

Social Mobility and Student Success

Complaints Procedure

PLEASE NOTE: This Complaints 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 complain about 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 backgrounds. We strive to provide an exceptional experience, but we recognise that there may be instances where an aspect of this experience may not be satisfactory.

A complaint is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' about a standard of service offered on behalf of the University. We are dedicated to maintaining an effective and timely procedure for complaints that clearly outlines how to make a complaint and ensures that all complaints are handled efficiently and appropriately. A complaint may focus on (but is not limited to):

- Members of University staff
- An unsatisfactory experience or service provided by the University i.e. an event, activity or opportunity provided by a department, faculty or central service
- Lack of information/guidance

How do I make a complaint?

If a prospective or current student, parent or guardian, teacher or school representative wishes to make a complaint in writing, this can be actioned by e-mailing a completed SMSS Complaints Form to outreach@lancaster.ac.uk. If the complaint is of a sensitive nature, please contact the Widening Participation team (using the above email) and request further information about the process for submitting a sensitive complaint.

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

The completed form should explain the nature of the concern, detail when it happened, where and who was involved (if known). Any related evidence should be included/attached to the e-mail. The person making the complaint is also required to state the specific outcome they are seeking in the documentation provided.

What will happen to my complaint?

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

Stage	Action	Person Responsible
1	<p>Complaints will be allocated to a Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) Manager for consideration. If a complaint concerns a staff member, project or activity delivered by a particular team (Widening Participation, Evaluation or Student Success), another Manager within Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) will investigate the complaint.</p> <p>Every attempt will be made to resolve the complaint at a local level and address issues at this first stage. The Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) team aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, with an initial response and explanation provided within <u>5 working days</u>.</p>	Social Mobility and Student Success Manager
2	<p>If a Stage 1 complaint is not resolved successfully, the complaint will progress to Stage 2 and it will be referred to the Head of Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) for review. If a meeting is required to discuss the complaint (either by phone, online or in person), the person making the complaint will be made aware of:</p> <p>(a) The proposed date of this discussion (subject to availability). (b) When they can expect further communication/resolution i.e. within a period of <u>10 working days</u>.</p> <p>Please note: If the complaint is about Social Mobility and Student Success (SMSS) itself or the Head of Social Mobility and Student Success, the following action will be taken:</p> <p>(a) The Head of Social Mobility and Student Success and the person making the complaint will agree a neutral member of External Relations to oversee the complaint i.e. not someone directly involved in the complaint. <u>OR</u> (b) If there is no satisfactory agreement, the complaint will move to Stage 3 as described below.</p>	Head of Social Mobility and Student Success
3	<p>Failure to appropriately resolve a Stage 2 complaint or in cases where External Relations deem a complaint to be severe, the complaint will progress to Stage 3 and it will be referred to the University Complaints Co-ordinator for further consideration.</p> <p>Please note: It is likely that an investigation will be required and this will add to the length of time needed to resolve the complaint. The Complaints Co-ordinator will aim to complete this process within <u>10 working days</u>, but there is an upper time limit of <u>three months</u> in complex cases.</p>	University Complaints Coordinator

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 complaints seriously and will handle personal information in confidence. Data collected via the SMSS Complaints Form will be used for the sole purpose of processing, investigating and resolving the complaint. 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.