

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200809, University of Strathclyde
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: academic appeal/exam results/degree classification
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who is a solicitor, raised a complaint on behalf of Ms A about the university's handling of her academic appeal. In particular, he said that the university failed to take all relevant material into account and failed to share information with Ms A during the appeal process.

During our investigation we considered the academic appeals procedure, which had two stages - faculty appeal and senate appeal. We found that, in line with the procedures, at faculty level neither the student making the appeal or the department had any right of appearance before the committee considering the appeal. The appeal at that level was considered on the basis of written information submitted by the student and the relevant department. In this case we were satisfied, based on the available evidence, that the written information provided by Ms A was taken into account during the academic appeal.

However, while we were satisfied that they had followed the academic appeals procedure we were concerned that, while the department responded to the written submission submitted by Ms A, she was not given an opportunity to respond to the submission submitted by the department, and we made a recommendation to address this. We were aware that Ms A could have requested the information that was considered at the faculty level before submitting an appeal to senate, but had not done so.

Recommendations

We recommended that the university:

- review their procedures for information sharing when dealing with appeals to ensure both parties have the same access to information; and
- should (if Ms A considers there are inaccuracies in the department's submission to the committee that have not been addressed and raises these with the university) provide evidence to demonstrate that they have fully considered these.