

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201705948, University of Strathclyde  
**Sector:** Universities  
**Subject:** teaching and supervision  
**Decision:** Not upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that his postgraduate supervisors failed to follow relevant policy or procedure in relation to his supervision, and about the university's investigation of his complaint.

We found no evidence that Mr C's supervisors failed to follow relevant policy or procedure. Mr C was particularly concerned that, after his first three years of postgraduate study, the number of meetings with his supervisors reduced significantly. Mr C first raised this issue after failing his final assessment. We found no evidence that he complained about the reduction in meetings in the second three years of postgraduate study, during which the university recorded that he failed to make progress with his work or engage with his supervisors for about 18 months. In terms of the university's investigation of Mr C's complaint, we found that it was thorough and appropriate in the circumstances.

We did not uphold Mr C's complaints. However, we determined that the university's policy and code of practice for postgraduate students could be clearer on the level of supervision available in similar circumstances, and we made a recommendation to address this point.

### Recommendations

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

- Update the policy and code for postgraduate research study to explain the level of supervision a student could expect in their writing up phase and when not paying fees.

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.