

# Procedure for the Withdrawal of Degrees, Awards and Distinctions

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This Procedure should be read in conjunction with [Senate Regulation 13](#).

## Preliminary Consideration

1. Concerns that there may be cause to consider the withdrawal of an award should be reported to the Secretary to Senate.
2. The Secretary to Senate, together with a senior member of Senate (normally a Provost, Vice-Provost, Vice-Dean or Professor), will consider the reported concern, making enquiries as appropriate. The Secretary to Senate may notify the alumnus of the concern, but is not obliged to interview them during the preliminary consideration.
3. If the Secretary to Senate determines that the concern is vexatious, malicious or unsubstantiated, they may dismiss it.
4. If the Secretary to Senate determines that the concern requires further consideration, they will refer the case to a Senate Panel. The Secretary to Senate will write a report detailing the concern and the reasons for its referral, which will be passed to the Senate Panel and the alumnus.

## Senate Panel

5. A Senate Panel will be appointed by the Chair of Senate and will normally comprise:
  - A Chair, who will be a member of Senate (normally a Vice-Provost);
  - One other academic staff member of Senate;
  - A student member of Senate who will be a sabbatical officer of the Union of Brunel Students; and
  - An expert in the relevant field, who may be internal or external to the University, if required.
6. Three Panel members must be in attendance in order for the Panel to be quorate, to include the Chair and student member. The Chair of Senate will also appoint a Secretary to the Senate Panel, who will convene and support the Panel.
7. Written notice of the Panel will be sent to the alumnus, together with the Panel membership, the name of the University representative attending (if applicable), the alumnus's right to be accompanied, and all documentary evidence at least 10 working days before the Senate Panel date. The student and the University representative will have the opportunity to provide a further statement for the Senate Panel's consideration. Any further statement, the names of any witnesses the alumnus wishes to call, and any concerns with the membership of the Senate Panel should be submitted to the Secretary to the Senate Panel 5 working days before its meeting.
8. The absence of the alumnus or the University representative will not prevent the Senate Panel from taking place nor invalidate the proceedings. In the event that the alumnus cannot attend for good reason, but wishes to be present, the Chair of the Senate Panel should consider an adjournment.

9. The Senate Panel shall consider the documentary evidence before it, and invite the alumnus and the University representative to respond to the concern, asking questions of both parties, as appropriate.
10. The Senate Panel will consider whether there is good cause to withdraw the award of the alumnus, and will consider any relevant mitigating factors when reaching their decision.
11. The decision of the Senate Panel will normally be communicated in writing by the Secretary to the Senate Panel, within 10 working days of its meeting. The outcome letter will also contain details of the right to appeal available under this Regulation.

### **Appeal Procedure**

12. If the alumnus is dissatisfied with the decision made by the Senate Panel, they should submit an appeal, within 20 working days of the date of the outcome letter, to the Secretary to Council. Appeals received after this deadline will only be accepted at the discretion of the Secretary to Council.
13. The appeal must be submitted electronically and with supporting evidence, where appropriate. If evidence is to follow, this must be stated, and should normally be submitted within a further 5 working days.
14. An alumnus may appeal on one or more of the following grounds only:
- a) That there is evidence that could not have been, or for good reason was not, made available to the Senate Panel;
  - b) That there is evidence of a procedural irregularity on the part of the University in considering the case, and that sufficient evidence remains that the appeal warrants further consideration;
  - c) That there is evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the Senate Panel;
  - d) That, giving due consideration to the documentation previously provided, the decision of the Senate Panel was unreasonable.
15. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Secretary to Council will, in consultation with a senior member of Senate (being a Provost, Vice-Provost, Vice-Dean or Professor), determine whether the ground(s) for appeal have been met. Where they have, an Appeal Panel will be convened; otherwise, the appeal will be dismissed. This decision will normally be communicated within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

### **Appeal Panel**

16. An Appeal Panel will be appointed by the Chair of Senate and will normally comprise:
- A Chair, who will be a member of Senate (normally the Provost or a Vice-Provost);
  - One other academic staff member of Senate;
  - A student member of Senate who shall be a sabbatical officer of the Union of Brunel Students; and
  - An expert in the relevant field, who may be internal or external to the University, if required.

**17.** Three Panel members must be in attendance in order for the Panel to be quorate, to include the Chair and student member. The Chair of Senate will also appoint a Secretary to the Appeal Panel, who will convene and support the Appeal Panel.

**18.** Written notice of the Panel will be sent to the alumnus, together with the Panel membership, the name of the Senate Panel representative attending (if applicable), the alumnus's right to be accompanied, and all documentary evidence at least 10 working days before the Appeal Panel date. The alumnus and the Senate Panel representative will have the opportunity to provide a further statement for the Appeal Panel's consideration, but will not be permitted to provide any further evidence. Any further statement, the names of any witnesses the alumnus wishes to call, and any concerns with the membership of the Appeal Panel should be submitted to the Secretary to the Appeal Panel 5 working days before its meeting.

**19.** The absence of the alumnus or of the Senate Panel representative will not prevent the Appeal Panel from taking place nor invalidate the proceedings. In the event that the alumnus cannot attend for good reason, but wishes to be present, the Chair of the Appeal Panel should consider an adjournment.

**20.** The Appeal Panel will consider the documentary evidence before it, and invite the alumnus and Senate Panel representative to respond to the appeal, asking questions of both parties, as appropriate.

**21.** The Appeal Panel will consider whether there is sufficient reason to challenge the decision of the Senate Panel and will either uphold the appeal (in whole or in part) or dismiss the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the Appeal Panel can set aside the decision of the Senate Panel and either replace it with one of its own, refer the case for fresh consideration by a new Senate Panel, or refer the case to the original Senate Panel for further consideration with commentary. If the appeal is dismissed, the outcome of the Senate Panel will stand.

**22.** The decision of the Appeal Panel shall normally be communicated in writing by the Secretary to the Appeal Panel, within 10 working days of its meeting.

**23.** The decision of the Secretary to Council and any subsequent Appeal Panel is final. There is no further right of appeal within the University.

### **Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

**24.** When all internal procedures are complete, the alumnus will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter, and may then request an independent review of their case by the OIA.

### **Reporting**

**25.** The decisions of Panels convened under this Regulation shall be reported to Senate annually.