

Case: 201004972, University of Stirling
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C was studying for a professional degree at the university. Following two instances of plagiarism, and because Ms C walked out of formal meetings, the university referred her to a fitness to practice hearing. Following the hearing, the university wrote to Ms C terminating her studies with immediate effect, and saying she would receive the award of a diploma in higher education.

Ms C complained that, during two meetings with the university (one about plagiarism, the other about placement), they did not support her or take into consideration that her personal circumstances had caused her to break down. She also complained that the fitness to practice hearing failed to take into account the circumstances she was in at the time of the two meetings, and she was not given the opportunity to provide an explanation for her behaviour. In addition, Ms C complained that, contrary to the university's policy and procedure for a fitness to practice hearing, they did not provide her with a copy of a briefing paper.

We did not uphold any of Ms C's complaints. As there were conflicting recollections of events, without direct objective evidence to support either Ms C's or the university's version, it was not possible to conclude with any certainty what actually happened at the two meetings or the fitness to practice panel. In relation to the briefing paper, we accepted as reasonable the university's explanation as to why, in the circumstances, they did not produce a paper on this occasion.