

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507991, North East Scotland College
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: admissions
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her son (Mr A) who was a student at the college. Mr A was offered a place on a course, which he accepted. He was later withdrawn from the course after attending for two weeks because his qualifications did not meet the course entry requirements.

Mrs C told us the college had failed to properly investigate her complaint about the offer Mr A received. We found that the college had failed to take reasonable care at application stage and/or at interview to check Mr A met the course entry requirements before offering him a place. We also found that in responding to the complaint, the college had held Mr A responsible for providing inaccurate information during the application process when this was not the case. We therefore upheld this complaint.

Mrs C also said the college had not reasonably assessed and met Mr A's additional support needs during a previous academic session. We found that a needs assessment was in place and had been shared with appropriate staff. We found no evidence that Mr A had asked for support that was not provided, or at least considered by the college. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the college:

- apologise to Mr A for the error in checking his qualifications, and for an error in responding to the complaint, specifically for suggesting, wrongly, that he had provided inaccurate information;
- remind staff of the importance of checking qualifications at application/ interview stage before making place offers; and
- proceed to make a goodwill payment, as discussed during the period of our investigation.