



office of the
independent
adjudicator

CASE-HANDLER

Assessment and Resolution Team | Office of the Independent Adjudicator

CANDIDATE PACK | FEBRUARY 2026

oiahe.org.uk

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ABOUT THE OIA

The OIA has a unique role as the operator of the independent student complaints scheme for England and Wales established under the Higher Education Act 2004. Our Scheme covers a wide variety of higher education providers, and the nature of complaints ranges from concerns about teaching and assessment to live issues in higher education such as industrial action, discrimination and sexual misconduct. We use learning from complaints to help improve policies and practices and the student experience.

We are independent of higher education providers and of other higher education sector organisations, whilst being a key part of the regulatory landscape. As a charity, an ombuds organisation and a body working in the tertiary/post-compulsory education sector with a forthcoming expansion of our remit in Welsh further education, we are part of three sectors and are informed by and contribute to all three.

Our work has impact on a national scale. The OIA is an intrinsically important organisation for both students' experiences of higher education and the development of the sector. People involved with the OIA have genuine reason to believe that we are making a positive difference to the lives of students in England and Wales as well as future generations of students. Engaging across the higher education sector, governments and other public bodies, we have clear visibility of how our work fits into the broader continuous improvement of higher education provision.



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 are honest, inclusive and fair. We are independent and impartial and we make decisions on merit.



Quality

We review complaints in a proportionate, timely and fair way, using our insight to develop and promote good practice. We have a professional and committed staff team.



Openness and accessibility

We are clear, transparent and accessible in all that we say and do.



Service ethos

We treat all who engage with us with respect and sensitivity. We listen, reflect, and learn, being flexible and responsive to those who use our service and working continuously to improve what we do.



Engagement

We are committed to understanding the sector and to sharing knowledge.



Equality and diversity

We believe strongly in equality and diversity and we promote it through our work and as an employer.

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 £34,099

(Salary progression based on performance within Grade 3 £34,099 - £39,631)

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

BENEFITS

Employment at the OIA includes a generous benefits offering; focused on supporting the physical, mental and financial wellbeing of our colleagues

Benefits include:

- 28 days annual leave (rising up to 33 with increased tenure).
- Participation in the Universities Superannuation Pension Scheme (USS)
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Cycle to work scheme
- A contribution towards a Gym Membership (upon passing probation)
- Discount savings scheme
- Flexible/Hybrid Working Opportunities

“I enjoy being able to take ownership of a case and ensuring that I reach the right resolution as effectively as possible. It’s great to be in an environment that encourages collaborative working and sharing knowledge and ideas with colleagues”.

”

“It has been a challenging but satisfying role especially when we are able to settle a complaint to the satisfaction of both the student and the provider. I have really enjoyed my first six months here and have felt supported and trusted by my colleagues to make right and fair decisions.”

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 **Monday 2 March 2026 at 10am**

Contact us

If you would like to discuss the role in more detail before applying, please contact 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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