



## **Award and Graduation Regulations**

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V1.0	05.08.2014	Registry	First Published version
V1.1	02.04.2015	Registry	At 2.3 " <i>programme of studies</i> " amended to – " <i>programme of study</i> ". At 2.3 " <i>beginning of October</i> " amended to " <i>within the specified registration period</i> ". At 6.2 " <i>issue certificates</i> " amended to " <i>issue award parchments</i> ".
V1.2	03.12.2015	Registry	2.3 amended to replace " <i>at the November ceremonies</i> " with " <i>at the first scheduled ceremony in the following year after their award is confirmed by an Assessment Board.</i> "
V1.2	03.12.2015	Registry	University role titles updated.
V1.3	01.10.2023	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Minor revisions, to remove reference to graduation enrolment fees and to update terminology.
V2	01.09.2024	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Revised to include; an overview of awarding powers and types of award; regulations for the procedural aspects of graduation and award revocation procedures.

## Section One - Awards

### 1 Awards of the University

#### Academic Awards

- 1.1 The authority to make an academic award on a taught programme of study, lies with Progression and Award Boards (PABs), under delegated authority from the Senate.
- 1.2 The authority to award a research degree resides with the University Senate, at the recommendation of the University's Research Degrees Committee.

#### Honorary Degree Awards

- 1.3 The University confers honorary degrees on persons of distinction who have made or are capable of making a major contribution to the work of the University or have earned distinction for activities more widely in the community; i.e. education, the professions, business, trade unions, culture, creative work or public service.
- 1.4 Any member of University staff, the University Court, the Honorary Degrees Committee and the Students Association may submit a nominee for consideration by the Honorary Degrees Committee.
- 1.5 The nomination process is strictly confidential and under no circumstances should it be discussed or communicated beyond those making the nomination and the Honorary Degrees Committee. This includes discussions with the individuals concerned, who should not be made aware of their nomination until approval has been granted by the Honorary Degrees Committee, on behalf of Senate. If confidentiality is found to have been broken the nomination will be withdrawn with immediate effect.
- 1.6 Categories of Honorary Degree awards:

**Honorary Doctorate Degree** - appropriate for those who have made a major contribution at national and/or international level and/or who have made an exceptional contribution to the development of the University.

**Honorary Fellowship** - appropriate for those who have made a major direct contribution to the general development of the University.

- 1.7 Honorary Degree awards are normally conferred at graduation ceremonies of the University.

#### Posthumous Awards

- 1.8 The University reserves the right to make posthumous awards to students, where circumstances permit. This will normally be the next available exit award, for which the student would have been eligible. Section 7 of this policy provides fuller details related to the consideration for award and conferment of a Posthumous award.

## **Section Two - Graduation Procedures**

### **2 Conditions of Entry to Graduation**

- 2.1 Graduation is open only to registered students of the university who have either fulfilled the academic requirements of their programme of study and who have been granted an award by the relevant progression and award board (taught students) or, in the case of research students, had a research degree award confirmed by senate (thereafter students are referred to as graduands).
- 2.2 In order to receive an award parchment and become a graduate of the University, Graduands must register for Graduation. A Graduand will not be deemed to be a Graduate of the University until they have registered and completed the process of graduation at a University Graduation and Awards Ceremony, either in person or in absentia, and their name and level of award included in the official Graduation listings.
- 2.3 Prospective Graduands are required to register for Graduation within the specified registration period by utilising University Graduation Procedures as determined by the University. Potential Graduands will be notified via their official GCU email address. Dates for registration will be published on the Graduation web pages.
- 2.4 Potential Graduands will be registered for Graduation in the name that is recorded on the University Student Record System at the time the award decision was made. The award parchment will bear the registered name of the Graduand, and cannot be changed at a later date.

### **3 Attendance and *In Absentia* Graduation**

- 3.1 The University will post the appropriate parchment(s) to all Graduates who have registered to graduate in absentia, to the home address provided by the Graduate and recorded on the Student Records System, for which students are responsible for ensuring correct information is provided.
- 3.2 A Graduand who indicates on their graduation registration form that they intend to attend the graduation ceremony in person, but subsequently does not attend the graduation ceremony, will be deemed to have graduated in absentia. Such a Graduate will not normally be eligible to attend another ceremony for the purpose of receiving the specific award(s) with which they have been deemed to have graduated in absentia.
- 3.3 Any Graduand who has not returned to their registered programme of study and/or who has not accepted the University's invitation to register for graduation within the specified registration period, will be graduated in absentia at the first scheduled ceremony in the following year after their award was confirmed. The graduation parchment will be posted, after the Graduate confirms their home address.

### **4 Exit Awards (Taught Students)**

- 4.1 In the normal course of events, it is anticipated that all students will seek to progress to the final award stage of their programme of study and attend the graduation ceremony thereafter. Students will not graduate and/or receive a certificate after each level of the programme.

- 4.2 In circumstances where a student is unable to progress, for example a personal decision to withdraw from a programme of study, an academic sanction imposed by the University, or a decision by the PAB to withdraw the student, where they have failed to progress normally, and where there is eligibility for an exit award within the programme of study, a student may elect to graduate with a lower award. In such instances, students must contact the Registry and register to graduate, in line with the 'Conditions of Entry to Graduation, as outlined in Section 2.
- 4.3 Where a student graduates from a programme of study with an exit award, they will be listed in the official Graduation Listings and will receive an award parchment bearing the exit award. Should the student subsequently return to the University to complete the original programme of study, the student will be required to hand back the award parchment to the Registry. The award parchment will be kept on file and subsequently destroyed, if the student successfully completes a higher level of the programme; alternatively, if the student does not achieve a higher award, the original parchment will be returned.
- 4.4 Students are reminded that graduation from a programme results in conferment of a single parchment (i.e. the highest attained award) and attendance at a graduation ceremony happens on one occasion only.

## 5 Appeals & Graduations

- 5.1 Once a Graduand has graduated from the University, they are deemed to have accepted an award, to become a Graduate of the University. Academic appeals from Graduates against award recommendations of Progression and Award Boards will not be considered by the University. The Registry will be advised where an Academic Appeal submission is received from final year/stage taught students, or from those where an exit award decision has been made by the PAB; whilst the Appeal is being considered, such students will have the options outlined below.
- 5.2 Graduands who wish to appeal the award recommendation of a Progression and Award Board may do so by utilising the regulations of the Academic Appeals Committee. Graduands who lodge an academic appeal have the following options:
- i. Attend the graduation ceremony as planned while the appeal is being considered;
  - ii. Defer graduation until the next set of ceremonies by which time the result of the appeal will be known;
  - iii. Graduate in absentia and await the outcome of their appeal.
- 5.3 Graduands who wish to take up option (i) will be included in the graduation listings with the award they are appealing against. They will not be given their award parchment at the ceremony but will receive a presentation folder with a letter. Once the appeal has been heard and a decision made and the School has made a change (where applicable) to the student's award decision<sup>1</sup>, the Registry will post the award parchment to the graduate's home address. The graduate will not be invited to attend another ceremony. If the appeal is upheld, the graduate's name and new level of award will be included in the next set of graduation ceremonies to record the higher award.

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<sup>1</sup> Any change to a student's award decision must be recorded by a Progression and Award Board Chair's Action sheet and the change must be made by the School on the University's Student Record Management Information System before a parchment can be sent to the graduate.

- 5.4 Graduands who wish to take up option (ii) will be invited to attend the next set of ceremonies once the decision of their appeal has been reached. The award parchment will be presented to them at the ceremony.
- 5.5 Graduands who wish to take up option (iii) will be included in the graduation listings and their award parchment will be posted, once a decision has been made. Once the appeal has been heard and a decision made (whether it is upheld or unsuccessful), the Registry will post the award parchment, to the graduate's home address. The graduate will not be invited to attend another ceremony. If the appeal is upheld, the graduate's name and new level of award will be included in the next set of graduation ceremonies to record the higher award.
- 5.6 Graduands who appeal against the decision of a Progression and Award Board which states that they are not eligible for an award, cannot attend a ceremony or be included in the Graduation Listings.

## **6 Graduation Awards and Records**

- 6.1 Registry establishes and maintains the official University Graduation and Awards listings.
- 6.2 Registry is the only office in the University which is authorised to issue award parchments bearing the University official seal.
- 6.3 For Aegrotat and Honorary awards, their designation will be clearly noted on the parchment.
- 6.4 No duplicate copies of award parchments will be issued by the University. However, Graduates may apply for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged award parchments. Satisfactory evidence of loss, damage or theft must be provided and a declaration signed by the Graduate confirming the validity of the request. A fee will be levied for the issue of replacement award parchments, as determined by the University from time to time.

## **7 Posthumous Awards**

### **Taught Programmes**

- 7.1 In the event of a posthumous award consideration for a student studying on a taught programme, it is the responsibility of the Dean of School and appropriate member of the Executive to approve the level of award to be made, consulting with the Academic Registrar and Programme Leader as necessary.
- 7.2 The award conferred is normally the next exit award for which the student would have been eligible, based on the stage of the programme of study they had commenced.
- 7.3 An unclassified Honours Degree/ Masters degree may be conferred in cases where there is strong evidence that the deceased student would have achieved a degree, as long as the amount of study the student carried out is greater than the amount normally associated with the Diploma of Higher Education/ Postgraduate Certificate.
- 7.4 In cases where there are outstanding academic requirements, the following options are available to the Progression and Award Board:
  - i. The outstanding requirements of the degree can be waived.

- ii. Approval can be given, following considerations outlined in Section 7.1, to take any further action necessary to complete the outstanding requirements and permit the award of the qualification (for example, typing up of draft assignments).
- iii. A lower award than that for which the deceased student was registered can be recommended, if this would be the most appropriate option.

### **Research Degree Students**

- 7.5 In the event of a posthumous award consideration for a Research Degree student, it is the responsibility of the Research Degrees Committee to seek evidence of the likelihood of successful completion of the Stage 2, Viva-Voce examination, had it been possible to proceed to that stage.
- 7.6 The award of Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), or Professional Doctorate (Prof D), can be considered for posthumous award. In all cases, the authority to confer a Research Degree lies with the University Senate, in line with the [Regulations for the Award of Research Degrees](#).

### **General**

- 7.7 In cases where the deceased student owes fees to the University, the School will disregard and clear the debt.
- 7.8 Posthumous degrees will be awarded in the name of the deceased student at the next relevant graduation ceremony.
- 7.9 The Dean and appropriate member of the Executive will liaise with the student's family and the Academic Registrar, to agree the manner in which the award is conferred. Three options are possible:
  - i. The award could be made by post
  - ii. The award could be made at a small private ceremony or meeting of family with staff concerned
  - iii. The award could be at the next appropriate Graduation and Awards Ceremony where the student's name could be read out in the normal way, followed by a brief statement of the posthumous nature of the award.

## **8 Regulation of the Issue of University Awards and Appropriate Fees**

- 8.1 The issuing of all university awards shall be subject to these regulations as amended and approved by senate from time to time and to such additional fees as the university court may, from time to time, determine. Deadlines for payment of any appropriate fees will be published on the university's website and the student portal.
- 8.2 Prospective graduands who have outstanding academic debt(s) to the university will normally be excluded from attendance at a graduation ceremony and from receipt of a graduation parchment, in line with the university's [credit control and debt management policy](#).

## **Section Three - Revocation of an Award Granted**

### **9 Revocation of an Academic Award**

- 9.1 The University reserves the right to rescind any award or distinction that has been granted to a former student
- a. where academic misconduct, fraud or deception has occurred prior to the granting of the award or
  - b. where there has been a procedural or administrative error made by the University including, but not limited to, the marking of an assessment, calculation and recording of marks, the deliberations of a Progression and Award Board\* (PAB) (taught) or Research Degrees Committee (Research) or in the communication of an award decision.

For the purposes of this policy, this shall be referred to as revocation of an award.

- 9.2 There is no limit on the length of time between an award being granted and revocation.

### **10 Revocation of an Academic Award due to Disciplinary Action**

- 10.1 Allegations relating to academic misconduct, fraud or deception and which may result in the revocation of an award, will be considered to be a potential disciplinary issue and will be responded to by the department of governance and legal services. All allegations will be investigated in line with either the *code of student conduct* or the *academic misconduct in research degrees policy* as appropriate.
- 10.2 Where it is possible to do so, the former student will be informed of the investigation (via GCU and last known personal email addresses) and will have the right to participate in the investigation and respond to the allegations made. The academic registrar will be informed of all investigations.
- 10.3 Where there is sufficiently robust evidence in support of the allegations, the matter will be referred to either
- a) the University's Senate Disciplinary Committee (for taught programmes); or
  - b) an Academic Investigating Panel (for research degrees)
- for consideration and disposal.
- 10.4 Where it is not possible to contact the former student, or the former student does not engage in the process, this will not prevent the case being progressed and an award being revoked or downgraded as appropriate.
- 10.5 The potential outcomes of a senate disciplinary committee or an academic investigating panel are
- dismissal of the case, with no further action taken; or
  - a recommendation to revoke or downgrade an academic award.
- The Chair of Senate, or their designate, will make the final decision regarding any recommendation which involves the revoking or downgrading of an academic award.

### **11 Revocation of an Academic Award due to Procedural or Administrative Error**

- 11.1 Where there has been a procedural or administrative error as outline at 9 (b) above, this will be reported to the Academic Registrar to instigate an investigation on behalf of the



Progression & Award Board (PAB) for taught awards or research degrees committee (RDC) for research awards. The outcome of the investigation will be referred to the appropriate PAB or RDC for consideration and outcome recommendation.

- 11.2 The potential outcomes of an investigation are
- dismissal of the case, with no further action taken;
  - revoking the original award and awarding a higher academic award where the error made was prejudicial to the former student(s); or
  - revoking the original award and awarding a lower academic award, or no award where the error made was favourable to the former student(s).
- 11.3 The recommendation to revoke or change an award will be referred to chair of senate (or their designate) along with the PVC education (for taught awards) or PVC research (for research awards) for approval. If approved, the university's record of award will be amended and the former student(s) informed via their GCU & last known personal email address(es).

## **12 Appeal Against Revocation of an Academic Award**

- 12.1 Where the senate disciplinary committee has agreed the revocation of an award, the former student will have the right of appeal in line with the code of student conduct. The university's decision letter will inform of this right of appeal.
- 12.2 Where an academic investigating panel has agreed the revocation of an award, the former student will have the right of appeal in line with the academic misconduct in research degrees policy. The university's decision letter will inform of this right of appeal.
- 12.3 Where a PAB or RDC has recommended the revocation of an award, the former student will have a right of appeal in line with the academic appeal policy. The university's decision letter will inform of this right of appeal.
- 12.4 The timeframe and process of each of the appeal routes outlined in 12.1 to 12.3 will be detailed in the University's decision letter.

## **13 Revocation of an Honorary Award**

- 13.1 The university reserves the right to rescind any award or distinction which has been granted on an honorary basis to an individual where new information about the recipient of an honorary award or distinction becomes available that:
- brings the University into disrepute or potential disrepute to; and
  - of which the University could not reasonably have been aware at the time the offer of award was made.
- 13.2 Where allegations of this nature are made, they will be investigated by the University Secretary, and a report submitted to the Honorary Degrees Committee for consideration and disposal.
- 13.3 The potential outcomes by the honorary degrees committee are
- dismissal of the case, with no further action taken or
  - revoking the honorary award or distinction.

- 13.4 If the honorary degree committee agrees to revoke an honorary award or distinction the university's records will be amended and the individual informed via their last known email address.
- 13.5 The decision of the honorary degree committee will be final and there will no right to appeal against the outcome.

