

SPSO decision report

Case: 201601715, City Of Glasgow College
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: communication staff attitude dignity and confidentiality
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C attended a course at the college. There were verbal interactions between Mr C and his tutor over the course of two tutorials. Subsequently, the college suspended Mr C and instituted a disciplinary process against him. The disciplinary process made no findings against Mr C. Mr C complained about the actions of his tutor, which were also investigated by the college.

In investigating Mr C's complaints, we reviewed the material Mr C and the college provided, as well as the relevant policies. Mr C made four complaints about the college, of which we upheld three.

Mr C complained that the college's tutor acted unprofessionally towards him at the tutorials. We found that there were opposing views on what occurred at the two tutorials. We considered there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the tutor acted unprofessionally, and did not uphold this complaint.

Mr C said that at the first tutorial he was not provided with written material on yellow paper (as required under his personal learning support plan). The college acknowledged this was not provided, and we upheld Mr C's complaint in this regard.

Mr C raised a number of concerns about the way the college brought and handled the disciplinary investigation against him. We had concerns about delays in the disciplinary process, the procedure followed, and the decision to immediately suspend Mr C. Therefore, we upheld Mr C's complaint on this point.

Mr C said the college's complaints process was unreasonable. We found that while the college had taken interviews as part of this process, their investigating officer did not consider transcripts previously obtained during the disciplinary process. We considered that this evidence should have been taken into account. We upheld Mr C's complaint in this respect.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for the failings in the disciplinary process and the failings in the complaints process. This apology should comply with SPSO guidelines on making an apology, available at www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Staff should be aware of the requirements of the student disciplinary procedure.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Complaints investigation staff should consider the transcripts of disciplinary processes as evidence when dealing with complaints.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.