

SPSO decision report

Case: 201604681, University of Aberdeen
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: academic appeal/exam results/degree classification
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained that the university failed to follow the correct procedures when assessing her exam. She was also unhappy that when she requested a copy of their standard operating procedure (SOP) for the assessment of the exam they provided the incorrect document. She also complained that they failed to consider her appeal in line with their appeals process.

We found that the university should have provided the SOP when this was requested. We also noted that they failed to arrange an appeal hearing within the timescale required by their appeals process. As a result, we upheld these elements of the complaint.

We did not find failings in the way Ms C's exam was assessed and did not uphold this element of her complaint. We did accept that the SOP was open to interpretation and we suggested to the university that they give consideration to reviewing this document to provide greater clarity.

Recommendations

We recommended that the university:

- write to Ms C to apologise for the initial failure to provide her with the correct documentation she requested;
- ensure that staff know how to respond to a freedom of information request; and
- write to Ms C to apologise for the delay in arranging the panel hearing.