

SPSO decision report

Case: 201407490, Ayrshire College
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: communication staff attitude dignity and confidentiality
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the college had not responded reasonably to his allegation of bullying. We found that the college had initially acted promptly, but had then failed to investigate the matter in line with the relevant policy. Mr C also complained that they had not acted reasonably in respect of a work placement. We found that the college had been entitled to raise concerns with Mr C about his behaviour. We considered that they had acted reasonably in relation to this matter and did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Mr C also complained that staff had failed to treat him with courtesy and respect during a meeting and that they did not give him a reasonable opportunity to answer questions during another meeting. We found that there had been differing versions of these meetings. We did not uphold these complaints, as there was no objective evidence to either support or refute Mr C's allegations. Finally, Mr C complained that the college had failed to reasonably investigate and respond to his complaints. We found that the college had not responded to him within the timescale they had referred to and they had not kept him updated. The college also failed to fully explore some of the comments in Mr C's complaint. In view of these failings, we upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the college:

- issue a written apology to Mr C for the failings identified;
- remind staff of the requirement to investigate allegations of bullying in line with the relevant policy; and
- make complaints handling staff aware of our decision.