

The Academic Regulations

Appendix 18:

Procedure for Considering Criminal Convictions

2026-27

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Summary

Appendix 18 details the University's procedure for reviewing applicants and students who are required to declare an unspent criminal conviction, ongoing criminal investigation or pending court case. The procedure also clarifies the University's expectation that students will make such declarations as necessary throughout the duration of their university programme.

This regulation ensures the University is compliant with its obligations under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and ensures transparency for staff, applicants and students.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Criminal conviction	For the purposes of this document, this term includes any unspent criminal convictions. and out of court disposals where relevant.
Disclosure and Barring Service	This is a government service which checks applicants for details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered unspent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974. An enhanced DBS check is required if you are studying or working in a regulated profession which requires interaction with vulnerable adults and/or children.
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)	These are designated external bodies which endorse or regulate certain professions. Some Edge Hill programmes enable a variety of associations with external bodies. Sometimes PSRB standards may override university regulations. If you are a student on a regulated programme, you also are required to meet these standards. This means that any misconduct logged on your record may have consequences for your future professional registration. That is, you may be excluded from or not accepted by a PSRB and therefore unable to work in a particular profession.
Regulated programme	For the purposes of this document, this is a programme which is regulated by or associated with a PSRB.
Senior member of university staff	Cases are considered by a range of senior university staff as appropriate to the circumstances. This term includes directors and faculty deans and associate deans, heads and associate heads of departments or support areas.

Purpose

This document is aimed at both applicants to and current students at the University ('you'). Any reference in this document to 'we' means the University, including any departments and teams involved in implementing this procedure.

This procedure will be used to consider declarations of any unspent criminal convictions. For the purposes of this document, we will refer to these declarations as 'a criminal conviction'.

This procedure should be read alongside other university regulations and policies. Please refer to the Key to Relevant Documents at the end of this document.

Nothing in this procedure is intended to restrict lawful freedom of speech or academic freedom as protected under the Education (No 2) Act 1986 and the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. However, all individuals are expected to express their views in ways that are consistent with professional practice and the law.

Our approach to criminal convictions and rehabilitation

As a university, we recognise that higher education is a key route to improving life chances. We believe that everyone with the potential and ambition to succeed in higher education should have the opportunity to do so, regardless of their background.

We recognise that people with criminal convictions can face significant barriers to accessing education. Our approach seeks to balance our responsibilities for safeguarding our community with our commitment to supporting rehabilitation and enabling individuals to move on positively with their lives.

In practice, this means that our process is underpinned by two key principles:

- ensuring that individuals are not unnecessarily disadvantaged once their conviction is spent and rehabilitation period has passed; and
- ensuring that relevant information is considered appropriately where there is a legitimate need to assess and manage risk.

This approach reflects sector guidance on fair access to education and supports our wider commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Regulation

1. Overview

1. We are all responsible for ensuring the University is a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for everyone. We expect the highest standards of conduct from our students whether on university premises, in professional placement settings, the wider community or online. Expectations of our student are set out in the Student Code of Conduct.
2. All applicants to Edge Hill are required to disclose if they have been convicted of a criminal offence prior to their enrolment. Similarly, all Edge Hill students are required to disclose if they are under investigation or convicted of a criminal offence whilst enrolled on a course. Depending on the programme studied, there may also be a mandatory requirement to make an annual declaration.
3. Declaring an unspent criminal conviction or investigation does not necessarily mean that your place at the university will be compromised. However, in such cases a risk assessment will be required to determine:
 - Any support you may require and whether the University can provide it
 - Any risk to be mitigated for the Edge Hill and wider community
4. The risk assessment helps the University fulfil its duty of care and responsibility to members of our community. The risk assessment process is intended to be supportive, proportionate and focused on enabling participation wherever it is safe to do so. For current students, this may include consideration of interim measures and the interaction with other University processes where appropriate.
5. While this procedure applies to both applicants and current students, the context in which decisions are made will differ. For applicants, the process supports decisions about admission to the University. For current students, the focus is on assessing and managing any risk while supporting continuation of study wherever it is appropriate and safe to do so. In such cases, this procedure may operate alongside other relevant University procedures.

Criminal investigations

6. **If you are an applicant** subject to a criminal investigation, you must disclose this to the [Student Casework Team](#) as early in the application process as possible. This information will be managed under the appropriate procedure depending on the programme you have applied for.
7. **If you are a current student** subject to a criminal investigation, you must report this to the [Student Casework Team](#). This will normally be managed under other existing university processes eg fitness to practise or non-academic misconduct. This will depend on your programme and the nature of the offence.

- If you are on a regulated programme, the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure may apply
 - If you are on a non-regulated programme, the University's Non-Academic Misconduct Procedure may apply
8. During this period the University will usually conduct a risk assessment under the relevant procedure to determine if there is a potential risk to the University community and implement any necessary precautionary measures. If you are a current student, this may include interim actions taken alongside other relevant University procedures.
 9. When determining the next steps, consideration will be given to the nature and context of the alleged offence, including whether it involved another student, occurred on university premises or otherwise and the students programme of study. Students will be informed of the next steps and any interim actions being taken. If the investigation leads to a conviction or condition of discharge, the processes in this document will be followed.

Failure to declare an unspent conviction

10. This applies to applicants and students.
11. If we have reason to suspect that you have not declared an unspent conviction, we will contact you for further information in the first instance. If we have received information from a third party regarding your unspent conviction, we will investigate but only share such data with you where relevant. We will not provide third-party details.
12. If you declared a conviction on a previous application, the University has the right to use this information and contact you for further details.
13. For applicants: failure to declare an unspent criminal conviction could result in your application being withdrawn. It is also your responsibility to let us know when your conviction becomes spent.
14. For current students: failure to declare an unspent criminal conviction may mean you are referred to another University procedure, eg Non-Academic Misconduct or Fitness to Practise, as appropriate.

2. Why we ask for information about criminal convictions

1. The University has a duty of care to students, staff and the wider community. As part of this we ask all applicants who accept a place at Edge Hill and all current students to disclose any relevant unspent criminal convictions or investigations. This enables us to identify, assess and manage any potential risk to the University community, where relevant, ensure regulatory compliance and offer you support where appropriate. In doing so, we aim to

ensure that any information requested is relevant, proportionate, and used in a way that supports fair access to education.

2. When you declare a conviction, we will check whether you have applied for or are registered to a programme which requires a DBS certificate.
3. Applicants and students are required to declare all unspent criminal convictions. However, not all convictions will be considered relevant to the University's decision-making. We will assess relevance based on the circumstances of your specific case.
4. You should also disclose your conviction if it was made by a court outside of Great Britain and would not be considered spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If you are an international student, the University will consider any criminal conviction disclosure in accordance with the UKVI requirements.

What is a relevant criminal conviction?

5. When assessing a student's suitability for professional practice placement, registration or continued study, the University may consider any outcome from a criminal court, or any other out of court disposal where appropriate.
6. In assessing relevance, the University will consider several factors including the nature and seriousness of the offence. Particular concern is more likely to arise in cases involving serious offences that may present a risk to others, for example:
 - Any kind of violence including (but not limited to) threatening behaviour, offences concerning the intention to harm or offences which resulted in actual bodily harm
 - Offences listed in the Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - The unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking
 - Offences involving firearms
 - Offences involving arson
 - Offences listed in the Terrorism Act 2006

This list is not exhaustive, and all cases will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific circumstances and context

How we will handle your application if you declare a criminal conviction

7. We will consider your criminal conviction separately from the rest of your application and may ask you for more information about your conviction. We may also consider your conviction at a Risk Assessment Panel ([Section 4](#)).
8. If we are satisfied that the University can manage or mitigate any associated risk and provide any necessary support, your application will proceed, however your offer may include certain necessary conditions.

9. If we decide your application cannot proceed, we will notify you in writing as soon as possible.
10. Please note: Failure to declare an unspent criminal conviction could result in your application being withdrawn. It is also your responsibility to let us know when your conviction becomes spent.

Convictions received during the application process

11. If you are convicted of a criminal offence at any point during the application process, you must inform the University Admissions Team as soon as possible. If you are complying with any court conditions (eg, paying a fine) or become the subject of a criminal investigation during the application process it is preferable that you inform us however, this is not a requirement, unless you are studying on a regulated programme.

Convictions received when you are a student

12. If this happens you must inform the Student Casework Team as soon as possible. You may also wish to discuss the matter with your personal tutor or other trusted staff member.
13. These steps apply whether your offence is within the University community (eg against a student) or have no association with the University community.
14. Please remember that if you declare a criminal conviction as an Edge Hill student, you can access wellbeing and practical support at the University. There are more details in [Section 8](#).

3. Regulated and non-regulated programmes

1. The University offers some programmes which enable a variety of associations with external bodies. These include programmes which are regulated and enable qualifying students to be accepted into a specified profession or apply for membership or registration with a specific professional body. Many of these programmes require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

For programmes requiring an enhanced DBS certificate

2. If you apply for or are currently enrolled on a programme requiring an enhanced DBS certificate, your case will be referred to the relevant faculty for initial consideration.
3. The procedure for consideration will differ depending on the profession concerned. Please refer to the programme handbook or webpage for your specific programme for information.

If you are an applicant

4. If a conviction or caution appears on your DBS certificate, you will be required to attend a faculty panel meeting. Local arrangements are in place for all

panels. However, the panel will normally include Edge Hill University staff, including a safeguarding officer and an external practise partner.

5. The purpose of this meeting is to consider all aspects of the disclosure, including spent convictions, cautions and reprimands. The panel will ascertain whether the conviction or caution is likely to prevent you from working with children or vulnerable adults and to address professional issues. They will also assess if you demonstrate the professional qualities required to meet the professional standard and have due regard to the requirements of the professional regulator.
6. In relation to professional issues, the panel will assess your personal qualities, insight and reflection through questioning. They may ask you to think about how you would respond in real life scenarios or answer certain questions when applying for future posts where the employer requires a DBS certificate.
7. Attendance at the panel meeting is mandatory in order to meet the entry condition of 'satisfactory DBS clearance'. If you do not attend the meeting or ask for it to be rescheduled, your admission or enrolment will not be confirmed. You will not be able to commence/continue with your programme and the University will withdraw its offer of a place on the programme.
8. The panel will consider the information on your DBS Enhanced Disclosure together with your responses, conduct and insight at the meeting. Having done this, they may conclude that you do not satisfy the requirements for entry to the programme and will therefore withdraw the offer of a place.
9. In certain circumstances, the University may also refer your details to the appropriate PSRB (eg DfE, NMC, GSCC etc) as required by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
10. We will inform you in writing of the review outcome within 10 working days of receiving your request for review.

If you are a current student

11. After initial consideration, the faculty may refer you to the University's Fitness to Practise procedure or require you to attend another DBS panel meeting depending on the outcome. Where appropriate, the University may need to report the outcome to the relevant professional body. The procedures for Fitness to Practise Panels are detailed in Appendix 17 of the Academic Regulations.
12. Please note, the University may be required to disclose the panel's decisions to any relevant PSRB.

4. Risk assessment panels for non-DBS programmes

1. We may hold a risk assessment panel under this procedure in the following circumstances:
 - When you, as an applicant or current student, declare an unspent criminal conviction to the University and there is no DBS requirement

- When you, as an applicant declare a criminal investigation to the University and there is no DBS requirement
- 2. The purpose of the panel will differ depending on whether you are an applicant or a current student. This reflects the need to balance decisions about admission with the ongoing management of risk and support for those already enrolled.
- 3. The Student Casework Team convenes all risk panels under this procedure and will communicate with you throughout the process.
- 4. Whether you are an applicant or a current student, the University reserves the right to hold a Risk Assessment Panel at any stage of the application or enrolment process where it is deemed necessary.
- 5. The panel will comprise the following:
 - Chair – this will be a senior manager of the University from a faculty or support area other than your own
 - Two other members of academic staff who have had no previous direct involvement with you
- 6. You will be invited to attend the panel to provide information on your case and update the panel on any relevant context to consider. You have the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a friend. Please read Appendix 23 (Role of a Student's Friend) for more details. This will be explained to you in your invitation to the meeting.
- 7. Should you decide not to attend the panel, an outcome will be determined in your absence

The panel meeting

- 8. The remit of the panel is to consider the disclosure and undertake a risk assessment.
- 9. The panel will consider the following:
 - The seriousness of the offence, including any aggravating factors, and its relevance to the safety of the students, staff, children, adults at risk and/or the public
 - Evidence of rehabilitation, time elapsed since the offence, and your progress since that time
 - Any information you provide regarding your personal circumstances at the time of the offence and any evidence or remorse/motivation for change
 - Any pattern of offending, lack of insight or lack of accountability
 - If appropriate, information provided by relevant external agencies
 - Any other information presented

10. When all information has been presented, the panel will deliberate in private. Panel members must base their decision on the evidence that has been presented to them.

Panel outcomes

11. Following consideration and deliberation, the panel will decide which of the following outcomes is appropriate:
 - The risk to the University can be managed with no further action
 - The risk to the University can be managed but restrictions on the applicant/student should be applied. Such restrictions include, but are not limited to, being refused or asked to leave campus accommodation or being given specific arrangements for when you can attend campus
 - The risk to the University cannot be reasonably managed and the application/student should be withdrawn.
12. In exceptional circumstances, where an award has already been conferred, the Panel may determine that revocation of the award should be considered. In such cases, the Panel will make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor or nominee from the University Executive, for a final decision.
13. The Student Casework Team will inform you in writing of the panel's decision and any restrictions/conditions within five working days of the decision being made. This notification will include a summary of the meeting, including the reasons why the panel made its decision, and will also advise you of your right to lodge an appeal.

5. Right of appeal

1. If you are dissatisfied with an outcome you may request a review of the decision, however your request must meet one or more of the following grounds:
 - There has been a procedural irregularity in the process
 - The panel's decision is unreasonable
 - There is new evidence that, for good reason, was not made previously available to the University or panel
2. To request a review, please complete the DBS appeal form, available on the [Student Casework Team webpages](#). You must request a review of the decision within 10 working days of receiving your outcome letter. Please ensure you clearly state which ground you are appealing under and provide information/evidence to support your claim.
3. Please note that disagreement with the panel's decision is not, of itself, ground for review.

4. A senior member of university staff who has not been involved in your case will undertake the review and may undertake further investigations as they deem necessary.
5. The purpose of a review is not to re-hear the case but to check that the process has been followed correctly and that the outcome was broadly consistent with similar cases. If you have provided substantial new evidence, the reviewer may consult with the Chair of the original panel.
6. We will inform you in writing of the review outcome within 10 working days of receiving your request for review. This ends the University's process and there is no further right of appeal within the University. We will provide you with a Completion of Procedures letter.

6. How we will communicate with you during this process

1. We will use a variety of methods to communicate with you including telephone, email, text, face to face and online meetings.
2. It is your responsibility to make sure we have the correct contact details for you and to check your emails regularly. We will save all correspondence relating to your case.
3. If you are a current student, our main way of communicating information will be via email (which may include letter attachments). When we email you we will use your university email address.
4. Access to your university account will normally remain open during this process, including for any appeal. However, if access to your University account has been removed during this or another process, we will use the alternative email address you provided at enrolment/registration.

7. Timeframes

1. This procedure specifies time for us and you to provide or respond to information.
2. We understand that being part of a formal process can be concerning and we always aim to conduct our investigations, meetings and appeals as quickly as possible.
3. We will keep you informed about the progress of your case and ensure you are able to access any support you require and will communicate any changes as necessary to other parties involved.
4. We expect you to update us regularly and communicate any changes to your situation in a timely manner.
5. Please note, our timeframes do not include public holidays or University closure days.

8. Support for you

Reasonable adjustments

6. If you decide to share information about a disability or condition, we can talk about any reasonable adjustments which may make it easier for you to participate fully in this process.
7. The kinds of reasonable adjustments we can make include, for example:
 - Extending a deadline or changing a panel date if your condition prevents you from meeting the original commitments.
 - Holding a meeting (including panel meeting) online rather than in person.
 - Accepting a written statement from you instead of attending a meeting.
 - Pausing the process and re-starting it when you are well.
 - Providing documents to you in hard copy and/or your preferred format, font, colour or size.
8. If you wish to request any reasonable adjustments, you must do so by emailing the Head of Student Casework with your request at least five working days before the meeting takes place. We cannot guarantee that all requests will be met.
9. Adjustments we cannot make, or which we deem to be unreasonable include, for example:
 - Exempting you from adhering to any element of the procedure which fundamentally changes the procedure or challenges its validity.
 - Altering any element of the existing procedure which fundamentally changes the procedure or challenges its validity or which sets a precedent that may disadvantage other students now or in the future.
 - Deviations from the procedure which would invalidate the procedure itself.

Sources of support

For applicants

10. Please contact the Admissions Team for information and queries about your application. For other support, please refer to the list of external sources of support appended to this document.

For current students

11. Support will be considered alongside any risk management measures to enable continuation of study wherever possible.
12. Support is available to you at all stages of this process, University sources of support include the following:
 - [Edge Hill Student's Union Advice Centre](#) (SU). The SU can help you navigate the various University processes and can also accompany you to panel meetings. Please read Role of the Student's Friend for more

details and information regarding on the University's position on legal representation during an internal process.

- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Team](#) who can provide emotional support during this process
- [Edge Well 24/7 student assistance programme](#) provides immediate, confidential and professional support
- The [Student Support Team](#)
- [Inclusion Team](#) or [SpLD](#) if you require any reasonable adjustments throughout the process.
- [Student Services](#) can also provide money advice and career support
- Disability support services/Occupational Health services
- Your personal tutor.

There is also a list of external sources of support appended to this document.

9. Record keeping and data sharing

1. Records are retained in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule.
2. We are committed to handling information about criminal convictions sensitively and proportionately, ensuring that it is only retained and shared where necessary and in line with legal requirements.

Disclosure to PSRBs and the DBS

3. The University follows the Data Protection Act 2018 when handling personal information. Accordingly, all students' personal and sensitive information is held securely and confidentially and is only shared when legitimate and necessary.
4. Ordinarily, consent will be obtained before a student's personal information is shared. However, information may be shared without direct consent where it is deemed that there is potential risk to colleagues, the public and/or the student.
5. The University reserves the right to report any findings it has made about a student under this procedure to the relevant PSRB, regulator or other appropriate bodies.
6. In accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the University is also under a legal duty to refer to the DBS any person who:
 - has harmed, or poses a risk of harm as a result of their conduct to a child or vulnerable adult
 - satisfied the harm test (ie. They have taken no action to harm a child or vulnerable adult, but the potential exists that they may do so in the future)
 - has been convicted of, or received a caution for, a relevant offence

Key to relevant documents

- [Appendix 17: Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Appendix 23: Role of a Student's Friend](#)
- [Non-Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)

Annexes

Annex A – Risk assessment panel agenda

Prior to the formal commencement of the meeting, panel members will deliberate in private to agree any areas which they believe require discussion.

1. The Chair will invite you to join the meeting and will
 - Welcome you and introduce each member of the panel
 - Outline the panel's remit and the procedure that will be followed
 - Confirm there is no conflict of interest between you and any panel member
2. The Chair will outline the reasons you have been invited to the panel
3. You will be invited to respond to each of the concerns raised
4. The Chair will then invite questions from panel members
5. When the Chair is satisfied that the panel has received all of the relevant information and evidence, they will ask if you have anything further to add. The Chair will also ask whether you feel you have had a fair opportunity to present your case to the panel.
6. The Chair will explain the next steps. That is, panel members will deliberate in private and you will be notified of the outcome in writing within five working days of the panel meeting taking place
7. The meeting will close and you will be asked to leave
8. Panel members will then discuss the evidence heard and your responses. Basing their decisions on the evidence presented to them, they will agree on one of the following outcomes:
 - The risk to the University can be managed with no further action
 - The risk to the University can be managed but restrictions on the applicant/student should be applied. Such restrictions include, but are not limited to, being refused or asked to leave campus accommodation or being given specific arrangements for when you can attend campus
 - The risk to the University cannot be reasonably managed and the application/student should be withdrawn.

Annex B – External sources of support

[Nacro](#): This charity works with people facing challenging circumstances to provide the support and skills they need to succeed.

Call: 0300 123 1889

Email: contactus@nacro.org.uk

For information and advice for people with criminal records and queries about DBS checks, please contact Nacro's Criminal Record Support Service:

Call: 0300 123 1999

Email: helpline@nacro.org.uk

[Unlock](#): This organisation supports and advocates for people with criminal records in England and Wales to move on positively in their lives.

Call the Helpline: 01634 247 350 Monday-Friday, 8.45am to 4.15pm

Message or WhatsApp: 07824 113 848

[Email about your own criminal record](#): This link takes you to a contact form

[The Samaritans](#): 24/7 confidential telephone support and advice in times of crisis. You do not have to be suicidal to call The Samaritans

Call: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org.uk.

[Hopeline247](#): confidential support and advice if you're having thoughts of suicide

Call: 0800 068 4141

Text: 07860 039 967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

[SHOUT](#) Free, confidential and anonymous. 24/7 crisis service

Text: 85258

[Hub of Hope](#) – this is a database of all available mental health support. Type in your postcode and it will direct you to your nearest mental health support services.

[NHS 24/7 Crisis Line \(Lancashire and South Cumbria\)](#): 0800 953 0110

[NHS111 website](#) contains information on how you can access mental health support

[Find your nearest A&E online](#) if you are in crisis and need to attend A&E

NHS Non-emergency: 111

Police Non-emergency: 101

End matter

Item	Information
Title	Appendix 18: Operation of Criminal Conviction Panels
Policy Owner	Director of Academic Registry
Policy Manager	Head of Student Casework
Approved by	Regulations Review Sub-Committee
Date of Approval	July 2026
Date for Review	July 2027