

## Document Details

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## Student Casework Review Procedures

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## **Student Casework Review Procedures**

### **SCR1 Introduction**

- SCR1.1 This document sets out the University's student casework review procedures, including the opportunity for external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator once all internal processes have been completed.
- SCR1.2 Advice on how to use this procedure is available from the Governance Team within the division of [Strategic Planning and Governance](#) as well as the [Students' Union Advice Team](#) a free, non-judgemental, and confidential support service.

### **SCR2 Definition, Principles and Accessing the Procedure**

- SCR2.1 Lancaster University defines student casework review as an opportunity for a student (or students) to seek a reconsideration of either the decision, the actions or both made within a formal non-routine student facing process. Formal non-routine student facing process include Academic Appeals, Academic Conduct, Complaints, Fee Appeals, Fitness to Study, Non-standard Academic Progression and Student Conduct (Discipline).
- SCR2.2 The Student Casework Review Procedures sets out how a formal review can be raised and how the University manages the process based on the following principles.
- (a) The University welcomes reasonable requests for review.
  - (b) No one will be disadvantaged for seeking a review in good faith.
  - (c) The objective is to establish the reasonable probability of fact and come to a relevant and proportionate outcome.
  - (d) The University will act in a fair and prompt manner and expects the same of all involved.
  - (e) The University will handle reviews confidentially within the process, as far as it is reasonable, and expects the same of all involved.

If a student thinks that any of these principles are not being followed, they should bring this to the attention of the Governance Team via [studentreview@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:studentreview@lancaster.ac.uk).

- SCR2.3 This procedure is available to all students (including former students) who have completed a formal student casework process (see SCR2.1).
- SCR2.4 This process may also be available for students on awards offered with a partner organisation or at a branch campus, details for which will be made available within the partnership.

- SCR2.5 This process is not available to those who have not been through a formal student casework process.
- SCR2.6 Anyone wanting to seek a review on behalf of someone eligible can only do so with that person's explicit consent. If consent has been provided for a previous student casework process, it will need to be reconfirmed for the review.
- SCR2.7 Students can be represented within a student casework review process by a third party such as a member of the Students' Union Advice Team. The University will require formal confirmation of representation in a timely manner from the person seeking the review. The University will accept legal representation but does not encourage it.

### **SCR3 The Process**

- SCR3.1 Once a formal student casework process has been completed the student will be provided, in writing, with a decision and any resulting actions (also referred to as outcome and remedy). This communication will also provide a description of how the student can seek a review.
- SCR3.2 To have a review the student must have reasons, or grounds. To have grounds students must evidence one of more of the following:
- (1) That compelling materials (evidence) exist that could not reasonably have been previously provided, i.e. there is something additional and good reason why it could only be submitted at this point.
  - (2) That a material irregularity occurred in the process, i.e. the University did not follow the requirements of its published procedure.
  - (3) That the decision and/or the agreed actions were unreasonable, i.e. the University's decision or agreed actions were not something that could have been reached by reasonable people using the materials and process.

To be clear, a student is not entitled to a review only due to dissatisfaction with the University's decision or actions. A student is also not entitled to use the review to raise matters not previously considered. New matters will be considered through the appropriate student casework process.

- SCR3.3 An application for a review is done via a form available [here \(link\)](#). The deadline for applying is 15 working days after the receipt of the decision letter. The date will be clearly stated in the letter and a link to the form provided. Requests for alternate application arrangements or additional time can be submitted to [studentreviews@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:studentreviews@lancaster.ac.uk) and will be given reasonable consideration in line with other student casework procedures.
- SCR3.4 In an application for review the burden of proof lies with the student. The University operates on the basis that its student casework processes are

effective, and the responsibility is on the student to compellingly demonstrate where this is not the case.

SCR3.5 When an application is received a member of the Governance Team will consider the request for a review and make an initial decision as to whether the request is eligible, including that it has been submitted on time.

SCR3.6 If the application is eligible one of two actions will follow.

1. If the application meets one or more of the grounds for review, but it is not clear how this has had a material impact on the original decision the member of the Governance Team will bring it to the attention of a Chair of the Review Panel for consideration. If the Chair agrees that there was no material impact, then this will be communicated to the student as detailed in SCR3.7. If the Chair disagrees then the process will continue as per action 2.
2. It will proceed to a Student Casework Review Panel and continue the process as detailed in section 4.

SCR3.7 If the application is not eligible or action 1 from SCR 3.6 has been completed, the student will receive a completion of procedures letter. This will explain both why the application is ineligible and the opportunity to take a case to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator (see SCR5).

SCR3. Even if eligible, it would not be expected that additional information gathering would be required and that the Review Panel would rely on the paperwork from the previous process along with the review form and associated materials supplied by the student. Exceptionally, for the purposes of greater detail to encourage a fair outcome, additional information gathering will be conducted at the discretion of the Governance Team. This will be done via the information gathering process set out in the Student Complaint Procedures.

SCR3. At the discretion of the Governance Team, in consultation with other parts of the University as appropriate, a risk assessment will be undertaken following eligibility determination and risk-informed actions agreed and implemented in line with the University's approach to risk management.

SCR3. The review process will continue to recognise those other operational requirements, for example outcome reporting, as set out in the original student casework process.

## **SCR4 Student Casework Review Panel**

SCR4.1 The Student Casework Review Panel (hereafter the Panel) reviews the application from the student testing whether the grounds for review have been met. The Review Panel will either: (1) uphold the original decision with no change, (2) uphold the decision but modify the actions, (3) overturn the original decision and agree new actions, or (4) overturn the original decision and return the case to the previous procedure to determine new actions. The reason why a Panel would choose option 4 is because the actions require either academic or professional judgement not present in the Panel membership.

SCR4.2 The Review Panel will consist of:

- A member of senior management
- Two other members of staff draw from a pool of members approved by Senate.

Also potentially present at the meeting will be:

- The student, along with a person to support or represent (see SCR2.7),
- A Coordinator to advise on process,
- A Clerk,
- A representative (normally the Chair) from the body that made the previous decision.

SCR4.3 The student is invited to the Review Panel meeting but is not required to attend and lack of attendance will not stop the Review Panel meeting proceeding. If attending, the student may be accompanied by a representative or by a person in support (who will provide support but who will not otherwise take an active role).

SCR4.4 Where either the student or the representative from the previous decision is not available, written submissions, circulated with the agenda, are admissible.

SCR4.5 Panels normally take place online but in exceptional circumstances in-person meetings may be convened.

SCR4.6 A typical structure of the meeting is as follows (this may be varied at the discretion of the Chair so long as it does not jeopardise the effectiveness of the Panel).

- The Chair sets out the process for the hearing of the review.
- The student, if present, makes an opening statement as to why the case should be subject to review.
- The representative of the previous process, if present, explains how the Panel's decision was reasonably determined.

- If the student presents additional evidence (in line with SCR3.2), including proposals for alternate actions, the representative of the previous process comments on these.
- The Panel lead a discussion to clarify understanding and determine fact on the basis on reasonable probability.
- The student and the representative of the previous process are offered the opportunity to make a closing summary statement.
- The student and representative of the previous process leave the meeting and the Review Panel determine the outcome as set out above.

SCR4.7 Following the Panel, the Coordinator contacts the student and the representative of the previous process and provides:

- Review Panel notes approved by the Chair,
- A written decision that addresses the points made in the application and gives reasons for the conclusion(s) reached by the Review Panel.

SCR4.8 Where the Panel decides option 1 from SCR4.1 the student will be provided with a completion of procedures letter. Where the Panel decides options 2 or 3, the student, is still dissatisfied, will be offered the option of a completion of procedures letter. Where the Panel decide options 4, the student will need to wait for the actions to be agreed and will then be offered the option of a completion of procedures letter if still dissatisfied.

## **SCR5 Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

SCR5.1 When the internal review procedures have been completed, if the student remains dissatisfied, a complaint can be taken to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. The application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Information about OIA and its processes can be found on their [website](#).

## **SCR6 Reporting**

SCR6.1 The Governance Team will produce an annual report for consideration by Senate.

## **SCR7 Ownership of Process & Review**

SCR7.1 This procedure is approved by Senate. Scrutiny and approval of minor amendments will be taken by the Student Experience Committee (SEC) (or any successor body).

SCR7.2 The process is managed within the Division of Strategic Planning and Governance which operates to standard operating procedures approved within the division under the oversight of the Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy

Secretary. The Division also provides the point of contact for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

- SCR7.3 The procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure best practice within the institution and to reflect consistency and adherence with national regulations, as set out by the Office for Students and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

**SCR8 Variation**

- SCR8.1 These procedures may be varied by agreement of those involved so long as the variations remain compliant with the principles as set out in SCR2.2.

**SCR9 Alternative Formats**

- SCR9.1 If alternative formats of this document are required, e.g. Large Print, Braille etc., please contact [studentreviews@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:studentreviews@lancaster.ac.uk)