

Case: 201103684, Queen Margaret University
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: academic appeal/exam results/degree classification
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the university had not fairly and fully considered his appeal in relation to his first year assessment. Mr C failed three of four modules and was required to leave the course as a result. He went through the appeal process, and then through the complaints process as he was unhappy with the handling of his appeal. We found that the university did not acknowledge or consider some of the issues raised in his initial appeal, and we were critical of this. Mr C also provided further information in relation to an issue which was not acknowledged by the university. We were critical of this too.

When Mr C complained about the way his appeal was handled, we found the university's response more thorough. It addressed all the issues raised, but we noted that one issue (which Mr C had not pursued via the complaints process) remained outstanding in relation to the original appeal. We found that generally the other points raised about Mr C's claims of extenuating circumstances were reasonably dealt with. On balance we upheld Mr C's complaint.

We also noted the university appeared to have no guidelines in relation to the use of proof readers and whether this would be acknowledged or taken into account in relation to the written presentation criteria for assessments, and made a recommendation about this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the university:

- revise the assessment criteria to recognise if a disabled student has had their written work checked by a proof reader provided by the university; and
- provide a full apology to Mr C for the failings identified.