

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201976, University of St Andrews
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: plagiarism and intellectual property
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained that before her misconduct hearing, the university failed to give her a formal statement detailing the allegations of misconduct made against her. She also complained that they failed to allow her the opportunity to challenge the evidence before they rejected her appeal.

We found that, although they did not give her a written statement of the allegations, these were fully discussed with her at an earlier meeting with a senior member of staff. In terms of the appeal, the university's policies give the student the opportunity to present any new evidence they may consider relevant to their appeal, prior to its consideration. The policy does not, however, allow the student to challenge evidence at this stage. As the university did provide details of the allegations of misconduct prior to the hearing, and as Miss C was not entitled to challenge the evidence at the appeal stage, we did not uphold her complaints. We did, however, make a recommendation based on Miss C's experience.

Recommendations

We recommended that the university:

- consider amending the academic misconduct policy to include a requirement to confirm in writing the type of academic misconduct alleged to have occurred, prior to a hearing.
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