



# Honorary Degree and Honorary Fellowship Procedure

## Purpose

This procedure sets out the criteria and process for submitting nominations for the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship, as well as matters the Honorary Degrees Committee considers when determining whether to recommend an award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship to UNSW Council.

## Scope

This procedure applies to individuals making nominations for the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship, members of the Honorary Degree Committee and nominees for the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship.

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## Principles and Objectives

### 1. UNSW Values

UNSW awards Honorary Degrees and Fellowships to recognise excellence, service to the University and/or to society. Recipients will have demonstrated a substantial link or relationship with the University. The award of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships will:

- reflect the values, strategic interests and policies of UNSW
- respect and reflect the diversity of the UNSW and Australian community
- seek to enhance and certainly not damage UNSW's reputation or interests
- reflect the high standards of integrity held by UNSW.

### 2. Honorary Degree

An Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of eminent service to UNSW, society and/or academia.

#### 2.1. Reasons for Award for an Honorary Degree

An Honorary Degree may be awarded in recognition of the following achievements by persons:

- who are eminent scholars and whose work has transformed the knowledge in their field
- who have made social impact by changing our understanding of the world and our lives
- who have given eminent service to UNSW

- who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in any major field of endeavour (e.g. intellectual, spiritual, cultural, commercial, governmental)
- who have provided eminent service to society by advancing important causes
- who have arranged for significant benefaction to UNSW.

## 2.2. Doctoral Degrees awarded at UNSW

Council may admit, honoris causa, an eligible person to one of the following degrees:

- Doctor of the University
- Doctor of Letters
- Doctor of Arts and Design
- Doctor of Business
- Doctor of Engineering
- Doctor of Health Care
- Doctor of Laws
- Doctor of Medical Science
- Doctor of Music
- Doctor of Science.

## 3. Honorary Fellowship

An Honorary Fellowship is awarded in recognition of conspicuous continued involvement with, and service to, UNSW. The UNSW Council may confer an Honorary Fellowship upon any person it considers has provided an outstanding contribution or distinguished and eminent service to the University beyond the expectations of the person's particular field of endeavour either within or outside of the University.

### 3.1. Reasons for Award for an Honorary Fellowship

An Honorary Fellowship may be awarded in recognition of the following involvement with UNSW:

- support of the interests and welfare of UNSW or of a particular part of its activities
- promotion of the academic purposes of the University or facilitating those purposes in any particular activity of UNSW
- fostering links between UNSW and other institutions in Australia and overseas
- increasing education opportunities for populations with disadvantage to enter UNSW
- supporting the needs of UNSW and its growth and diversification
- philanthropic contribution to the University.

## 4. Eligibility

### 4.1. Eligibility to nominate candidates

The following people may submit a nomination for an Honorary Degree or Fellowship:

- current and former members of UNSW Council
- current and former staff of the University
- students of the University
- alumni of the University (including any person to have completed more than two-years study without conferral of an award).

The Chancellor, at their discretion, may waive any eligibility requirement set out in this section..

### 4.2. Eligibility to be nominated for an Honorary Degree or Fellowship

The following people will not usually be considered eligible for nomination for an Honorary Degree or Fellowship:

- current UNSW Council members

- current members of staff who are not volunteers
- current elected representatives of any tier of government.

The Chancellor, at their discretion, may waive any eligibility requirement set out in this section.

#### 4.3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

UNSW is committed to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion. UNSW recognises that its successes should be built on the diversity and cultural richness of our communities, and that care should be taken to ensure that both nominations and the award of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships reflect the diversity of the UNSW and Australian community.

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1. Nomination

Nominations must:

- be considered and supported by a member of the [UNSW senior leadership](#), normally (but not limited to) the University Leadership Team or a Faculty Dean
- be submitted using either the Nomination for Honorary Degree form, or the Nomination for Honorary Fellowship form; available by contacting [governance@unsw.edu.au](mailto:governance@unsw.edu.au)
- be submitted to the UNSW Governance Office via email ([governance@unsw.edu.au](mailto:governance@unsw.edu.au))
- include sufficient information to identify the person and the reason for the award, including their connection to UNSW and any proposed plans for communication and future engagement opportunities with the nominee
- provide statements in support of the award and the nominee's standing and achievements and justification of the specific honorary doctorate (or alternatives) from the list set out in Section 2.2
- include a citation to be read at the graduation or special conferral ceremony
- provide information of any relevant risks posed to UNSW in awarding the Honorary Degree or Fellowship
- remain confidential from the nominee.

### 5.2. Consideration of Nominations

The Honorary Degrees Committee considers and recommends to UNSW Council the approval of a nomination for the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship:

- a recommendation to UNSW Council for the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship must be supported by a majority of members of the Honorary Degrees Committee
- if the Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee considers a nomination to be urgent, that nomination may be considered:
- at a special meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee, convened on reasonable notice to members
- by electronic circular, in which case the matter may only be approved if at least a majority of members vote in favour of the recommendation and there are no dissenting votes. If a dissenting vote is issued, the nomination will be held over for discussion at the next scheduled meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee.
- if the Honorary Degrees Committee does not recommend a nomination for approval by UNSW Council, the Corporate Secretary and Governance Coordinator, Philanthropy and Development will advise the nominator
- if UNSW Council approves the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship, the Chancellor will contact the nominee in writing to seek their consent for the award
- the Honorary Degrees Committee may recommend to UNSW Council that it revoke a previously awarded Honorary Degree or Fellowship. This is not a pre-requisite to UNSW Council exercising its absolute discretion set out in Section 7.

### 5.3. Posthumous Awards

Nominations for the award of a posthumous Honorary Degree or Fellowship will not be considered.

If UNSW approves the award of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship and the nominee accepts, but dies prior to the award being conferred, it may be conferred posthumously.

#### 5.4. Receipt of Awards

If the award of Honorary Degree or Fellowship is accepted, the Manager of Graduations and Prizes will arrange for conferral to occur at a relevant scheduled graduation ceremony, which is mutually convenient for both parties. Honorary Degrees or Fellowships will not be conferred in absentia.

Subject to the above, at the discretion of the Chancellor and/or the Vice-President, External Engagement, conferral may also occur at a special ceremony or event hosted by UNSW.

#### 5.5. Recordkeeping

The Secretariat to the Honorary Degrees Committee will maintain a record of all nominations considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee including Honorary Degrees or Fellowships: awarded; not recommended for consideration by UNSW Council; considered but not approved by UNSW Council; revoked by UNSW Council; or declined by the recipient.

The Manager of Graduations and Prizes will publish on the University website the list of award recipients.

## 6. Use of Titles

An Honorary Doctoral Degree is not a qualification under the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#), and does not entitle the recipient to use the title 'Doctor' except where participating in an activity or event associated with the University.

Any certification documentation issued to Honorary Degree recipients will specify that the award is honorary.

## 7. Revocation of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship

The UNSW Council may in its absolute discretion resolve to revoke an Honorary Degree or title of Honorary Fellowship if it considers that the relevant award is contrary to the interests, good standing or reputation of the University. The UNSW Council will consider information relevant to any proposed revocation that it receives from the Division of Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement, or any other Division as it considers necessary or appropriate.

The Chancellor will notify the Honorary Degree or Fellowship holder of the revocation in writing. UNSW reserves the right to notify any other person or entity of the revocation.

**Version:** 2.1

**Effective:** 6 August 2024

**Responsible:** Vice-Chancellor and President

**Lead:** Director of Governance and University Secretary



## Appendix

### Legislative compliance

1. This policy is intended to ensure that UNSW complies with the:
  - 1.1. University of New South Wales By-law 2005 (NSW).

### Related documents

- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Terms of Reference of the Honorary Degrees Committee

Definitions and Acronyms	
<b>Award</b>	To bestow on an individual an Honorary Degree, or title of Honorary Fellow.

### Version history

- **Version 1.0** approved by Executive Director, University Services on 10 January 2012 effective 10 January 2012. Major review and integration of procedure for Honorary Degrees and Honorary Fellowships. Replaces resolutions CL95/93, CL96/026, CL96/027 and CL06/86.
- **Version 1.1** approved by Head of Governance on 28 May 2014 effective 16 May 2014. Updated contact officer and Nomination for Honorary Degree Form.
- **Version 1.2** approved by Acting Head of Governance on 15 September 2015 effective 15 September 2015. Updated paragraph 3.2.3 by removing links to forms and directing readers to Governance.
- **Version 1.3** approved by Acting Head of Governance on 10 March 2016 effective 10 March 2016. Section 2 – removal of Doctor of Education.
- **Version 1.4** approved by Acting Head of Governance on 14 March 2016 effective 14 March 2016. Section 2 – change to Doctor of Medicine, now Medicinal Science, removal of Doctor of Juridical Science and Doctor of Information Technology
- **Version 2.0** approved by UNSW Council on 15 August 2022 effective 15 August 2022. Full review.
- **Version 2.1** approved by Director of Governance on 1 August 2024 effective 6 August 2024. Administrative updates to outdated titles, links and references to policy.