

HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE & CRITERIA

The Award of Honorary Degrees

“Proposals for the conferment of honorary degrees shall be considered by a Joint Committee of the Council and the Senate.” (Ordinance 25.2)

1. Background

Honorary Degrees conferred by the University recognise the exceptional contributions made by the individuals concerned. In addition, the awards made:

- a) **reflect the University’s key values** – academic freedom, integrity and accountability, sustainability, critical thinking and intellectual creativity.
- b) **demonstrate the University’s commitment to the creation, development and communication of knowledge** and acknowledge the economic, social and cultural benefits of these activities.
- c) **indicate the University’s primary roles** as a major research-led institution, as a regional leader in Higher Education and as the UK’s European University and its international outlook.

2. Honorary Degrees available to be awarded

The following degrees are available to be conferred on appropriate individuals who meet the University’s criteria for the award of honorary degrees subject to approval by Senate and Council:

D.Arts	Doctor of Arts
D.C.L.	Doctor of Civil Law
D.D.	Doctor of Divinity
L.L.D.	Doctor of Laws
D.Litt.	Doctor of Letters
D.Mus.	Doctor of Music
D.Sc.	Doctor of Science
D.Univ.	Doctor of the University

3. Consideration of suggestions for awards

In considering suggestions for awards the Honorary Degrees Committee will determine its recommendations for approval by Senate and Council using the criteria set out below having regard to the other considerations which follow as these are relevant.

An honorary degree may be conferred on an individual who has a direct or indirect association with the University or its region and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- (i) the achievement of academic distinction in an academic discipline of the University
- (ii) an exceptional and distinguished contribution to business, public life or service, locally, in the University’s region, nationally or internationally.

Note: It is recognised that notwithstanding the above there may be exceptional circumstances where it is appropriate to confer an honorary degree on an outstanding individual who meets one or both of (i) and (ii) above but who has no direct or indirect association with the University or the region.

- (iii) In applying these criteria and determining its recommendations for approval the Committee should
- a) reflect a range of academic disciplines/other contributions
 - b) seek to honour individuals of distinction or achievement not already overburdened with honorary degrees from other universities, except in the case of exceptional service to the University and/or Kent/Medway
 - c) recognise diversity in all its aspects
 - d) reflect key elements of the University Plan and strategy such as research excellence, Europe, internationalisation, Medway, widening participation, the importance of the environment and sustainability
 - e) acknowledge significant University anniversaries or other key events or themes when appropriate.

4. Procedures for the consideration of suggestions for the award of honorary degrees

- (i) Suggestions should be submitted using the nomination form by the deadline indicated. Suggestions may be made by individuals or by a group/school(s)/department(s) of the University or by persons external to the University.
- (ii) The case for an award should outline the exceptional contribution of the nominee and the reasons why they are deserving an honorary degree, including their relationship to the University or its region. The Committee is looking for a strong narrative that could be the basis of an inspirational oration at a degree congregation. A successful candidate is likely to have reached a high level of attainment within their profession or calling and the nomination should include a list of verifiable outputs and achievements. It would be helpful if it could be demonstrated that the person nominated has acted as a role model or has encouraged and supported students or those less experienced in their field.
- (iii) It is strongly suggested that those completing nomination forms first send them to their Head of School or Department for consideration, so that any comments from the Head of School or Department can be incorporated before the form is submitted to the Committee.
- (iv) All suggestions, together with, where relevant, Who's Who entries, will be submitted to the Honorary Degrees Committee for its consideration.
- (v) The Secretary will provide confidential feedback on suggestions received to those making suggestions.
- (vi) The Committee's recommendations are subject to approval by Senate and Council. They remain confidential until the individuals concerned have been approached

informally by the Vice-Chancellor and have agreed to accept the awards and this is published in one or more news releases by the Media Office.

(vii) Honorary Degrees are conferred in person at Congregations of the University.

5. Membership

The Committee shall comprise: the Vice-Chancellor as Chair; 3 ex officio members (the Chancellor, the Chair of Council and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience); 3 Lay Members; 3 members appointed by Senate; a Public Orator (from among the number of University Public Orators); and the Student Union President.

The following shall be in attendance:

- Events Manager
- Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to Council)
- Governance Support Officer

6. Frequency of Meetings: Meetings: At least twice a year in Autumn and Winter Terms, with additional meetings if required.

7. Quoracy:

One third of membership and to include at least one Lay member.

8. Review

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed for effectiveness at least every three years.

9. Queries

Any queries on the above should be sent to Secretary of the Honorary Degrees Committee (councilsec@kent.ac.uk)

Version Control

	Review Date	Review	Approved by
1.0			

NN 09.08.23

LF 29.08.24