

SPSO decision report



Case: 202201457, University of Glasgow
Sector: Universities
Subject: Policy / administration
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the university's handling of an investigation into allegations made against them and their subsequent complaint about the matter. The allegation against C was investigated by the university's sports association and upheld. The matter was then passed to the university's student conduct team for consideration as to whether any further sanctions should be applied. C complained about the processes followed by the sports association. C also complained about the processes followed and the delays incurred during the university's conduct investigation.

We considered C's complaint that the university's investigation into the allegations made against C were unreasonable. During our investigation, we found that C had not requested an appeal of the university's decision. In order for this office to investigate a complaint about an appeal, the student or their representative must first have completed the organisation's appeals procedure before bringing their complaint to us. As C had not done this, our investigation was limited to considering whether the university had informed C of their right to appeal and provided them with information on how to do so. We found that the university had reasonably informed C of their right to appeal. Therefore, we did not uphold this part of C's complaint.

We also considered whether the university's investigation of C's complaint was unreasonable. We found that it was reasonable for the university not to consider C's complaint about the sports association. As an autonomous external body, it is not covered by the complaints procedure. In relation to the university's handling of C's complaint about the university's code of student conduct investigation, we found that there were significant delays to the completion of the complaint investigation. We also found that the university did not reasonably provide C with updates regarding the progress of the complaint investigation, with this only being forthcoming in response to the enquiries made by C. Therefore, we upheld this part of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the unreasonable delays by the university to investigate the complaint. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Complainants should be advised prior to the response deadline if the 20 working day target cannot be met. Information should be given about the reason for the delay and revised anticipated date of completion should be provided.

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.