

SPSO decision report

Case: 201300641, University of Glasgow
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: academic appeal/exam results/degree classification
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who was studying for a PhD (an advanced degree course), began his studies in 2006 and after some problems with his research was told by the university that his progress was unsatisfactory. He appealed that decision in 2009 and the university decided to allow him to continue his studies under certain conditions. These included weekly supervisory meetings, the production of a detailed plan for his PhD submission and quarterly reviews with his supervisors and an independent person. At a review meeting in July 2011 Mr C was again told that his progress was unsatisfactory. He lodged an appeal in September 2011 and following decisions by both a college appeals committee and a senate appeals committee his appeal was dismissed in November 2012.

Mr C then complained to us. Our investigation focused only on the appeals process from July 2011. This was because the earlier process was out of time for us to investigate, and the academic decisions were outwith our jurisdiction.

Mr C complained that the university's examination of his appeal in 2012 was unreasonable, and that they failed to deal with his appeal within the timescales set by their own procedures. Our investigation found, however, that the university had considered all the relevant evidence provided, including information provided by Mr C about his health and adverse personal circumstances. We also found that, although the appeals process was not completed within the timescales set within the university's procedures, there were no unavoidable delays and where delays occurred, Mr C was kept informed.