



Honorary Degrees Board

Board Terms of Reference, Membership and Criteria

Status: Open
Required Action: Honorary Degrees Board is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To APPROVE the membership and Terms of Reference for the Honorary Degrees Board. To APPROVE the criteria for the award of Honorary Degrees.
Executive Sponsor- Geoff Green, Registrar and Secretary
Executive Summary The Board reviews and approves any changes to its membership, Terms of Reference and the criteria for the award of Honorary Degrees. There are proposed changes to the criteria for the award of Honorary Degrees to reflect the University's new duties from the Higher Education Freedom of Speech Act 2023. The proposed changes are highlighted in red for ease of reading.
Alignment with Strategic Aims- There is no direct alignment to the strategic aims.
Risk Considerations All approved nominations are subject to due diligence. The Board should consider the reputational risk for all nominations, as well opportunities in relation to the criteria.
Value for Money Considerations There are no foreseen Value for Money considerations.
Compliance (Legislative, Regulatory or Statutory) Considerations Appointments are made in accordance with the University's governing documents.
Freedom of Speech The criteria has been updated to confirm that the Board take account of the University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech. Records will be maintained to demonstrate nominees were not penalised for their exercise of free speech or academic freedom.
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion The criteria sets that that the Board will at all times take full account of the University's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in its deliberations.
Committee Route: If approved, the revised terms of reference, membership and criteria will be reported to Senate and Council for ratification.

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
HONORARY DEGREES BOARD
Terms of Reference 2025~~6~~**

Role

To consider nominations for Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Honorary Fellowships and recommend them to Senate and Council for approval; to ensure that appropriate awards are given.

Responsibilities

- 1) To consider nominations for Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Honorary Fellowships.

- 2) To recommend nominations for Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Honorary Fellowships to Senate and Council.
- 3) To consider, record and address the potential equal opportunity impacts of decisions made by the Board (in accordance with the 'due regard' provisions of the Equality Act 2010).

Reports to

The Board reports to Senate and Council in the form of reports following meetings, normally once annually.

Constitution and Membership

The constitution of the Board is as follows:

- a) The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- b) The Chair of Council
- c) The Chair of the Alumni Association Committee
- d) The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- e) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professional Services)
- f) The Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Heads of College
- g) The Public Orators
- h) The Chairs of the Staff Equality Action Groups
- i) The President of the Students' Union
- j) The Registrar and Secretary

- k) One lay member of Council
- l) One Senate member of Council

Appointments (a-j) are ex-officio and will sit on the Board for the duration of their appointment in their substantive post. Appointments (k-l) will be reviewed annually by the University Nominations Committee.

Secretariat

Governance Office.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings normally occur once per annum.

Quorum

The quorum for the Board is 5 members.

Review

The Terms of Reference and membership are normally reviewed annually, at the start of each academic year.

Membership 2025~~6~~

- a. The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair): Nishan Canagarajah
- b. The Chair of Council: Neil Goulden ~~Gary Dixon~~
- c. The Chair of the Alumni Association Committee: Martin Cullen
- d. The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Henrietta O'Connor
- e. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professional Services): Kerry Law

- f. The Heads of College:
1. Tom Robinson
 2. Dirk Schaffer ~~Sarah Davies~~
 3. Teela Sanders
 4. Dan Ladley
- g. The Public Orators:
1. Paul Jenkins
 2. Graham Shipley
 3. Nigel Siesage
- h. The Chairs of the Staff Equality Action Groups
1. Disability Action Group: Paolo Vargiu
 2. Gender Equality Action Group: Leena Sodha
 3. LGBT+ Action Group: Kirsten Barrett
 4. Race Equality Action Group: ~~Nora Musyoka Paul Campbell~~
- i. The President of the Students' Union: ~~Matt Schofield Joshitha Venkataraman~~
- j. The Registrar and Secretary: Geoff Green
- k. One lay member of Council: Liz Blyth
- l. One Senate member of Council: Stewart Fishwick

Secretariat - Governance Office

Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Honorary Fellowships – Criteria 2025~~6~~

Criteria for the consideration of nominations for Honorary Degrees

The Honorary Degrees Board has adopted the following criteria, which should be taken into account when preparing a nomination:

An honorary degree is one of higher education's most significant accolades. It is the policy of the University to award honorary degrees, on a selective basis, to distinguished individuals who merit special recognition for genuine achievement and distinction in a field or activity consonant with the mission of the University. The Board will apply this fundamental criterion in assessing nominations and making its recommendations to Council and Senate.

Subject to this, the following characteristics (which are neither exclusive of each other nor all required) in a candidate will tend to strengthen a nomination:

- Exceptional academic achievement, particularly in fields for which the University is renowned
- Outstanding achievement – public, civic, intellectual, business, cultural or sporting
- A strong connection with Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland
- A close University connection, for example:
 - as an alumna/alumnus
 - as a result of sustained and productive academic collaboration
 - as a volunteer or collaborator in other areas of University life

- Integrity and a demonstrated commitment to the University values as articulated in the current University Strategy (Inclusive, Inspiring, Impactful), which may include, but not be limited to, the demonstration of:
 - promoting a diverse, inclusive and supportive learning community
 - supporting and promoting social justice
 - cross-cultural understanding
 - working in partnership
 - integrity and open-mindedness
- The award will create or strengthen a relationship which will add to the University's standing, and offers potential for the future
- The recipient provides a role model to graduating students or is otherwise likely to add value to a degree congregation, engage the interest of the students and enhance the graduation experience.

Accomplishments such as the following will not *in themselves* be sufficient reason for an award: holding public office, acts of philanthropy, enjoying popular acclaim or celebrity, service to the University or to another educational institution.

Honorary degrees will not normally be awarded posthumously or *in absentia*.

The Board will at all times take full account of the University's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in its deliberations. **The Board will also take account of the University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech. Records will be maintained to demonstrate nominees were not penalised for their exercise of free speech or academic freedom.**

Governance Office

January 2024⁶