

What is the OIA and why does it matter?

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator and its role in English and Welsh Higher Education

JIM DICKINSON, WONKHE SUs

BARRY MCHALE, STUDENT LIAISON OFFICER, OIA



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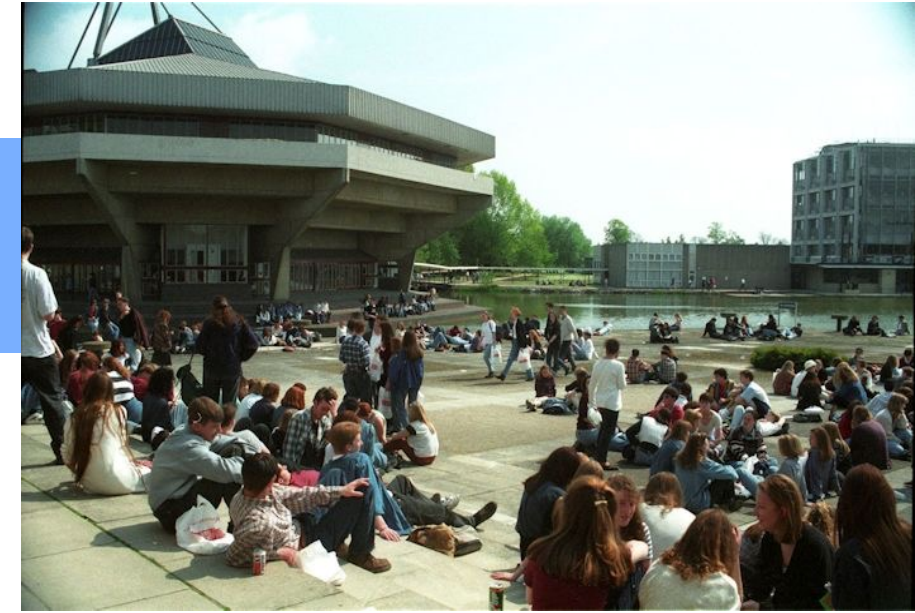
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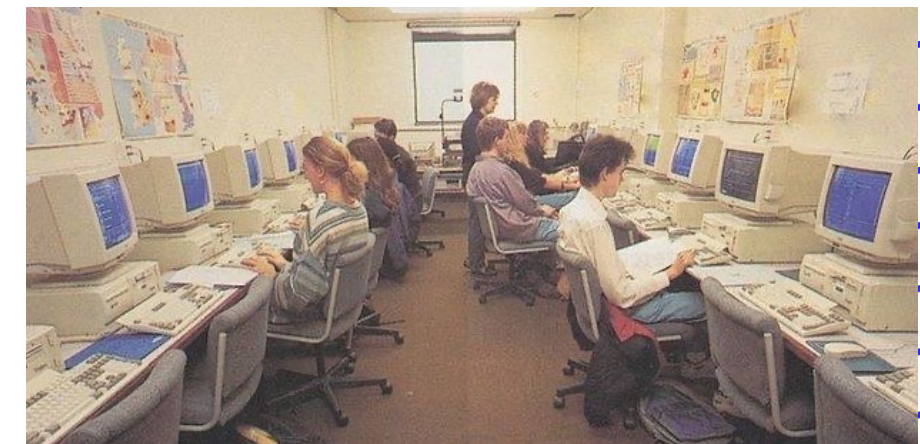
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The nineties



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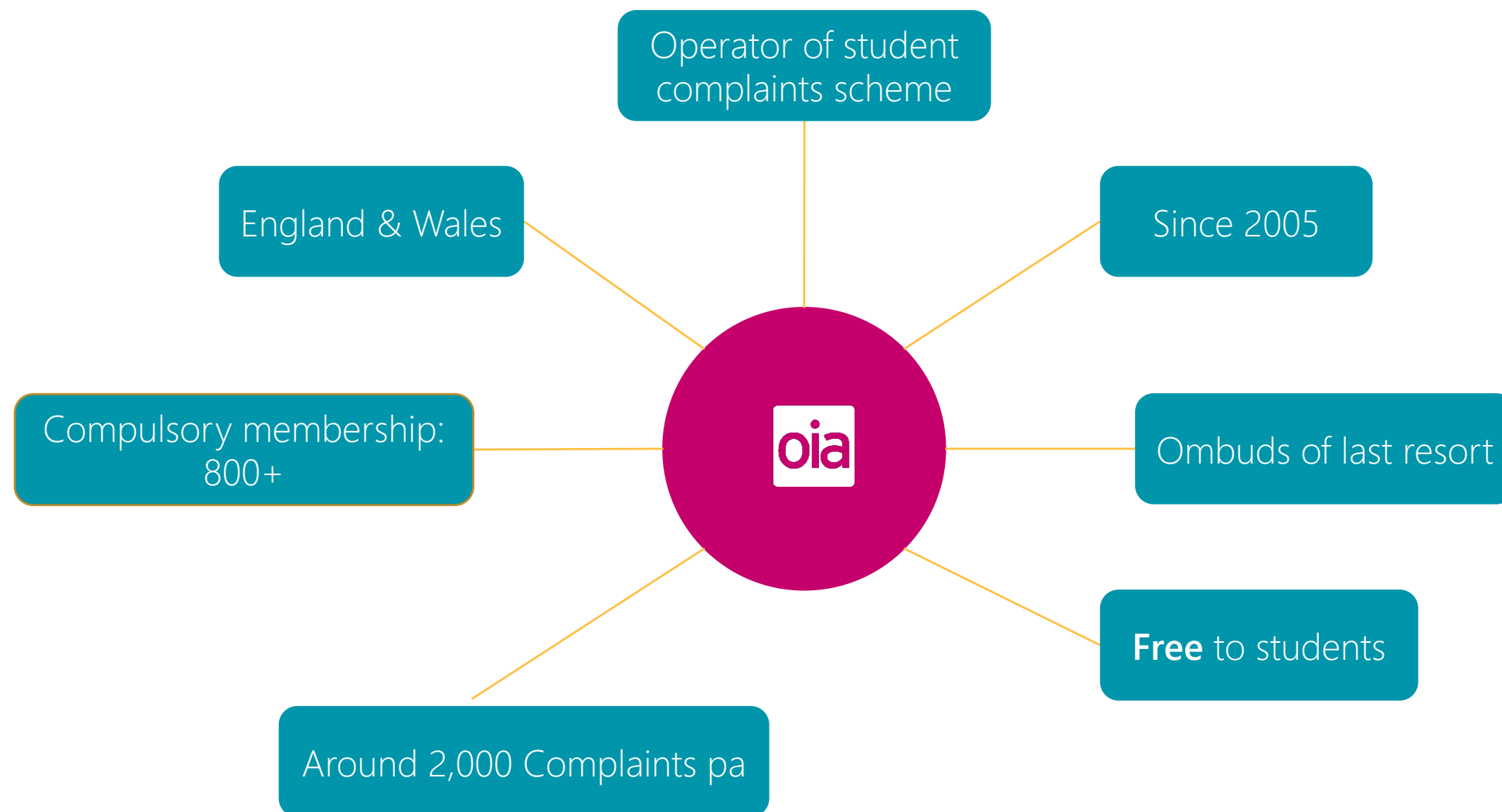
- Complain to the Queen? (“the visitor”)
- Dearing review
- Independent body to which students could make complaints.
- A white paper in 2003 set out the government goal of establishing the body via legislation.
- OIA runs voluntary scheme in 2004, the designated operator of the student complaints scheme in 2005.
- Now by law, all higher education bodies are required to abide by the rules of the OIA's complaints scheme.



Essentials

- Reviews unresolved complaints from students about their higher education provider.
- Where it finds that the provider has done something wrong, it makes Recommendations for them to put things right.
- Shares learning from complaints to help improve policies and practices across the higher education sector.
- Works with others and contribute to the development of policy, both in the wider regulatory framework for higher education and in the ombuds sector.
- Approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute as the consumer Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) body for higher education.
- Registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.





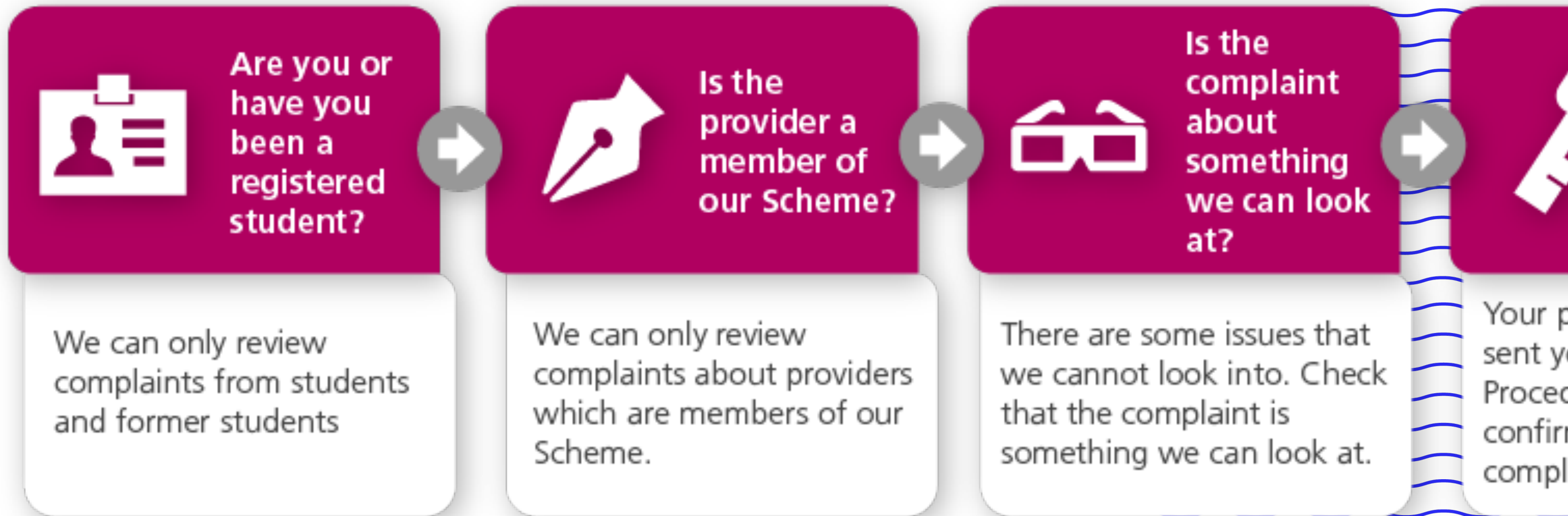
Complaints stages

- **Early resolution** is designed to address straightforward concerns swiftly and locally, for example at school or faculty level, before a student escalates them into a formal complaint.
- **The formal stage** is used where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of early resolution, or where early resolution is not possible or suitable due to the character, complexity or seriousness of the case.
- **The review stage** is where the student can appeal to a higher body within the provider for a review of the process of the formal complaint to ensure that appropriate procedures were followed and that the decision was reasonable.

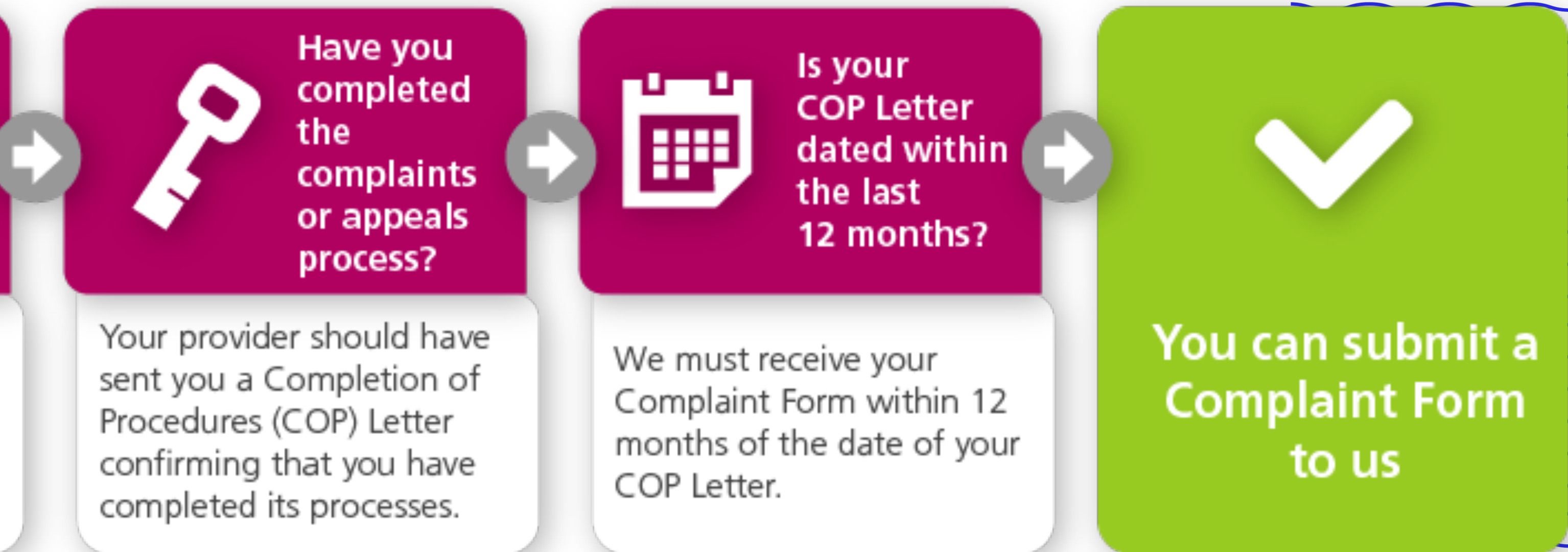
Process



Process



Process



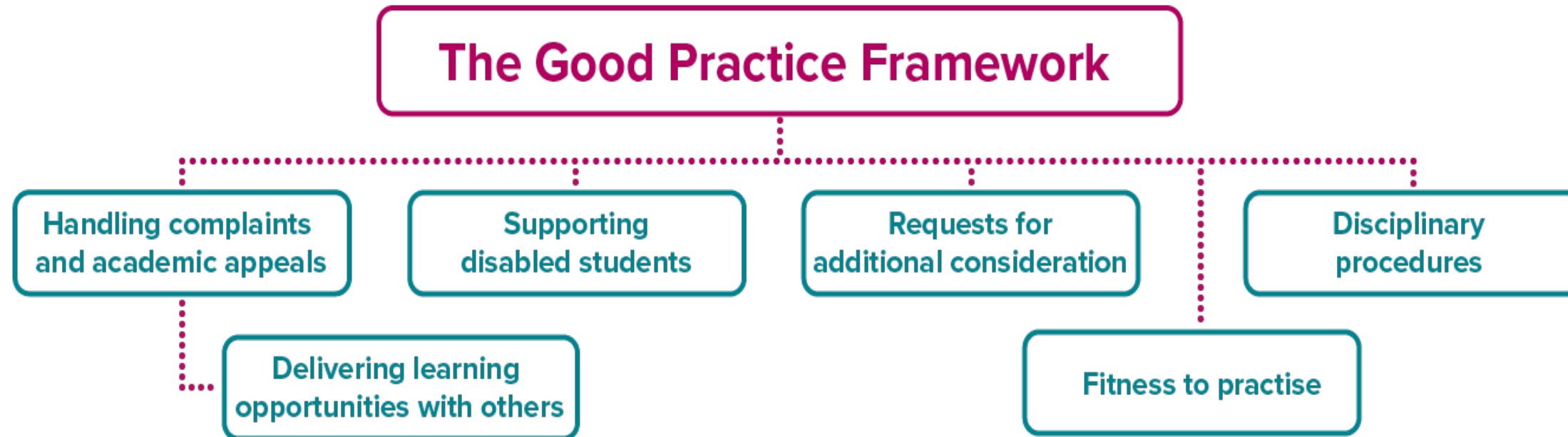
The killer questions

Did the provider follow its own procedures?

Were the procedures reasonable?

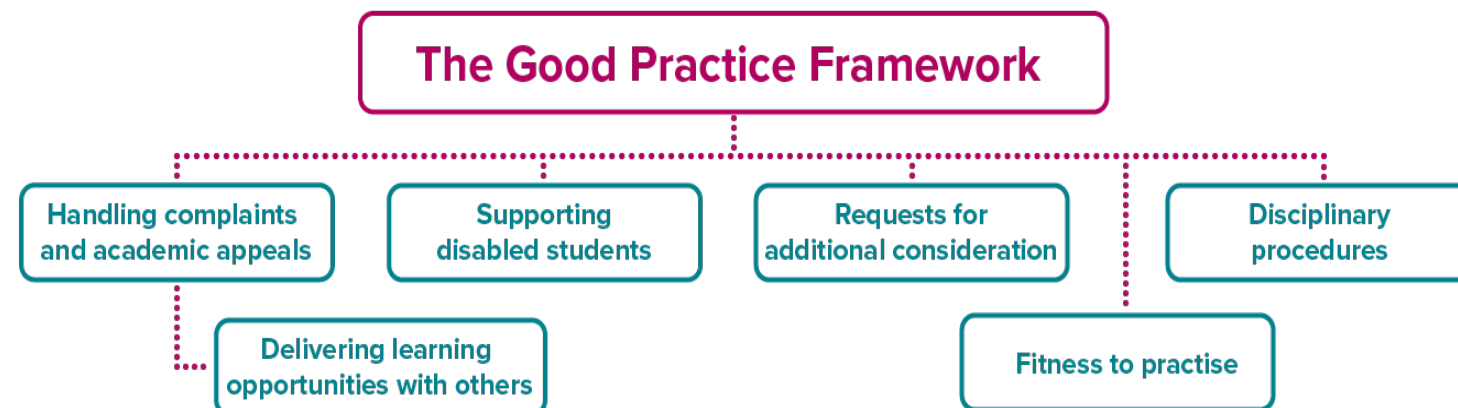
Was the provider's final decision reasonable?

Good practice



Good practice

- Handling complaints and academic appeals
- Supporting disabled students
- Requests for additional consideration
- Fitness to practise
- Disciplinary procedures
- Delivering learning opportunities with others



Fairness

Procedural Fairness

- “My prof told me not to appeal my final grade as it would be denied.”

Substantive Fairness

- “When I received the decision, it was just one sentence saying my appeal was denied.”

Relational Fairness

- “When my prof said, you are just a poor student and shouldn’t be here, I felt very bad.”

Equitable Fairness

- “I was told that I could not use my background status as an excuse to get an extension.”

And the rest

- What have been the trends recently?
- How might case examples help?
- What's all this about a separate scheme for free speech complaints?
- How should providers be learning from complaints?
- Can we get students to raise things earlier?
- How can SU officers get involved?

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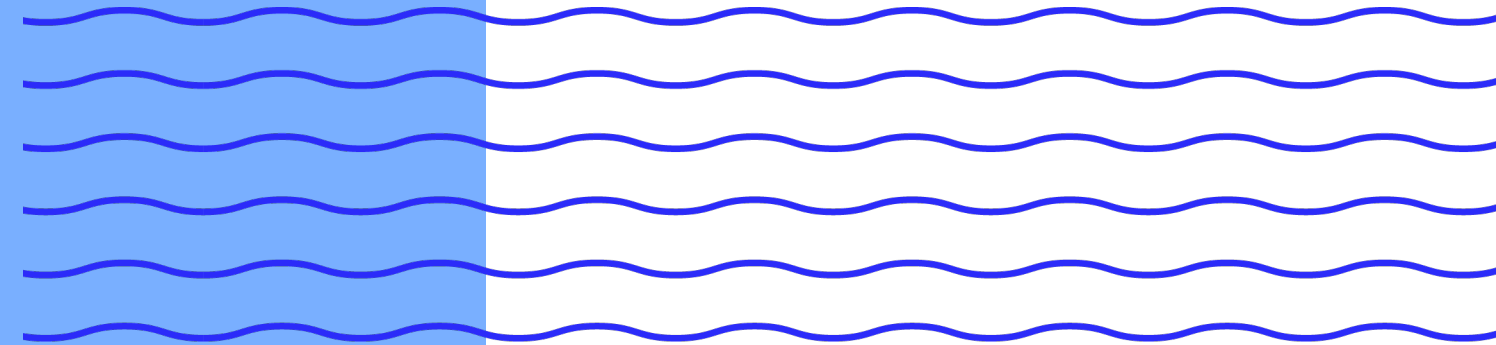
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