

# Disability in Higher Education Advisory Panel: delegated authority and Rules of Procedure

## Part 1: Purpose and delegated authority of the Disability in Higher Education Advisory Panel and its members

1. The OfS has established the Disability in Higher Education Advisory Panel (“the Committee”) with the main remit of providing advice to the OfS on matters relating to the interests of disabled students. Subject to paragraph 2, the Committee has the authority (on a non-exclusive basis) to:
  - a. in accordance with specific or general direction or instructions given by the chair of the Committee, give advice or make recommendations to the OfS on any matters relating to the interests of disabled students for any purposes connected to the performance of any of the OfS’s functions;
  - b. with the express written approval of the chair of the Committee, conduct, or make arrangements for conducting, any form of external research or external gathering of information (on a voluntary basis) for any purposes connected with a.;
  - c. receive and utilise information and/or documentation provided to the OfS by any person on a compulsory or voluntary basis for the purposes doing any of the things described in a.;
  - d. do anything that is ancillary or incidental to a., b., and c. (including, but not limited to, the preparation of reports and conducting internal research).
2. The following are non-exhaustive illustrative examples of matters which are outside the authority and remit of the Committee:
  - a. providing any form of advice or making recommendations about the affairs of a particular higher education provider or matters which could reasonably be considered as falling outside of the remit of the OfS;
  - b. publishing or disclosing (outside of the OfS) any advice or recommendations;
  - c. doing anything that is a type of reserved matter under the OfS’s published scheme of delegation; and
  - d. any role in dealing with individual complaints or with disputes between students and their university or college.
3. The chair of the Committee has the authority to:
  - a. convene and manage any type of meeting of the Committee;
  - b. make and manage any type of arrangement for conducting the business of the Committee in lieu of a meeting;

- c. give specific or general directions and/or instructions to the Committee for the purposes described in 1.a.;
  - d. decide whether or not to give approval for the purposes described in 1.b.;
  - e. do anything that is ancillary or incidental to paragraphs 3 a., b., c. and d.
4. In the event that the chief executive or any deputy committee chair reasonably considers that the chair of the Committee is unable to act for any reason (including, but not limited to, in circumstances where the chair of the Committee has notified the chief executive or any deputy committee chair that they are unable to act), each deputy committee chair is to be treated as having the same authority of the chair of the Committee as set out and described in paragraph 3 of this part.

## **Part 2: Rules of Procedure for the Committee**

### **A. General**

1. The validity of any proceedings (including quorum) of the Committee is not to be affected by a vacancy among the members or by any defect in the appointment of a member.

### **B. Membership**

1. The Committee will consist of up to 11 members overall and no less than two members, including:
  - a. a chair who must be an OfS staff member at pay band 12 or above; and
  - b. up to two deputy chairs of the Committee who must be OfS staff members at pay band 11 or above;
  - c. any combination of the following persons:
    - i. other OfS staff members; and
    - ii. other natural persons that are neither members of the OfS nor OfS staff members (hereafter “Independent Committee Members”).
2. As at 15 March 2024, John Blake, Director for Fair Access and Participation is the chair of the Committee and Suzanne Carrie, Head of Student Equality and Welfare is appointed as deputy chair

### **C. Meetings, decision-making and quorum.**

1. Meetings of the Committee may be held in person, by video or teleconferencing (or any combination of such methods).
2. In lieu of a meeting of the Committee decisions may be taken by correspondence (including by email) and the business of the Committee may otherwise take place in accordance with any other arrangements made by chair of the committee.
3. The quorum necessary for any decision of the Committee (whether taken during a meeting or by correspondence in lieu of a meeting) is two members, including either the chair or a deputy chair and one other member.

## **D. Reporting**

1. The chair of the Committee is expected to provide reports on its activities to the OfS from time to time. However, any failure to provide a report to the OfS will not in any way affect the validity of any decisions taken by the Committee.

## **E. General provisions applying to the whole of this document**

1. All words and expressions contained in this document (excluding those expressly defined in this document), and all matters arising in respect of the scope of any delegated authority provided for in this document, are to be interpreted (and, as the case may be, resolved) in accordance with all the provisions set out in Part 9 of the OfS Scheme of Delegation.
2. Any reference to the “interests of disabled students” is to be interpreted broadly and (includes but is not limited to):
  - a. past, current, or future students;
  - b. any type of disability which falls within the scope of section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 (including by virtue of the provisions contained in schedule 1 to that Act).
3. Any reference to “external” means outside of the OfS and any reference to “internal” means within the OfS.