

Savings account with bonus interest programme

Topic: **Account / savings book** Case number: **2020/01**

The client had a savings account with the bank with a bonus interest programme. If she made deposits of at least CHF 5'000 per calendar year, she received a preferential interest rate on the entire savings balance in the account. In 2019, she did not receive any such a preferential interest payment, even though she had made deposits of CHF 5'000. It turned out that the amount of CHF 0.85 had been deducted from her deposits for the letter postage, which was used to send the year-end statement. In previous years, she had not been charged for the postage as a gesture of goodwill. The bank took the view that the client had narrowly failed to meet the conditions for the preferential interest rate in the calendar year in question and refused to make concessions. The client then submitted the case to the Ombudsman. After the Ombudsman contacted the bank, it immediately relented and credited the preferential interest rate to the client.

In the case at hand, the client had not reached the minimum amount required to reach the limit for the preferential interest rate solely because a negligible amount of CHF 0.85 for the postage of the year-end statement had been deducted from the deposits. The bank explained that it had accommodatingly not taken the postage into account for the calculation of the minimum amount in previous years, but had changed this practice with effect from the calendar year 2019. For the Ombudsman, the precise conditions for the bonus interest programme were essential to know. He requested a copy of these conditions from the bank and asked it whether the change in practice regarding the letter postage had been communicated to customers so that they could have adjusted accordingly by increasing their deposits to reach the minimum amount. He indicated to the bank that he considered their attitude problematic if such communication had not been made.

The bank did not submit the account terms to the Ombudsman, but immediately credited the client with the preferential interest rate without giving reasons for the change in its position. He was therefore able to close the case with a positive outcome for the client.