

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201500520, University of Edinburgh  
**Sector:** further and higher education  
**Subject:** academic appeal/exam results/degree classification  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained about the information provided by the university in respect of the work she was required to submit for assessment at the end of the academic year. She said she asked her course tutor for information about the submission requirements but that the course tutor could not help her. She failed this aspect of the course. She said she contacted a senior secretary who advised her not to appeal but to resit the assessment in August. She felt this advice was wrong. She submitted her work in August after the deadline and, as a result, it was given a zero mark. She also said she was advised after her late submission that even though her submission was late it would still be assessed. She was also unhappy with the level of information provided by the university about the academic appeals process and about the late submission of work. Ms C was advised that she would need to resit the following year. As a result, she appealed the university's decision to give her a zero mark but her appeal was rejected. She was also unhappy with the time taken by the university to tell her their decision on her appeal.

We reviewed the information available to students and noted that there was a description of the assessment submissions required for this course. Contact details were also provided for members of the academic staff who could assist where there was any doubt or confusion. We also found that there was clear information on the late submission of work and the academic appeals process online and in the student handbook. Whilst we could not say with sufficient certainty what information she was given by staff, we noted that the appeals process was clear and that she could have sought advice about this from a number of sources. We also noted that, even if she was told that her work which she submitted late would be assessed, the policy was clear in that this was not the case. However, we noted that consideration of her appeal had taken much longer than the published timescales and, as a result, we upheld this aspect of the complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the university:

- write to Ms C to apologise for the time taken to consider her appeal; and
- remind staff that all appeals should be dealt with within the published timescales.