

Protocol for the award of UCD Honorary Degrees and Major Awards



University Secretariat, September 2018

1. Introduction

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

2. Who can nominate?

Any member of the University faculty and staff may propose a nominee for an Honorary Degree or Ulysses Medal 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 by the Committee. The President may make proposals directly to the Committee.

3. Nomination criteria

Honorary degrees are conferred on awardees 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. A significant connection to the University in some capacity is also a criterion in the evaluation of nominees.

The *Ulysses Medal* is the highest academic honour that the University can bestow and is awarded to those whose work has made an outstanding global contribution. The Medal was inaugurated as part of UCD's sesquicentennial celebrations in 2004 and celebrates the creative brilliance of our alumnus James Joyce.

In choosing recipients for these honours 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, honorary degrees and Ulysses Medals honour both the recipients and the institution.

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

Honorary Degrees:

- 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 categories of Honorary Degrees available for award as per the National University of Ireland (NUI) categories are as follows:

- Doctor of Arts (DArts)
- Doctor of Celtic Studies (DLittCelt)
- Doctor of Economic Science (DEconSc)
- Doctor of Education (DEd)
- Doctor of Engineering (DEng)
- Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA)
- Doctor of Laws (LLD)
- Doctor of Literature (DLitt)
- Doctor of Medicine (DMed)
- Doctor of Music (DMus)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)

Ulysses Medals:

- Distinction in the arts, science or other field of scholarship or creativity

The University does not award honorary degrees or Ulysses Medals to current faculty or staff or to serving members of the Governing Authority or other University boards or bodies and does not award degrees or the Ulysses medal posthumously or *in absentia*.

4. Nomination procedure

Twice a year, in October and April, the President will issue a call to all faculty and staff, inviting them to prepare nomination proposals for the award of honorary degrees and Ulysses Medals. Proposals are submitted directly to the relevant College Principal, or Vice-President in the case of support units, who formally submits the nominations to University Secretariat. 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 via University Secretariat. 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 they are 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 University Secretariat for consideration by the committee noting that endorsement was not forthcoming from the College Principal or Vice-President.

Proposals must be submitted on the pro forma template, with supporting documentation, by the submission deadline advertised in the President's call. At all stages of the nomination process, confidentiality must be strictly observed; as such, nominees should not be notified of their nomination in advance, and no communication should be made by proposers to nominees around nominations. Successful nominees will be contacted after the completion of the process. Proposers will need to provide a postal address if the nomination is approved. Under no circumstances should a postal address be provided as part of the nomination process.

Where a nominee is resubmitted for consideration after having not been approved previously by the Committee, University Secretariat will include the original Devil's Advocate report from the initial submission, along with any available relevant minute of the Committee's deliberation, to accompany the resubmitted nomination to the Committee.

Normally, nominations from Colleges and support units should reflect adequate gender representation on an individual basis i.e. with at least one male and one female nominee. In situations where nominations received by the relevant deadline do not reflect adequate gender balance (i.e. 40% of either gender not represented among the nominees), the Chair will liaise with College Principals and Vice-Presidents with a view to encouraging further nominees to address the imbalance.

5. Formal Consideration of Nominees

Ahead of meetings of ACCHDMA, University Secretariat will circulate all valid nominations (i.e. those submitted by appropriate deadlines and on relevant documentation) and supporting documentation received 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 consider 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 their achievements reflect the ethos and vision of the institution. The Devil's Advocates' reports will be circulated to the Committee, along with nominees' nomination papers, ahead of formal meetings.

ACCHDMA will meet twice per academic session, normally in September and March, and will consider all proposals as prepared by University Secretariat. 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.

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 and consideration of the nomination shall be postponed. The sub-committee will conduct a more thorough evaluation of the candidate's suitability and will present their final recommendation at the next meeting of ACCHDMA for consideration.

Proposals will be considered with reference to the criteria outlined in section 3 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 will be approved by consensus.

Normally, no more than one candidate will receive an award at each conferring ceremony.

Where the Committee recommends the award of an honorary degree or Ulysses medal, 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.

6. Electronic Consultation of ACCHDMA

Only nominees for Ulysses Medals are to be considered electronically by ACCHDMA, and only in exceptional circumstances with the approval and at the discretion of the Chair. The imminent presence of a potential candidate on campus will not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance for the expedited award of a Ulysses Medal.

Nominees for Ulysses Medals which do not fall within the usual meeting cycle of ACCHDMA should be submitted to University Secretariat stating the reasons for its submission outside of the normal cycle. University Secretariat will obtain a Devil's Advocate report as per normal procedure and the ACCHDMA membership will be consulted via email by University Secretariat within a schedule approved by the Chair. Communication of decisions made by electronic consultation will follow the procedure outlined below.

7. Communication of ACCHDMA decisions

In the case of nominees approved for award by ACCHDMA, University Secretariat will implement recommendations as follows:

Honorary Degrees

- University Secretariat will issue a list of approved nominees for honorary degrees to the Conferring Unit, President's Office, along with their associated nomination papers. This list will also be presented to the committee.
- The relevant College Principal, Vice-President or proposer will be advised to contact the President's Office directly with a contact address for the relevant approved nominee.
- The President's Office will contact approved nominees individually with a view to ascertaining their willingness to accept an honorary degree. The approved nominees will also be invited to present an address to an appropriate conferring ceremony at this time. It is not a requirement for approved nominees to present an address.
- The Conferring Unit will then schedule conferring of honorary degrees as appropriate. As stated in section 4 above, proposers should not communicate with nominees around nominations.
- The Conferring Unit or the President's Office will inform the relevant College Principals, Vice-Presidents and University Secretariat of the confirmed conferring dates and times as soon as possible.
- It is important that confirmed conferring dates and acceptance of honorary degrees is communicated as early as possible to facilitate communication of decisions to Academic Council and Governing Authority and to ensure appropriate arrangements can be made by the relevant College or Unit.

- The Conferring Unit will communicate details of upcoming honorary conferrings to each College Principal for onward communication to interested faculty and staff.

Ulysses Medals

University Secretariat will communicate ACCHDMA's approval for the award of a Ulysses Medal on a particular nominee to the President's Office, Principal of the nominating College, appropriate Vice President or proposer in case of direct nominations, and the Director of Communications. The College Principal/Vice-President/proposer will then liaise with the President's Office and UCD University Relations in arranging the award of the Medal to the recipient.

In the case of nominees not approved for award by ACCHDMA, University Secretariat will communicate the decision formally to the appropriate College Principal, Vice-President, or proposer (in case of direct nomination) as soon as possible after the meeting. The College Principal or Vice-President will in turn communicate this decision to the original proposer, if appropriate.

8. Award of honorary degrees

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.

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, and as such awardees may be invited to give an address at the relevant conferring ceremony. Normally, each graduation ceremony held by the University will confer no more than one honorary degree on an individual from an associated College or discipline.

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.

9. Award of Ulysses Medals

In recognition of the Ulysses Medal's status as the highest honour bestowed by the University, nominating Colleges and Units should ensure that appropriate ceremony and procedure be followed in its award. As stated in section 6 above, College Principals or Vice Presidents (as appropriate) should liaise with the President's Office and UCD University Relations to ensure that sufficient weight and consideration is given to the conferring of such awards.

While the individual circumstances of Ulysses Medal events may vary between disciplines and environments, given the status of the award the following should be considered when planning events

- Where possible, the President should formally bestow the Medal on the awardee, and introduce them based on liaison with the appropriate College Principal/Vice-President
- Ulysses Medals should be bestowed at a special university event organised for the purpose of honouring the awardee.
- Awardees should be invited to present an address, participate in an open interview, or otherwise engage with an invited audience in a way which formally demonstrates the status of the award and burnishes the reputation of the University
- University Relations should work with the appropriate College Principal/Vice-President to ensure that appropriate and productive publicity opportunities are availed of around the award