

SPSO decision report

Case: 201305043, University of Strathclyde
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the university had failed to allow sufficient time for his submission to be marked in order that he could obtain a qualification. He told us that if he had obtained the qualification by a specific date, he would have received an increase in his salary. Mr C had missed the original deadline for submitting the work. The deadline was then extended and a further extension was subsequently agreed with Mr C. He paid the required fee and submitted the work on the date that had been agreed, which was just under six weeks before the date he needed to obtain the qualification in order to obtain the salary increase.

The university's programme guide for the course stated that students should expect to receive feedback within six weeks of the date the work is submitted. In Mr C's case, we found no evidence that he was told that he would receive the feedback within a shorter time period. The work was in fact marked and returned to Mr C with feedback just over three weeks after he submitted it. This left just over two weeks for Mr C to resubmit the work in order to obtain the qualification. However, the university told us that his submission had fallen far short of what was needed in order to pass, as could be seen by the extensive feedback provided, and it would have taken him several months to do the work required to obtain the qualification. They pointed out that, if the submission had been a marginal fail, they would have supported him if he had wished to make a resubmission and to have that result approved in time. They also said that they could not reasonably have known the extent of the corrections required, or how long it would take to bring the submission to the required standard, before Mr C submitted it.

We found that there were no unreasonable delays or failings by the university that left Mr C with insufficient time to achieve the qualification and the salary increase. He had been aware of the tight timescale, and it was his choice to submit the work at that time and pay the required fee. We were satisfied that the reason that he was unable to resubmit the work at the required standard within the deadline was because of the revisions that were required and not because of delays by the university. In view of this, we did not uphold the complaint.