

## CONFERMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Introduction

The University's Board Regulations provide that the Board shall approve honorary awards on the recommendation of the Governance Committee in accordance with the University's Conferment Policy and Procedure.

Two types of honorary awards are available:

- Honorary Doctorates for **outstanding** contributions to particular fields of academic or professional endeavour; and
- Honorary fellowships for **exceptional** accomplishments that reflect the ethos and values important to the University and its community.

Within the Honorary Doctorate category, the following may be conferred as honorary awards:

#### Honorary Doctorates

Doctor of Laws (LLD)

Doctor of Letters (DLitt)

Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil)

Doctor of Science (DSc)

Doctor of Technology (DTech)

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

The University awards honorary doctorates and fellowships to recognise an individual's outstanding or distinguished contribution to academic or public life, in particular in areas connected to the University's mission and values. The decision whether to award an Honorary Doctorate or an Honorary Fellowship will depend on the extent to which a nominee meets the University's criteria and what academic or other qualifications they already hold.

By awarding honorary awards, the University not only recognises outstanding achievement, but also creates an opportunity for outstanding individuals to establish life-long relationships with the University. This could be by cementing a relationship with an outstanding University alumnus/a, or by growing a relationship with a distinguished academic or outstanding public figure who could contribute to the University's academic endeavour or provide inspiration and guidance to students.

The University seeks nominations from current students, current staff, Governors and alumni on an annual basis. Nominations are then considered by the Governance Committee, which will identify those nominees who best fulfil the University's criteria and comply with the principles for award (see below). The Governance Committee will determine whether an Honorary Doctorate or Honorary Fellowship is appropriate.

### Criteria and Principles

All nominees should match the following criteria:

- They must demonstrate the very highest national or international distinction in their chosen field in academic and/or public life;
- There must be clear potential for them to develop a lasting relationship with the University;
- Their achievements must relate in some way to the work or values of the University;
- Individuals who have given exceptional service to the University over an extended period of time may also be considered.

In addition to assessing whether nominees meet these criteria, the Governance Committee must also take into account the following principles:

- There should be explicit potential for growing the Honorary Graduate's relationship with the University;
- Those holding or seeking to hold political office (whether elected or unelected), and those in a position to directly benefit the University, should not be honoured while they are in office;
- Whilst potential international links are welcomed, the prospective Honorary Graduate should be of merit in his/her own right and careful consideration should be given to differences in values and culture between those of the UK and those of the nominee;
- Current staff and current University partners should not be considered. Awards to former members of staff should be made with the utmost care and discretion and to mark a truly exceptional contribution;
- Nominations where an individual nominates themselves will not be accepted;
- There may, on occasion, be a case for expediting an award that has been approved in principle in order to avoid conferring it posthumously;
- Where an individual has accepted the offer of an honorary award, but dies before it can be conferred, it should be conferred posthumously;
- Where an award has been agreed in principle, but the nominee dies before formally accepting the offer of an Honorary doctorate or fellowship, the award should not be conferred posthumously and consideration should be given to alternative methods of recognition.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

When considering nominations, the Governance Committee should pay particular attention as to whether an award could represent a conflict of interest. The following could represent conflicts of interest, but the list is not exhaustive and each nomination should be considered on its own merits. The University should not grant Honorary Awards:

- that can be seen as being 'in return for' financial or other donations;
- that may give the erroneous impression of trying to buy influence or favour, and is contrary to the 'Nolan principles' of selflessness and integrity;
- to individuals active in public life who are subject to an organisational code of conduct that prevents them from accepting awards (other than sovereign honours) while in office;
- where the association with the University may be seen to provide an individual with undue power or influence;
- to international nominees where there is the potential for controversy, or at least adverse comment as a result of differences in values and culture between those of the UK and those of the nominee.
- to former members of staff unless they have made a truly exceptional contribution to their academic field and/or in public life.

### **Process**

The Secretary and Registrar will issue an annual invitation to staff, students and alumni to make nominations. The invitation will set a deadline for nominations, and will ask for all nominations to be submitted on a Nomination Form for which the University Secretary and Registrar is responsible. Nominations not submitted on the correct form will not be considered. Nominations received after the closing date may, at the discretion of the University Secretary and Registrar, be held over for consideration in the following year.

The Governance Committee will consider all nominations that are eligible for consideration under the Conferment Policy and Procedure. The Committee may decide to reject the nomination, to recommend the nomination to the Board for approval, or to carry over the nomination for consideration at a later meeting.

The Governance Committee's recommendations for the conferral of honorary awards are subject to approval by the Board of Governors. The decisions of Governance Committee and the Board are final.