

Fraud

The SAAS fraud team sits within the Finance Dept and has three staff members - the Fraud Manager, Fraud Officer and Fraud Administrator. The team, although small, works closely with all colleagues within the Agency to minimise fraudulent activity.

The team's main function is to prevent individuals receiving student support on a fraudulent basis and to build a case for prosecution when fraudulent activity has been identified. We are governed by the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM) which gives a definition of external fraud and we also have our own [SAAS Fraud Policy](#)

We carry out targeted and reactive fraud investigations. We also respond to data requests from the Dept of Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs, Local Authority Benefit Offices, the Police and other public bodies. We are part of the Audit Commission's National Fraud Initiative to share and compare data across public bodies to prevent and detect fraudulent activity within the public sector.

TARGETED

We conduct targeted investigations looking at different types of student support to:

- Ensure that monies are paid correctly;
- Confirm that students comply with the terms and conditions of the award;
- Review and improve controls as necessary.

REACTIVE

We are responsible for investigating any instance where an external fraud may have taken place. If sufficient evidence is available we will submit a report to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) for consideration to prosecute.

We can ask COPFS to impose a fiscal fine for low value cases and we can use our own recovery processes if there is insufficient evidence to progress a civil prosecution.

Attempted student fraud tends to fall into four categories:

- Obtaining student support but not attending a course of study;
- Providing false personal information to obtain a grant when ineligible;
- Providing false information to increase the amount of the award due;
- Using false identities and information to gain an award.

COURT ACTION

The Agency takes a very serious view of fraud or attempted fraud. We work closely with the police and/or COPFS to take forward cases for prosecution as appropriate.

WHISTLE-BLOWING

If you have any information you would like to pass to us about possible fraudulent activity against SAAS you can contact us, in **TOTAL** confidence, at:

Fraud Unit

SAAS

Gyleview House

3 Redheughs Rigg

Edinburgh

EH12 9HH

Or

Telephone our direct fraud line on 0845 002 0019

Or

Email us at fraudunit@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Examples of recent successful prosecutions for fraud include:

A student was jailed for 16 months after hijacking someone else's identity and National Insurance Number, getting a job with a government department, and fraudulently claiming £31k in student loans and grants.

A DSA student who forged the signature of his helper and gained £8k was sentenced to 250 hours community service.

A student who had claimed funding as a single parent while actually married and gained £9k was fined £5k and given a 3 year probation order.