

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201507832, West College Scotland  
**Sector:** further and higher education  
**Subject:** policy/administration  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C complained about the college's administration of the distance-learning maths course she applied to. We found that Miss C was only contacted by the college regarding the fee waiver evidence that was required for enrolment on the course the day after the course started. We noted that this delay meant that Miss C did not receive her course materials on time and was not allocated a tutor at the appropriate time. We were satisfied that, once enrolled, Miss C received an appropriate level of support from her tutor and we noted that the college had offered a free place on an equivalent maths course in response to her complaint. We considered that this was reasonable. However, we were critical of the college's processing of the application and considered that staff should have contacted Miss C regarding the evidence needed within good time of the course start date. We upheld Miss C's complaint.

Miss C also raised concerns about the college's handling of her complaint and said that the college had exceeded its target timescales in responding to her complaint. We noted that the college had exceeded the investigation target, but we were satisfied that the college had a good reason for this as it was not able to speak to relevant staff during the summer holiday period. The college told us that they had not contacted Miss C at the appropriate time to explain the delay and agree a revised timescale. They also told us that they had introduced a new audit process to prevent this happening again. We upheld this aspect of Miss C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the college:

- review the reasons for the delay identified in contacting Miss C about her fee waiver evidence, with a view to preventing this from happening again; and
- provide us with evidence of the audit process, regarding sending holding letters, that has been introduced.