

Document name
Revocation of RCN Lifetime Awards Policy and Process
Who does this policy apply to? Recipients of the following RCN Lifetime Awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCN Fellowship • Honorary Fellowship • Award of Merit <p>The other RCN Awards (Forum Achievement Awards, Representative of the Year Awards, and Student Ambassador of the Year) are not lifetime awards - they are awarded for a specific year – and therefore are not part of this policy.</p>
Purpose To clarify the process for removing an RCN Lifetime Award from RCN and non RCN members.
Description of the policy This policy sets out the criteria and process when a recipient of an RCN Lifetime Award (RCN and non RCN members) can have their award removed.
Author/s Natalie Zara, Executive Director of Governance & Matt Beavan, Governance Engagement and Projects Manager
Cross Reference: Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy - available on RCN website
Status: Approved
Circulated for comment and/or amendments to: Prof Daniel Kelly, Chair of Fellows Convening Committee
Policy owner: RCN Governance Team
Date policy approved and by whom

RCN Awards Committee – 27 February 2025		
RCN Council – 22 May 2025		
Date of implementation: May 2025		
Date of next review - May 2028		
Department responsible for review		
Governance Department		
VERSION CONTROL		
Title	Change	Date and version
Revocation of Fellowship Award	New policy and process	2022, version 1.0
Revocation of RCN Lifetime Awards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Removing the need for Council to assign Council members to be investigators or set up a sub-Committee. The process of investigation and decision is to be undertaken by a Membership Resolution and Disciplinary panel in accordance with the Membership Resolution and Disciplinary Policy (MRP). 2 Expanding the application of the revocation procedure to other lifetime achievement awards – Honorary Fellow and Award of Merit. 3 Introducing an appeal stage. 	2024/2025, version 2.0

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Removal of RCN Lifetime Awards Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The criteria for removal of an RCN Lifetime Award (Fellowship, Honorary Fellowship or Award of Merit) should primarily be that an award holder has acted in a way that is considered to be gross misconduct and/or which brings the nursing profession the RCN, or the honour of RCN lifetime achievement award into disrepute.
- 1.2. Although not an exhaustive list, illustrative examples of such action could be:
 - Professional misconduct
 - A declaration of a qualification which they do not hold
 - Plagiarism
 - Unauthorised use of RCN property or resources
 - Where actions bring the RCN into disrepute.
 - Theft or fraud.
 - Conviction of a criminal offence
 - Physical violence or abusive behaviour.
 - Gross negligence.
 - Serious breaches of confidentiality.
 - Promoting a competitor organisation that represents nurses and nursing.
 - Social media statements etc in public contradiction to RCN policy or public health guidance whilst not impeding diversity of thought or academic debate.

2. Process for removal of a lifetime award – where the Award holder is an RCN member

2.2. The process for removal of a lifetime award is as follows:

- a) If a complaint is received from any source, or if RCN staff becomes aware of information about conduct that they believe is serious enough for a possible removal of award, the General Secretary and Chief Executive will discuss the issue with the Awards Committee as soon as practicable.
- b) If the Awards Committee agree that there is a case to answer, the General Secretary and Chief Executive will inform the Chair of Council and make arrangements for the matter to be investigated in line with the [Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy](#) (MRP), in summary:
 - The respondent member will be contacted to advise them that a complaint has been received and to explain the process for investigation as well as the support available to them during this time.

- An investigation will be carried out to establish the facts of the case to determine whether there is a case to answer. The investigation should aim to conclude within 12 weeks.
 - The respondent will be entitled to representation throughout the process from a union representative of the RCN, or other union, a colleague or friend.
 - If it is decided by the Investigating Officer that there is a case to answer the matter will proceed to a Disciplinary Panel comprised of 3 members, at least 1 of those will be a member of RCN Council. The Panel will consider the evidence from all parties, including the Investigating Officer, the respondent, complainant and any relevant witnesses before determining whether the allegations(s) are upheld and where relevant an appropriate sanction.
 - A respondent has a right to appeal any finding where an allegation has been proven, and a sanction imposed and can do so within 1 month of the date of receiving the outcome letter.
 - An appeal will be dealt with impartially, and by an independent Appeal Panel comprising 3 members that were not involved in the original investigation or hearing and heard within 25 days of the appeal submission. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.
- c) In line with the MRP, the Executive Director of Governance will be informed of the outcome, which may include:
- Revocation of the title of the award.
 - Sanction whereby the award holder may not occupy a Governance role for a period of up to 36 months.
 - Interim suspension of the award.
- d) The Executive Director of Governance will work with the Head of Investigations and Complaints to report to Council on the decision of the MRP panel. The Executive Director of Governance will inform the Awards Committee as soon as practicable.
- e) Following the decision of the panel, if revocation is advised, the following actions will then take place:
- For all lifetime achievement awards:*
- The Award holder and individual raising the issue will be informed of outcome in writing.
 - The Award holder's name will immediately be removed from the Roll of Honour.
 - The Award holder is requested to return the medal to the College.

Additionally, in the case of Fellowship:

- The Award holder's name will immediately be removed from the Fellows Directory on the RCN website
- The Award holder is requested not to use FRCN post nominals in any circumstance.
- The Fellows community is informed of the decision

3. Process for removal of a lifetime award – where the Award holder is not an RCN member

3.1. If an awardee is an Honorary Fellow, the MRP (which is only applicable to RCN members) cannot be followed. If concerns similar to those in section 1.1 are raised, the process set out below will be followed:

- The Executive Director of Governance will inform the Executive Team who will consider the reputational risk posed by the behaviour of the Award holder that has led to the concerns.
- The Executive Team may then make a recommendation to the Awards Committee, on whether suspension or revocation of honorary fellow title should occur.
- The Executive Director of Governance will arrange for Council to be informed of the recommendation, for approval.
- An Honorary Fellow has a right to appeal any finding where an allegation has been proven, and a sanction imposed and can do so within 1 month of the date of receiving the outcome letter.
- Should an Honorary Fellow wish to appeal the decision of the Council, a panel of three members, at least one of whom should be a Fellow, will be convened. The appeal will be heard within 25 days of the appeal submission. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

3.2 If revocation is approved, the same actions set out at paragraphs 2.2(e). will apply.

NB: Should the processes in this document fail to be updated in line with the MRP at any point, the processes in the MRP take precedence.