

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201808623, Queen Margaret University  
**Sector:** Universities  
**Subject:** Special needs - assessment and provision  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C had enrolled on two short courses run by Queen Margaret University. They made a number of complaints to us about the action taken by the university in relation to adjustments that they requested for disabilities that affected the way they worked.

C complained that the university did not initially provide them with reasonable support for the courses. We were satisfied that the university sought to make reasonable adjustments for C and that they demonstrably took account of C's input when preparing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). We did not uphold this complaint.

C also complained that the university then unreasonably failed to provide the support that was agreed. We found that there had been a delay in providing C with a USB stick that the university had committed to provide them with and we upheld this complaint.

We also found that there was no evidence of communication with C when their disability adviser was absent and that the Head of Student Services had failed to respond to C's contact. We upheld C's complaints about these matters.

We also upheld C's complaint that the university had failed to provide a note taker for a course. Although the equality legislation recognises that there can be more than one way to address an assessed need, in this case, the alternative arrangements did not run smoothly and did not address the matter within a reasonable timescale. We also upheld a complaint that the university had failed to provide a transcript of the course as previously agreed with C.

We did not uphold C's complaint that a lecturer had failed to respond to their contact about the course or their complaint that the university failed to deal with their complaint effectively.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for these failings. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets).

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

- The university should ensure that any agreed adjustments are provided within reasonable timescales.
- The university should ensure that staff reasonably communicate with students who contact them.

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.