

SPSO decision report

Case: 201701126, Ayrshire College
Sector: colleges
Subject: policy / administration
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C paid a small amount of his college course fees late in the academic year, while around 95% of the fees remained unpaid six weeks before the end of the course. At that point, the college told Mr C that he would have to pay the fees. When he failed to do so, the college passed the debt to a recovery agency. Mr C complained that the college unreasonably demanded that he pay his course fees and referred his debt to a recovery agency. He also complained about the college's handling of his complaint.

Mr C said that he had agreed a final payment plan with the college which they did not honour. We found that the college's record showed that Mr C made several different payment plans previously, but there was no evidence that he agreed the final payment plan. Mr C signed an enrolment form that committed him to abiding by college rules, being liable for payment of his course fees, and understanding that if he did not pay, the college would instruct a debt recovery agency to collect payment. Debt recovery information was also covered in the college's Student Fees and Debt Recovery Policy. The college gave Mr C several opportunities to pay until they passed his debt to the recovery agency.

In regards to complaints handling, we found that the college's response to Mr C's complaint referred to the evidence that they had gathered and provided him with a copy of this evidence where appropriate. The response dealt with the issues thoroughly and we found it to be reasonable.

We did not uphold Mr C's complaints.