

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201401042, New College Lanarkshire  
**Sector:** further and higher education  
**Subject:** special needs - assessment and provision  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C was a college student, studying for a degree offered by a university in collaboration with the college. Mr C complained that the college did not provide him with support on the day of his final degree exam, as had been agreed. Mr C was also unhappy with how they dealt with his complaint.

Mr C said a college tutor told him they should meet up 15 minutes before the exam, so the tutor could tell him where the exam was being held. The tutor said they did not make this arrangement. We did not find any written evidence that the arrangement had been made. In any event, Mr C found the exam room on time, and during the exam was provided with the support that had been agreed with the college. We, therefore, did not uphold this complaint.

We found that the college carried out a thorough investigation of Mr C's complaint. However, their letter to him did not deal with the specific issues he raised and did not explain why they decided not to uphold his complaint. This is not good practice, and not in keeping with the model procedure developed by our Complaints Standards Authority. In addition, the college did not explain to Mr C that they were dealing with his complaint at stage two of their procedure. Therefore, we upheld this complaint.

We also found, as the college did during their investigation, that there was a lack of clarity about telling students where their exams were being held, and so we made a recommendation to deal with this issue.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the college:

- revise their procedures to ensure that all students on the collaborative programme receive information, from a specified source, about the location of their examinations in good time, in line with the university's expectations;
- provide us with a copy of their further guidance for staff on more formality in relation to email responses; and
- remind relevant staff that complaint responses must be in line with the model complaints handling procedure.