

SPSO decision report

Case: 201103213, University of Dundee
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the university failed to properly investigate his complaints about his tutor. He said that they did not consider all the evidence he submitted to them, and based their decision on matters not raised by him and on his tutor's previous performance. He also complained that university staff advised him that he had grounds to make an appeal, but that his appeal was then unreasonably rejected and he was not provided with adequate support in making his complaints.

Our investigation found that the decision made was based on all the evidence available, including the tutor's current performance. The university found that there had been a delay in providing feedback to Mr C on his independent study project and they apologised for this. They also wrote to the tutor to remind him of the requirement to give timely and professional feedback when requested by students. Following a further complaint from Mr C, the university also asked the tutor to write and apologise to Mr C, which he did.

Although Mr C was not satisfied with that letter of apology, we found that the tutor had done what was asked of him. We were also satisfied that the university had considered all the evidence that Mr C provided. On the matter of the advice given on the appeals process, we found that university staff had appropriately advised Mr C about the next stage of the complaints procedure. The fact that Mr C was given this information did not give, and should not have given, him an unrealistic expectation that any appeal he made would be upheld. In relation to the support provided to Mr C, we found that the university had, in compliance with their complaints procedure, given Mr C information about the support and assistance available and he had taken advantage of that support. Members of university staff and the students association had provided support and information to Mr C during the complaints process.