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UNIVERSITY**

Protocols for handling fraudulent academic confirmation / qualifications in relation to students/graduates (Annex to the Fraud and Bribery Response Plan)

Organisation	Leeds Beckett University
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Introduction

The following protocol sets out the process for how the University will deal with investigations into potential fraudulent qualifications or academic confirmation relating to those who claim to have studied or are studying at Leeds Beckett University.

This protocol does not apply to fraudulent qualifications relating to applications to work at the University or committed by those employed by the University. Such matters shall be dealt with under the [Counter-Fraud, Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy](#), coordinated by the Registrar & Secretary in conjunction with HR.

Information for students to obtain genuine copies of their University certificates, references and verify awards

To help prevent qualifications fraud, students and graduates must be aware that replacement certificates can only be obtained from the [Registration and Awards Team](#), and under no circumstances should they attempt to recreate the certificate themselves, nor purchase one from a 'replacement certificate' website. Students must only trust documents issued by the University's official channels.

The [Registration and Awards Team](#) can verify the details of a student's award according to our historic records - provided specific dates or module marks are not requested.

References or requests for specific dates or module marks should be directed to the relevant **course team**.

Where a request is from a third party, personal information can only be provided with the consent of the Data Subject.

Protocol

The approach depends on whether the perpetrator is linked to the University (i.e., a current student), or not linked to the University, which includes those who have graduated.

Where academic or student qualifications fraud is detected, the following procedure will apply:

Step 1: Academic / student qualifications fraud is detected:

- (1) Course Administrator / Awards team confirms that the award/letter/graduate document(s) in question is fraudulent and informs [Registrar & Secretary's Office \(RSO\)](#) (under the [Counter-Fraud, Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy](#)).
- (2) Where consent¹ is provided, the Course Administrator / Awards team can respond to the third-party enquiry setting out that the information is not genuine (copying in [RSO](#) for recording purposes).
- (3) The Registrar & Secretary (as the Designated Officer), or Nominee, will determine the fraud level in line with guidance set out in the [Fraud and Bribery Response Plan](#) and any action required. Certain cases may require escalation, in which case the Registrar & Secretary will nominate an internal Investigating Officer and/or escalate to the police.
- (4) RSO will keep a log of each case.

Step 2a: Fraud committed by current student:

- (1) Refer to Student Casework for investigation under the [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- (2) RSO to log outcome and report via Audit Committee.

OR

Step 2b: Fraud committed by individual not linked to the University (including graduates of the University):

- (1) RSO to issue a cease-and-desist letter² to the perpetrator. This letter is agreed and signed by, or on behalf of, the Registrar & Secretary. The letter will set out that the individual is required to take action in order to close the matter.
 - (A) **Individual agrees to actions as set out in the cease-and-desist letter:** Matter closed.
OR
 - (B) **Individual does not agree / take action as set out in the cease-and-desist letter:** The Registrar & Secretary to take a view on escalating to Action Fraud and/or HEDD³.
- (2) The Registrar & Secretary's Office to log the outcome and report to the Audit Committee.

¹ The [One-Minute Guide - Requests for personal information under Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018](#) sets out the University's protocol for requests for **personal information**. Personal information should not be passed to a third party without the consent of the Data Subject. All requests where genuine consent is not provided, should be emailed to the [Information Governance Team](#).

² Based on HEDD templates for cease and desist letter, set out in the HEDD [toolkit for higher education providers](#).

³ The University will engage with regulatory bodies such as [HEDD](#), which maintains a database of bogus providers and has a repository of fake certificates and runs the UK's official degree fraud reporting service on behalf of the Office for Students. The University will pass information on qualifications fraud discovered to HEDD as may be appropriate and beneficial for the sector.