

Regulations and Procedures for the Conferment of University Awards

2023-24

Issued by the Standards and Enhancement Office.

Technical updates of this document are undertaken on an annual basis to reflect changes to the University's organisational and management structures and to incorporate earlier, approved amendments to related policies, procedures and regulations.

This document relates to the current year. If you become aware of any previous versions that are available online please notify SEO@bolton.ac.uk so that action can be taken to remove the document(s).

REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE CONFERMENT OF UNIVERSITY AWARDS

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REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE CONFERMENT OF UNIVERSITY AWARDS

A. REGULATIONS

1. Awards

The University maintains a portfolio of awards approved by Senate which may be added to with the approval and authority of Senate.

2. Principles of conferment

- 2.1 Authority to approve and confer academic awards on behalf of the University resides with the University Senate. This authority may be delegated by Senate to named bodies or persons. No certificates, transcripts, records of achievement or similar may be legitimately issued in the University's name other than with the authority of Senate.
- 2.2 An academic award is deemed to be achieved by a student on the date that the final Assessment Board makes the decision that the student has satisfied the academic requirements to qualify for the award. This decision is made through authority delegated by Senate to the Assessment Board (or to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, which acts as the Assessment Board in respect of postgraduate research degrees). Such authority includes action taken by the chair or an authorised subcommittee of the respective Board subsequently on its behalf. It is therefore neither necessary nor standard practice for award lists to be presented to Senate for formal approval since sufficient authority is vested in the relevant Board through delegated powers from Senate.
- 2.3 The official date of the award recorded on the student record is, therefore, the day, month and year on which the respective final Assessment Board was satisfied that the student had reached the required standard. This date will still be used if the Assessment Board delegates to the chair or to an authorised subcommittee a decision which is made subsequent to the date of the Assessment Board. In the case of honorary awards, the date of the award is the date of the relevant Degree Congregation.
- 2.4 Academic awards are conferred on students in person or *in absentia* at the University Degree Congregation by the Vice Chancellor or their nominee, under delegated authority from Senate. Honorary awards are conferred on recipients according to the *Honorary Awards: Regulations and Procedures*.
- 2.5 Conferment of a University academic award is evidenced through a formal certificate provided to the student as confirmation that the award has been made, which is dated with the month and year that the final Assessment Board met and agreed the award or delegated a decision to its chair or to an authorised subcommittee. The certificate is normally supplemented by a transcript or similar record (e.g. a Higher Education Achievement Report – HEAR) setting out in greater detail the course or programme of study followed, the units taken, the credits awarded and the grades received (see section 11 below). For honorary awards, the award certificate records the month and year of the relevant Degree Congregation.
- 2.6 Students are considered to have exited their course or programme of study and completed their registration with the University once they have achieved their award.

Conferment under Collaborative Partnership Arrangements

- 2.7 Where the University makes an academic award with one or more collaborative partner organisations, the formal written collaborative agreement shall specify the regulations to be followed, having due regard to the University's requirements.
- 2.8 Where the University has authorised a collaborative partner organisation to operate a course or programme of study leading to an academic award of the University, conferment of awards shall in such cases be governed by these regulations and/or by such other regulations as may be agreed by Senate.
- 2.9 The University may from time to time be authorised to recommend students for, and possibly then to confer, the awards of other bodies. In some such cases the conferment regulations of the other bodies may apply; where such regulations do not exist or are silent on any specific point, University regulations shall be applied as far as is practicable.

3. Conditions for receipt of an Academic Award

- 3.1 An academic award will be conferred when the following conditions are satisfied:
- (a) the individual was a registered student of the University at the time of his or her assessment for an award, had satisfied the academic requirements to qualify for the award, and had met any other applicable requirements of the University and/or of any relevant collaborative partner organisation as specified in the relevant University and/or collaborative partner organisation terms, conditions and regulations;
 - (b) the details of that individual's legal full name, date of birth, gender, course or programme of study followed and the award to be conferred have been registered by the University;
 - (c) the award to be conferred is one approved by Senate under its degree awarding and academic powers as resulting from successful completion of the relevant course or programme of study;
 - (d) conferment of the award has been recommended by an Assessment Board, or delegated to its chair or an authorised subcommittee, convened, constituted and acting under regulations approved by Senate under its degree awarding and academic powers;
 - (e) the recommendation of the award has been signed as detailed elsewhere in these regulations, confirming that the assessments have been carried out in accordance with the University's requirements and that the recommendations have received the consent of the external examiners.

4. Exit Awards

- 4.1 Unless otherwise agreed by Senate in respect of specific courses (e.g. for courses leading to double awards), no student may receive more than one award for study on a course.
- 4.2 Students who do not go on (through academic failure or withdrawal) to achieve the final award for which they are registered may be awarded any other approved 'exit' award for which they have qualified and are eligible, provided the conditions specified in 3.1 above are met. Acceptance of such an award does not preclude subsequent registration in order to study for a higher award, subject to the University's normal admission procedures and regulations.

- 4.3 Exceptionally, students who are continuing to the final stage of a course or programme of study may apply individually to the appropriate officer in Student Data Management (or whatever is the responsible organisational unit) and request that an exit award is issued in recognition of their successful completion of a stage of their course or programme of study. Alternatively, at the time of programme approval or subsequently, an academic department may request that all students are issued with certificates in recognition of their successful completion of the appropriate stage of a course or programme of study. This information will be recorded on the University's course validation record and Student Data Management will be informed of the need to issue certificates in accordance with the awards lists emanating from Assessment Boards.
- 4.4 Once an award has been conferred, that qualification is normally not withdrawn if a higher qualification is subsequently achieved. However exit awards may not be claimed retrospectively once the final stage has been successfully completed.

5. Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

- 5.1 The definitions, circumstances and conditions under which a student may be recommended for an Aegrotat award, including posthumously, are described in the separate document: *Regulations and Procedures for the Award of Aegrotat Qualifications (including Posthumous Awards)*.

6. Rescinding an Award

- 6.1 In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for an academic award to be rescinded where approval or conferment has already occurred. This could arise for the following reasons:
- (a) if it should come to the attention of the chair of the Assessment Board after the Board had met that there had been a breach of regulations which would affect the final outcome of the assessment and of which the Board was not aware;
 - (b) if an error in recording the decisions of the Board remained undetected;
 - (c) other circumstances, for example:
 - irregularities in registration and enrolment procedures affecting individual students;
 - the outcome of investigations into academic misconduct by students;
 - material irregularity in the assessment procedures which is established after the Assessment Board has met;
 - the outcome of an academic appeal by students.
- 6.2 Any of these circumstances shall be brought to the attention of the chair of the Assessment Board who may consult with the Academic Registrar and/or with the appropriate officer in Student Data Management, as appropriate to the circumstances. Subject to their advice, the following action should be taken:

- (a) If it appears that a breach of regulations has taken place, all students affected by it should be informed that their awards are deferred and the Assessment Board should be reconvened to reconsider the results of the students involved.
 - (b) The views of at least one External Examiner should be considered by the reconvened Board. However in view of the commitments of External Examiners and the need to act with speed in such cases, the External Examiner(s) may be consulted separately by the chair of the Board and their opinion obtained in writing to be put before the Board.
 - (c) The decisions of the reconvened Board will be issued in the form of a new results list and letters will be sent on behalf of the chair of the Board to those student(s) whose results have been affected.
 - (d) If a recording error has taken place, the chair of the Assessment Board will inform all members of the Board and arrange for a corrected record to be issued as quickly as possible, writing individually to those student(s) affected.
- 6.3 The decision to rescind an honorary award will be governed by the *Honorary Awards: Regulations and Procedures*.

7. Responsibilities for Record-keeping

- 7.1 On behalf of the University, Student Data Management shall be responsible for the maintenance of the record of academic awards conferred by the University. The records shall include the full title of the award and the date it was conferred, together with the name (as shall be recorded on the certificate issued to the student), and date of birth and the registration number of the student. In the case of students granted an award of the University having studied at another institution, then the name of that institution shall also be present in the records, along with any additional information as shall from time-to-time be deemed necessary or appropriate.
- 7.2 The University shall maintain computerised course records and additional specifications and descriptors for each course or programme of study approved/re-approved under the University's validation and review procedures. It will be the responsibility of the Standards and Enhancement Office, in liaison with Student Data Management, to define and implement procedures for the creation and maintenance of these records and additional specifications and descriptors following the introduction of new courses or programmes of study or the review or amendment of existing ones.
- 7.3 Student Data Management (in liaison with the Research and Doctoral Division in the case of research students) will be responsible for maintaining the University's official student records from which information relating to the conferment of awards will be drawn.

8. Degree Congregations

Ceremonies

- 8.1 University of Bolton Degree Congregations are events at which academic or honorary awards are conferred on eligible recipients (whether in person or *in absentia*) and where recipients receive formal recognition of their award and congratulations from the University community.
- 8.2 Recipients of awards are invited by the Graduation Office to wear the academic dress for which they are eligible; all participants should comply with the relevant University policies, procedures and regulations, especially in respect of professional behaviour and dress code, and conform to any particular requirements of the ceremony.

Attendance

- 8.3 Only those whose eligibility for an award is finally confirmed and communicated to Student Data Management by the published deadline each year will be eligible to attend a particular ceremony (see Appendix 4 for possible exceptions). All those whose awards are finally confirmed after this deadline will be able to attend a subsequent ceremony.

B. PROCEDURES

9. Administration of Awards

- 9.1 The administrative procedures relating to the stages of action prior to the conferment of awards will be controlled by Student Data Management, in co-operation with Chairs of Assessment Boards, Academic Support Services, the Research and Doctoral Division and the Standards and Enhancement Office.
- 9.2 Academic Support Services (and/or the Research and Doctoral Division in the case of research students) will prepare results lists from the course and student information on the appropriate University Records.
- 9.3 For research degrees the results lists comprise the relevant examination forms, completed and signed by the examiners at the conclusion of the *viva voce* examination, as presented to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.
- 9.4 Prior to the presentation of results list to Assessment Boards, all data will be confirmed by Academic Support Services (and, for research degrees the Research and Doctoral Division), in collaboration with other staff as required. The checks carried out will ensure:
 - (a) That all and only relevant registered students are included on the results list for the Assessment Board at which they are to be presented (irrespective of whether or not they will actually receive an award).
 - (b) That there are no erroneously listed students.
 - (c) The names listed are full and correct
 - Full, last, family or surname;
 - first two forenames (in correct order);

- Student number.
- (d) Where anomalies are identified which require action, these are resolved before the relevant list is issued. Lists not requiring correction would be taken to the appropriate Assessment Board for the recording of results.
- 9.5 For each award title to be considered at any Assessment Board for taught programmes a Header Sheet will be completed by Academic Support Services from a template published by Student Data Management, stating the award, date and place of the meeting and the course/s on which the students are enrolled. The names of those present who are External Examiners and the Chair of the Assessment Board (or nominated representative) shall be entered and their signatures obtained at the end of the meeting where recorded results are decided. For research degrees the approved minutes of the meeting of the Board at which a student is recommended for an award serve as the annotated results list.
- 9.6 The chair of the Assessment Board (or their nominated representative) will ensure the accurate recording of results and the recommendations for awards on the appropriate results lists.
- 9.7 The results lists, annotated with the recommended results, will be used by Academic Support Services (or for research students by the Research and Doctoral Division) to enter the recommended results on the University's student records. When the recommended results have been entered lists of results are produced and crosschecked against the annotated results lists to ensure correctness.
- 9.8 Student Data Management will produce a conferment checking list of the successful candidates. This will be based upon the results list recommendations made by the Assessment Board as prepared by the Secretary of each Board immediately following the meeting.

10. The preparation and issue of award certificates

Format and content

- 10.1 The certificate available to a student will be under the title specified in the regulations for the programme on which he/she is registered.
- 10.2 It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that his/her name is correctly entered in University records at their first enrolment on the course, as the name first registered is the one which will ordinarily appear on the award certificate. If a student changes his/her name whilst registered for the award it is the responsibility of the student to notify Student Data Management of the change in writing, providing valid evidence acceptable to the University, e.g. deed poll, marriage certificate.
- 10.3 The name shown on the certificate will be the student's full name as registered on the date the award is made. A change of name after that date will **NOT** result in a change of name on the certificate, except in cases of a replacement certificate issued to recognise gender reassignment, as described in 10.16 below; it is otherwise for the student to keep evidence that he/she was previously known by the name on the certificate.

10.4 Unless the award is made by an external body, the certificate will be in the format approved by the Vice Chancellor or nominee on behalf of the University. Samples of the approved format and wording of certificates will be held by Student Data Management. Certificates will bear the signature of the Vice Chancellor. Certificates improperly issued or without correct signatures, or which have been amended after issue, are not valid.

10.5 The following will be recorded on the certificate pertaining to academic awards:

- (a) the name of the University;
- (b) the name of the student;
- (c) the award achieved, including any classification or grading if appropriate;
- (d) the title of the programme of study;
- (e) relevant endorsements, e.g. recognition by any professional, statutory or regulatory body;
- (e) the month and year in which the award is conferred.

Where an 'ordinary' degree (i.e. a degree without honours) is awarded, the certificate is not otherwise endorsed, except in respect of any collaborative or PSRB status where such endorsement has previously been approved.

10.6 A certificate provided in respect of an honorary award shall only record such details, notably on the purpose of the award, as are determined by the Vice Chancellor to be appropriate.

Timescale

10.7 All certificates will be produced as soon as is practicable following the Final Assessment Board date (or the date an appeal is resolved through a decision of the Assessment Board).

Recording and Despatching Certificates

10.8 All certificates will be stored within Student Data Management. Accurate systems for recording and filing certificates for issue/release will be in operation.

10.9 A strict certificate despatching procedure will be maintained. The standard procedure (see 10.10 and Appendix 4 for possible exceptions and note that the standard procedure may not apply in the case of collaborative partnership students) is for certificates to be posted directly to the student's recorded home address. Confirmation is required from international students of the address to which the certificate is to be posted.

10.10 Exceptionally and giving reasons acceptable to the appropriate officer in Student Data Management, a student may request of Student Data Management that their certificate be collected by a named representative; if agreed, then before release the certificate must be signed for by the student or the student's representative upon presentation of identification and written authority acceptable to the appropriate officer in Student Data Management.

Security

10.11 Until they are issued, all certificates will be filed and retained within a secure environment. The University does not currently issue certificates electronically and requests for such will be respectfully declined.

Duplicate Certificates

- 10.12 An application for a duplicate certificate must be directed through the institution and addressed to Student Data Management using the application form supplied.
- 10.13 Each duplicate certificate will be issued only with the consent of the appropriate officer in Student Data Management and each request will be dealt with on an individual basis.
- 10.14 Each duplicate certificate issued will be endorsed "**Duplicate**" and in all other respects will be identical to the certificate originally issued.
- 10.15 Duplicate certificates are only issued upon payment of the appropriate fee.

Replacement Certificates

- 10.16 In cases where alterations or amendments to names have taken place **after the date of award, replacement certificates will not normally be issued**, except in cases of gender reassignment, where a replacement certificate will be issued free of charge upon receipt of a written request accompanied by acceptable proof of the change of name, e.g. statutory declaration or deed poll. Otherwise, responsibility rests with the candidate himself/herself to prove that he/she was previously known under another name.
- 10.17 A quality checking procedure for award certificates will be carried out by Student Data Management staff under the supervision of the appropriate officer in Student Data Management. It is recognised that despite extensive checks, errors may still occasionally arise in the information printed on certificates, including names. Similarly, although great care is taken on the University's part, damage to certificates may sometimes occur in transit. Certificates requiring replacement due to incorrect information or because of damage should therefore be returned to the University for correction as soon as possible, normally at no cost to the student.
- 10.18 For a certificate to qualify as a replacement the original certificate must be normally returned to the University or acceptable proof of destruction provided to the appropriate officer in Student Data Management; otherwise the certificate issued will normally be a duplicate certificate and will be endorsed as such.

11. Transcripts

An official, final transcript or equivalent (e.g. Higher Education Achievement Report – HEAR) will be made available to eligible students (see Appendix 4 for possible exceptions), in the format currently agreed by the University. It will normally include:

- (a) Name of Student;
- (b) University Reference (Student Number);
- (c) HESA Reference;
- (d) Qualification Aim;
- (e) Classification or distinction, if any;
- (f) Programme of Study;
- (h) Award date;
- (i) The titles of the modules studied in each year of the programme, their academic levels, grades, marks and credits awarded.

12. Endorsements in respect of collaborative arrangements

Where the course or programme of study has been followed at a collaborative partner organisation, and unless the University agrees otherwise with the partner, the transcript will be endorsed with the name of the organisation, the location (and country if it is outside the UK) and the language of study and assessment if it was not English. In the case of postgraduate research degrees or other collaborative programmes where no transcript is issued, these endorsements will be recorded on the award certificate.

APPENDIX 1

Header Sheets to be used for the Preparation of Results Lists for Assessment Boards

A fully completed Header Sheet will be provided by Academic Support Services from a template produced by Student Data Management for each award title to be considered at an Assessment Board, with the following details included:

- (a) AWARD TITLE
- (b) SUBJECT FOR CONFERMENT (where relevant)
- (c) COURSE CODE/S
- (d) COURSE TITLE/S
- (e) THE MODE OF STUDY FOR EACH AWARD AT THE ASSESSMENT BOARD
FULL-TIME PART-TIME DISTANCE LEARNING
- (f) DATE OF ASSESSMENT BOARD AND PLACE HELD
 - 1. *The recommendations for Awards made at this Assessment Board meeting are in accordance with the approved regulations for the above validated course/s or programme/s of study.*
 - 2. *The signatures below are of the External Examiners who were present at the meeting of this Assessment Board and who concur with its recommendations.*
- (g) NAME AND SIGNATURE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS
 - 3. *The individual results on the list of named candidates as presented to and approved by this Assessment Board are a correct record of the recommendations made that relate to the above Awards.*
- (h) NAME AND SIGNATURE OF CHAIRPERSON
 - 4. *The proceedings of this Assessment Board complied with the current Academic Regulations of the University as determined by Senate.*

UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON

**THE CONFERMENT OF AWARDS 2022/23
HEADER SHEET FOR ASSESSMENT BOARD RESULTS LIST**

Course Title/s _____

Course Code/s _____

Award Title/s _____

Date of Assessment Board _____ **Place** _____

Mode of Study: Full Time / Part Time / Distance Learning

This is to certify that:-

1. The recommendations for Awards made at this Assessment Board meeting are in accordance with the approved regulations for the above validated course/s or programme/s of study.
2. The signatures below are of the External Examiner/s who were present at the meeting of this Assessment Board and who concur with its recommendations.

THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER(S)

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Present:** Y / N

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Present:** Y / N

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Present:** Y / N

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Present:** Y / N

This is to certify that:-

1. The individual results for the list of named candidates as presented to and approved by this Assessment Board are a correct record of the recommendations made that relate to the above Awards.
2. The proceedings of this Assessment Board complied with the current Academic Regulations of the University as determined by the Academic Board.

CHAIRPERSON _____ **Signature** _____

STUDENT DATA MANAGEMENT - ASSESSMENT AND AWARDS

Date Received _____ **Date Published** _____

APPENDIX 2

Procedure for the Recording of Student Names

Student results lists will always contain the following information:

- STUDENT NUMBER
- SURNAME
- FIRST TWO FORENAMES
- STUDENT STATUS

Names of Candidates

- i. The University will ensure that the names listed on the results lists are the full and correct surnames of the candidates, as recorded at first enrolment and set out correctly.
- ii. The University will not use initials/abbreviations/punctuation in the names for award lists and certificate production **EXCEPT** in cases where they have been legally adopted by the student.
- iii. The University will ensure that candidates have notified them of any such changes of name (eg. by marriage) and produced confirmatory legal evidence.
- iv. No change of name that has taken place later than the award date will be taken into account. Candidates are made aware of this and informed at enrolment that they cannot alter their names at will.
- v. A student will **NOT** be awarded a degree under a married name if they marry **AFTER** the completion of their course, i.e. after the date of the final meeting of the Assessment Board.

APPENDIX 3

Format of Award Certificates

The certificate of an award conferred by the University will record information relating to:

- a. The University;
- b. the full student's name - forenames first;
- c. *has been admitted to or awarded* the **award title** (Formatted according to agreed nomenclature and University Regulations), followed by any classifications;
- d. *having followed an approved. programme in* the **title of the programme of study**. (Formatted according to agreed nomenclature);
- e. endorsements, such as:
 - (i) any other distinctions approved for inclusion;
 - (ii) in specific cases as agreed, any recognition of the award by a professional, statutory or regulatory body;
 - (iii) volume and level of credits in the case of Continuing Professional Development awards;
- f. date of the award (the month and year in which the final decision was made by (or, with appropriate authority, on behalf of) the Assessment Board;
- g. in the case of collaborative postgraduate research degrees or other collaborative programmes where no transcript is issued, endorsements relating to the name of any other institution where the programme was studied (and its location if this is not readily apparent from its name, including the country if it is outside the UK), and the language of study and assessment (where it is not English). See examples in Figure 1 on the following pages;
- h. signature: Vice Chancellor.

FIGURE 1

ANNABEL EAGLE

has been admitted to the degree of

**Bachelor of Science
with First Class Honours**

having followed an approved Honours programme in

Psychology

June 2023

ANNABEL EAGLE

has been admitted to the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

having followed an approved postgraduate research programme entitled

Title of Thesis

Studied at New York College, Athens, Greece

June 2023

APPENDIX 4

Outstanding Financial Obligations to the University and Unresolved Breaches of University Regulations

1. A student having any outstanding financial obligations to the University may be subject to a range of sanctions which could affect, amongst other actions, the issue of their transcript, HEAR, or certificate and/or attendance by the student and/or their guests at a degree congregation, as outlined in the applicable Course Fees policy governing their enrolment and registration.
3. Evidence confirming the fulfilment of the outstanding financial obligation should be presented to Student Data Management (and, for research degrees, the Research and Doctoral Division), so that completion of the award may take place.
4. Where a breach of the Regulations has been confirmed, the resulting action may include the relevant Assessment Board rescinding the award.

Equality Impact Assessment

“The University of Bolton is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment to equality and diversity means that this procedure has been screened in relation to the use of plain English, the promotion of the positive duty in relation to race, gender and disability and avoidance of discrimination to other equality groups related to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender reassignment.”

REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE CONFERMENT OF UNIVERSITY AWARDS	
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