

Terms of Reference for membership of the OIA's Higher Education Advisory Panel

1. Members of the Advisory Panel give informal advice to the OIA on matters of higher education practice that arise in the course of its work as the independent complaints handling body for students in higher education.
2. The role of Panel members is:
 - a. To discuss and advise on current issues in the Higher Education sector and their impact upon complaints, and on matters of good practice; and to receive updates on the work of the OIA; and
 - b. To advise OIA staff on an ad hoc basis about issues of practice in higher education arising from student complaints.

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 will be invited to attend Panel meetings held around once every six months either online or at the OIA's office in Reading. Ongoing consultation will be conducted by phone or email. The overall time commitment is not expected to exceed 10 hours a year. The OIA will make reasonable adjustments to support the active participation of all panel members.
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 Advisory 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 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 Higher Education Advisory Panel

- There will be up to 10 members of the Panel.
- Panel members will have knowledge and experience of higher education from the perspective of providers or student representative bodies,
- 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 three 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.
- Members may resign from the panel at any time if they feel unable to continue for any reason.
- Members should inform the OIA if they change their main employment role. The OIA may decide to bring an individual membership to an end, for example, if the member's new role does not help the member to maintain current knowledge of issues affecting students or the higher education sector.
- The OIA will review membership as it considers appropriate, for example in response to changes in case receipts or significant changes in the sector and policy landscape.