

News story: New universities regulator comes into force

The Office for Students (OfS), the new regulator designed to champion the interests of students, promote choice and help to ensure that students are receiving a good deal for their investment in higher education, has legally come into force today (1 January).

With the legal establishment of the OfS, Education Secretary Justine Greening has also announced the final six appointments to the OfS' 15-strong Board.

These appointments will not only reflect the diverse needs of the HE sector but will also make sure the interests of employers and students are represented by the new body, which will also hold universities to account over issues such as vice chancellor pay and free speech.

The OfS will replace HEFCE as the main regulator of higher education, and it will hold universities to account for the quality of teaching they provide.

It marks a major milestone in the implementation of the Higher Education and Research Act (2017), and the OfS will have an explicit legal duty to promote choice and consider the student, employer and taxpayer interests.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

The higher education sector is one of our nation's greatest assets, and the OfS will play a vital role in ensuring our universities retain their world-class reputation for years to come.

I welcome the new OfS board members to their important new roles. Their experience and skill will be key in ensuring the OfS achieves its ambitions.

OfS Chair Sir Michael Barber said:

I am delighted to be welcoming another outstanding set of appointments. The new Board members' broad mix of skills and experiences complement those already appointed.

I am confident that the OfS has a Board in place that is well-placed to successfully oversee the creation and guide the operation of a new organisation which will be shaping our brilliant higher education sector in the interests of students, short, medium and long term.

Minister for Universities Jo Johnson said:

The OfS will introduce a truly modern approach to regulation – one that will further enhance the reputation of our university sector.

I welcome today's appointments, and I am confident that the OfS has a board that will champion choice and competition, and put the interests of students at the heart of regulation.

Newly appointed board members will take up posts in January 2018. They include:

- Simon Levine is the Managing Partner and Co-Global Chief Executive Officer of the global law firm, DLA Piper. A graduate of Cambridge University, he is a Visiting Professor and Lecturer at Imperial College Business School.
- Toby Young is the co-founder of the West London Free School, and now serves as the director the New Schools Network. His teaching experience includes working as a teaching fellow at Harvard and a teaching assistant at Cambridge. He is a Fulbright Commissioner.
- Elizabeth Fagan is Senior Vice President, Managing Director of Boots.
- Katja Hall is a partner at Chairman Mentors International, previously she was Group Head of External Affairs and Sustainability at HSBC where she was responsible for external communications, stakeholder engagement, social responsibility and community investment.
- Monisha Shah is Chair of Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance. She is also a serving Trustee of ArtFund, an independent fundraising charity for art. In December 2015, Monisha was invited by the Prime Minister to join the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- Ruth Carlson is a current student at Surrey University, where she is a Student Ambassador for civil engineering. She has experience as a course representative, as a former president of the Surrey University Women's Football Team and has also worked in other institutional and regional representative forums.

These 6 board members will join those that have already been announced to form the full OfS Board of 15 members. The other board members are: Sir Michael Barber (Chair), Martin Coleman (Deputy Chair), Nicola Dandridge (CEO), Chris Millward (DfAP), Gurpreet Dehal, Kate Lander, Prof Carl Lygo, David Palfreyman, and Prof Steve West.

Notes to editors

For more information or interview requests, please contact the Department for Education press office on 0207 783 8300

The Office for Students (OfS) was created by the Higher Education and Research Act which received Royal Assent in April 2017.

The Office for Students will have a duty to promote student interests, ensuring students have a wide range of quality options

By implementing the Government's Teaching Excellence Framework, the OfS will hold universities to account for the quality of teaching they provide. They

will shine a light on the grade inflation that we have seen tearing through the system and play a central role in pressing institutions to respect student's rights and comply with consumer law consistently across the sector.