

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201507640, Student Awards Agency for Scotland  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** handling of application  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C applied for and was awarded student funding, including a dependants' grant, for the academic year 2014/15 by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). When she applied the following year, the dependants' grant was not awarded. Mrs C contacted SAAS to find out why she did not qualify for the dependants' grant, and SAAS noted during the call that her husband's income was quite high and that dependants' grant was usually only paid where a partner's income was very low. SAAS then wrote to Mrs C and told her that she had been overpaid for the year 2014/15 and had to repay the dependants' grant she had received, incorrectly, on the basis of the information she had provided.

Mrs C questioned that she had provided the wrong information to SAAS. She said that she had answered all the questions honestly and had provided evidence of her husband's earnings for the tax year ending April 2014.

We obtained information from SAAS about the questions Mrs C had been asked when completing the online application. In the dependants' grant section, we found that Mrs C had clearly been asked to declare her husband's 'total income' for the coming year and that she had entered an incorrect figure.

We were satisfied that SAAS could not have assessed the dependants' grant on the basis of Mrs C's husband's past income because the grant was awarded on an estimate of the current year's income rather than on past earnings. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.