we are all happy to accept [the provider's] offer to fix fees at the cost we enrolled for and proceed to wrapping up the complaint. A huge thank you from us all for mediating on our behalf, and for using your voice and knowledge where ours was not respected or heard. What a great result."



"Thank you for pushing for a sincere apology from the university and chatting with them to make things right. ... I just wanted to thank you ... for pursuing this matter quickly and for giving me the support that you have. I really appreciate it and thanks to you I feel like my voice has finally been heard."



"Thank you for your email and effort. While I am not totally pleased with the outcome, I have respect for what you have done, and I understand your reasoning. Additionally, I don't want to put any more effort into this either. So, I was satisfied enough to accept this offer."



In 2024, we resolved 552 cases by settlement. In a significant number of these cases, providers exercised their discretion to consider new evidence about a student's personal circumstances that, had it been available at the time when the student's case was originally considered, would have resulted in a different outcome. It is usually reasonable for providers to expect students to seek help promptly when difficult personal circumstances are having an impact on their studies. But it is also essential for providers to recognise that it can be very difficult for some students to obtain and supply relevant supporting information during a crisis. The cases we have received have included students experiencing serious personal health difficulties, bereavements, severe financial hardship, and being the victims of violent crime. Providers should consider principles of proportionality and fairness when making decisions that affect students. It is relevant to consider the investment of time and resources that students have committed to their studies and the significant impact of not being able to continue with those studies when considering student's circumstances. In some cases where the underlying circumstances have been very serious, it will be unfair to reject student's claims just because the student did not follow administrative processes.

Other outcomes from settlements included:

- ◆ A provider offered to give a student access to their marked exam script to provide additional assurance that no error had been made in transcribing the marks into the provider's centralised system
- ◆ A provider accepted that a penalty for going over the word-count of an assessment should not have been applied. It removed the ten-mark penalty from the student's mark
- ◆ A provider offered to consider a student's appeal against a decision to terminate their studies. The provider had previously rejected the student's appeal because it was submitted after the deadline. The provider accepted that there was no evidence that the student had been properly informed of its decision to terminate their studies or about their right of appeal.

Sometimes we need to carry out a detailed review of what has happened to understand why the student is dissatisfied and to decide if there is something the provider should do to put things right. Where we decide that a complaint is Justified or Partly Justified, we usually make Recommendations. In 2024, we made Recommendations in 306 of the complaints we closed.



Recommendations can be focused on putting things right for the individual students who have complained, or they can be focused on improving what a provider does in the future. We describe these as “good practice Recommendations”. In 2024 we made good practice Recommendations in 144 complaints. We referred providers to guidance available in the Good Practice Framework. Common themes across several recommendations related to ensuring that adequate records are kept at the initial stages of a process; training staff operating processes on the burden and standard of proof and giving sufficiently detailed reasons for decisions made; and completing processes in a timely manner.

Other Recommendations included that providers should:

- ◆ amend information available to prospective students to ensure it is accurate, for example, about visa requirements and about student accommodation options
- ◆ clarify information about key progress points for existing students, for example, protocols for signing-off student placement hours, and the process for agreeing with a supervisor when a postgraduate research thesis is ready for examination
- ◆ update their regulations to address emerging issues. For example, to include more information about the use of generative AI, and to support this with information in course handbooks and module specifications about what is permitted for specific assessments. And to reconsider processes for complaints about disruption to teaching to take account of both academic impacts and financial impacts on students
- ◆ review their procedures to ensure they are compatible with the Good Practice Framework. For example, by clarifying when students studying at a delivery partner have a right of appeal to the awarding partner, and by issuing Completion of Procedures letters to appropriately advise students of their right to complain to us
- ◆ provide training for their staff, for example to all staff involved in academic appeals, academic engagement and fitness to study processes setting out the provider’s obligations towards disabled students under the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring greater awareness of the processes to use when agreeing and reviewing reasonable adjustments.



“Thank you for your email, and your comprehensive response on [the student’s] case. I just wanted to contact you to confirm that [we] have no comments in relation to this outcome and are happy to progress this once it is appropriate to do so.”

(From a provider)

Financial outcomes

Sometimes students are seeking financial remedies. We will usually consider financial remedies if a student

- ◆ has been incorrectly charged for their tuition fees, or for accommodation costs
- ◆ has had additional costs because of something the provider has done or not done
- ◆ did not receive the service that they could reasonably expect for which they had paid tuition or other fees
- ◆ has lost income because of something the provider has done or not done
- ◆ has been caused distress or inconvenience by something the provider has done or not done, and this has not been put right by a practical action.

In 2024, the total amount of financial compensation offered to students following a Recommendation was £677,785. In addition, £1,809,805 was offered to students as part of a settlement. The highest single amount of financial compensation was £63,650. 143 students received amounts of £5,000 or more, of whom 74 received £10,000 or more. The larger sums of compensation were agreed in instances where there had been serious disruption to a student's studies for prolonged periods, or where a provider's actions had led to the student being unable to complete the qualification which they were studying for. Some of the higher amounts awarded reflect the high costs international students have faced (including tuition fees and visa costs). In a small number of cases where a provider has treated a student unfairly for a long time, or repeatedly missed opportunities to put things right, we have recommended compensation above £5,000 for distress and inconvenience.

Learning from complaints that are not upheld

In some of the complaints we review the provider has already accepted that something had gone wrong. In 2024, we decided that 293 complaints brought to us were Not Justified because the provider had already made a reasonable offer to put things right. At the end of our process, the providers re-made these offers to the students.

Just over 50% of the complaints we completed in 2024 were Not Justified. Even in the complaints that we do not uphold and where the provider has not made an offer to the student, there is important learning for providers about how students have experienced their formal processes. In our experience, a lack of clarity or compassion in the way a decision is communicated can make the difference between a student accepting a decision or continuing to pursue their complaint.



"Thank you for taking the time to looking into our complaint. If [provider name] had made it as clear as your outcome, we probably wouldn't have needed you."



"I would like to say that despite this unfavourable outcome, I am very thankful for your time and effort in reviewing my complaints."

Compliance

In 2024, 93% of our student-centred Recommendations and 82% of our good practice Recommendations were complied with on time. This is a significant improvement from 2023 (where it was 86% and 63% respectively). Complying with our Recommendations in a timely way is important to enable students to move forward and to ensure that other students benefit from improved processes as soon as possible.

In 2024 providers did not comply with our Recommendations in three instances.

The London Bridge Business Academy (LBBA)

The student complained to us because they were removed from their course of study shortly before they were due to re-submit some assignments. LBBA said this was because of a lack of academic progress and engagement.

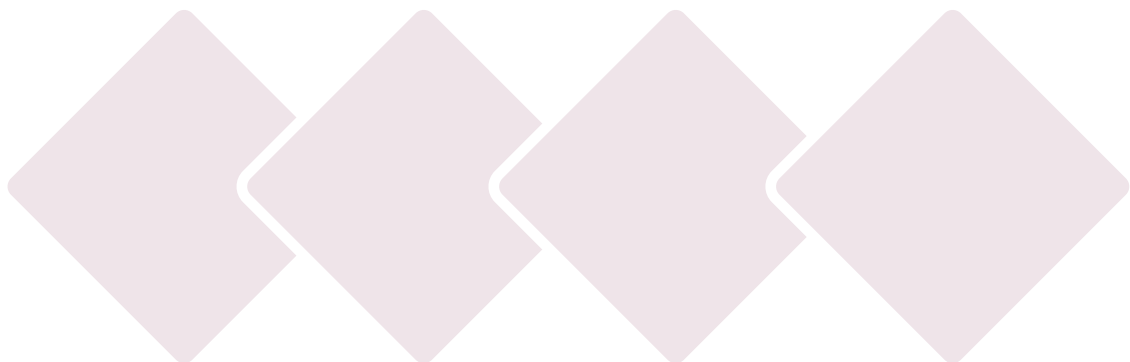
We expressed no view on the student's engagement with teaching or likelihood of success in further assessments, and we did not comment on the academic judgment of LBBA staff. However, we had concerns about the fairness of the process. The decision to terminate the student's registration was not taken within any clear, structured process under the provider's regulations.

We decided that the student's complaint was **Justified**. We made four student-centred Recommendations concerning the student's return to study and two good practice Recommendations.

LBBA did not accept our decision and has not complied with the Recommendations.

We followed our Compliance Protocol and explained to the College that, under our Rules, we report non-compliance with our Recommendations to our Board and in our Annual Report. Despite our best attempts to engage with LBBA, this correspondence has not been productive.

We reported the College's refusal to comply with our Recommendation to our Board in December 2024 and shared information about the complaint with the Office for Students (OfS).



New College, Durham

A student at New College complained to us about the College's handling of a process leading to them being withdrawn. We are not publishing any details of the complaint because the small size of the College's student body means there could be a risk that the student might be identified.

We decided that the student's complaint was **Partly Justified** as we were not satisfied that the College had handled the initial stages of the process appropriately and there were concerns with the College's Panel process. We made two student-centred Recommendations and two good practice Recommendations. Recommendation 1 was for a financial payment to remedy the distress and inconvenience. Recommendation 2 was to return the student's case to a new Panel for fresh consideration. We were clear that we had no view on what the outcome of any fresh consideration should be.

The College made an offer to the student in line with Recommendation 1 and said it would act on our Good Practice Recommendations. The College's position is that it cannot comply with Recommendation 2.

We followed our Compliance Protocol and explained to the College that, under our Rules, we report non-compliance with our Recommendations to our Board and in our Annual Report. The College has interacted with us constructively throughout and there have been extensive attempts on both sides to find a solution. However, a point of fundamental disagreement has been reached. The College's view is that it cannot comply with Recommendation 2, due to concerns about staff welfare.

We reported the College's refusal to comply with our Recommendation to our Board in December 2024 and shared information about the complaint with the OfS.

Applied Business Academy (ABA)

A student complained to us about ABA's handling of their appeal against a decision to terminate their studies for low attendance.

We decided that the student's complaint was **Justified**. We concluded that ABA had overlooked evidence relating to the student's engagement, when considering a termination appeal. The student no longer wished to return to ABA, so the two Recommendations made focused on personal remedy: an apology and £500 in recognition of distress and inconvenience.

On the day we issued our Complaint Outcome and proposed Recommendations ABA announced that it would be closing its higher education courses. ABA made the decision to close permanently and went into voluntary liquidation before the deadline for compliance.

Although aware of the liquidation, we pursued formal compliance action due to ABA initially indicating that it would comply, and to offer ABA a right of reply. The Liquidators confirmed that compliance was not possible. We provided the student with information about how to make a claim as an unsecured creditor. We informed the Liquidators that the non-compliance would be reported to the Board (we did this in March 2025) and in our Annual Report.

Sharing learning

Complaints are a valuable source of information about students' experiences. We engage with providers, student representative bodies (SRBs) and students to explore the wider context of the complaints we see and to share learning from them.

Casework notes and case summaries

We regularly publish summaries of complaints we have reviewed as examples of the issues we have seen, and the approach different providers have taken. We are careful to ensure that individual students and members of staff are not identifiable. We usually also exclude information that identifies the provider; in publishing real examples of our casework our intention is to illustrate principles that apply in treating students fairly at any provider.

Our case summaries give some indication of the wide variety of different issues students have faced during their studies. In 2024 we published case summaries about [student accommodation](#), [work placements](#), [postgraduate issues](#), [service issues including students' consumer rights](#), and [student transfer](#).

Our case summaries and accompanying casework notes are one of the most popular sections of our website and during 2024 we introduced a new [Learning from our casework](#) section on our website, grouping together guidance and case summaries on particular subjects and student matters, to make it easier to find information about particular topics.

Good Practice Framework

In 2024 we completed the work we began in 2023 to update the [Delivering learning opportunities with others](#) section of the Good Practice Framework. We continue to encourage providers to use our Good Practice Framework as a resource when designing student-facing procedures. Students and SRBs also use the guidance in our Good Practice Framework to understand whether their provider is taking a reasonable approach.

In 2025 we will consult on a new section of the Good Practice Framework, about responding to complaints about harassment and sexual misconduct.

Outreach activities

Our outreach activities through the year included workshops, webinars, visits to providers, other discussions with individual providers and SRBs, discussion groups, and contributing to external events. We value the opportunities to listen to a range of different views informed by experiences across the higher education sector. Hearing about student issues that are different to those we see in our complaints helps us to understand where there may be factors preventing students from using formal processes to help resolve their difficulties. We also benefit from providers and SRBs sharing their examples of good practice and innovation. We feed this learning into our casework, and it can help us to identify practical and proportionate outcomes to complaints.

Workshops, webinars and external events

In 2024 we delivered workshops and webinars for staff who handle complaints and appeals within providers, and staff and student officers within SRBs. We covered topics including student placements, complaints handling within partnerships, complaints from disabled students, and the benefits of sharing data between student advice services and student complaints functions. Participants often tell us that they value the opportunity to discuss practice with colleagues in similar roles at different providers as well as hear from us about our approach.

We also participated in a range of events hosted by different organisations including the Academic Registrars' Council (ARC), Universities UK (UUK), the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the National Union of Students (NUS). These events often give us the opportunity to talk to student-facing staff who are not directly involved with complaints or appeals processes but whose work may be pivotal to student experience.

Discussion groups

We held 30 small discussion groups with students and student advisors, including sessions focusing on the experiences of disabled students, minoritised ethnicity students and apprentices.

Several of the apprentices we spoke to had previously studied at higher education level on more traditional academic programmes. They described the workload as intense in comparison to their earlier experiences but were largely positive about the benefits to them of combining employment and study. Several spoke highly of the level of support they had received and of well-established student representation systems. Others had found their course more difficult, flagging timetabling changes at short notice as a particular source of frustration. Some did not feel that they were getting a "full university experience" because their long working hours meant they were unable to participate in extra-curricular activities.

In general discussions, several students raised concerns about staff redundancies and the knock-on impacts on the availability of supervision and specific academic expertise. Students also reported that sometimes academic staff shared students' concerns about how courses were being delivered but felt unable to provide resolution to issues at a local level and actively encouraged students to raise complaints about these issues.



"I just wanted to quickly thank both of you for taking the time to do this, and taking the time to solve this, and to sort of listen to everything we have to say, and all of the things we faced. I don't know about anyone else but, even just seeing this advertised to sign up for – I found it so encouraging to see that people were actively listening to us and wanted to make a change based on what we have to say – that's been really refreshing".

(Student Discussion Group participant)

Visits

In 2024 we continued to visit providers and SRBs across England and Wales. As well as meeting with complaints and appeals teams, we also met with staff providing support to disabled students and staff working in welfare and mental health support roles. We heard significant concerns about the operation of processes for students to apply for the DSA. This was universally described as being subject to extensive delays which are having significant impacts on students. Providers told us that they are increasingly stepping in to fund interim support measures, and that the process for reclaiming these costs is ineffective. There is a growing disparity between the stringent evidence students are required to produce to obtain funding, and the more flexible approach providers are being directed to take by bodies including the EHRC. Providers are increasingly accepting a range of information from students, including their description of their own lived experience, when deciding what support a student may benefit from. Providers were also frequently concerned that their support services were expected to take on significant levels of support because the NHS is unable to provide some services at the level required.



"It was fantastic to be able to ask questions, reflect on what we do well and what we would like to do better as part of non-judgmental open conversations with OIA staff."

(Feedback after a visit from a Point of Contact at a provider)

With SRBs we discussed continuing financial hardship and how students' paid employment is affecting their ability to participate fully in student life. We also discussed issues around freedom of speech and student protest. Some providers had experienced significantly more student protest activity than others. Providers based within cities were more likely to be concerned about protesters from outside their academic communities affecting the safety of staff and students.

We are always happy to answer any queries about our Scheme or good practice guidance, and we welcome conversations about emerging issues or anything else it may be useful to discuss. Please get in touch at outreach@oiahe.org.uk.

Advisory Panels

Our two Advisory Panels give us access to expertise and advice on issues related to our casework. Each panel met twice in the year to discuss topics of interest. Our case-handling staff can also refer issues to Panel members outside of meetings for their expert input. The meetings provided valuable insight into sector issues, and we were able to share information about our approach. The Panels do not see or make decisions on individual complaints.

Higher Education Advisory Panel

The Higher Education Advisory Panel (HEAP) discussed a wide range of issues including issues affecting international students, mental health and duty of care concerns, requests for additional consideration in academic appeals, complaints related to validated and accredited courses, the challenges with implementing the new OfS registration condition on harassment and sexual misconduct, use of external investigators and how this is perceived, and how pressures on providers and students are impacting on general patterns in complaints.

The Panel reflects the diversity of our Scheme membership and includes student advisers and a balance of administrators and academics from providers.

HEAP members during 2024

- ◆ **Zoë Allman** - Associate Dean (Academic), De Montfort University
- ◆ **Claire Blanchard** - Partnership Team Leader, University of Wales Trinity Saint David
- ◆ **Dr Mark Hollingsworth** - Deputy Chief Operating Officer, City St Georges, University of London
- ◆ **Charlotte Levy** - Assistant Registrar in Examinations, Conferments & Awards, University of West London
- ◆ **Dr Nathan Morris** - Head of Student Complaints and Academic Casework, University of Warwick
- ◆ **Carmen Neagoe** - Head of Educational and Teaching Support, Judge Business School, University of Cambridge
- ◆ **Melissa Reilly** - Head of Student Support at UA92
- ◆ **Adrian Spence** - Head of Advice, Wellbeing and Accommodation Support, Aston Students' Union, Birmingham
- ◆ **Cat Turhan** - Director of Membership Services, Imperial College Union
- ◆ **Nicholas Whitehouse** - Coordinator, Mixed Economy Group of Colleges

Disability Experts Panel

Our Disability Experts Panel (DEP) is made up of disability practitioners and experts in disability matters from specialist organisations and higher education providers.

The Panel discussed issues including the impact that the implementation of the new DSA process is having on students, progress with the Disabled Student Commitment roll out to the sector, student mental health and the Equality Act and highlighted concerns that difficult financial situations in some providers may lead to a reduction in resource to support disabled students.

In July, the EHRC published a new guidance note clarifying providers' responsibilities in the light of the Abrahart/University of Bristol case. It emphasises the need for training of staff in all roles across providers. The Panel flagged the importance of commitment from senior leadership roles to drive change within academic communities.

DEP members during 2024

- ◆ **Harriet Cannon** - Disability Advisory Team Manager, University of Leeds
- ◆ **Nicola Frampton** - Insight Manager, Student Minds
- ◆ **Lucy Merritt** - Education Policy Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust
- ◆ **Laura Nettell** - Interim Head of Disability Services, University of Gloucestershire
- ◆ **Phil Scarffe** - Head of Student Welfare, De Montfort University
- ◆ **Alice Speller** - Executive Director, National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP)



Working with others

Working independently but interdependently with the wider higher education (HE) regulatory framework is one of our key objectives. During 2024, the financial sustainability of the sector across the UK became an increasingly pressing concern and this set the agenda for much of our collaborative work. We brought our knowledge of student complaints into sector-wide discussions exploring what the impact of financial challenges may be upon students' experiences.

We have continued to meet and engage with key sector stakeholders. We worked with a range of organisations, including the Department for Education (DfE), the Welsh government, the OfS, Medr, UUK, NUS and the Quality Assurance Agency, among many others. We contributed at the Quality Council for UK Higher Education and had regular joint meetings with DfE, the OfS and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

During 2024, we responded to several consultations and engaged in discussions around key areas for the governments, including the use of agents in student recruitment and investigation into student finance for study at franchised higher education providers.

The wider financial context has led us to build on our earlier work towards our longstanding aim that there should be appropriate protection in place for students in the event of a provider closure.

We have engaged with OfS on wider market exit scenarios and with the DfE's financial sustainability team. Throughout 2024, we have been involved in relevant taskforces and have continued to engage with a small number of providers who have recently exited the market, with the aim of improving outcomes for students. It can be beneficial for students and for the providers that are closing to address students' concerns without the need for each individual student to pursue a formal complaint and to then bring a complaint to us.

We have also contributed to policy work and discussions in this area, and to thought pieces and presentations, drawing on our knowledge of the impact of closures on students. Our call to interested parties to join us in exploring possible solutions received a good response from providers, sector groups, specialist consultants and insurance practitioners. This has led to a piece of research with higher education consultancy SUMs consulting – taking learning from providers, student representative bodies and others impacted by closures we have worked on. We anticipate the outputs of this work will be published in 2025. This potentially important and far-reaching area of work gives us a lot to consider, in terms of our early intervention role, its funding, the political landscape and other organisations we need to work with.

In the first half of 2024, we prepared for the commencement of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and the parallel OfS complaints scheme, which was due to come in to force on 1 August 2025. In July the newly elected government decided to pause implementation to review

the impact and implementation of the Act. In early 2025, they announced their intentions to implement, amend and remove some parts of the Act. The government intends to remove students from the jurisdiction of the OfS complaint scheme. We welcomed this amendment as we believe it gives clarity for students and providers and a fair route to independent review to all students impacted by these issues. We will continue to work with OfS, to try to ensure clarity where there is potential for overlap, considering any regulation and guidance when reviewing complaints and sharing information on systemic issues and possible breach of regulatory conditions.



We continue to work with the Welsh Government and Medr on the implementation of the expansion of our remit into further education (FE) in Wales. The timing of this alongside Medr's wider timetable and regulations has proved complicated. The delays in establishing the wider regulatory landscape have impacted on our planned work in preparing providers and we are conscious of the wider sector pressures to be ready for implementation of the new regime. We are hopeful that the necessary changes will be in place for September 2026.

We also engaged with the Department of Business and Trade on the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 which amongst other aspects, has an impact on how Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) bodies are regulated. As an established ADR scheme with legislative underpinning, we have been exempted from these requirements.

Meanwhile we continue to work towards our goal that all HE students should have access to independent redress by continuing to engage with providers and awarding organisations who wish to join the scheme voluntarily. In June EM Normandie joined the scheme voluntarily before being added to the OfS register (therefore becoming a 'qualifying institution') in early 2025.

A key part of our work with others is to bring our expertise to areas we think can benefit students, student organisations and providers. For example, in 2024 we continued to work with the Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce. The Taskforce aims to improve mental health support for students in higher education and reduce the impact of mental distress. One of the priority areas for the taskforce was compassionate communications and the development of more sensitive policies, procedures, and communications by providers guided by a statement of good practice principles. We contributed to the Compassionate Communication Statement of good practice principles drawing on our well-established kindness work. We also provided further input to ensure it is in line with the Good Practice Framework. The [Compassionate Communications Commitment](#) was launched in November 2024 and is now owned by ARC, and we will be taking it into account when reviewing complaints.

As well as our work within the HE sector, we are also part of a wider community of complaints and ombuds organisations. We are active members of the Ombudsman Association, which facilitates valuable discussion about good practice in complaints handling. We are also members of the European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education.

Improving what we do

In 2024 we undertook a strategic review, exploring our purpose and goals and identifying the strategic objective and priorities for the coming years. We set out these priorities in our updated [2025 Strategy](#) and the plans to support this work in our [2025 Operating Plan](#).

One of the priorities we agreed is to fundamentally review our casework process to ensure that it has service users at its heart, is as efficient as possible and is focused on effective resolution and remedy. We have seen an increasing number of complaints received year on year, the needs and expectations of students are changing, and the sector is constantly evolving. It has never been more important that we offer an accessible and easy to navigate process that is flexible enough to meet the needs of the students and providers who use it.

We have continued to look for efficiencies across our case-handling process. This includes further embedding our work to understand trends in the complaints we receive and where there are opportunities to streamline our approach.

Kindness

Despite the sustained increase in complaints that we have seen in 2024, we have worked hard to continue our focus on quality and kindness. We have continued to offer tailored support to vulnerable students and those experiencing difficult circumstances. We were pleased to contribute to the drafting of the [Compassionate Communication Commitment](#).



"I am very very grateful for your patience and effort in the handling of my case. I wish to let you know that I have been touched by your kindness multiple times during these months."

Student Feedback

In 2024 we continued to invite feedback from the students who use our service. This feedback, together with insights from students who participated in our student discussion groups and from our general engagement with students during our process, is very valuable and informs how we develop what we do.

Some students are very satisfied with our service. We are pleased that a high proportion of those who respond say that we have treated them with respect and politeness. Others express concerns, most commonly around understanding our processes and decisions, the extent and nature of our remit, or a perception of a lack of impartiality.

It is important and valuable for us to understand what we could do better for those students that have not experienced our service in a positive way. Students who are unhappy with their experience can make a complaint about our service. In 2024, we received 45 service complaints, compared to 52 in 2023. Some of the complaints we received raised issues about the merits of the student's complaint about their provider, which we can't consider under our service complaints procedure. As in previous years, where the concerns were about our service, the issues raised were generally like the concerns expressed in the wider student feedback. As well as being an opportunity to put things right if they have gone wrong, the complaints we receive about our service provide valuable insight into how we could further improve our service.



Legal challenges to our decisions

Our case decisions can be challenged by judicial review. Judicial review cases often provide useful learning and insights for us, and we value reflections from judges on our decisions and processes.

During 2024 we received a total of 13 new judicial review claims, compared with ten in 2023 and four in 2022. 11 of the claims received in 2024 were refused permission and we are waiting for the court to reach a decision on one of them.

One claim was granted permission. While we were successful in defending the specific issues raised by the student, the Judge concluded that one aspect of our process regarding the revision of our proposed Recommendations, had not been handled fairly. Our recommendations were set aside, and we continued our review. Following further comments from both the student and provider about new proposed recommendations, the provider made an offer to the student in line with our new Recommendations, and these were accepted by the student.

Over the past year we have seen an increase in the number of students who commence legal proceedings without legal representation, which can present additional challenges. We recognise that the costs involved in litigation can be significant. We try to keep our costs low, but we also have a responsibility to recover the costs we incur in successfully defending claims made against us. To assist with managing the continued increase of legal claims, we established a new operational role of Adjudication Reviewer to oversee and respond to legal claims proportionately and cost effectively.



“...The Claimant rather has to identify clear arguable errors of a public law nature. Having reviewed the various submissions....I fail to see any evidence of such failings. The material before the court suggests that the Adjudicator carefully reviewed the information in front of it and reached a rational decision.”

During the year we also received one County Court claim from a student, regarding the outcome of their complaint to us, which was struck out by the Court.

Data and our casework

In 2024 we continued to develop customised reporting on the new casework system we introduced in 2023. Our reporting and intelligence hub helps to increase the visibility of our progress in different areas and colleagues across our organisation use this tool to support their work in areas including improving allocation of cases and the accuracy of data in our systems, and monitoring compliance.



Website

In 2024, to ensure that our content management system was up-to-date and would remain supported, we re-built our website on a new platform. We didn't make significant changes to the content of the site, but we took the opportunity to make some improvements for security and accessibility.

Our people

At the heart of our organisation are our people. Our strong team of people have shared values, a wide range of skills and life experiences, and a commitment to the work we do. We work together in a positive and collaborative way to deliver the best service we can across all areas of our work.

With continuing increases in the number of complaints coming to us and the need to manage other key aspects of our work effectively, we continued to grow our organisation. In our recruitment we maintained a strong focus on skills. Our recruitment system uses anonymised applications and predictive, skill-based assessments to identify the best candidates for a role, while minimising the risk of unconscious bias.



"Although it took time, it was actually fun to do this application! Such a welcome change to the standard 'here are ten criteria, show how you meet each one'."



"As well as feeling that you are engaging in a fair and balanced process, it also gives a sense of what the hiring manager is looking for in a candidate and the community and ethos of the company."



"Looks like you are a fair employer and would love to get an interview even if it may not work out as I would love to work in an org like this."

Employee Engagement Survey

In August 2024, we ran our Employee Engagement Survey. We conduct this survey periodically and it is conducted anonymously on our behalf by the [Institute of Employment Studies \(IES\)](#). We are always keen to hear our staffs' views and perspectives, and we were pleased that 96% of colleagues shared their thoughts and suggestions. The views expressed in the survey will feed into our approach as an employer and will help us to shape what we do across the whole organisation. The timing of this survey was particularly helpful given our strategic review work.

We were delighted with the outstanding set of survey results and IES specifically noted our high engagement score of 4.01 out of 5, not achieved by many organisations, in their experience. This score is particularly meaningful given 96% of our people responded and scored the many attitude statements including submitting free text responses. This year's engagement score is our second highest score over the years, only 0.04 lower than in 2020.

Diversity survey

As part of our commitment to being an inclusive organisation and to further strengthen diversity within our organisation, we conducted an anonymous diversity survey which had a 90% response rate. This was to give us a clearer understanding of the diversity we have and to enable us to monitor our progress in strengthening our diversity. We use the diversity information available from our recruitment platform to gain insight to decide where we may need to position our approach differently. The findings are informing our development work for 2025.

Staff representation

Our Staff Liaison Committee (SLC) again met regularly through the year. It continues to be a valuable forum for listening to and sharing information with team representatives.

We were pleased to reach a formal voluntary recognition agreement with GMB Trade Union, effective from 1 September 2024. We are confident this will be a beneficial development and contribute to continuing positive dialogue with our people. Following a nominations process, two OIA colleagues were appointed as GMB representatives to act on behalf of and support colleagues who are members, providing representation to OIA management on key issues and to nominated team members in the SLC.

We will be working with both our SLC and GMB to develop an improved dialogue, involvement and employee engagement as part of our organisational development priority in our wider strategic plan.



Jenny,
Senior Assistant Adjudicator

“Going to university was completely transformative for me, as it is for so many others, so I wanted to be part of an organisation that helps protect students whilst they’re studying and promotes good practice and learning in the sector. I like having the ability to manage my own time and see something all the way through – I get a sense of accomplishment from completing a case. There’s something really satisfying about unpicking a complex case to come to a decision. And colleagues are always happy to share their wisdom. The depth and breadth of knowledge here is amazing.”

**Imi,****Technical Support Analyst**

"As a Technical Support Analyst, I have the privilege to assist my colleagues with any tech-related queries, allowing them to continue providing the best level of service to those who contact our organisation. It's a varied role and I get an insight into the exceptional support that the different teams consistently provide to our service users – sometimes in high-pressure situations. My peers at the OIA make my role easier by being patient and understanding, and they always take the time to explain parts of the process that I am unfamiliar with so we can work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcome."

**Jim,****Case Coordinator**

"I joined the OIA in 2012 and gained extensive casework experience as a case-handler before moving into my current Case Coordinator role, in which I look after cases from vulnerable students and complaints involving sensitive circumstances. The most rewarding part of my role is helping students that are in difficult situations access our Scheme. I believe strongly in the benefits of using kindness in everything we do, and I work hard to do that in my role."

The Rebecca Marsland Award

The Rebecca Marsland Award was created in 2019 in memory of our friend and colleague who sadly passed away. It is awarded each year as a celebration of an outstanding contribution to our work, an exceptional personal achievement or an act of kindness. We invite colleagues to make nominations and our Chief Executive and our Independent Adjudicator, together with a previous year's winner of the award, decide on a worthy winner. This year, the award was given to Lucy, a Senior Case-handler in our Assessment and Resolution Team, who received nominations from colleagues across several teams. Lucy cares deeply about the work she does and the students whose cases she handles. Colleagues across the organisation were keen to recognise Lucy for the thoughtful and considered advice she shares with them and her willingness to take on additional and challenging work. She is described as an excellent colleague who makes an outstanding contribution to casework and the organisation.

Our organisational structure

Board of Directors

Helen Megarry
Independent Adjudicator

Zoë Babb
Head of Adjudication Team

Adjudication Managers
Tracey Allen, Sarah Redford,
Claire Skelly, John Wolff

Sub-teams of
Assistant Adjudicators

Chris Pinnell
Head of Casework Support &
Resolution Team

Adjudication Managers
Sally Adams, Craig Howlett,
Emma Jackson, Rachel Thackray

Sub-teams of
Case-handlers

Casework Support Managers
Tim Cadd, Wendy Dant (Int),
Nicole Sanderson (ML)

Sub-teams of
Casework Administrators

Jo Nuckley
Head of Outreach & Insight Team

Outreach Team

James Hare
Insight Manager

Insight Team

Ben Elger
Chief Executive

Charlotte Corrish
Head of Public Policy

Catherine Mountford
Interim Head of Leadership Office

**Communications and
Leadership Office Team**

Dan Saward
Head of Digital Technology

Data & Technology Team

Claire Kurowski-Ford
Operations Manager

Operations Team

Michaela Hanbuerger
Head of People & Culture

People & Culture Team

Key - correct as of 31 December 2024

Senior Leadership

Management Group

Line Managers

Staff Teams

Our Board of Trustees/Directors

In 2024 we successfully agreed and adopted new [Articles of Association](#) and our planned new governance arrangements came into effect on 29 October 2024.

Our new governance arrangements preserve the valued involvement of sector and student organisations while continuing to safeguard our independence and ensuring our governance arrangements have the confidence of all our stakeholders. It is important that our governance reflects both the current context and that it is flexible enough to adapt to future changes in the higher education sector.

Under the revised arrangements, all new Trustees are appointed through an open recruitment process within a framework that sets out the skills, experience and diverse perspectives required, including student perspectives and English sector and Welsh sector perspectives, in an appropriately balanced way. We have also kept in mind the growing expectations for highly effective governance of charities, including in relation to Board size, and expectations of us as an ombuds scheme.

Board members are not involved in the review of individual complaints. The Board's responsibilities include:

- ◆ preserving the independence of the Scheme and the role of the Independent Adjudicator
- ◆ oversight of the performance and effectiveness of the Independent Adjudicator, the Chief Executive and the OIA Scheme
- ◆ setting the budget for the OIA and the level of subscriptions payable by providers each year
- ◆ approving the [Rules](#) of the Scheme.

During 2024 we said goodbye to five trustees who had served on the Board for significant periods of time, Jon Renyard, William Callaway, Alistair Fitt, Orla Tarn and Chloe Field. We thank them all for their exceptional contribution to the Board and the OIA.

Trustees/Directors

Trustees/Directors are appointed by the Board of Trustees. They are normally appointed for a term of three years and serve up to two terms. The Board may decide to extend a Trustee's period of service up to a maximum of nine consecutive years.

The Trustees of the charity and Directors of the charitable company, who served throughout 2024 unless otherwise stated and were members of the Board on 31 December 2024, were as follows:

Lay Trustees/Directors

Chair - Sim Scavazza

Deputy Chair - Martin Kirke

Andrew Chandler

Nicola Flint

Jonathan Rees

Trustees/Directors with a sector perspective

Professor Alistair Fitt - English sector

Dr Wendy Finlay - English sector

Dr Kevin Mundy - Welsh sector

Trustees/Directors with a student perspective

Adesewa Adebisi

Alex Stanley (from July 2024)

Sophie Williams

Trustees/Directors who served part year under previous governance

Jon Renyard (until June 2024) - Nominated Director

Orla Tarn (until May 2024) - Nominated Director

Chloe Field (until June 2024) - Alternate Director

William Callaway (until June 2024) - Nominated Director

Our strategy and Operating Report

Our charitable purpose is to advance education for public benefit through the independent review of student complaints in England and Wales and by using learning from complaints to help improve policies and practices.

Our strategy identifies four key priorities through which we fulfil our purpose:

- ◆ to review student complaints independently, fairly and effectively
- ◆ to share learning from complaints with higher education providers, student representative bodies, students and others, to help improve policies and practices and the student experience
- ◆ to work effectively with others and influence policy and practice in the wider regulatory framework for higher education and in the ombuds sector
- ◆ to continually develop our organisation so that we can do our work well.

Our [Operating Report for 2024](#) reports progress against our [Operating Plan 2024](#). It sets out what we have done during the year to advance each of our strategic priorities. It includes information on our performance against our key performance indicators, progress in ongoing areas of work, and new initiatives.

In 2024 we undertook a strategic review which has resulted in a revised strategy for 2025 and updated strategic priorities. The [2025 Strategy](#) is available on our website.

Subscriptions

Our subscription model is designed to reflect the diversity of our membership and, to a lesser extent, the number of complaints received about a provider, through a core subscription fee and a case-related element.

All providers pay a core subscription. For most providers this is based on student numbers (see Core subscription fee rates below for more information).

Core subscription levels are reviewed annually. In line with an upward trend over several years, we again saw a significant increase in the number of complaints we received in 2024, and we expect this to continue going forward. We continued to focus on handling cases as efficiently as possible. We are aware of the considerable financial challenges facing the higher education sector. Our Board carefully considered the resource needed to deal with our caseload alongside the financial pressures in the sector and agreed to freeze core subscription rates for 2025 for all providers.

Some providers also pay a case-related element of the subscription. Points are allocated to cases received, and a fee is payable for each point above a threshold for each band. The case-related element is payable when the number of points allocated to complaints received about the provider in the previous year exceeds the band's points threshold. The number of points above the threshold determines the fee. The points allocated to a case are based on whether it is not eligible for us to review, is settled or withdrawn before it goes to full review, or is fully reviewed. This maintains the vital principle that there should be no link between the outcome of eligible cases and the amount of any fee paid.

2024 was the first year when the increase of 10% in the points threshold for each band was applied (increasing the number of points that can be incurred before case fees are payable) and the impact of this for us will only be seen in 2025. The Board felt it important to maintain a link between costs and increased complaints received and therefore agreed to make a small increase in the per point fee from £250 to £255 for cases received in 2025 (payable in 2026).

More details of our [subscriptions arrangements](#) can be found on our website.

CORE SUBSCRIPTION FEE RATES FOR 2024
(pro-rated for providers joining the OIA Scheme part way through the year)

Student numbers	Band	Core Subscription Fee (£)	Core Subscription Fee (£) (HE in FE providers only)
Up to and including 200 students	AA	566	396
201 to 500 students	A	1,168	818
501 to 1,500 students	B	2,358	1,650
1,501 to 6,000 students	C	12,677	8,874
6,001 to 12,000 students	D	25,152	17,607
12,001 to 20,000 students	E	41,807	29,265
20,001 to 30,000 students	F	63,195	44,237
30,001 to 50,000 students	G	75,099	52,570
50,001 to 100,000 students	H	92,415	64,690
More than 100,000 students	I	141,989	99,393

CORE SUBSCRIPTION FEE RATES FOR 2025
(pro-rated for providers joining the OIA Scheme part way through the year)

Student numbers	Band	Core Subscription Fee (£)	Core Subscription Fee (£) (HE in FE providers only)
Up to and including 200 students	AA	566	396
201 to 500 students	A	1,168	818
501 to 1,500 students	B	2,358	1,650
1,501 to 6,000 students	C	12,677	8,874
6,001 to 12,000 students	D	25,152	17,607
12,001 to 20,000 students	E	41,807	29,265
20,001 to 30,000 students	F	63,195	44,237
30,001 to 50,000 students	G	75,099	52,570
50,001 to 100,000 students	H	92,415	64,690
More than 100,000 students	I	141,989	99,393

The core subscription fee for 2024 for the following providers was £330 (£330 in 2025):

- ◆ Providers of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITTs)
- ◆ Providers that are brought into membership of our Scheme because their designated HE provision is franchised from another provider, and (if they are based in England) they are not on the OfS Register
- ◆ Providers in England that are not on the OfS Register but are providing a course leading to an award of another member of our Scheme that is in England.

Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted funds		Total 2024	Unrestricted funds		Total 2023
	General Reserves	Pension Reserve		General Reserves	Pension Reserve	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
<i>Income from investments</i>	187,928	-	187,928	112,862	-	112,862
<i>Income from charitable activities</i>						
Subscriptions	8,255,722	-	8,255,722	7,232,600	-	7,232,600
<i>Other income</i>	328	-	328	-	-	-
Total income	8,443,978	-	8,443,978	7,345,462	-	7,345,462
Expenditure						
<i>Charitable activities</i>	7,563,029	-	7,563,029	7,198,964	(4,786,966)	2,411,998
Total resources expended	7,563,029	-	7,563,029	7,198,964	(4,786,966)	2,411,998
Net income/(expenditure)	880,949	-	880,949	146,498	4,786,966	4,933,464
Net movement in funds for the year	880,949	-	880,949	146,498	4,786,966	4,933,464
Total funds at 1 January 2024	2,449,869	-	2,449,869	2,303,371	(4,786,966)	(2,483,595)
Total funds at 31 December 2024	3,330,818	-	3,330,818	2,449,869	-	2,449,869

The amounts derive from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included in the statement of financial activities.

Balance sheet at 31 December 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets		33,301		83,100
Intangible assets		172,524		255,335
		<u>205,825</u>		<u>338,435</u>
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	233,109		213,301	
Cash at bank and in hand	8,541,084		6,429,532	
	<u>8,774,193</u>		<u>6,642,833</u>	
LIABILITIES:				
Amounts falling due within one year	(5,449,200)		(4,506,965)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>3,324,993</u>		<u>2,135,868</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>3,530,818</u>		<u>2,474,303</u>
LIABILITIES:				
Amounts falling due after one year		-		(24,434)
NET ASSETS EXCLUDING PENSION PROVISION		<u>3,530,818</u>		<u>2,449,869</u>
Pension provision		(200,000)		-
TOTAL NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		<u><u>3,330,818</u></u>		<u><u>2,449,869</u></u>
FUNDS				
Unrestricted Funds				
General Reserves		3,330,818		2,449,869
Pension Reserve		-		-
		<u><u>3,330,818</u></u>		<u><u>2,449,869</u></u>

These constitute summarised financial statements and do not include the financial information and disclosures required in a full set of financial statements.

The full set of audited [financial statements](#) can be found on our website.



office of the
independent
adjudicator

Annual Report 2024

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