

## Examining the dissatisfaction responses of HE students in England following first-tier and second-tier complaint outcomes

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| <b>Start and End date:</b>                             | September 2016 – 2022 (part time)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>1. Brief summary of what the research is about.</b> | <p>My research is seeking to understand why some students complain to the higher education ombudsman, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), and/or persist through the OIA's internal and external review procedures and others do not. Within consumer behaviour literature, the dissatisfaction responses of HE students following a first-tier complaint and the factors influencing these responses has remained largely unexplored. This study will therefore examine how the assessments and attitudes of higher education students, following the completion of a first-tier complaint (i.e. a university complaint), influence their dissatisfaction responses. This study will contribute to procedural justice literature by examining the relationship between assessments of procedural justice in the OIA's complaints scheme and the dissatisfaction responses of higher education students.</p> |
| <b>2. What are the research questions?</b>             | <p>This study will be guided by the following four research questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the dissatisfaction responses of higher education students in England following first-tier and/or second-tier complaint outcomes?</li> <li>• Why do some higher education students in England communicate their dissatisfaction by</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                                                                                                                            | <p>complaining to a second-tier complaints scheme (i.e. the OIA) and others do not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following completion of a second-tier OIA complaint review, why do some higher education students communicate their dissatisfaction through the OIA's internal or external review mechanisms and others do not?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between assessments of procedural justice in the OIA's complaints scheme and dissatisfaction responses?</li> </ul>                                                                                                           |
| <b>3. What, if any, outputs so far?</b>                                                                                    | There are no outputs to date as this research is in its initial stages.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>4. What outputs are planned?</b>                                                                                        | I would like to introduce my research at several higher education and ombudsmen conferences and as the research develops to write journal articles.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>5. What is the anticipated impact?</b>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide data on the dissatisfaction responses and attitudes of higher education students in England</li> <li>• To identify barriers preventing higher education students complaining to an ombudsman and/or obtaining effective remedies through the ombudsman process</li> <li>• To assist higher education providers and ombudsmen develop policies to better address unresolved student complaints</li> <li>• To contribute to the higher education reform debate by evaluating the effectiveness of the current second-tier complaints handling scheme</li> </ul> |
| <b>6. Comments / additional information / requests for data or input from the broader administrative justice community</b> | I would welcome feedback and comments from researchers in related fields or from those working and studying within higher education and/or ombudsmen. When I finalise the research design and move closer to the data collection stage I will be introducing my research to a number of higher education sector bodies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |