

## Social Mobility and Student Success

### Appeals Procedure

**PLEASE NOTE: This Appeals Procedure is to be completed in relation to Social Mobility and Student Success activities. It is not to be used to by current LU students to appeal university decisions relating to academic, student experience or disciplinary matters. For more information, please visit the LU website: [Student complaints and appeals | ASK - Lancaster University](#).**

Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) are committed to ensuring equality of access and providing Widening Participation, Student Success and Evaluation activities that enhance the social mobility of prospective and current students from widening participation (WP) backgrounds. We make decisions about an individual's participation in Social Mobility and Student Success activities according to internal SMSS departmental policies and national guidelines provided by the Office for Students (OfS).

We recognise that there may be instances where individuals may not agree with a decision that has been made and an appeal may be an appropriate course of action. An appeal is defined as, 'a process in which cases are reviewed, where parties request a formal change to an official decision' made by the University. We are dedicated to maintaining an effective and timely procedure for appeals, which clearly outlines how to submit an appeal and ensures that all appeals are handled efficiently and appropriately. An appeal may focus on (but is not limited to):

- Eligibility to participate in Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) activities
- Non-continuation on a Widening Participation or Student Success programme due to academic attainment or levels of engagement i.e. non-attendance
- Allocation of Student Success opportunities i.e. schools placements
- Breaches of an SMSS Student Code of Conduct
- Unsuccessful request for financial assistance

**Please note:** For further details about the decision-making processes that underpin the above areas, please see the *Additional Information* section.

#### What can I appeal against?

A common misconception is that simply not being happy with the outcome of a decision is a reason to make an appeal. The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team will only consider an appeal for the following reasons:

1. SMSS policies and procedures have not been followed correctly
2. There is new information or evidence of a change in circumstances that has not been taken into consideration as part of the original decision-making process
3. There is evidence that a decision has been made unfairly

**Please note:** Individuals must select **ONE** of the above grounds for an appeal.

If you are unsure about whether you have grounds for an appeal, please contact the Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team via email: [outreach@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@lancaster.ac.uk).

### How do I submit an appeal?

If an individual would like to submit an appeal in writing, this can be actioned by e-mailing a completed SMSS Appeal Stage 1 Form to [outreach@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@lancaster.ac.uk).

**Please note:** The email must contain ‘SMSS Appeals’ in the subject line.

The completed form should explain the grounds of the appeal, any relevant details about the situation and the staff member(s) involved in making the decision (if known). Any related evidence should be included/attached to the e-mail. If the person requesting an appeal is seeking a specific outcome, this should be clearly stated in the documentation provided.

### What will happen to my appeal?

All Stage 1 appeals will be processed according to the procedure outlined below:

Stage 1 Grounds of Appeal	Action	Person Responsible
SMSS policies and procedures have not been followed correctly.	<p>The appeal will be allocated to a Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager to review and decide on the most appropriate course of action. This Manager will be from a different team unconnected to the origin of the appeal i.e. Widening Participation, Student Success or Evaluation and Impact.</p> <p>The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager will aim to address appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within <b>5 working days.</b></p>	Social Mobility and Student Success Manager
New information or a change in circumstances that has not been taken into consideration as part of the original decision-making process.	<p>The appeal will be allocated to a Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Officer from another team (Widening Participation, Student Success or Evaluation and Impact) so that a staff member who has not been involved in the original decision-making process is conducting the review.</p> <p>The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Officer will aim to address appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within</p>	Widening Participation, Student Success or Evaluation Officer

	<b><u>5 working days.</u></b>	
There is evidence that a decision has been made unfairly.	<p>The appeal will be allocated to a Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager to review and decide on the most appropriate course of action. This Manager will be from a different team unconnected to the original decision (Widening Participation, Student Success or Evaluation and Impact).</p> <p>The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager will aim to address appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within <b><u>5 working days.</u></b></p>	Social Mobility and Student Success Manager

### What happens if I want to take my appeal further?

If you have received a final decision at Stage 1 and you do not accept the outcome, then you may proceed to Stage 2 and request a review. You cannot request a review of a Stage 1 appeal because you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can only request a review based on the following grounds:

- New evidence that could not have been reasonably made available at Stage 1
- Evidence that the SMSS Appeals Procedure has not been followed correctly at Stage 1
- There is evidence that the judgement made at Stage 1 was biased

**Please note:** Individuals must select **ONE** of the above grounds and submit the request for an appeal review **within 10 working days** of the original appeal decision.

### How do I submit a request for a review?

If an individual would like to request a review of an appeal in writing, this can be actioned by e-mailing a completed SMSS Appeal Stage 2 Review Form to [outreach@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@lancaster.ac.uk).

**Please note:** The email must contain 'SMSS Appeals' in the subject line.

The completed form should explain the grounds of the review, any relevant details about the situation and the staff member(s) involved in making the appeal decision (if known). Any related evidence should be included/attached to the e-mail. If the person requesting a review of an appeal is seeking a specific outcome, this should be clearly stated in the documentation provided.

### What will happen to my request for a review?

All requests will be processed according to the procedure outlined below:

Stage 2 Review of an Appeal	Action	Person Responsible
There is new evidence that could not have been reasonably made available at Stage 1.	<p>The review of an appeal decision will be allocated to a Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager to investigate and decide on the most appropriate course of action. This Manager will be from a different team unconnected to the original appeal (Widening Participation, Student Success, Evaluation and Impact).</p> <p>The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager will aim to review appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within <b><u>5 working days.</u></b></p>	Social Mobility and Student Success Manager
There is evidence that the OSS Appeals Procedure has not been followed correctly at Stage 1.	<p>The Head of Social Mobility and Student Success will review the outcome of the Stage 1 appeal and decide on the most appropriate course of action. The Head of Social Mobility and Student Success will provide an initial response, review and final decision within <b><u>10 working days.</u></b></p>	Head of Social Mobility and Student Success
There is evidence that a decision has been made unfairly.	<p>The Head of Social Mobility and Student Success will review the outcome of the Stage 1 appeal and decide on the most appropriate course of action.</p> <p>The Head of Social Mobility and Student Success will provide an initial response, review and final decision within <b><u>10 working days.</u></b></p>	Head of Social Mobility and Student Success

### What happens next?

All Stage 2 decisions are final and conclude internal University appeals procedures.

**Please note:** If an individual would like to make a complaint, this is subject to the terms outlined in the *SMSS Complaints Procedure*. Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) will not consider a complaint about an appeal on the basis that an individual does not agree with a final decision unless there is grounds and evidence to support a complaint.

Please see the *SMSS Complaints Procedure* for more information.

### General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The University will process your personal data in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GPPR). The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team will take all appeals

seriously and will handle personal information in confidence. Data collected via the SMSS Appeal Stage 1 Form/SMSS Appeal Stage 2 Review Form will be used for the sole purpose of processing, investigating and resolving the appeal. This information will be held in shared files (password protected) on Lancaster University servers, only as long as is necessary, for a maximum of 10 years, as per Lancaster University's Data Retention Schedule.

## Additional Information

This section provides further details and guidance in relation to SMSS decision-making processes for the purposes of clarifying appropriate grounds for an appeal.

### Eligibility to participate in Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) activities

The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team provide activities for students from widening participation backgrounds according to the WP criteria provided by the Office for Students (OfS) as per the conditions of Lancaster University funding.

Eligibility to participate in Social Mobility and Student Success opportunities is determined by several factors:

- Widening participation criteria (*this may vary between projects*)
- Academic criteria (*depending on the project*)
- Adequate supporting statement, teacher reference or interview (*depending on the project*)

For more information about widening participation/project specific selection criteria, please see the *Widening Participation* section of the Lancaster University website:

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/widening-participation/>

**Please note:** If the number of students applying for a Widening Participation or Student Success activity exceeds the spaces available, the Project Coordinator will prioritise individuals who fulfil a greater number of widening participation criteria to ensure that opportunities are allocated fairly. Some projects may require current students, young people, parents, guardians and/or teachers to return permissions forms or references for the Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team to confirm an individual's place on a programme. Any conditions of participation will be clearly communicated at the point of application.

### Overview of decision-making

If an individual unsuccessfully applies for a Widening Participation or Student Success activity, the reason for this decision will be clearly identified according to the table below:

Decision	Reason
<b>A</b>	Does not meet the required widening participation criteria.
<b>B</b>	Does not meet the specified academic criteria (where applicable).
<b>C</b>	Is not eligible due to not being in the year group specified for the opportunity.

<b>D</b>	Unsatisfactory supporting statement, teacher reference or interview.
<b>E</b>	Compulsory information required to participate in the SMSS project, activity or opportunity has not been returned by the specified deadline.
<b>F</b>	Met the required widening participation criteria. However, priority has been given to individuals who fulfil a greater number of widening participation criteria due to a limited number of places or opportunities available.

**Please note:** There may be more than one reason for an unsuccessful application.

### **Allocation of Student Success opportunities i.e. schools placements**

While SMSS play a supporting role in the administration of credit-bearing, school placement modules, all decisions connected to the allocation of a place on the module sit with the relevant academic department. Complaints linked to this should be made to the academic department following their processes and procedures.

Whilst SMSS take school placement preferences into account i.e. primary, secondary or SEN/alternative provision settings. SMSS reserves the right to allocate a school placement that does not align with a student's preferred option. For example, every year the number of secondary school placements available in the local area is limited and the number of requests exceeds supply. In this instance, a student will be placed in a primary school to ensure that they are able to undertake a placement and complete the requirements of their academic module. This decision is final and there are no grounds for an appeal.

### **Non-continuation on a Widening Participation or Student Success programme due to academic attainment or levels of engagement i.e. non-attendance**

The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team strive to support every student taking part in a Widening Participation or Student Success activity to make the most of the opportunity and reach their potential, irrespective of background or barriers.

#### **Conditions of participation**

Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) projects may require students to make sufficient academic progress and demonstrate a willingness to participate in core events and activities to continue with a programme at key transitional stages. For example, prospective students moving from Year 12 to Year 13 of the *Lancaster Access Programme* are expected to be predicted and 'on track' to achieve a minimum academic grade requirement. Alternatively, a current student may be expected to attend pre-arranged academic support or professional development sessions as part of the Lancaster Success Programme.

Academic requirements/expected levels of engagement, and other conditions of participation will be made clear to students at the point that they apply for a Widening Participation or Student Success project.

#### **What happens if concerns are raised?**

If the Project Coordinator becomes concerned that a student is not making the required academic progress or is repeatedly not engaging with or attending core activities, they will contact the student and the school/college (in the case of pre-university activity) to discuss the matter and identify next steps.

The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team will make every attempt to support the student, understand any arising issues and offer or signpost them to appropriate support.

The decision to remove a student from a Widening Participation or Student Success programme will be made by a Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager and this action will not be taken without written evidence of prior student consultation and forewarning (via the Project Coordinator).

**Please note:** Students also have the right to withdraw from a Widening Participation or Student Success programme at any time by notifying the Project Coordinator in writing (i.e. via email).

### **Breaches of an SMSS Student Code of Conduct**

The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team may ask students to sign a Student Code of Conduct when taking part in a programme or activity.

The *SMSS Student Code of Conduct* asks students to adhere to the following rules and regulations when taking part in Widening Participation activities hosted on campus at Lancaster University, or at external locations when Lancaster University is in a position of *logo parentis* (in place of a parent):

1. Students must observe and comply with all instructions given by Lancaster University staff or Student Ambassadors for the purposes of health and safety
2. Students must not leave the University campus or designated external location, unless accompanied by Student Ambassadors/Lancaster University staff
3. Students must remain in their allocated group, under the supervision of Student Ambassadors/Lancaster University staff at all times
4. Students must attend all timetabled sessions as per their programme of activity
5. Students must switch off or place mobile phones on silent during all timetabled sessions
6. Students must not take photographs of other people at any time
7. Students must treat all members of the university campus and local community with respect, consideration and courtesy at all times
8. Students must not bully others or exhibit behavior that is deemed physically aggressive or verbal harassment at any time
9. Students must not use alcohol, intoxicating substances or have dangerous objects in their possession at any time
10. Students must not smoke or use electronic cigarettes, in any university or external building at any time

The above rules and regulations exist to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved in an event or activity. Failure to adhere to the *SMSS Student Code of Conduct* will result in Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) taking the following action:

Stage	Action	Person Responsible
1	A verbal warning and/or a telephone call to parents, guardians or school.	Widening Participation (WP) Officer
2	A student is sent home or back to school immediately ( <i>this could be at their own expense</i> ).	Widening Participation (WP) Manager
3	A student can no longer continue to take part in a designated programme.	Social Mobility and Student Success Manager

The frequency and/or the severity of the breach will determine the most appropriate course of action. The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team will make every attempt to resolve breaches at Stage 1, progressing through the stages (in the case of repeated breaches) as appropriate.

If a student breaches the *SMSS Code of Conduct* and their failure to comply with the rules is deemed to be serious i.e. poses a risk to own/others health and safety, a decision may be made at Stage 2 or Stage 3 without consultation at Stage 1.

### Financial assistance

Financial assistance may be available to students taking part in Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) projects, activities or events on a case-by-case basis to ensure that financial circumstances do not become a barrier to WP students accessing opportunities.

#### What does financial assistance cover?

Financial assistance may cover the following:

- The cost of public transport to and from the University to attend a Widening Participation or Student Success activity or school placement (*as appropriate*)
- A contribution towards on course costs or enrichment provision to enhance the student experience (*specifically for students taking part in Lancaster Success Programme*)

Where financial assistance is available for specific SMSS projects or activities, the Project Coordinator will provide clear guidance on funding eligibility and criteria at the point of application.

#### Parameters of financial assistance

The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team will not fund public transport costs (in full or in part) in cases where transport has already been reasonably provided by the department. We encourage students to use public transport where possible but accept that there may be circumstances where this may not be appropriate. For example, travelling to a school placement located in an area with limited transport links or where accessibility requirements necessitate further reasonable adjustments.



In these situations, a taxi may be provided, or a decision taken to reimburse a student for the mileage costs incurred (capped at the price of public transport). These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and require the Project Coordinator's prior approval to ensure that the appropriate paperwork has been completed.