

# Update for OIA Points of Contact

Information for you as our Point of Contact



Welcome to the September edition of our Update for Points of Contact.

As our Point of Contact, you have an important role in helping us to review complaints about your provider effectively, and more widely in liaising with us and providing information that helps us to run our Scheme effectively.

Our Updates for Points of Contact are designed to help you in this role. You can also find information on our [website](#).

## Updated compliance procedures

Membership of the OIA Scheme brings with it some obligations and providers have an excellent track record of complying with those obligations. When issues do arise it is usually possible to resolve them at an early stage. But it is important for the effective operation of our Scheme and for students' confidence in it that where necessary we take steps to pursue compliance. We have recently updated our casework compliance procedures, and we have introduced a process for following up compliance with our requests for information that supports our wider work (for example, information on the number of Completion of Procedures Letters providers issue each year, which provides contextual information for the number of complaints to us). You can find more information about our compliance procedures on our [Complying with our Rules](#) webpage.

## Student numbers

For most providers that are members of our Scheme, we use student numbers to allocate the provider to an OIA band. The bands determine the [OIA subscription](#) payable by the provider, as well as providing contextual information for some of our reporting (for example our Annual Statements). Where possible we take student numbers from the most recent relevant published data from HESA or HEIFES data returns. This includes students reported through the HESA Aggregate Offshore record and HESA's alternative provider data. Where a provider does not report its student numbers through these returns, we ask for the information directly from the provider. If you are a Point of Contact in one of these providers, we will contact you soon to ask for student numbers for the academic year 2019-20. We will send you further information about this in the coming weeks, but if you have any questions in the meantime, please email [subscriptions@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:subscriptions@oiahe.org.uk).

## Internal procedures

In our September e-newsletter we included information about the project we ran earlier this year looking at relevant internal procedures at a sample of providers. As part of the project we looked at whether different procedures at each provider signposted students to our Scheme and, where they did, the information that was given. We were pleased to see that many of the providers in the sample included accurate information about our Scheme in their procedures. But several gave out of date information about our Scheme. We saw that a number of procedures across a range of providers still told students they had to submit their Complaint Form to us within three months of completing the providers' internal procedures — students have 12 months to submit their Complaint Form. We also saw incorrect contact information in some procedures. Sometimes the information given on the provider's website was correct, but the information in the procedure itself hadn't been updated.

It is important that all providers' procedures give students accurate and up-to-date information about our Scheme. We will be sharing some learning from the project, including broader themes and key good practice learning points, as part of our outreach programme. But in the meantime, please take some time to check the information about our Scheme in your provider's procedures and elsewhere (eg online and in handbooks) is up to date. Our current contact information is given below. You may also find it helpful to read our guidance on [signposting students to our Scheme](#).

## Complaints relating to the impact of coronavirus and industrial action

As we mentioned in our recent e-newsletter, we have updated information on our website about complaints relating to the [impact of coronavirus](#) and [industrial action](#). The information draws together some of our existing guidance and updates it in the context of approaching the new academic year. This includes:

- bringing together our guidance on handling complaints arising from these issues into combined guidance on handling [complaints arising from significant disruption](#)
- some thoughts on coronavirus-related [considerations as we approach the new academic year](#)
- updated [coronavirus FAQs for students](#)
- updated [industrial action FAQs for students](#).

## Points of Contact information

Thank you to everyone who has provided us with their updated contact information following our request in last month's Update for Points of Contact. Please continue to let us know about any changes to Point of Contact details via the [MyOIA](#) portal or by emailing us at [membership@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:membership@oiahe.org.uk). If you would like us to use a different contact for invoicing (eg Accounts Payable), please send us these details too. You can find more information about the role of Points of Contact on [our website](#).

**Thank you for reading our Update for Points of Contact. If you have any questions, please email us at [outreach@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:outreach@oiahe.org.uk).**