

Policy for the Revocation of University Awards and Credits

1. Purpose

This policy refers to situations whereby awards or credits conferred by Dublin City University may be revoked. It defines the grounds when such an action may be warranted and how the University will assess if an award or credits should be revoked. The process by which the award or credits will be revoked is also contained in this policy.

2. Scope

This policy and related procedures applies to all former students and all graduates of Dublin City University who have obtained credits or awards from the University.

3. Policy Statement

The Academic Council of Dublin City University, on recommendation of the Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar, may revoke an award or credits conferred on a person where the University investigates and establishes one or more of the following:

Breaches of academic integrity to include, but not confined to:

- Submitting other people's work as your own, irrespective of whether you commissioned or paid for the work;
- Buying or commissioning work via professional agencies;
- Submitting the same or similar work for more than one assessment;
- Providing false, misleading or incomplete information;
- Research misconduct.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

A post-award discovery of a suspected breach of academic integrity will be reported in the first instance to the Chief Operations Officer (COO). Following a preliminary assessment, the COO can initiate an inquiry process.

A suspected post-award breach of academic integrity relating to research awards or credits will be dealt with under the University's Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct <https://www.dcu.ie/policies/index.shtml>.

The procedures outlined below will apply to a suspected post-award breach of academic integrity relating to undergraduate or postgraduate taught awards or credits.

4.1 Appointing an Inquiry Committee

The COO will appoint an Inquiry Committee and Committee Chair, normally within 20 working days following initiation of the inquiry. The Inquiry Committee should consist of at least 3 individuals who do not have real or apparent conflicts of interest in the case and are impartial.

The purpose of the inquiry is to make a preliminary evaluation of the available evidence of the case and to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of a potential breach of academic integrity. The Inquiry Committee will submit a draft report to the COO which will include a recommendation whether an investigation is warranted or not.

The COO will provide the person concerned with a copy of the draft inquiry report for comment. The individual can provide comments to the COO within 15 working days of their receipt of the report. Any comments received will be provided to the Inquiry Committee and will become part of the final inquiry report and record. Based on the comments, the Inquiry Committee may revise the report as appropriate.

The final report and any comments will be reviewed by the COO, who will make the determination of whether findings from the inquiry provide sufficient evidence of a potential breach of academic integrity to justify conducting an investigation, normally within 15 working days of receipt of the final report. The inquiry is completed when the COO makes this determination. The COO will notify the person concerned in writing of his/her decision of whether or not to proceed to an investigation and will remind them of their obligation to cooperate in the event an investigation is opened. The COO will also notify the Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar of the findings and his/her decision.

4.2 Conducting the Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to explore in detail the potential breach of academic integrity. The findings of the investigation will be set out in an investigation report.

The COO will appoint an Investigation Committee and the Committee Chair to conduct the investigation. The Investigation Committee should consist of at least 3 individuals who do not have real or apparent conflicts of interest in the case, are impartial, and have the necessary expertise to evaluate the evidence and issues related to the allegations.

The Investigation Committee will be appointed and the process initiated normally within 30 working days of the completion of the inquiry, if findings from that inquiry provide a sufficient basis for conducting an investigation. The investigation will normally involve examination of all relevant documentation and files. Whenever possible, the committee will interview the person responding to the allegation and other individuals who might have information regarding aspects of the allegations. Interviews may be taped or transcribed. The person concerned may take appropriate advice and have an advisor present during investigation interviews.

The Investigation Committee will submit the final report to the COO within 60 working days of its first meeting. In the event of unavoidable delays in gathering testimony and/or other

evidence the duration of the Committee's work can be extended by the COO on request. The final report must describe the policies and procedures under which the investigation was conducted, describe how and from whom information relevant to the investigation was obtained, state the recommendations and explain the basis for the recommendations.

The COO will provide the individual concerned with a copy of the draft investigation report for comment. The person concerned will be allowed to review and comment within 14 working days of receipt of the draft report. The person's comments will be attached to the final report. The findings of the final report should take into account such comments in addition to all the other evidence.

Based on a preponderance of the evidence, the COO along with other institutional officials, (to include the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar and the relevant Dean of Faculty), will make the final determination whether to accept the investigation report and its findings. If this determination varies from that of the Investigation Committee, the COO will explain in detail the basis for rendering a decision different from that of the Investigation Committee. The COO may also return the report to the Investigation Committee with a request for further fact-finding or analysis. The determination issued by the COO, together with the Investigation Committee's report, constitutes the final investigation report. When a final decision on the case has been reached, the COO will notify both the individual concerned and the Vice President Academic Affairs/Registrar in writing.

4.3 Right to Appeal

In the event that revoking an award or credits is the recommendation reached following the course of action outlined above the person concerned will be notified in writing of the decision. The individual will have 30 working days to appeal the recommendation. The individual has the right to appeal on grounds which include (but are not restricted to):

- Failure to follow appropriate procedures in the investigation;
- New evidence;
- Arbitrary, capricious or erroneous decision-making;
- Inappropriate disciplinary action.

The appeal should be directed to the Deputy President of Dublin City University. In order to make an appeal, the individual must prepare an appeal submission for issue to the Deputy President, which clearly states the basis for and nature of the appeal and which includes all relevant evidence. During the appeal process, the Deputy President may interview any party involved in the original investigation and will take appropriate actions to consider any new evidence. The Deputy President will issue a decision to the individual within 60 working days of receipt of the appeal. In the event that an appeal is successful, the University will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the reputation of the individual is restored.

5. Revocation of Awards or Credits

When the period for lodging an appeal has expired or when an appeal has been unsuccessful, the decision to revoke an award or credits will be reported, for formal noting, to the Academic Council of the University by the Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar.

When a decision is made to revoke an award or credits the following actions will be taken:

- I. The Secretary to Academic Council will formally notify the Registry of the decision.
- II. The University records will be updated appropriately to reflect that the award or credits were revoked. The records on the student information system and the digital records will be amended accordingly.
- III. The individual will be requested in writing to surrender their academic transcripts and parchment and will be formally advised that they are not permitted to cite the award or associated title to any persons in the future.
- IV. The Registry will advise the Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar when the parchment has been returned to the University.

6. Contacts

Please contact the Office of Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar or the Registry for any queries relating to this policy.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by Academic Council every five years.

Other relevant Policies and Codes of Conduct (<https://www4.dcu.ie/policies/policies.shtml>):


Academic Integrity & Plagiarism Policy

Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

Student Code of Conduct and Code of Discipline

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