

SPSO decision report

Case: 201905097, Glasgow School of Art
Sector: Universities
Subject: Teaching and supervision
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C applied for a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) programme. One of the key features of a CDA is the opportunity to work with an industry partner (IP) as well as academic staff. C complained that their supervision had been flawed and that there had been a lack of engagement with the IP. They also complained about how their complaint was handled.

We considered the information both C and Glasgow School of Art (GSA) provided in support of the complaint. We found that C had regular supervision meetings which were documented as required. There is also evidence that C's supervisors were readily available by email and responded promptly to C's contacts. However, according to associated guidance from the Arts and Humanities Research Council Training Grant Funding Guide and their guide on CDAs, GSA should have set out the structure of the collaboration and the expectations of those involved. They did not define what a CDA is or the expectations of the IP and student. The student did not receive an induction at the IP's business address nor was a supervisor appointed at the IP. We upheld this complaint.

We were satisfied GSA had provided a reasonable response to C's complaint, which was about a number of different issues as well as supervision, and did not uphold that complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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.