

# Honorary Degrees - Procedure Guide

## 1. Introduction

This procedural guide is based on University of Edinburgh Resolution No. 6/1972 and on decisions by the Honorary Degrees Committee and the Senatus.

## 2. Degrees which may be conferred:

2.1 The Degrees which may be conferred honoris causa by the University of Edinburgh are:-

- Doctor of Divinity (DD)
- Doctor of Laws (LLD)
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)
- Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)
- Doctor of Music (DMus)
- Doctor of Science in Social Science (DSc (Social Science))
- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (DVM&S)
- Master of Arts (MA)
- Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Doctor of Education (DEd)

2.2 The University may also confer the Degree of Doctor honoris causa (Dr h c).

## 3. Eligibility

3.1 The conferring upon any person of an Honorary Degree shall not qualify that person to become a candidate for any Degree or Diploma, eligibility for which is confined by Ordinance, Resolution or Regulation University graduates; it shall, however, entitle that person to become automatically a member of the General Council.

3.2 No Honorary Degree shall be conferred upon a person on the payroll of the University, except that the Honorary Degree of Master of Arts or the Honorary Degree of Bachelor of Science may be so conferred, in recognition of long service or exceptional merit, upon a person who is not already a graduate of the University.

3.3 The Degree of Doctor honoris causa may be conferred on grounds other than scholarship, but other Honorary Degrees carrying the title of Doctor shall not be so conferred save most exceptionally.

3.4 No application from any person desirous of receiving any Honorary Degree shall be entertained.

## 4. Honorary Degrees Committee

The Honorary Degrees Committee is appointed annually by Senatus and consists of the Principal and such other members of Senatus as determined from time to time by Senatus. The duty of the Committee is to select persons to be recommended to Senatus for the conferment of Honorary Degrees.

## 5. Nominations Procedure

**5.1** The Secretary to the Committee writes to the Heads of Colleges and asks for details of the College nomination(s) to be submitted, with a note including the College's priorities for the awards, by late April that year.

**5.2 (a)** All members of Senatus have the right to put forward nominations for Honorary Degrees to be awarded on the basis of international academic distinction. These should normally be submitted to the appropriate College in the first instance. Exceptionally, such a nomination may be sent direct to the Secretary to the Honorary Degrees Committee if there is good reason why it should be considered without delay.

(b) Nominations or suggestions for Honorary Degrees to be awarded on other grounds may be sent direct to the Secretary to the Honorary Degrees Committee by any member of the University community. Nominations for the degree of Doctor honoris causa should meet the following criteria;

- Outstanding personal contributions to the work and development of the University - in the case of (normally former) members of staff, extending beyond their immediate area of responsibility;
- Outstanding social, economic or cultural contribution to Edinburgh or Scotland;
- Outstanding work, public service or contribution to society more generally in areas of particular relevance to the University's values and mission;
- Outstanding achievement by an alumnus/a, especially combined with one of the above.

**5.3** Each College may put forward no more than one nomination for degrees listed in 2.1 above for each of the graduation ceremonies at which degrees taught in the College will be conferred and one nomination for the degree of Doctor honoris causa, although it should be understood that the number of Honorary Degrees each year is not constant.

**5.4** Nominations in respect of Degrees to be conferred will normally be considered by the Committee in late Spring and recommendations conveyed to the first meeting of Senatus thereafter.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** It is important from the beginning of the process of nomination through to the point at which a decision is reached and the successful candidates have been invited by the Principal, that a high level of confidentiality be maintained. It would be a major embarrassment if a nominee was made aware of their nomination and was then subsequently unsuccessful. Equally it would be

embarrassing for the University if there was disclosure in the public domain prior to the successful nominees receiving official notification from the Principal.

## **6. Format of Nominations**

This nomination must be written under Freedom of Information guidelines. Please try and restrict your information to what is available in the public domain. Where it is necessary to include private information this must be clearly marked as such, i.e. "Information not in the public domain".

Nominations should be submitted on the forms provided by the Secretary to the Committee (please note that a nomination not submitted in the following format is difficult to assess and the nomination is thus likely to be undermined):

- (a) a completed nomination form
- (b)(i) a supporting submission on page 2 of the above PDF Form, which contains an introductory statement setting forth the principal grounds for the distinction;
- (ii) a brief chronological, narrative account of the nominee's life and work;
- (iii) an outline of the nominee's most significant academic or other achievements;
- (iv) an assessment of his/her standing on a basis of international comparison or in the life of the nation;
- (v) Edinburgh connection or link (please provide evidence of what benefit has been received within the University or the City); and
- (vi) any other information the proposer would wish to bring to the attention of the Committee.
- (c) nominations should be accompanied by details of the nominees' published works in an Appendix.

- [Nomination form](#)

## **7. Recommendations to Senatus**

**7.1** The Honorary Degrees Committee shall submit a Motion for the award of Honorary Degrees in the form of a written report which shall be made available to members of Senatus at least two days before the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be presented.

**7.2** The names of those recommended for Honorary Degrees are confidential until approved by Senatus and offers have been accepted by candidates.

NB: Nomination must be prepared using freedom of information guidelines - for detailed information see the Records Management website.

- [Records Management website](#)