



Guidelines for Awarding Honorary Degrees

Preamble

An honorary degree is the highest honour bestowed within the power of the University, and as such is a reflection of the University of Guelph's highest aspirations, mission, and values, and in particular where those values are reflected by individuals whose extraordinary achievements "Improve Life".

In conferring honorary degrees, the University of Guelph seeks to recognize extraordinary achievement, and to honour individuals whose accomplishments demonstrate both a transformative impact and standard of excellence such that they provide, through example, inspiration to graduates of the University and to the University community. Individuals receiving an honorary degree become ambassadors for the University; thus, through their association and engagement should enhance the reputation of the University of Guelph.

Honorary degrees are to be awarded to distinguished individuals and in recognition of a lifetime of extraordinary achievements in the arts, sciences, business, public service, or volunteerism in the community-at-large. The Honours and Awards Committee (the "Committee") may also recommend this honour to those whose outstanding contributions to their fields or to society have not yet been widely recognized.

Eligibility and Exclusions

1. Canadians and non-Canadians are eligible to be nominated.
2. Normally, active members of staff, faculty, Senate and Board of Governors are not eligible to be nominated.
3. Canadian politicians currently in elected office are not eligible for honorary degrees.
4. Normally, honorary degrees are not awarded posthumously or in absentia.

Degrees Awarded

The University of Guelph confers the following honorary degrees:

1. Doctor of Laws

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions or service to society, the University or community as a whole; or, to a profession or discipline concerned with service to the community.

2. Doctor of Letters

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions to academic life, knowledge, or society in the areas of the humanities or the creative and performing arts.

3. Doctor of Science

Awarded for significant and extraordinary contributions to academic life, knowledge, or society in the areas of pure and applied science, and /or social science.

Criteria

In selecting candidates for recommendation to Senate, the factors considered by the Committee shall include:

1. **Accomplishments of note:** including scholarly distinction; outstanding contributions to the creative or performing arts; outstanding achievements in a profession.
2. **Service to the community-at-large or to a profession or discipline:** including outstanding achievements in the area of public or volunteer service at the national or international levels; or, at the local or community level; or, to a profession or discipline.
3. **Service to the University:** including that of long-standing or exceptional merit and reflecting contributions to the well-being of the University.

Nominations

1. An annual call for nominations will be issued to the University community in the spring of each year, from the University Secretariat.
2. Nominations for honorary degrees shall be submitted to the University Secretariat, by the deadline date specified in the call for nominations.
3. Nominations may be made by any member of the constituent group from the University community, or from external nominators. Nominations are normally not accepted from family members of the nominee. Self-nominations will not be accepted for consideration.
4. Nominations may be made in honour of a special anniversary (e.g. the centenary of a college might be an occasion on which awards to particular candidates would be appropriate.)
5. Nominations submitted outside the time frame specified in the annual call for nominations will be reviewed by the Committee at its next regular meeting.
6. Nominations must be completed in accordance with the *Documentation* section of these guidelines. Incomplete submissions will be returned to nominators and may be resubmitted for consideration at the next regular meeting of the Committee.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and to designing, reviewing, and rebuilding structures – including policies, programs, and practices – that are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all. In keeping with this commitment, nominations of qualified individuals from historically marginalized and underrepresented communities including those who identify as Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Colour; persons with a disability or who identify as differently abled; persons of all genders, and sexual orientations; and those with a demonstrable track record of confronting oppression and promoting belonging in their organizations and communities are strongly encouraged. The Committee will strive to ensure

that nominations recommended to Senate are appropriately diverse, balanced, and reflective of the University and community which it serves. Dimensions of diversity considered by the Committee shall include, but not be limited to, those described above.

Documentation

The following items shall be included with the nomination:

1. Nomination Form

The nomination form may be accessed from the [University Secretariat website](#).

2. Citation

The citation will be presented to Senate as the basis for the nomination and to inform Senate's decision to award the honorary degree. The citation should summarize the nominee's accomplishments, the significance of their achievements, and the impact of such on the local, national, or international community. (The citation should *not* be a list of positions held, award received, etc. Such information should be left to the resumé/curriculum vitae. Summaries should avoid technical terminology). The suggested rationale for the awarding of an honorary degree from the University of Guelph should be included in the citation.

As a general guideline, the citation should approximate 250 words.

3. Appraisal

The detailed appraisal should describe fully the extraordinary and/or transformational nature of the candidate's achievements, and the related impact on their particular field of endeavour or on the larger community. The appraisal should not be a list of activities; rather, should provide context (i.e., to understand why the candidate's achievements are important, the real impact of their contributions, and why the University of Guelph, particularly, should honour that individual).

As a general guideline, the appraisal should approximate 750 words.

4. Resumé or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)

The resumé or C.V. is particularly important for nominations for the honorary degree Doctor of Science, and should include the full list of positions held, awards received, and other appropriate information (e.g., publications if nomination is made in recognition of contributions to an academic discipline).

Where a resumé or C.V. is not available, a comprehensive biography and/or other sources of information which outline the candidate's achievements should be included with the nomination.

5. Letters of Support

A minimum of two (2), and no more than three (3) letters of support must be submitted from individuals knowledgeable about the candidate's accomplishments and related impact. Letters should:

- a. Augment, rather than simply reiterate, the material contained in the other documentation;
- b. Speak to the broader context of the candidate's achievements;
- c. Indicate the relationship, if any, between the letter writers and the candidate and the basis for their knowledge of the candidate's achievements.
- d. When individuals are approached to write letters of support it is important that they be informed of the *need to maintain confidentiality* in accordance with the *Confidentiality* section of these guidelines.

6. Evidence of Institutional Support

It is strongly recommended that nominators consult with the Office of the Dean from the appropriate College to obtain a letter of support and/or endorsement of the nomination. Nominations received without evidence of such consultation may be returned to the nominator or referred to the appropriate College(s) for review prior to being considered by the Committee. A letter of support and/or endorsement from a Dean and/or Dean's Office will be accepted in addition to the letters of support referred to in the *Documentation* section - item 5 of these guidelines.

Confidentiality

1. It is extremely important that all involved in the submission of the nominations recognize that this is a confidential process. In particular, nominees should not be informed that they are under consideration.
2. The only names ever to be made public are those who are offered the award by the President of the University and who accept the award.
3. The President will determine at what point a name is made public.

Selection

1. The Committee meets at least once in each of the fall and winter semesters to consider nominations. When the Committee deems it necessary to obtain additional information about a candidate, it may postpone a decision on the nomination in order to consult further with the nominators or others as appropriate.
2. The Committee will forward its recommendations to a closed session of Senate and in accordance with the Bylaws of the Senate Honours and Awards Committee. Senate will vote on each candidate individually in the form of a ballot. Nominators will be informed of the outcome after Senate has received and voted on the recommendations.
3. Following Senate's approval of a nomination, an offer to receive the honorary degree will be extended to the nominee through a letter from the President.

Time Limits

1. Nominations not approved by the Committee for recommendation to Senate are held active by the Committee for a period of three (3) years from the time of first nomination.

Nominators may be invited to add to or revise the dossier each year.

2. Offers of honorary degrees are not intended to be open-ended. Candidates will be requested to communicate their acceptance of the University's offer within three (3) months of receipt, and to attend a convocation ceremony to receive the degree within three (3) years. The consent of the Honours & Awards Committee is required for a candidate to attend a convocation ceremony to receive an honorary degree more than three (3) years after Senate approval.

<i>Approval Authority:</i>	Senate Honours and Awards Committee
<i>Office of Responsibility:</i>	University Secretariat
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