

## **Terms of Reference for membership of the OIA's Disability Experts Panel**

1. Members of the Disability Experts Panel give informal advice to the OIA on disability-related matters that arise in the course of its work as the independent complaints handling body for students in higher education.
2. Panel members have a dual role:
  - a. to advise OIA staff on an ad hoc basis on issues relating to the support of students with a disability and associated Provider policies and procedures. For example, members may be asked to advise on the provision of reasonable adjustments and the possible impacts of specific types of disability.
  - b. to alert the OIA to policy changes, sector practice, rulings or other developments which may impact or influence our approach to dealing with disability-related cases.

Panel members may be approached individually or collectively.

3. Members will not have any operational involvement nor will they see individual cases, either collectively or as individuals. Adjudication decisions will remain the sole responsibility of the OIA staff team.
4. Panel members may be asked to attend Panel meetings which are likely to be held twice a year either online or at the OIA's offices in Reading. Ongoing consultation will be conducted by phone or email. The overall time commitment is not expected to exceed 10 hours a year.
5. Panel members must declare any conflicts of interest. Current HE Provider OIA Points of Contact are not eligible for panel membership.
6. Panel members must maintain strict confidentiality in respect of the work of the Panel and discussions with staff. Membership of the Experts Panel will be made public and the OIA may make public information it has

learned from the Panel that is relevant to good practice issues arising from complaints. Individual comments will not be attributed.

7. The Chair of the Panel will be an OIA senior manager.
8. Panel members will be appointed for an initial period of two or three years. They may receive an honorarium in recognition of their services at an annual rate of £450. This should be requested by invoice. Payment will be made annually in arrears. Panel members may also claim reasonable expenses in line with the OIA expense policy as and when they are incurred.

### **Membership of the Disability Experts Panel**

There will be maximum of 8 members of the Panel.

Members will be disability practitioners and/or experts in disability matters.

Members will be drawn from organisations with appropriate expertise.

Members may be expert individuals or representatives of a specialist organisation.

Organisational membership will be for three years. This may be renewed without limit. Where an organisational member is unable to join a panel meeting, they are encouraged to ask a colleague to attend in their place.

Individual members will serve for a period of two years. This may be renewed for a further period of two years at the discretion of the OIA. Individual members are not expected to nominate anyone else to attend in their absence.

The OIA will review membership as it considers appropriate, for example in response to changes in case receipts or significant changes in the policy landscape.