

SPSO decision report

Case: 201800870, Student Awards Agency for Scotland
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: policy / administration
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)'s handling of her application for funding. Mrs C applied for funding for her course through SAAS. The award was initially granted, however, it was then found that the course was not eligible, as it was not delivered by a publicly funded body. SAAS rescinded the fund for Mrs C's course and advised her of this. Mrs C complained that it was an error on SAAS' part which meant the course appeared to be eligible and it was unreasonable to rescind the funding. Mrs C appealed the decision, however SAAS' view remained the same. In the first response to the appeal SAAS' response referred to a different name for the course, stating the approved funding was for a course different from the one Mrs C was attending. This was not the case and in the second response to the appeal SAAS apologised for the confusion but still considered the decision to rescind the funding was reasonable.

We reviewed the information available relating to the communication and response to the administrative error. It was found that the information on SAAS's website, including this course as an eligible choice, was provided by a third party, not SAAS itself. We found that there had been a level of confusion due to the various names used for the same course, however this stemmed predominantly from information provided by a third party. The initial error that the course was included in the first place also stemmed from information provided by a third party. We considered the actions of SAAS on discovering the error to be reasonable. The course was removed from SAAS' website and SAAS apologised for the error in the initial appeal response. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.