



University of
St Andrews

Honorary degree guidelines

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Introduction

1. This policy sets out guidelines for the nomination and revocation of honorary degrees.

Overview

2. In awarding an honorary degree the University of St Andrews seeks:
 - to affirm its commitment to excellence;
 - to create enduring ties of affection between the University and the honorand; and
 - to celebrate an individual's outstanding contribution to St Andrews, Scotland or the world.

Nominations

- 3.1 Nominations should be submitted on the appropriate Honorary degree nomination form, see link below.
- 3.2 An existing link to St Andrews is not a pre-requisite to nomination if a potential honoree is of appropriate distinction and if the nomination can demonstrate the value of a future link between the University and the honorand.
- 3.3 As part of its equality and diversity agenda, the University is particularly keen to see nominations of women, BAME, and LGBT+ as well as individuals with another protected characteristic.
- 3.4 All nominations must be proposed and seconded before submission, and one of the signatories must be a member of the professoriate.
- 3.5 The nomination form must state clearly why the nominee is deserving of an honorary degree and those nominating should have regard to the following:
 - the University is less likely to award a degree to a serving politician national or international, but retired politicians may be considered;
 - anyone chairing or running a body from which the University may benefit, such as a research council or other funding council or other funding body is unlikely to be considered eligible for an honorary degree while in that role;
 - the university is also highly unlikely to wish to award honorary degrees to any individual with whom it has an active fund-raising relationship;
 - as honorary degrees are bestowed during graduation ceremonies consideration should also be given to the proposal of potential honorands whose nomination will resonate valuably with the University's student graduands.
- 3.6 Where possible the nomination form should include an indication of whether the nominee is likely to be available and willing to receive the degree in the year in question.
- 3.7 Nominees must not be approached about their nomination. This is to avoid embarrassment or hurt feelings should a nomination be unsuccessful. Proposers and Seconders will be asked to confirm, by means of signing the form, that they understand and commit to this requirement for confidentiality.

- 3.8 Completed forms should be submitted to the Secretary of the committee, Fiona Thompson (fjt71@st-andrews.ac.uk), for consideration by the Honorary Degree Committee.

Honorary Degree Committee

- 4.1 Nominations will be considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee chaired by the Principal and with the membership consisting of the Master of the United College & Deputy Principal, the Senate Assessors, President of the Students' Association, and a small number of senior members of the Professoriate.
- 4.2 In considering nominations the committee will particularly look for evidence of the following:
- (i) the nomination has relevance for Scotland and particularly for St Andrews;
 - (ii) the award affirms the University's core value of excellence and the Principal's priorities of diversity, fairness and inclusivity;
 - (iii) the award would reinforce a continuing beneficial association with the University;
 - (iv) the award is timely, in that a delay might frustrate the intention;
 - (v) the award would, in the context of the list of awards for any given year provide balance between the faculties and between the sexes.
- 4.3 The committee will be mindful that excellence may be demonstrated equally well in academic and non-academic environments. An honorary award may also be and appropriate recognition for a recent employee or member of the University Court who has rendered truly exceptional service to the university.
- 4.4 It is essential that confidentiality is maintained throughout the nomination process. The Principal's Office will endeavour to provide feedback in the event that a nomination is unsuccessful.
- 4.5 Nominations may not be successful immediately and may, at the discretion of the committee be carried forward for consideration in a subsequent year.

Guidelines for revocation of honorary degrees

5.1 Honorary degrees are an award, not a qualification, and represent a public association between the University and the recipient. In exceptional circumstances, the University reserves the right to withdraw an honorary degree from a living recipient in the event that the recipient, due to behaviour or actions which become known subsequent to their award, either:

- (i) is considered no longer to uphold the University's core values; and/or
- (ii) through continued association with the University, risks bringing the University into serious disrepute.

5.2 A decision to revoke an Honorary Degree will be taken by majority vote at Senate, on the recommendation of the Honorary Degree Committee.

5.3 Any proposal should be made in writing to the Senate Office, and must include substantial grounds for review having regard to the criteria set out above. Proposals will only

be accepted from University employees, or from matriculated students, in both cases with the support of a member of the University professoriate. The Honorary Degree Committee, taking such advice as it deems appropriate, will consider whether to make a recommendation to the Senate that the Honorary Degree be revoked.

5.4 Should the Honorary Degree Committee recommend revocation; the Honorary Degree may be withdrawn following a majority vote by the Senate. Should the Honorary Degree Committee not recommend revocation, or a proposal to revoke fail to secure a majority vote of Senate, no further action will be taken unless substantial new evidence comes to light that warrants a reconsideration of the case.

5.5 If a revocation is approved by the Senate following a majority vote, then Senate will take such steps as it deems appropriate to inform the recipient.

5.6 Any decision of the Honorary Degree Committee or Senate (as appropriate) in respect of any proposal to revoke is final. Neither the Honorary Degree Committee nor Senate will consider vexatious or repeated proposals in respect of the same facts or circumstances for the same recipient.

Form linked to this policy- [Honorary degree nomination form](#)

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