

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507495, Queen Margaret University
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: academic appeal/exam results/degree classification
Decision: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his daughter (Miss A), who was a third year student at the university. At the end of the year, Miss A received her final results, which showed that she had not submitted several assignments. Miss A queried this with the school office as she said she had submitted the work electronically. However, the university could find no record of this, and they told Miss A she had to withdraw from the course. Miss A appealed against this decision but the appeal was not upheld. Miss A appealed again and provided copies of the missing assignments. While the university marked some of these, they did not uphold Miss A's appeal.

Mr C complained about the conduct of the appeals process, and that Miss A had not been notified earlier about the non-submissions. He said the university gave Miss A unhelpful advice on what to include in her appeal, which meant that one of her papers was not marked. He was also unhappy that another paper was not marked (as the creation date of the electronic document was after the due date). He said Miss A had previously provided evidence of the correct creation date (in hard copy), but the university lost this. Mr C said the university should have provided more support to Miss A in making her appeal and kept her updated throughout the process.

After investigating these issues, we did not uphold Mr C's complaints. We found that the university had provided appropriate support and advice, and kept Miss A updated throughout the process. We considered the university's reasons for not marking two of the papers were adequate, as one of the papers was not included in the appeal, and there was no evidence the other was created before the due date. We also found the university had no duty to notify Miss A of non-submissions as their policies and guidance made it clear that students were responsible for submitting all work in hard copy and electronic format. However, we found that a member of staff gave Mr C inaccurate information about this and we recommended that the university apologise for this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the university:

- apologise to Mr C for giving him incorrect information.