

SPSO decision report

Case: 201608305, University of Glasgow
Sector: universities
Subject: policy/administration
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C was a student on a placement at an organisation outside the university. He felt that he was bullied by staff at the organisation where he was on placement and complained to the external organisation. They investigated, and found that Mr C had been mistreated while on placement. Mr C was unhappy with the university's role in what happened and complained to them. Mr C remained unhappy and brought his complaints to us. He complained to us that the university had failed to follow their Dignity at Work & Study Policy and Procedure during his placement, that they had unreasonably provided incorrect information to the external organisation about his reports of mistreatment during placement, and that the university had handed his complaint in an unreasonable way.

We found that the university's Dignity at Work & Study Policy and Procedure outlined what a student or university staff member should do if they thought they were being subjected to bullying by students, members of university staff, or contractors and suppliers. It did not include a specific provision for students on placement who thought they were being subjected to bullying by a member of staff employed by the placement provider. Given this, we found that the policy did not apply in Mr C's circumstances and we did not uphold this part of the complaint.

We found that information about Mr C's reports of mistreatment was provided by the university to the external organisation in a phone call. Given this, we could not prove exactly what was discussed and whether the information was incorrect. Therefore, we did not uphold the complaint.

We found that the university's investigation report on Mr C's complaint was a reasonable reflection of the relevant evidence from him, university staff, and the external organisation. The report responded to each of the main points of Mr C's complaint and reached reasonable conclusions on them. We therefore considered that the university had handled Mr C's complaint in a reasonable way and we did not uphold this part of the complaint. However, in their investigation report about the complaint, the university had made a number of recommendations. Given the importance of the university learning from complaints to improve their service, we requested that they send us evidence that these recommendations had been implemented.