



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



Revocation of Awards Procedure



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Purpose

1. This procedure outlines the principles and processes for revoking academic awards conferred by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). This ensures that the University maintains the integrity and credibility of its academic qualifications and aligns with sector-wide best practices.
2. The procedure establishes a fair, transparent, and consistent approach to address cases where there is evidence of academic misconduct, administrative error, or other grounds constituting 'good cause' for revocation.

Applicability and Scope

- 3 This procedure applies to all academic awards conferred by BNU, including taught degrees, diplomas, and certificates, but excludes honorary titles granted by the Council.
4. In exceptional circumstances, the University may revoke and reissue, or revoke in its entirety a conferred degree, diploma, certificate, or other academic award if at any time it is discovered and proved to the satisfaction of the University that there is compelling evidence of 'good cause' to do so.
5. 'Good cause' includes, but is not limited to:
 - A significant administrative error was identified in the awarding process, contrary to the regulations and procedures established by the Boards of Examiners.
 - The identification of gross academic misconduct committed during the period of registration leading to an award, including but not limited to plagiarism, collusion, or cheating.
 - A serious breach of integrity or ethics in connection with academic research undertaken during the registration period, such as data fabrication, falsification, or any other form of research misconduct.
 - The submission of falsified or fraudulent documentation or intentional misrepresentation associated with the award, whether occurring before, during, or after the registration period for the award.
 - Actions or behaviours amounting to serious professional misconduct, as defined by University policies or by standards established by relevant Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies, whether committed before, during or after the period of registration associated with the award.
6. This procedure applies to all individuals holding BNU awards, including current and former students whether taught at BNU or delivered by one or more of the University's partners.
7. The University would not normally revoke an award posthumously unless the reputational risk to the University was considered significant.

Preliminary Consideration

8. If a report or evidence emerges suggesting a potential case for revoking an award, the matter, along with the supporting evidence, shall be referred to the Vice-Chancellor for consideration. The Vice-Chancellor, or nominated representative, in consultation with the Registrar, will assess the validity of the allegation and may:
 - Dismiss the case if unfounded, for example, if the concern reported is malicious, vexatious or has insufficient evidence to warrant a formal investigation.
 - Refer cases involving academic misconduct or administrative errors to the Academic Registry.
 - Request additional information from relevant parties and initiate a formal investigation.

Formal Investigation

9. If preliminary considerations suggest 'good cause', the Vice-Chancellor will refer the matter to the Revocation Panel ('the Panel') to conduct a formal investigation.
10. The Panel will comprise:
 - Registrar or appropriate representative appointed from Senate (Chair).
 - Two senior members of academic or professional services staff.
 - A Students' Union Sabbatical Officer.
 - A Secretary appointed by the Academic Registrar.
11. The Panel will consider all relevant matters and circumstances to determine an appropriate outcome. It may appoint an Investigating Officer to conduct a formal investigation on its behalf who will prepare a report setting out its findings for consideration by the Panel.
12. The Panel will take reasonable action to inform the individual concerned ('the Respondent') of the investigation and the specific allegations. The Respondent will be invited to submit a written response and/or appear before the Panel. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the Respondent has at least ten working days' notification of the Panel details.
13. A Panel may proceed with the absence of the Respondent if the Panel is satisfied that all reasonable attempts have been made to contact them without success, or if the Respondent has refused to attend.
14. In certain extreme circumstances, for example in cases of high-profile incidents in the public domain, a Panel may proceed with a revocation without directly contacting the Respondent.

Revocation Panel Proceedings

15. A Revocation Panel will be scheduled to take place as required.
16. The Panel will review all pertinent evidence including, but not limited to:
 - Documentation relating to the original award.
 - Details of the alleged misconduct or error.
 - The Respondent's submission(s).
17. The Respondent has the right to:
 - Present evidence, arguments, and mitigating circumstances to the Panel.
 - Be accompanied by a non-legal supporter or representative during any meetings with the Panel, who may speak on behalf of the Respondent with the agreement of the Chair. See the section below 'Support and Representation' for definitions.
18. The Panel will determine, based on the balance of probability, whether there is 'good cause' for revocation.
19. The Panel's decision will be documented in a written report, including findings and recommendations, and submitted to the Senate for consideration and approval.

Decision by Senate

20. Senate will review the Panel's report and may:
 - Approve the recommendation for revocation.
 - Reject the recommendation.
 - Request further investigation or clarification.
21. Decisions may be made at a scheduled Senate meeting, an extraordinary meeting convened for this purpose, or via Chair's action by the Vice-Chancellor, with any such action reported to the Senate at its next meeting.
22. The Panel will take all reasonable attempts to inform the Respondent, usually within ten working days of the Senate's decision, including reasons and any actions required.
23. When a decision is made by Senate to revoke an award entirely or to revoke and reissue an alternative award, the relevant Boards of Examiners will formally confer the revised award either by chair's action or an appropriately convened Board.

Support and Representation

24. Respondents are entitled to be accompanied by another person to act as a supporter or as a representative.
- A **supporter** is defined as 'a friend or another supporting person', attending the meeting to provide moral and emotional assistance. A supporter is not expected to speak or take any formal part in the proceedings without prior agreement from the Chair. A supporter may be, for example, another student, a member of staff, a family member, or a Students' Union Adviser.
 - A **representative** is defined as a person authorised to act as an advocate of the respondent. A representative has the right to speak and question witnesses on behalf of the respondent and would be expected to present the student's case if required, though it is preferred that the respondent make any statements regarding the case themselves. This role is normally fulfilled by a member of the Students' Union Advice Centre.
25. When responding to the invitation to attend the Panel, the respondent should state if they are to be accompanied to the meeting and in what capacity.

Right to Appeal

26. The Respondent has the right to appeal the decision within ten working days of notification. Requests for an appeal will only be accepted on the following grounds:
- Procedural irregularities.
 - New evidence not previously available at the time of the Panel.
 - Perceived bias or unfairness in the process.
27. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Clerk to Council, who will appoint a member of the senior executive team (University Strategy Group) to conduct a review. Reviewers will be asked to consider whether:
- To uphold the original decision.
 - Recommend a re-investigation.
28. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the Respondent, and the decision is final. It is expected that reviews will be completed within ten working days of receipt.

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

29. All proceedings will be conducted with strict confidentiality.
30. Records of the investigation and decisions will be maintained securely in accordance with the University's data protection and retention policies.

Return of Award Documentation and External Reporting

31. If an award is revoked, the individual is required to return any physical certificates or documentation related to the award to the University within twenty working days of notification. The original certificate will be rendered invalid, and all records of the award will be removed from the University's system.
32. If the award classification is altered, or a lower award is conferred, a new valid certificate will be issued once the original revoked certificate is returned. The new certificate will retain the original award date. The award holder will be informed of the consequences of continuing to use the revoked or reissued award.
33. The University will report the revocation to relevant external bodies, professional associations, or regulatory agencies as appropriate. Where there is believed to be a potential safeguarding risk, for example in the cases of Nurses or other health professionals, the University should inform the employer.
34. Upon revocation or reissue, the Academic Registry will immediately update the University's Student Record System, replacing the original record and noting the reason for the amendment.

Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

As a university, we are committed to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We have a legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical obligation to ensure our policies, systems and processes are fair, inclusive and ensure every member of the BNU community can thrive.

Whilst we all have protected characteristics, we know there are certain characteristics and communities that are marginalised and underrepresented in Higher Education and the workplace. These are: different ethnicities (including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) Disabled individuals; neurodiverse individuals; pregnancy (including maternity and paternity impact); the LGBT+ community; carers; people of different faiths; people impacted by menopause and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers. We also know individuals have multiple intersectional experiences and different points in their lives and careers.

1. With reference to the above characteristics, in what ways does this policy enhance equality and the access of opportunity at BNU?

The policy ensures fairness and transparency by applying a clear, consistent process for all individuals, regardless of background. It upholds academic and professional integrity, protecting the value of qualifications for all students, including those from underrepresented groups. The policy also provides due process, allowing individuals to respond to concerns before a final decision is made.

2. In what ways does the policy adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented communities?

There is a potential risk that individuals from underrepresented backgrounds may be disproportionately affected due to systemic barriers in education, such as unconscious bias or lack of access to academic support. To mitigate this, the policy must be applied fairly, with consideration given to individual circumstances, including disabilities, neurodiversity, and socio-economic challenges. Clear communication and accessible support throughout the process can help reduce unintended negative impacts.

3. How does this proposal work towards achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the [Equality Strategy 2023-2028](#)? Please signpost objectives and actions in the BNU Equality Strategy.

The policy aligns with BNU's commitment to fairness, accountability, and inclusivity by ensuring decisions are made objectively and without discrimination. It supports the university's objectives to uphold integrity in academic and professional standards while considering individual circumstances. To further support EDI goals, the policy ensures accessible guidance, reasonable adjustments, and support for individuals from marginalised backgrounds throughout the process.

Signed:

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Date: 14th January 2026



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