

# Award and Alumni Documents Policy and Procedure

## 1. OVERVIEW

The Award and Alumni Documents Policy and Procedure sets out how the University manages the process for making award and alumni documentation available to its students, graduates and early leavers. For the purposes of this policy and procedure, the terms 'student' or 'students' refer to both students and graduates of the University. The policy and procedure is administered by the Graduation and Awards Office on behalf of the University and is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

All students who have an award conferred by the University will receive a hard copy Award Certificate as well as an electronic version of the Award Certificate issued via students Gradintelligence accounts, free of charge.

Where students have taught components to their study, a transcript will also be issued, either as a Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) where the programme studied is eligible for this electronic document, or as a hard copy transcript where the HEAR may not be possible to issue (such as for modular study).

Where the HEAR is available for a student as their transcript, no hard copy alternative is provided by the University free of charge.

Charges apply for additional or replacement copies of award documents: see the [Student Documentation Ordering System](#) for further details.

## 2. AWARD DOCUMENTS

Once an Award has been conferred, a notification email is sent to the student's Essex email and the external email address as recorded on ESIS (the Essex Student Information System) within 30 days of the award conferral.

The notification email will confirm when electronic copies of award documents are available to access via Gradintelligence and outline procedures relating to the issue of the hard copy Award Certificate and the different dispatch options. Students will be required to respond to this email to advise of their preferred method of dispatch. If no reply is received, the Award Certificate will be posted to a student's home address as recorded on their student record. It is students' responsibility to ensure this information is kept up to date, in line with university policies.

If a replacement Certificate is required where a student has not kept their address details up to date, a Certificate re-print fee (£40) may apply.

All Award documents are sent by standard Royal Mail (second class) or standard Royal Mail international post. No documents are sent using tracked mail or by courier unless by special arrangement. Should a student wish to pay to use a tracked or courier service instead, by special arrangement, they may do so following the guidance attached to the notification email or by contacting the Graduation and Awards Office for further information.

Where an award is conferred within 4 months of a Graduation, all Award Certificates will be retained by the University for students to collect at Graduation.

## 3. DIGITAL AWARD DOCUMENTS

**If you began your studies in, or after, 2014**, you will be eligible to have access to a Gradintelligence account.

For eligible programmes, after each year of study your academic transcript will be updated within your HEAR to show the marks ratified by the Board of Examiners. It is not possible to publish unratified marks on a HEAR.

Upon final completion of an award, an electronic copy of a student's Award Certificate will also be available on their Gradintelligence account within 30 days of the award being conferred. For eligible programmes, a final HEAR, noting the award issued, will also be updated within 30 days of the award being conferred.

Hard copy transcripts are no longer issued by the University unless a programme of study cannot be published via the HEAR (such as modular studies).

All students will have access to their Gradintelligence account for life and this service is entirely free of charge.

#### **4. DEBT**

In accordance with the University's Student Debt Policy, where a student is in educational debt to the University, no award shall be conferred, and no award documents will be issued until the outstanding debt is paid.

#### **5. UNDELIVERED DOCUMENTS**

Where documents are posted to you and they have not arrived, a second set may be issued at the University's discretion.

Students are not eligible for another set of documents free of charge where:

- the documents were posted out to an address in the UK and less than 6 weeks have passed.
- the documents were posted out to an address in Europe and less than 8 weeks have passed.
- the documents were posted out to an address in the rest of the world and less than 12 weeks have passed.
- a second set of documents have already been issued free of charge.
- the student failed to notify the University that they have not received the documents within six months of them being sent.
- the student failed to respond to the University's award notification email to provide an alternative address
- the student failed to keep their personal contact details, including home address, up to date on their student record prior to completing their award.

#### **6. UNCOLLECTED AND RETURNED DOCUMENTS**

Where a student is unable to collect their Certificate from Graduation, they will be contacted by the Graduation and Awards Office after the ceremonies have finished to outline procedures for either making the Certificate available to collect from a campus or posting it to the student.

Where a student requests to collect their Award Certificate from campus but fails to do so and does not respond to communications from the Graduation and Awards office, the documents will be retained for 6 months, but if not collected within this period, they will be destroyed, and the student will be liable for a replacement certificate fee (£40) for a new copy to be produced, if requested in the future.

Where an award document is posted but it is not possible for it to be delivered, it may be returned to the University. Upon receipt of a returned Award Document, the University will contact the student to make them aware and seek an alternative address to re-post the document to. If a student fails to respond, the document will be retained for 6 months. After this period, the document will be destroyed, and the student will be liable for Certificate replacement fee (£40) if they request a copy at a later date.

#### **7. REPLACEMENT AND ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS**

Students who have lost, damaged, or misplaced their original Award documents are liable for a replacement document fee which can be paid and the required documents ordered via the [Student Documentation Ordering System](#).

Graduates, including Alumni, of the University may purchase additional or replacement copies of award documents at any point. A variety of documents, as well as document protectors and other award and graduation keepsakes, can be purchased online via the [Student Documentation Ordering System](#).

For transcript orders, where there may not be a full electronic record of the academic transcript, this information will need to be obtained from the relevant archive. Orders that require an archive search will take longer to process. When locating archive records, in some circumstances, it may not be possible to provide a full and complete transcript of marks. Should this be the case, a partial transcript may be produced, accompanied by a letter of explanation.

In the event that an alumnus has an outstanding educational debt to the University, it will not be possible to receive certain award documents, including those that note final award information as an award is not conferred until this debt is cleared.

## 8. NAME CHANGES

In accordance with University Student Names policy, a student's legal name, as recorded on the student record system, will appear on any award documentation.

It is not possible to have a preferred name printed on award documentation instead.

Legal name changes made during a student's study, prior to award conferral, will be updated on the student record and the updated legal name will be printed on award documentation when the award is conferred.

Legal name changes after an award has been conferred will not be updated on a record or any award documentation, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the Student Names Policy for further information.

## 9. VERIFICATION OF AWARD DOCUMENTS

The verification of University awards for third parties is managed via the Higher Education Degree Database (HEDD) <https://www.hedd.ac.uk/>. The University does not usually verify Award documents directly. All Award documents carry the embossed seal of the University and the signature of the Registrar and Secretary, which confirms authenticity. Award documents are **only** valid if both the seal and the signature are present.

The University are unable to provide legalisation or notary services. Further advice on how to enable a document to be legalised can be found online: <https://www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised>.

## 10. DOCUMENTATION REFUND POLICY

### 1. OVERVIEW

The documentation refund policy is applicable to any user, whether current student, graduate, alumnus of the University of Essex or partner institution when purchased via the [Student Documentation Ordering System](#).

### 2. REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS

- 2.1 An order cancellation and refund request will not typically be issued where the order has already been processed.
- 2.2 Orders placed through the document ordering system may take 7 to 10 working days to produce.
- 2.3 Where a refund request is received prior to an order being processed, a full refund may be issued.
- 2.4 Where a refund request is received and the order has been processed but not dispatched, a partial refund may be issued relating to any postage fees paid for as part of the order, but no refund will be made for any award documents already produced.
- 2.5 Requests to cancel an order and request a refund must be made in writing to [award-docs@essex.ac.uk](mailto:award-docs@essex.ac.uk), marked with high urgency and including the order information.
- 2.6 Refund requests will normally be **rejected** if the request is made for the following reasons:
  - The individual was not aware that an Award Certificate and Transcript (if applicable) is available free of charge after graduation (one per graduate). This is clearly stated on the Student Documentation Ordering System.
  - The student or graduate claims that the wrong documents were produced when there is demonstrable evidence to the contrary.



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- The student or graduate misunderstands the documents they required and ordered the wrong ones. The Student Documentation Ordering System gives details of what each document provides and can be used for. The full details of each document should be read and understood before proceeding to purchase the document and any questions relating to products should be sent to [award-docs@essex.ac.uk](mailto:award-docs@essex.ac.uk) prior to making the purchase.

**Graduation Office March 2025**