

Outreach and Student Success (OSS) Appeals Procedure

Outreach and Student Success (OSS) are committed to ensuring equality of access and providing Outreach and Student Success 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 Outreach and Student Success activities according to internal OSS 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 Outreach and Student Success activities
- Non-continuation on an Outreach or Student Success programme due to academic attainment or levels of engagement i.e. non-attendance
- Breaches of an *OSS 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 Outreach and Student Success (OSS) team will only consider an appeal for the following reasons:

1. OSS 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 **at least one** of the above grounds for an appeal.

If you are unsure about whether you have grounds for an appeal, please contact the Outreach and Student Success (OSS) team via email: 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 *OSS Review and Appeal Form – Stage 1* ([available via the Outreach and Student Success webpages on the Lancaster University website](#)) to outreach@lancaster.ac.uk.

Please note: The email must contain ‘OSS 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 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
OSS policies and procedures have not been followed correctly.	<p>The appeal will be allocated to an Outreach and Student Success 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. Access, Outreach or Student Success.</p> <p>The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) Manager aims to address appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within <u>5 working days.</u></p>	Outreach 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 an Outreach or Student Success Officer from another team (Access, Outreach or Student Success) so that a staff member who has not been involved in the original decision-making process is conducting the review.</p> <p>The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) Officer aims to address appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within <u>5 working days.</u></p>	Outreach Officer
There is evidence that a decision has been made unfairly.	<p>The appeal will be allocated to an Outreach and Student Success 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 (Access, Outreach or Student Success).</p> <p>The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) Manager aims to address appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within <u>5 working days.</u></p>	Outreach 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:

- There is new evidence that could not have been reasonably made available at Stage 1
- There is evidence that the *OSS 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 **at least 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 *OSS Review and Appeal Form – Stage 2* ([available via the Outreach and Student Success webpages on the Lancaster University website](#)) to outreach@lancaster.ac.uk.

Please note: The email must contain ‘OSS 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 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 an Outreach and Student Success 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 (Access, Outreach or Student Success).</p> <p>The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) Manager aims to review appeals as quickly as possible, with an initial response, review and final decision provided within 5 working days.</p>	Outreach and Student Success Manager
There is evidence that	The Head of Outreach and Student Success will review	Head of

<p>the <i>OSS Appeals Procedure</i> has not been followed correctly at Stage 1.</p>	<p>the outcome of the Stage 1 appeal and decide on the most appropriate course of action. The Head of Outreach and Student Success will provide an initial response, review and final decision within <u>10 working days.</u></p>	<p>Outreach and Student Success</p>
<p>There is evidence that a decision has been made unfairly.</p>	<p>The Head of Outreach 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 Outreach and Student Success will provide an initial response, review and final decision within <u>10 working days.</u></p>	<p>Head of Outreach and Student Success</p>

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 *OSS Complaints Procedure*. Outreach and Student Success (OSS) 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 [OSS 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 Outreach and Student Success (OSS) team will take all appeals seriously and will handle personal information in confidence. Data collected via the *OSS Review and Appeal Forms – Stage 1/2* 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 OSS decision-making processes for the purposes of clarifying appropriate grounds for an appeal.

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Eligibility to participate in Outreach and Student Success activities

The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) team provide Outreach and Student Success 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 OSS opportunities is determined by several factors:

- Status as a UK student, attending a school or college in the UK
- 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 an Outreach 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 young people, parents, guardians and/or teachers to return permissions forms or references in order for the Outreach and Student Success (OSS) 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 an Outreach or Student Success activity, the reason for this decision will be clearly identified according to the table below:

Decision	Reason
A	Is not a UK student, attending a school/college in the UK.
B	Does not meet the required widening participation criteria.
C	Does not meet the specified academic criteria (where applicable).
D	Unsatisfactory supporting statement, teacher reference or interview.
E	Compulsory information required to participate in the OSS project, activity or opportunity has not been returned by the specified deadline.
F	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. If there are multiple eligible applicants that meet the same number of widening participation criteria, Outreach and Student Success reserve the right to allocate places or opportunities on a first-come-first-served basis i.e. based on when an application was received.

Non-continuation on an Outreach or Student Success programme due to academic attainment or levels of engagement i.e. non-attendance

The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) team strive to support every student taking part in an Outreach or Student Success activity to make the most of the opportunity and reach their potential, irrespective of background or barriers.

Conditions of participation

Some OSS projects 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 11 to Year 12 of the *Lancaster Access Programme* or *Access to Medicine* 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.

Any academic requirements, expected levels of engagement or other conditions of participation will be made clear to students at the point that they apply for an Outreach 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 Outreach and Student Success (OSS) 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 an Outreach or Student Success programme will be made by an Outreach and Student Success Manager and this action will not be taken without evidence of prior student consultation and forewarning (via the Project Coordinator).

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

Breaches of an OSS Student Code of Conduct

The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) team may ask students to sign an *OSS Student Code of Conduct* when taking part in an Outreach programme or activity.

The *OSS Student Code of Conduct* asks students to adhere to the following rules and regulations when taking part in Outreach activities hosted on campus at Lancaster University, or at external locations when Lancaster University is in a position of *loco parentis* (in place of a parent) in line with relevant legislation:

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 *OSS Student Code of Conduct* will result in Outreach and Student Success (OSS) taking the following action:

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

The frequency and/or the severity of the breach will determine the most appropriate course of action. The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) 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 *OSS Code of Conduct* and their failure to comply with the rules is deemed to be serious i.e. poses a risk to their/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 Outreach and Student Success 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 an Outreach and Student Success activity, school placement or work experience (*as appropriate*)
- A contribution towards on course costs or enrichment provision in order to enhance the student experience (*specifically for students taking part in Lancaster Success Programme*)

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

Parameters of financial assistance

The Outreach and Student Success (OSS) 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 or work experience opportunity located in an area with limited transport links.

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.