

SPSO decision report

Case: 201706577, University of Edinburgh
Sector: universities
Subject: academic appeal / exam results / degree classification
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the outcome of two academic appeals.

We found that the university did not apologise for erroneously telling Mr C which section of the Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion of Studies he was being excluded under. We also found that the university's communication with Mr C, following a decision made by the Appeal Committee, was not sufficiently clear.

While the second appeal appeared to have been processed appropriately, it was not clear, even after further enquiries of the university, what had happened following Mr C's first appeal. For this reason we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for an error with regards to the section of the procedure under which he was excluded from his studies, and for the lack of clarity in relation to the appeals process and decisions following the Appeal Committee's decision. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

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

- The university should a) conduct an independent review of how the College Postgraduate Studies Committee's process and decision, following the Appeal Committee's decision, was communicated to Mr C and b) how the process and decision was subsequently explained.

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.