

Procedure for the Award of UCD Honorary Degrees and Major Awards

Sponsor: Academic Council Committee Honorary Degrees and Major Awards ACCHDMA



In keeping with the University's Policy Management Framework, the Procedure for the award of UCD Honorary Degrees and Major Awards will comply with legislation and Codes of Practice and be consistent with existing University Statutes, Regulations, and other Policies.

1. Introduction

The Academic Council Committee on Honorary Degrees and Major Awards (ACCHDMA) 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 procedure has been reviewed and approved by ACCHDMA.

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, in accordance with the below requirements, 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 based on one or more of the following criteria:

- a) To recognise distinguished individuals for their sustained excellence in scholarly, scientific or artistic endeavour.
- b) To recognise outstanding professional or philanthropic activity to advance the public good.
- c) To recognise a significant connection to the University in some capacity.

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 arise 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. Before agreeing to confer an honorary degree or Ulysses medal, ACCHDMA should satisfy itself that the recipient and their achievements reflect the ethos, vision, and values of UCD. College Principals and Vice-Presidents are urged to exercise discretion when submitting the final list of nominees, being cognisant of the status of these awards.

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

Honorary Degrees:

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)

Selecting the appropriate Honorary Degree award category:

Three award categories can also be proposed for a generic award: LLD, DLitt and DSc. A generic award category should be selected for a candidate whose achievements are not based on academic merit. For candidates who have distinguished themselves in an academic field, a specific award category reflecting the specific discipline should be selected.

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

Normally 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 forms 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 proposal so that a case may 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 in accordance with local GDPR procedures and is reflective of the data protection principles outlined under section 10 of these Procedures.

Prior to submission to the Committee, the College Principal/Vice-President must seek confirmation from the College Vice-Principal for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) or

equivalent person that the proposed nominees align with the EDI mission of the University. Nominations from each College/Unit should comprise no more than 50% of any one gender.

The submission of a given proposal by a College Principal/Vice-President implies that the merits of a case, its financial implications and its alignment with the University's EDI mission have been considered in full and that they are in a position to present the case to the Committee. College Principals/Vice-Presidents reserve the right to defer submissions to a future meeting of the ACCHDMA, for example, in instances where an excess of nominations for any one gender are received. In such a case personal data collected should not be reused without updating it to assure the proposal is up-to-date and correct.

Where the Principal or Vice-President does not approve the nomination, they should inform the proposer. The proposer 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, by the submission deadline advertised in the President's call. At all stages of the nomination process, confidentiality must be strictly observed. As such, proposers must not:

- Notify nominees in advance of the meeting;
- Communicate with nominees with regard to their nomination in any way;
- Share personal data of nominees (for example, contact details) in advance of the ACCHDMA meeting. Proposers may 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 minute of the Committee's original deliberation, to accompany the resubmitted nomination to the Committee.

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 the interest of protecting decision-making, University Secretariat will redact the name of the proposer for each award on these documents.

In each case, the Chair will appoint a member of the Committee to act as an "Independent Commentator" to consider a given nomination in greater detail, to satisfy the Committee that the nomination is valid, that the nominee meets the criteria outlined, and that their achievements reflect the ethos, vision and values of the institution. The 'Independent Commentator' reports are based on publicly available information and will be circulated to the Committee, along with nominees' nomination papers, ahead of formal meetings.

ACCHDMA normally meet twice per academic session following a call for nominations issued by the President 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. The Committee reserves the right to defer consideration on a nomination to a future meeting.

Where the Committee considers that awarding an honorary degree or major award in a certain instance might prove controversial, a risk assessment exercise may be undertaken by a sub-committee of ACCHDMA and consideration of any affected nomination shall be postponed. The risk assessment should concern itself with the factors giving rise to concern in a generic sense and it should not focus on a particular candidate or candidates. The sub-committee will present its final recommendation to 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 in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference.

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

The Committee reserves the right to rescind an Honorary Degree or Ulysses Medal at any stage following award.

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 an Independent Commentator 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

As outlined in Section 4 above, no communication should take place between the proposer and the nominee. Follow up communication is completed centrally in accordance with the below agreed steps.

Note that there is no standard timeline within which Honorary Degrees and Ulysses Medals are awarded to approved nominees.

Honorary Degrees

Action	Completed By	Timeline
List of approved nominees for award sent to the Conferring Unit and the President's Office, along with the associated nomination papers.	University Secretariat	Directly after meeting.
The proposer will be contacted confirming the Committee's decision and asked to submit contact details for the relevant approved nominee. The Conferring Unit and the President's Office will be cc'd on this communication.	University Secretariat	Directly after meeting.
Approved nominees will be contacted to confirm their willingness to accept the proposed award.	President's Office	On receipt of contact details.
Conferring Unit will schedule conferring of awards as appropriate and will liaise with approved nominees on their attendance.	Conferring Unit	On confirmation of conferring dates.
College Principals, Vice-Presidents, UCD University Relations Office and University Secretariat will be informed of upcoming conferring dates at which approved nominees will receive their award.	Conferring Unit	On confirmation of nominee's attendance.

Ulysses Medals

Action	Completed By	Timeline
List of approved nominees for award sent 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.	University Secretariat	Directly after meeting.
The UCD Protocol for Organising a Ulysses Medal Presentation Ceremony Form will be sent to the proposer and relevant administrator in nominating College.	President's Office	
Once the ACCHDMA has approved a recommendation for the award of a Ulysses Medal the College or Unit which has proposed the candidate must complete and return the Presentation Ceremony Form to the President's Office and the UCD University Relations Office.	Relevant College / Unit	On receipt of approval notification.

Approved nominees will be contacted to confirm their willingness to accept the proposed award.	President's Office	On receipt of contact details.
College Principals, Vice-Presidents, UCD University Relations Office and University Secretariat will be informed of upcoming conferring dates at which approved nominees will receive their award.	Conferring Unit	On confirmation of nominee's attendance.

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 as determined by the Conferring Unit.

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. It is not a requirement for approved nominees to present an address. 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. 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.

10. Data Protection

ACCHDMA is committed to upholding the principles of the GDPR in the following ways:

1. **Lawfulness, fairness and transparency** – the University’s Act provides a legal basis for awarding degrees, prizes, and other awards and to further the objects of the University. The University developed this policy to define and guide the selection process and its criteria in a clear and consistent manner. The policy is publicly available from the UCD website.
2. **Purpose limitation** – data will only be used for the purpose of making decisions on honorary degrees and major awards.
3. **Data Minimisation** – data collection is limited to publicly available information only, which should focus on trustworthy, authorised sources. The amount of data collected should be limited to what is proportionate and necessary.
4. **Accuracy** – the Independent Commentator Report is used as an accuracy check.
5. **Storage limitation** – a data retention schedule is set-out below.
6. **Security, integrity confidentiality** – data used draw on publicly available data, but the ACCHDMA aims to store any information compiling such data on secure UCD systems, and to provide access to the compiled data on a need-to-know basis.
7. **Accountability** – this document sets out how the Committee undertakes its business. Additionally, any decisions made are recorded in line with university processes.

ACCHDMA Data Retention Schedule

Records pertaining to honorary degrees and major awards (proposal forms, independent commentator reports, electronic communications and hardcopy documentation) shall be retained until the candidate has been conferred / awarded / or has declined, whereupon they will be destroyed. In instances where a nomination has not been successful, records will be destroyed once the minutes of ACCHDMA confirming that decision are approved.

Nominators are advised to dispose of records in accordance with local GDPR practice and University policy.