



Student panel update

Purpose

1. To update the board on the work of the student panel.

Recommendations/Decisions required by the board

2. The board is invited to note:
 - a. The updates in this paper.
 - b. The minutes from previous panel meetings which will have been approved by the panel and will be published on the OfS website in due course.

Paper publication date

3. This report will be made available on the OfS website.

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Update

4. The student panel met for the fourth time of this cycle on 22 June. There was one substantive discussion session at the meeting on the B conditions and essay mills.
5. The discussion on the B conditions and essay mills was led by Nicholas Holland, Competition and Registration Manager, Henry Stubbles, Senior Officer – Competition and Registration, and James Hare, Graduate Trainee. The panel provided their perspectives on awareness levels regarding the consequences of contract cheating, and what else the OfS could do raise this awareness. The panel fed back that:
 - a. Awareness is generally not high regarding the consequences of using services. The focus from providers is on plagiarism, collusion, and academic integrity. It seemed like providers wanted to avoid the topic of essay mills so they don't encourage their use.
 - b. The advertising from contract cheating businesses is aggressive and currently outweighs communications from providers.
 - c. Students who use these services often do so because they feel they have no choice. It's important to look at why students find themselves in that position
 - d. The OfS could help raise awareness of these issues through communication campaigns that clearly outline the consequences of using services, through a similar document to the OfS notifications guide, or supporting the development of clear ways to report these organisations.
6. Minutes of student panel meetings from the 2021-22 period have been submitted to the board for information. These have been approved by the panel and will be published on the OfS website in due course. Going forward, minutes from each panel meeting will be aligned with board meetings.
7. The application window closed on 17 June for recruiting new student panel members, with the goal of recruiting for 10 student panel positions by August 2022.
8. This year we received 298 applications – a 46 per cent increase from the 161 applications received in 2021. This increase reflects that we are recruiting for double the amount of places this year compared with last year. The recruitment campaign met its success targets for applicants. The student engagement team are currently in the process of sifting applications. Student panellists will be engaged in the recruitment process by sitting on interview panels.
9. When we recruit new students, we look at gaps in representation on the panel. This year we are particularly keen appoint students from the following groups:
 - a. international students
 - b. students from Black and minority ethnic groups
 - c. students with disabilities
 - d. students from small or specialist providers.

10. Outside of formal panel meetings, panel members participated in several other opportunities for engagement such as:

- a. Participating in a workshop about the blended learning review
- b. Helped facilitate interviews with providers as part of the blended learning review
- c. Took part in a roundtable discussion on NSS data and its dissemination for quality assurance, enhancement and regulatory purposes
- d. Sharing their experiences of being on the student panel on the [OfS blog](#) to help promote student panel recruitment.

11. 10 student panel members will be stepping down in July, and we will be welcoming incoming members with a training day at the start of September. The panel members stepping down will be:

- a. Ramy Badrie
- b. Jo Barlow
- c. Erk Gunce
- d. Miranda Harmer
- e. Maisha Islam
- f. Molly Lawson
- g. Francesco Masala
- h. Nikhita Nachiappan
- i. Bryony Toon
- j. Aimear Wolstenholme