
Protocol for the award of UCD Honorary Degrees



University Secretariat
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Introduction

The Academic Council Committee on Honorary Degrees and Major Awards authorizes the award of honorary degrees and retains oversight of the award of major public awards on behalf of, and on the delegated authority of Academic Council. The following protocol has been reviewed and approved by Academic Council.

NOMINATION PROTOCOL

Who can nominate?

The President may make proposals directly to the Committee. Any other member of the University community may propose a nominee to the relevant College Principal/Vice-President. The College Principal/Vice-President will submit the application to the ACCHDMA Secretariat by the advertised submission deadlines for consideration at the next scheduled meeting of the committee.

What are the criteria for nomination?

The purpose of these awards is to recognise distinguished individuals for their sustained excellence in scholarly, scientific or artistic endeavour. In addition, outstanding professional or philanthropic activity to advance the public good may also be honoured. Nominees with a significant connection to the University are particularly welcome.

In choosing recipients for this honour the University shall be mindful of the reputational benefit that may flow from its association with persons of singular distinction and probity. In that sense, the award honours both the recipient and the institution.

Individuals proposed must demonstrate one or more of the following attributes, either in his/her own right, or in a representative capacity:

- Academic distinction in their field of scholarship or creativity
- Exceptional achievement in a field other than academia
- Outstanding contribution to the mission of the University

The University does not award honorary degrees to current faculty or staff, or to serving members of the Governing Authority or other University boards or bodies.

How and when to nominate?

In Spring of each year, the President will issue a call to all faculty and staff, inviting them to prepare nomination proposals for the award of honorary degrees in the subsequent academic session. Such proposals shall be aligned to any of the discipline-specific graduation ceremonies. Proposals are submitted directly to the relevant College Principal, or Vice-President in the case of support units. College Principals or Vice-Presidents will review the merits of the proposal so that a case may formally be presented to the committee. The mechanism for advance review is a matter for the individual College/Support Unit to determine provided the process is robust, clear and strictly confidential, and results in a submission from the College Principal/Vice-President to ACCHDMA. The submission of a given proposal by a College Principal/Vice-President implies that the merits of a case and its financial

implications have been considered in full, and that s/he is in a position to formally present the case to the committee.

Where the Principal or Vice-President does not consider a proposal has sufficient merit, the nominator should be informed. The nominator may at their discretion submit the proposal directly to the ACCHDMA Secretariat for consideration by the committee noting that endorsement was not forthcoming from the College Principal or Vice-President. Proposals must be submitted to the ACCHDMA Secretariat on the pro forma template, with supporting documentation, by the June submission deadline advertised. At all stages of the nomination process, confidentiality must be strictly observed.

SELECTION PROTOCOL

The ACCHDMA secretariat will circulate all nominations and supporting documentation received by the June submission deadline to members of the Committee for advance review (normally, no later than ten days before a scheduled Committee meeting). In each case, the Chair will appoint a member of the committee to act as “devil’s advocate” to screen a given nomination in greater detail, verifying the details of the application through data searches and gathering further information and/or advice from the relevant College Principal as required in order to satisfy the Committee that the nomination is valid, that the nominee meets the criteria outlined, and that his/her achievements reflect the ethos and vision of the institution.

ACCHDMA will meet once per academic session, normally in September, and will review and consider all proposals submitted. Where a significant number of proposals are received, it may be necessary to convene a preliminary meeting of ACCHDMA for the purposes of *prima facie* consideration.

Proposals will be considered with reference to the criteria outlined above, and the final list of approved candidates will wherever possible be broadly representative of discipline, gender, age and nationality. A proposal to award an honorary degree must be supported by two-thirds or more of the members present and voting in order for the committee to recommend the award of the degree. Where the committee considers that award of an honorary degree to a particular candidate is potentially controversial, a risk assessment exercise may be undertaken by a sub-committee of ACCHDMA subsequent to the meeting. The sub-committee will conduct a more thorough evaluation of the candidate’s suitability and will present their final recommendation at a special meeting of ACCHDMA convened to consider the findings of this exercise before agreeing to recommend the award of an honorary degree.

Normally, no more than 12 candidates will be approved for awards. Honorary degrees conferred at scheduled graduation ceremonies during the year will allow these recipients to act as role models for the graduates of the discipline concerned.

Where the number of honorary degree candidates approved by ACCHDMA exceeds 12 in any given academic session, College Principals will be advised to re-submit certain nominations in a subsequent academic session.

Where the Committee recommends the award of an honorary degree, the President, or a member of the University acting on behalf of the President, will approach the candidate to determine if they will accept the degree.

Where a candidate recommended by the Committee is willing and in a position to accept the degree, the University will usually confer the degree at the relevant discipline- specific graduation ceremony.

Where a candidate indicates that they will accept an honorary degree and is to be conferred, their candidacy will be brought to the attention of the next meeting of Academic Council and the next meeting of Governing Authority as an item for noting. University Relations will then communicate details of upcoming honorary conferring ceremonies to all staff in advance of same.