

Revocation of awards policy and procedures

1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the arrangements which will be followed where the University College has cause to consider the revocation of an award (whether a degree, diploma, certificate or award of credit) which has been conferred on a former student of the University College by the relevant Assessment Board acting on the delegated authority of Academic Board. It does not apply to the revocation of Honorary Awards or AECC Fellowships awarded before 2018; this is covered by a separate process.
- 1.2 The University College is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities, religious or political beliefs. All complaints will be considered on their merits and in accordance with the Dignity Diversity and Equality Policy. Where a student or staff member working with this policy has specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 all endeavours will be made to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings and facilities to accommodate their needs.
- 1.3 Under this policy and associated procedures any University College role or officeholder may act through their appointed nominee.
- 1.4 Academic Board may not delegate its power of revocation to any individual or committee.

2. Conferment of awards

- 2.1 Awards of degrees, diplomas and certificates of the University College are made by the relevant Assessment Board acting on the delegated authority of Academic Board. Assessment Boards review student achievement and individual student results in accordance with the assessment regulations and confer awards of the University College upon those who have fulfilled the learning outcomes of an approved course and achieved the standards required for an award.

3. Revocation of Awards

- 3.1 The University College, with the approval of Academic Board, may revoke and reissue, or revoke in its entirety, any degree, diploma or certificate awarded by the University College if at any time it is discovered and proved to the satisfaction of the University College that there is good cause to do so. Good cause includes, but is not limited to
 - the discovery, subsequent to the approval of the award, of serious academic or research misconduct (including fraud or deception) in work submitted for the qualification.
 - serious professional misconduct committed during the period of registration for the award that come to light after the award is made which if known at the time, would have meant that the award would not have been made.
 - identification of an administrative error or irregularity in making the award under the University College's assessment regulations or serious irregularities in the conduct of the Assessment Board
 - that the award holder has not met the requirements of the award conferred
 - where other circumstances come to light after the award is made which if known at the time, would have meant that the award would not have been made.

4. Procedure for investigating a case for revoking an award

- 4.1 Where a report or evidence comes to light indicating that there may be a case for revoking an award the matter will be passed to the Academic Registrar, as Secretary of Academic Board, for further investigation.
- 4.2 Where the Academic Registrar determines that the concern reported is vexatious, malicious or has insufficient substance to warrant substantive consideration, the Academic Registrar may dismiss the concern at any time.
- 4.3 If in the Academic Registrar's judgement there is a prime facie case to answer, they will arrange for the

establishment of an Investigating Panel the membership of which will be approved by the Chair of Academic Board. The membership of the Panel will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the claim or allegation, but will normally be Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and will not include any of the Examiners who which made the original recommendation for the award. The Academic Registrar will act as Secretary, and will arrange for a written record of the proceedings.

- 4.4 Where the Chair of Academic Board considers it appropriate given the circumstances of the case, the Panel membership may include an external academic or professional expert, normally in the relevant field.
- 4.5 The Panel will undertake such inquiry as it considers relevant and appropriate in the circumstances to consider and determine the matter. It will determine its own operating procedures on a case-by-case basis, in the light of the particular circumstances of the case, except that:
 - The award holder shall have an opportunity to respond to allegations and submit evidence. The award holder shall be given 10 working days to submit information, or they can request additional time and provide an explanation of the reason for the delay.
 - If it is decided to hold a meeting as part of the investigation, the award holder will be given the opportunity to answer allegations in person before the Panel and to put their case. The award holder may be accompanied at any meeting by another person of his or her choice, for support or representation as appropriate. Neither the award holder nor the University College will normally be permitted to be represented in person by a legal practitioner at any hearing or meeting held under this Policy. Whether any such legal representation will be permitted will be at the reasonable discretion of the Chair of Academic Board.
The Academic Registrar will take reasonable steps to provide the award holder with at least ten working days' written notice of the date, time and place of the meeting, the nature of the concern raised and the information in support of the concern, and details of the proposed schedule of proceedings to be adopted at the meeting. However, where such reasonable steps have been taken, the meeting may proceed in the award holder's absence.
- 4.6 Under this Policy the balance of probabilities shall be the test applied in determining whether or not a concern is sustained.
- 4.7 **Revocation of award and issuing of amended classification:** the Investigating Panel may conclude that it is appropriate to recommend an alteration in the award classification, or the award of a different exit award. No such recommendation may be made without discussion with the current external examiner(s) for the course concerned and the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board (or in the event that the course is no longer running, with external examiners and the Chair of Assessment Board for the closest cognate course).
- 4.8 The written report of the Investigating Panel's deliberations, and its recommendations, with a summary of the evidence considered should be submitted to the next meeting of Academic Board for consideration.
- 4.9 Academic Board will make a determination in the case, including a decision to revoke the degree, diploma or certificate if warranted. In reaching its decision Academic Board will consider, but need not be bound by, the recommendations submitted by the Investigating Panel.
- 4.10 Academic Board may not approve a recommendation for revocation unless not fewer than two thirds of the members of the Board are present and voting vote in favour of it.
- 4.11 In the event that Academic Board concludes that the award should be revoked, the Academic Registrar will notify the award holder of the decision of Academic Board, in writing.
- 4.12 In the event that Academic Board concludes there is no case to answer, all records of the allegation and any subsequent investigation shall be destroyed and the Academic Registrar shall confirm to the award holder that this has been done.
- 4.13 Where an award is revoked, the Academic Registrar will write to the award holder to confirm that the award has been revoked, and the reasons for the decision, and will require that the Award Certificate is returned to the University College within 10 working days. If the decision of Academic Board is that the award classification be altered, a revised certificate will be issued on return of the original certificate. The new certificate will be dated the same as the original. The award holder shall also be advised of the consequences of continuing to use the award following revocation.

4.14 The award holder will be sent a Completion of Procedures letter and Registry will immediately amend the Student Records System.

5. **Right of Appeal**

5.1 There is no right of appeal within the University College against the determination of Academic Board to revoke a qualification, as this is a matter of academic judgement. The issuing of the letter from the Academic Registrar completes the University College's internal process.

5.2 **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA):** A person dissatisfied with the outcome of the case decided upon by Academic Board may be able to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, provided that their complaint is eligible under its rules.

6. **Awards made through Educational Partnerships**

6.1 If the award holder in question holds a degree, diploma or certificate relating to a course delivered under an educational partnership for which the University College is the awarding body the provisions within this policy will apply. Relevant staff at the partner institution (as appropriate to the case and to the nature of the partnership) must be involved in any investigation.

6.2 For awards where the University College is not the awarding body the equivalent policy and procedures for the awarding body will normally apply.

6.3 Procedures for awards made jointly with other institutions will be detailed in the formal agreement between the two institutions.

7. **Access to and Disclosure of Information**

7.1 Award holders who are subject to the provisions of this policy will be entitled to apply for access to personal data in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University College under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and other legislation. Applications should be made in writing to the Academic Registrar.

7.2 All information collected under the requirements of this policy/procedure will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. For further information please refer to the student privacy notice.

7.3 Where the award that has been revoked relates to a course which is accredited by a professional, regulatory or statutory body, the University College will disclose the outcomes of action under this policy and/or information ascertained through this process to the relevant bodies. There may also be circumstances in which disclosures may have to be made to other parties.

8. **Onward reporting**

8.1 Any decision by Academic Board to revoke a degree, diploma or certificate must be reported to the next meeting of the Board of Governors.

9. **Applicability**

9.1 Academic Board may revoke a degree, diploma or certificate under this policy even if the conferral occurred before this policy was approved.

Version:	1.0
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Reference source:	Examples from other institutions used as source material
Date approved:	30 June 2021
Effective from:	1 July 2021
Review date:	Spring 2024
Target:	All Staff, All students enrolled on AECC University College awards
Policy location:	VLE, SIP, public website
Equality impact	No direct impact. There is provision for reasonable adjustments to be made where required.