



**The Commissioner for  
Public Appointments**

**Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE**  
**Commissioner for Public Appointments**  
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Jo Johnson MP  
Minister for Transport

26 February 2018

Dear Jo,

I have finally been able to complete my report into the appointments to the Board of the Office for Students which I enclose with an annex on due diligence.

I am very grateful to you for coming to see me to explain the background. It helped me understand your thinking and what happened.

As the report notes, I am satisfied about the good intentions of yourself and Sir Michael Barber in seeking to appoint a diverse and balanced board on the basis of fair and open competition. It is not my role to comment on your decision to appoint Toby Young and I understand your reasons for appointing him.

As the report makes clear, I do have serious concerns over aspects of the process which breached, or compromised, the Government's own Governance Code.

As requested, I have made some suggestions about how due diligence might be improved in a realistic and proportionate way in the era of social media.

All best wishes  
Y sincerely

Peter

**Peter Riddell**  
**Commissioner for Public Appointments**