



office of the  
independent  
adjudicator

# Case-handler

**Assessment and Resolution Team**

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Candidate pack | May 2026  
[oiahe.org.uk](http://oiahe.org.uk)



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# About the OIA

## The vision of the OIA

The OIA's vision is simple but powerful: higher education students are always treated fairly. We pursue this through resolving individual complaints, sharing learning from those complaints to improve policies and practices, and working with providers, sector bodies, and governments to ensure a higher education system that is just and accountable.

## How the scheme operates

The OIA runs the independent student complaints scheme for higher education in England and Wales. When a student has gone through their university or college's internal complaints or appeals process and remains dissatisfied, they can bring their case to us. We review the complaint impartially, considering the evidence from both the student and the provider, and decide whether the provider acted fairly and followed its own procedures. Our approach is independent, impartial, and proportionate: we do not re-hear the case, but we look carefully at whether the provider applied fair processes and reached a reasonable outcome. Where we find that things have gone wrong, we can make recommendations to put things right for the individual student, and we share learning more widely to help improve practice across the sector.

## Our History and Organisational Structure

Established following legislative reforms in the early 2000s, we were designated under the Higher Education Act to run the independent student complaints scheme in England and Wales.

Today, we are a charity and company limited by guarantee, governed by an independent Board, with oversight, clear governance arrangements, and strategies that reflect the changing landscape of higher education.



# Our Values

Our values inform everything we do. We recruit people who share our values and are committed to our vision, and we reflect our values in our work.

Our values are:



## Integrity and independence

We act impartially, fairly, and on merit.



## Service ethos

Treating everyone with respect, sensitivity and responsiveness



## Quality

We aim for timely, proportionate, and fair handling of complaints, with continuous learning and improvement.



## Engagement

We engage with students, providers, and stakeholders to share knowledge and improve the sector



## Openness and accessibility

We are transparent and accessible in our communications and actions.



## Equality and diversity

Both a commitment in our work with the sector and as an employer. Kindness and human-centred approaches are increasingly part of how we do things.

# Culture, Benefits and Employee Experience

## Work Environment and Culture

As a charity, our purpose goes beyond profit, we are driven by values of fairness, independence, and service to the public good. This ethos shapes our work environment and culture: collaborative, respectful, and mission-focused. We are a supportive community where colleagues are trusted to deliver, encouraged to share ideas, and recognised for their contributions.

Our charitable status reinforces a culture of accountability and integrity, and gives staff the satisfaction of knowing that their work directly benefits students and strengthens confidence in higher education.

We are based in Reading and operate on the basis that hybrid working offers many benefits. We believe that colleagues collaborate well in person, as well as being able to manage their time through remote or home working.



**“Friendly, supportive team environment where views are valued and people are trusted.”**

**“Each day is different: case-handling brings new challenges; we also review processes and seek to improve how we serve students.”**

**“Flexible working arrangements and a hybrid model to suit varying roles and personal circumstances.”**

## Location and Office

- Central Reading location with good transport links.
- Modern facilities and commitment to wellbeing.
- Career Opportunities and Growth Paths
- Roles are available across case handling, outreach, organisational support (e.g. HR, IT, Operations) and more.
- Opportunities for progression through specialist and leadership tracks as the organisation grows and develops.
- We believe in internal development: many senior-roles are filled by promotion; mentoring and training are emphasised.



## Learning & Development

- Structured learning programmes and mentoring to help you build both technical and soft skills.
- Regular feedback and performance reviews to guide career development.
- Access to external training, conferences, and sector events to stay up-to-date with sector trends and best practice.



## Diversity & Inclusion

- We strive for a workforce that reflects the diversity of those we serve.
- Our policies aim to remove barriers, whether in recruiting, supporting, or promoting staff.
- Commitment to kindness, human-centred approaches, fairness and compassion at every stage.



## Benefits

- Generous holiday allowance.
- USS Pension scheme.
- Employee assistance scheme to support staff wellbeing.
- Flexible working / hybrid-working opportunities.
- Health and Wellbeing Benefits, including discount schemes.

# Teams, Culture, and Contribution

Here's a snapshot of teams within OIA, and how they each contribute to our mission:

## Senior Leadership (Independent Adjudicator & Chief Executive)

Sets strategy, upholds independence, quality and fairness, and ensures the whole organisation is aligned to our purpose.

## Assessment & Resolution (incl. Casework Support)

Receives and assesses complaints, gathers information, and drives early, proportionate resolution wherever possible. Casework support ensures smooth, timely case progression. This is the frontline of our service and a key driver of accessibility and efficiency.

## Leadership & Governance

Provides governance, Board and leadership office support, risk and compliance coordination, and communications, so decisions are well-governed, transparent and aligned to our values.

## Outreach & Insight

Shares learning from complaints, produces guidance and case studies, and engages with students and providers through events and training, turning case experience into sector improvement.

## Public Policy

Leads on external policy engagement and stakeholder relationships, helping ensure our learning informs national discussion and that our scheme remains understood and trusted.

## Adjudication

Carries out independent, evidence-based reviews and issues outcomes with clear reasons. This team safeguards consistency, fairness and the credibility of our decisions.

## Digital Technology & Operational Services

Keeps our case management and core systems secure and reliable, supports data and reporting, finance, office administration, and facilities that keep everything running behind the scenes and support value for money, so colleagues have the tools to work efficiently and safely.

## People & Culture

Recruitment, development, wellbeing and inclusion. Builds the capability and culture to deliver complex, sensitive work to high standards.

# The role

**Job title:**

Case-handler

**Reports to:**

Adjudication Manager / Head of Casework Support and Resolution Team

**Department:**

Assessment and Resolution Team

**Location:**

Hybrid / Reading - a minimum of one day a week in the office.  
More office attendance will be needed during probation period

**Hours of work:**

35 hours (full-time) / Part-time working considered

**Salary range:**

**Starting salary of £35,625**

(Salary progression based on performance within Grade 3 £35,625 - £41,339)

## Summary of the position, impact and autonomy

The Case-handler will work as part of the Assessment & Resolution Team which is a lively and collaborative casework environment. The Case-handler conducts the initial assessment process for complaints. The Case-handler also conducts reviews of individual complaints and drafts and issues Complaint Outcomes. Personal interaction by phone with students and providers is a key part of the role.

# Main responsibilities:

With appropriate guidance and support:

- Appropriately apply the OIA's initial assessment process to complaints
- Decide whether complaints are eligible for review under the Rules of the Scheme and inform all parties
- Request and obtain documents and information from higher education providers ("providers"), students and student representatives
- Promote and assist resolution of complaints at the earliest stage possible by communicating with students, student representatives and providers
- Provide effective guidance to students, student representatives and providers on the OIA's case-handling process, possible remedies and typical timeframes
- Conduct reviews of complaints, draft and issue Complaint Outcomes
- Analyse and take appropriate actions on eligibility decisions and Complaint Outcomes in accordance with OIA policy
- Take appropriate actions to ensure providers comply with good practice recommendations
- Keep thorough and accurate case records on the OIA's case management systems
- Effectively and efficiently manage own case load of complaints in line with the OIA's processes
- Contribute to the development of the OIA's knowledge management systems
- Represent the OIA at external events and contribute in other ways to publicising the Scheme and sharing good practice.

# Person specification

	Essential	Helpful to have
<b>Knowledge, training, experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be experienced at dealing with a range of people at various levels</li> <li>• Experience of managing and maintaining a heavy workload</li> <li>• Awareness of the higher and/or further education sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of mediation/ alternate dispute resolution practices</li> <li>• Experience of working in complaints casework, investigatory or ombuds/regulatory organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Skills, qualities and attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent written and oral/ telephone communication skills</li> <li>• Excellent interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Customer service focus</li> <li>• High degree of discretion and integrity</li> <li>• High level of accuracy and attention to detail</li> <li>• Analytical and investigatory skills</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to learn new processes and procedures with a positive attitude</li> <li>• Self-starter, flexible, proactive and able to work autonomously</li> <li>• Ability to adapt approach to suit a range of different people</li> <li>• Ability to manage and prioritise a heavy workload</li> <li>• Resilience to work in a demanding and high-volume environment</li> <li>• Strong ability to remain calm under pressure</li> <li>• Friendly and committed to the benefits of team working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediation skills</li> </ul>
<b>Competencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analytical</li> <li>• Impactful</li> <li>• Approachable</li> <li>• Professional</li> <li>• Open-Minded</li> <li>• Constructive</li> </ul>	
<b>Technical knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfortable with technology and with the ability to adjust to new and changing IT systems and processes.</li> <li>• Strong and recent experience of using Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of PowerPoint, Adobe Acrobat Pro and/or SharePoint</li> </ul>

# How to apply

## Application

To apply please visit our [website](#) and submit your application online.

At the OIA, we use Applied for our recruitment. Applied aims to overcome unconscious bias in recruiting. Instead of using your CV alone, we'll be asking you to answer questions to test skills needed for the role. The responses are then anonymised, and reviewed in a random order by members of our team.

## Advert closing date

The closing date for applications is by **Wednesday 27 May 2026 at 10am**

## Contact us

If you would like to discuss the role in more detail before applying, please contact [recruitment@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@oiahe.org.uk).

## What reasonable adjustments can be made if I have a disability?

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to support disabled applicants and ensure that you are not disadvantaged in the recruitment and assessment process, and to ensuring that reasonable adjustments can be made for you in the role if your application is successful.

If you need any adjustments to the process because of a health condition or disability please contact the [recruitment team](#).



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