

LTC16D149

Title: *OIA Annual Statement 2016*
Author: Laura Thompson, Head of Learning and Teaching (Quality)
Date: 13 June 2017
Circulation: LTC 21 June 2017
Agenda: LTC16A006
Version: Final
Status: Open

Issue

Each year, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) publishes information about each member provider's record in handling complaints and appeals for the preceding calendar year.

The purpose of publishing this information is to:

1. Increase the transparency of the OIA Scheme;
2. Increase public scrutiny of complaints handling records in higher education providers;
3. Increase students' confidence in complaints handling processes; and
4. Allow providers to look at their own record alongside that of similar providers.

Recommendation

To receive the OIA Annual Statement for 2016.

Resource Implications

None

Risk Implications

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Timing of decisions

None

Further Information

Please direct any enquiries to Laura Thompson (laura.thompson@uea.ac.uk, x7374).

Background

In previous years, the information was published in the form of an Annual Letter. In 2017, for the first time, the information is published in the form of an online Annual Statement. The OIA have updated the format and content of the published information in response to feedback from member providers. Several providers have asked the OIA to produce the Annual Statements on an academic year basis rather than a calendar year basis. This would not be a straightforward change to make because the OIA reports all of its data and financial information in calendar years and has done since inception. Such a change would also make comparisons with data from previous (calendar) years difficult. Nevertheless, it is something that they will keep under review.

The Annual Statement for 2016 for UEA is attached.

With regards to Completion of Procedures letters please note that the high volume for 2016 in comparison to 2015 is due to changes in reporting and reflects best practice guidance.

UEA issues completion of procedures letters at the end of each stage in the appeals and complaints process as this is best practice to enable students to easily escalate cases to the OIA should they wish to. A high number of completion of procedures letters should not be seen as a negative. Some providers choose to only issue them on request but this makes the process harder for students as they can only approach the OIA if they have a completion of procedures letter.



'for students in higher education'

University of East Anglia

Annual Statement for 2016

This is the Annual Statement for University of East Anglia for the calendar year ended 31 December 2016. It documents the record of University of East Anglia in handling complaints and appeals in that year.

Student Numbers

Year	OIA Band ⁱ	Number of providers in OIA Band	Number of HE students	Relevant data source	Relevant data period
2016	E	44	17140	HESA	2013-2014
2015	E	43	17220	HESA	2012-2013

i OIA Band: This refers to the OIA subscription bands. See the relevant definition for more information.

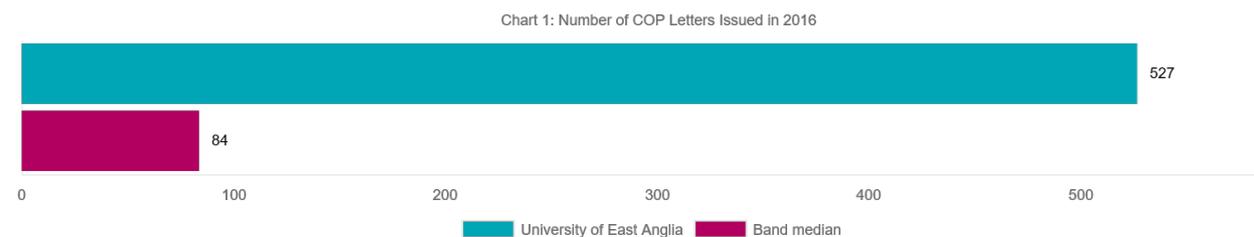
Completion of Procedures (COP) Letters issued

Guidance on COP Letters can be found on our website. The fact that a COP Letter has been issued does not necessarily mean that the student is dissatisfied with the outcome. The OIA's Guidance on COP Letters says that providers should issue a COP Letter when a complaint (or appeal) has been upheld, if the student asks for one. Therefore, when reviewing the data in the Annual Statements, it should be noted that it is difficult to compare 'like with like'.

Number of Completion of Procedures Letters issued

Dated 2016	527
Dated 2015	39

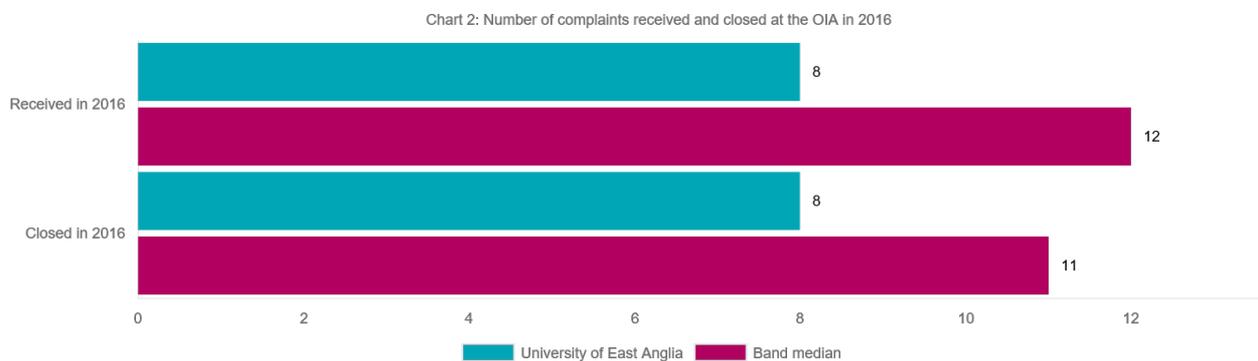
Chart 1 shows the number of COP Letters issued by University of East Anglia in 2016 compared to the median number of COP Letters issued by providers in the same OIA Band in 2016.



Annual complaints to the OIA

Complaints received by the OIA ⁱ			Complaints closed by the OIA ⁱ		
Year	against University of East Anglia	against all providers	Year	against University of East Anglia	against all providers
2016	8	1517	2016	8	1668
2015	10	1850	2015	12	2327

Chart 2 shows the number of complaints against University of East Anglia received and closed at the OIA in 2016 compared to the median number of complaints received and closed at the OIA in 2016 for providers in the same OIA Band.



ⁱ **Complaints received at the OIA:** Includes Not Eligible complaints.

ⁱ **Complaints closed by the OIA:** Some of the complaints might have been received in the previous year.

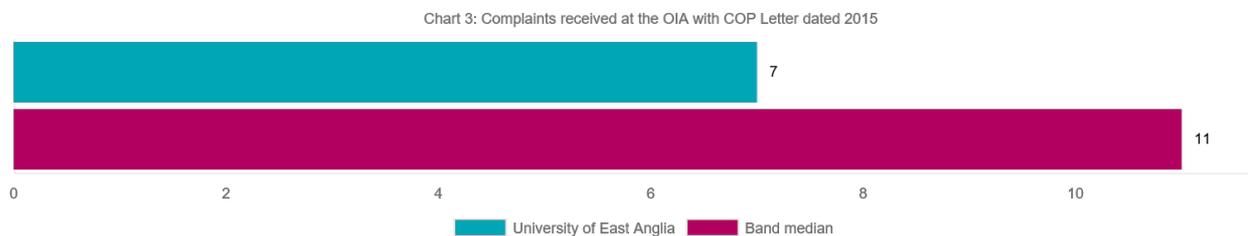
Complaints received at the OIA with Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter dated 2015

The table below provides data on the number of complaints against University of East Anglia received at the OIA to date with a COP Letter dated 2015. This data can be included in this Annual Statement because the 12-month period within which students may complain to the OIA has now expired for students issued with COP Letters in the latter part of 2015.

Complaints received at the OIA with a COP Letter dated

2015^①	7
2014	16

Chart 3 shows the number of complaints against University of East Anglia received at the OIA to date with a COP Letter dated 2015 compared to the median number of complaints received at the OIA to date with a COP Letter dated 2015 for providers in the same OIA Band.



The above data means that about one in every 5.6 students of University of East Anglia who were issued with a COP Letter during 2015 had brought their complaint to the OIA by the end of 2016. The mean average proportion^② of students with COP Letters issued in 2015 bringing their complaints to the OIA by the end of 2016, for providers in the same OIA Band as University of East Anglia was one in every 8 students.

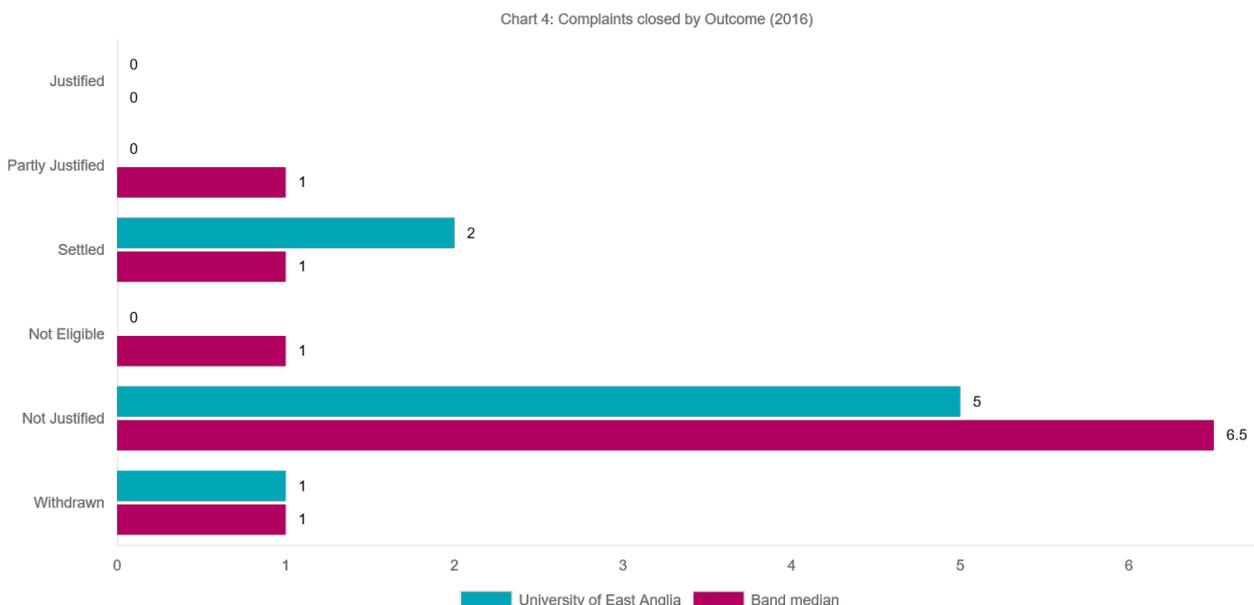
Relevant data for 2016 will be provided in the Annual Statement for the year ended 31 December 2017.

① Complaints received at the OIA with a COP Letter dated 2015: Some of these complaints may have been received by the OIA in 2016 and so will be included in the 'Annual complaints to the OIA' figures for 2016 above.

② Mean average proportion: We use the mean average for the OIA Band as a comparator, which is consistent with the way that we have previously calculated the ratio of "Completion of Procedures Letters to OIA complaints" for the OIA as a whole.

Complaints Closed in 2016 by Outcome

Chart 4 breaks down the complaints against University of East Anglia closed by the OIA in 2016 by outcome. Those figures are then compared to the median figures for providers in the same OIA Band.



Complaints Closed in 2016 by Complaint Category

Chart 5 breaks down the complaints against University of East Anglia closed by the OIA in 2016 by category of complaint. The actual numbers of complaints are contained in brackets.

Chart 6 breaks down the total number of complaints against all providers closed by the OIA in 2016 by category of complaint.

Chart 5: Complaints closed by complaint category (2016)
University of East Anglia

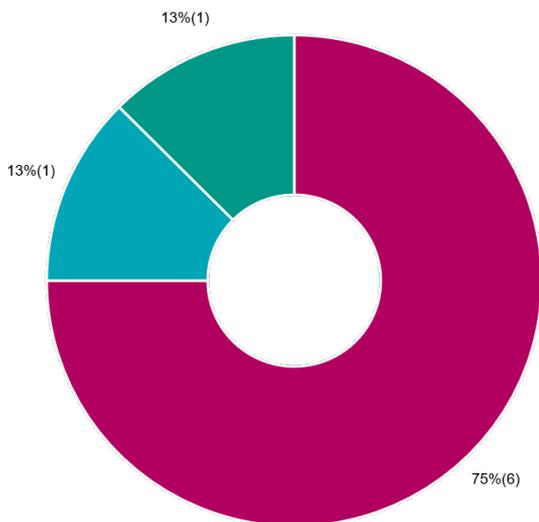
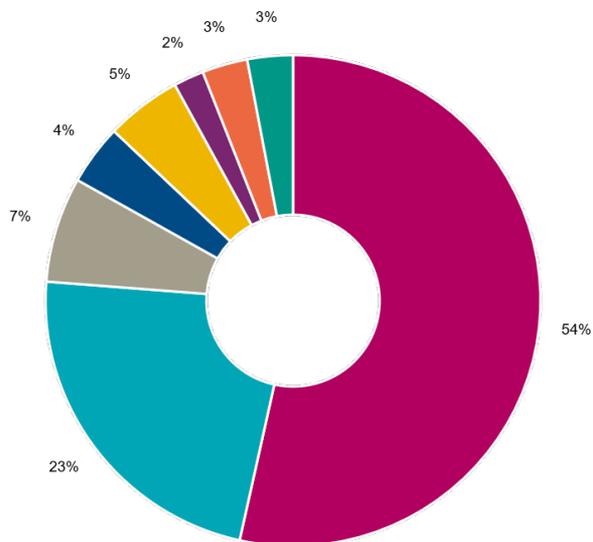


Chart 6: Complaints closed by complaint category (2016) - all complaints



Complaint categories

(Click on a category below for further information)

Academic Status

Financial

Discrimination and Human Rights

Not Categorised

Service Issues (Contract)

Academic misconduct, plagiarism and cheating

Disciplinary matters (not academic)

Welfare and Accommodation

Engagement with the OIA in 2016

This section includes general information about all providers' engagement with the OIA during 2016. Where relevant, we include specific information about the individual provider as well.

Response times to OIA information requests

A key time frame for the OIA's review of a complaint is the time it takes for the provider to respond to the OIA's initial request for information that we need to review a case. In 2016, the average number of days providers took to respond to our request for this information was 27 days. In 2016, 19 providers took an average of less than 20 days. This is hugely helpful to us. However, 37 providers took on average more than 30 days to respond.

In 2016, we made 5 or more separate initial requests for information from University of East Anglia. University of East Anglia responded to those requests in an average of 25 days.

Settlement of complaints made to the OIA

In 2016, the OIA continued to consider whether complaints that it received were amenable to early resolution, without the need for a full review. 9% of all complaints closed by the OIA in 2016 were resolved by settlement. 2 out of 8 complaints closed against University of East Anglia in 2016 were resolved by settlement.

Compliance with OIA recommendations

Where the OIA considers a complaint to be Justified or Partly Justified our decisions will usually make recommendations to the provider. The OIA expects providers to comply with our recommendations in full and in a prompt manner. Compliance is carefully monitored by the OIA and the Independent Adjudicator is required by our Rules to report any non-compliance by a provider to the OIA's Board and to publish it in the OIA's Annual Report.

88% of 'student-centred' recommendations¹ with an OIA compliance date in 2016, were complied with in a timely manner. The average number of days that providers took to comply with 'student-centred' recommendations with an OIA compliance date in 2016 was 16 days.

Outreach events

In 2016, the OIA ran a wide-ranging outreach programme including seminars, webinars and visits by OIA staff to individual providers. We hope that these events proved useful and informative for our member providers.

We note that individuals from University of East Anglia have attended a number of OIA webinars in 2016. Members of OIA staff also visited University of East Anglia during 2016. We are grateful for University of East Anglia's positive engagement with us.

1 'student-centred' recommendations These are recommendations which affect the individual student, such as a recommendation for a rehearing or the payment of compensation. The OIA also makes "good practice recommendations", such as a recommendation to change or review procedures.

Complaint Categories

Academic Status

Complaints which are related to academic appeals, assessments, progression and grades.

Service Issues (Contract)

Complaints which are related to the course or teaching provision, facilities and supervision.

Financial

Complaints relating to finance and funding: e.g. fees and fee status, bursaries and scholarships.

Academic misconduct, plagiarism and cheating

Complaints which are related to academic offences including plagiarism, collusion and examination offences.

Discrimination and Human Rights

Complaints where the student claims there has been any form of discrimination, including harassment, and where he or she claims his or her Human Rights have been breached.

Disciplinary matters (not academic)

Complaints which are related to disciplinary proceedings for non-academic offences.

Welfare and Accommodation

Complaints relating to support services, e.g. counselling, chaplaincy, assistance for international students and accommodation issues.

© Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

The OIA is a charity, registered in England & Wales under number 1141289, and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales under number 4823842.

Registered Office: OIA, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB, United Kingdom