

Refund and Compensation Policy

Effective September 2024 - Present

Potential applicants should be aware that this policy is under review in light of newly introduced regulatory requirements from the Office for Students. It is anticipated that it will be republished before 31 October 2025. Once republished a summary document will be included on the University website summarising changes made.

Purpose of Policy	This Policy sets out the University of Central Lancashire's position and the circumstances where refunds and compensation may be paid out to students and applicants in the unlikely event that we are unable to preserve the teaching on one of our courses.
Internal services involved	Academic Registry Academic Quality Unit Legal and Governance
Related regulations, policies and procedures	Student Protection Plan Student Complaints Procedure
Enquiries to	Executive Director of Academic Registry and Recruitment
Senior Managers responsible	Executive Director of Academic Registry and Recruitment
VCG Lead	Pro Vice Chancellor (Students and Teaching)

Version	Approved	Effective from	Revisions made	Next Review
1	May 2024	September 2024		May 2025

Policy Scope

1. This Policy sets out the University Lancashire's position and the circumstances where refunds and compensation may be paid out to students and applicants in the unlikely event that we are unable to preserve the teaching on one of our courses. It has been developed in line with the Universities UK briefing on compensation and refund policies published in April 2018.
2. The University is committed to preserving continuity of study for all students registered on its courses. In doing so, the University acknowledges its responsibilities and duties in law which include:
 - its contractual obligations to applicants and students;
 - the protections in the Consumer Rights Act 2015;
 - the Higher Education and Research Act 2017;
 - the conditions of registration with its principal regulator, the Office for Students (OfS);
 - the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework;
 - the Quality Assurance Agency guidance; and
 - internal constitutional documents, regulations, rules and procedures.
3. As a registered higher education provider with the OfS, the University has published a Student Protection Plan (SPP). Our SPP sets out what students can expect to happen should a programme of study, campus, or institution close. The purpose of the SPP is to ensure that the University has considered how students can continue and complete their studies or can be compensated if this is not possible.
4. The SPP outlines how the University will ensure that current and prospective students will be able to continue and maintain their quality of study in the event of disruption or course closure, or where there are changes to a course. The SPP outlines the potential risks that could arise and the mitigating measures that the University will take if such an event occurred. The aim of

the SPP is to reassure current and prospective students that the University has the necessary measures in place to ensure that they can continue their studies.

5. Alongside the SPP, the University has implemented this Refund and Compensation Policy. This Policy outlines the circumstances under which the University will refund and/or compensate applicants and students for their tuition fees, deposits, and other associated costs, and provide compensation where appropriate, should the University no longer be able to maintain continuation of study for an applicant or current student. This Policy should be considered in conjunction with the University's Tuition Fees Policy.
6. 'Teaching out' will be the University's usual course of action and it will always be our first choice of protection measure to take. Where arrangements to teach out are put in place, we commit to ensuring that the relevant course of study can be completed by all currently registered students.
7. As a result, refunds and compensation are seen as a last resort for the University, as it is determined to do everything in its power to ensure that all students can continue to study at the University. Nevertheless, this Policy clarifies how the University will provide refunds and/or compensation in the unlikely event that it is unable to maintain continuation of study.
8. In this Policy a reference to the University no longer being able to preserve continuation of study means that the University has terminated or intends to terminate either:
 - a. a course of study on which an individual has been offered or accepted a place, before that individual can register as a student; or
 - b. a course of study on which a student is registered before that student has completed the course.
9. A refund relates to the repayment of monies paid to the University or an appropriate reduction in the amount of monies owed in future by the student

to the University. This could include tuition fees, other associated course costs or accommodation costs.

10. Compensation means a recognition for some other recognisable loss suffered by the student. This normally falls into two categories:

- a. compensation for wasted out-of-pocket expenses which have been incurred by the student and which were paid to someone other than the University, such as travel; or
- b. an amount to compensate for any material disadvantages to the student arising from the University's failure to fulfil its duties appropriately.

11. All students are covered by this Policy:

- a. students who are in receipt of tuition fee loans from Student Loans Company or other student funding organisation;
- b. students who pay their own tuition fees;
- c. students whose fees are paid by a sponsor.

Planned Mid-Course Termination

12. Whilst 'teach-out' is always the University's usual course of action and it will always be our first choice of protection measure to take, the University recognises that there may be rare occasions when circumstances do not allow this.

13. A planned mid-course termination is a situation where the University can no longer continue with a course of study as originally intended but intends to terminate the course at the end of an academic year. This allows for a more organised and structured transition for students as they complete their current studies.

14. If this event occurs, the University will consult with the students enrolled on the course to gather their input and perspectives when developing a plan for addressing the termination. This ensures that the University considers the opinions and needs of the students who are directly affected by the situation and strives to make a responsive and inclusive plan. As a minimum we will:
- a. ensure all enrolled students on the course receive the University award (such as a certificate or diploma) that recognises the stage they have reached or will reach at the end of the academic year;
 - b. offer those students advice and support to help them decide whether to transfer to a different course at the University or seek to transfer to another higher education provider to complete their studies;
 - c. offer to pay reasonable travel costs to cover visits to an alternative provider;
 - d. put in place a refund and compensation plan relevant to the circumstances of each individual that includes provision for compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by a student because of any relocation;
 - e. consider whether additional funding such as bursaries should continue to be paid to the student should they transfer to an alternative provider.
15. The University will also ensure that it has a comprehensive plan in place for dealing with applicants affected by course terminations, including clear communications, as well as providing support to affected applicants in making informed decisions about their future education options, whether applying for a different course at the University or seeking an alternative at another higher education provider.

Unexpected Course Termination

16. An unexpected course termination occurs in a challenging situation, when the University is left with no option but to discontinue a course midterm.

17. When such unforeseen circumstances arise, the University will prioritise communication and consultation with the affected students on the course, ensuring that they are kept informed and involved in the process. As a minimum we will:
- a. ensure all enrolled students on the course receive the University award (certificate or diploma) that recognises the stage they have reached;
 - b. offer those students advice and support to help them decide whether to transfer to a different course at the University or seek to transfer to another higher education provider to complete their studies;
 - c. offer to pay reasonable travel costs to cover visits to an alternative provider;
 - d. put in place a refund and compensation plan relevant to the circumstances of each individual that includes provision for compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by the student because of any relocation;
 - e. consider whether additional funding such as bursaries should continue to be paid to the student should they transfer to an alternative provider.
18. The University will also ensure that it has a comprehensive plan in place for dealing with applicants affected by course terminations, including clear communications, as well as providing support to affected applicants in making informed decisions about their future education options, whether applying for a different course at the University or seeking an alternative at another higher education provider.

Refund and compensation plan

19. The refund and compensation plan referred to in paragraphs 14 & 15 will include appropriate provision for:
- a. tuition fee and associated course costs;

- b. maintenance costs;
- c. reasonably incurred accommodation costs;
- d. travel costs related to the relocation of provision;
- e. international student visa costs.

20. Relevant guidance published by the OfS, Competition and Markets Authority and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education will be considered in preparing plans.

Process

21. If the University cannot find a suitable resolution to maintain study continuity, or if there are expenses linked to an acceptable alternative, the student is entitled to claim through this Policy. This Policy ensures that students are fairly compensated in such circumstances where the University fails to meet its obligations.
22. Affected students will be invited to complete a claim form and provide any necessary evidence in support of the claim for compensation/reimbursement. This may include submitting proof of actual expenses incurred, especially if they were incurred outside of the University. The University will not provide reimbursement/compensation for speculative or hypothetical financial losses.
23. All decisions on refunds and compensation will be made by a Refund and Compensation Panel. The Panel will meet promptly once it is established that the University is unable to preserve the continuity of study and a group or individual claim has been initiated.
24. The Panel will comprise of:
- a. Executive Director of Academic Registry and Student Recruitment
 - b. Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
 - c. Deputy Registrar, Immigration and Compliance

d. Office for Students Compliance Manager

25. For each student claim, each case will be considered individually on its own merit and the Panel will decide on one or a combination of the following outcomes:

- a. **Refund** – Money will be refunded in recognition of tuition fees and/or other relevant costs, for example accommodation, for services which have not been delivered.
- b. **Commitment to honour payments scheduled** – Where a student would ordinarily receive a bursary payment or scholarship, the University may agree to fund/continue to fund such payments for a specified period.
- c. **Facilitate transfer** – Where a transfer is secured (within the University or to another HE provider) the University may provide financial support for costs incurred which relate directly to the transfer process and/or costs associated with the transfer that otherwise would not have been incurred by the student, for example additional travel expenses.
- d. **Compensation** – Compensation may be awarded where the University recognises that a student has experienced actual financial loss, or other material disadvantages, as a direct result of the University's failure to preserve their study.
- e. **No action**

26. The panel will normally consider the claims based on the evidence provided and would not normally interview the affected students as part of the process. Should the panel deem that appropriate, students are entitled to be accompanied and/or represented by a person of their choosing during this procedure, who may be from the Students' Union Advice Centre.

Payments

27. The Academic Registry is responsible for processing refund and compensation payments.
28. Where possible, refunds will be made via the same mechanism through which the University received the payment in the first instance:
- a. Student Loans Company (SLC) payments will be returned to the SLC via a change in circumstances notification;
 - b. fees paid by sponsors, such as employers, will be returned to the sponsor;
 - c. self-funded students will receive the refund directly.
29. Compensation, bursary and scholarship payments will be made directly to the student via a BACS payment.
30. Payment will normally be made within 28 days from the agreement that a refund/compensation is due.

Complaints

Where a student is not satisfied with the decision of the Panel, they may bring a complaint under the University's [Student Complaint Procedure](#) which will be considered by a Stage 3 panel under the Procedure.