



University of  
St Andrews

## Honorary degree guidelines

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## Introduction

1. This policy sets out guidelines for the nomination 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](mailto: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.

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

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0.1	Migration and update	Draft	Margaret Sinclair, Senate Office	06/09/2019

0.2	Annual Review	Draft for approval -no substantivechanges	Margaret Sinclair, Senate Office	12/08/20