

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES BY MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY¹.

1. INTRODUCTION

Maynooth University as a constituent university of the National University of Ireland is empowered under the *Universities Act, 1997* to award degrees, including honorary degrees.

The higher doctorate degrees awarded *honoris causa* are the highest awards of the University. The titles of the honorary degrees that may be awarded, are²:

Degree of Doctor of Arts DArts
Degree of Doctor of Celtic Studies DLittCelt
Degree of Doctor of Economic Science DEconSc
Doctor of Education DEd
Doctor of Engineering DEng
Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts DFA
Degree of Doctor of Laws LLD
Degree of Doctor of Literature DLitt
Degree of Doctor of Medicine DMed
Degree of Doctor of Music DMus
Degree of Doctor of Science DSc

The Masters degrees MA, MEd and MSc may also be awarded *honoris causa*.

The purpose of honorary degrees is to recognise distinction in a particular field of human endeavour, related to the expansion of knowledge, discovery and understanding; the deepening of scholarship in every discipline whether of the humanities or the sciences; the critical appreciation and the practice of literature, music and the visual and performing arts. In the main, these degrees are intended to further the purposes of this University by honouring academic distinction in all disciplines.

In addition to degrees honouring scholarship and creativity, honorary degrees of the University may also be conferred on individuals who, whether in their personal or representative capacities, through their energies, service and actions have contributed significantly to the strategic development of this university, public life, the betterment of society, and the interests of humanity in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere.

The award of an honorary doctorate normally requires international or national distinction or contribution on the part of the candidate. The University may, under special circumstances, recognise more local contributions or particular contributions to the development of Maynooth University through the award of a Masters degree *honoris causa*.

Maynooth University may award honorary degrees from time to time as it deems appropriate. This document sets out the guiding principles and procedures for the award of honorary degrees.

2. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES

(i) The award of an honorary degree by Maynooth University is an honour of the highest level. Honorary degrees are awarded to persons meriting recognition at this level, and who, in turn, bring honour to Maynooth University.

¹ This document draws upon the publication *Honorary Degrees of the National University of Ireland*, <http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/HonDegsGuidingPrinciplesc.pdf>.

² This list was approved by the NUI Senate in September 2007

(ii) The award is for distinction in the candidate's own right or in the candidate's representative capacity.

(iii) In the conferring of an honorary degree, the main purpose is to honour distinction in scholarship and creativity. Honorary degrees are awarded in every discipline in the Humanities and the Sciences and in every branch of the visual and performing arts.

(iv) In addition to honouring scholarship and creativity, honorary degrees may be awarded to individuals who, whether in their personal or representative capacities, through their energies and service, have contributed significantly to the strategic development of this university, public life, the betterment of society, and the interests of humanity, in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere. In general, honorary degrees for individuals who have distinguished themselves in political life will be awarded only after they have retired from office.

3. PROCEDURES GOVERNING PROPOSALS FOR THE AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES

(i) Nominations for the award of honorary degrees will be invited by the Chair of the Academic Council, the President, normally at the second regular meeting of the Academic Council in each academic year. The President may also seek nominations from members of the Governing Authority, and from members of the University Executive who are not members of either the Academic Council or the Governing Authority.

(ii) Proposals for consideration will be submitted with supporting documentation to the Registrar on, or before, a date agreed by the Academic Council. Each proposal will be signed by three members of the Academic Council, or by three members of the Governing Authority, or three members of the University Executive. Proposals from members of the Governing Authority or the University Executive will in each case be supported by at least one academic member of the relevant nominating body. The supporting documentation will clarify why Maynooth University, rather than any other university in Ireland, should award an honorary degree to the proposed candidate.

(iii) Current or retired members of the academic staff of Maynooth University should not be proposed for the award of honorary doctorates by this university.

(iv) Proposals for the posthumous award of an honorary degree will not be accepted.

(v) Normally, one of the proposers should be aware of the contact details of the candidate and be in a position to assist with the preparation of a citation if required.

4. GRANTING OF HONORARY DEGREES CONFERRED BY MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

The Academic Council is responsible for all degrees, including honorary degrees, granted by Maynooth University. The award of an honorary degree is the culmination of a multi-stage process in which confidentiality concerning the identity of prospective awardees is of paramount importance.

The Academic Council will establish an Honorary Degrees Committee as a Standing Committee. It will have responsibility for ensuring that the principles and procedures outlined in sections 2 and 3 above are adhered to, and additionally it will have delegated authority from the Academic Council to decide on which candidates merit the award of honorary degrees, having taken account of the principles contained in section 2.

The membership of the Honorary Degrees Committee will be:

The Chairperson of the Academic Council, namely the President (*Chair*),

The Chairperson of the Governing Authority,
The Registrar (*Secretary*),
The Faculty Deans,
Two members of Academic Council, one male and one female.

The term of office of the Honorary Degrees Committee will be three years.

The Committee will review all proposals submitted by members of the Academic Council, the Governing Authority and/or the University Executive and agree by simple majority the candidates that merit the award of honorary degrees, having taken account of the principles contained in section 2. The Committee will decide on the degrees to be awarded, and the introducers of the candidates for the conferring ceremony.

In exceptional situations where it appears appropriate to invite a visiting dignitary to accept the award of an honorary degree, the President is empowered to act promptly, after the members of the Honorary Degrees Committee have been consulted by the Registrar. Where it is necessary for the Honorary Degrees Committee to make a decision on a proposal for the award of an honorary degree between meetings, this will normally be done by postal ballot, including by e-mail.

Following a decision to grant an honorary degree the President will write to the prospective awardees and seek their consent to have the degree awarded. In the event of a candidate being unwilling or unable to accept the degree, the Honorary Degrees Committee may decide to grant an honorary degree to another candidate that has been proposed in accordance with the procedures set out above, and that meets the requirements implicit in the principles outlined above.

Under no circumstances should there be any discussion of a nomination between the proposers, or any member of the Honorary Degrees Committee, with any prospective candidate until after the Committee has made its decision and until after the President has written to the awardees. Absolute confidentiality must be respected by all throughout the process.

The Registrar as Secretary of the Honorary Degrees Committee will report to Academic Council the names of all candidates who have been offered, and have agreed to accept, honorary degrees from the University. The Registrar will also inform the National University of Ireland of the honorary degrees awarded by Maynooth University. The Registrar's Office will maintain the records of the Committee and all correspondence that may result from the decisions of the Committee.

5. CONFERRAL OF HONORARY DEGREES

- The President's office will organise the conferral ceremonies in consultation with the Registrar's Office
- The President will normally confer the honorary degrees.
- The Introducers will include the President or his nominee to mark the significance of such conferral ceremonies.
- The Chancellor and members of the NUI Senate will be invited to attend the conferring ceremony.
- Honorary degrees will not normally be conferred *in absentia*.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the list of honorary graduands each year includes both men and women and reflects diversity in the areas in which the candidates have distinguished themselves and the degrees to be conferred.

Updated by Academic Council, 2 November 2020

PROPOSAL FOR THE AWARD OF AN HONORARY DEGREE
for the consideration by Maynooth University Honorary Degrees Committee

1.	Name and Address of individual proposed for the award of an honorary degree	
2.	Criterion under which it is proposed that the honorary degree be awarded viz. (a) distinction in the arts, sciences or other field of scholarship or creativity, or (b) contribution to the strategic development of the university, public life, the betterment of society, and the interests of humanity, in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere	
3.	Is the degree proposed for personal distinction in the candidate's own right or in his/her representative capacity?	
4.	What are the particular reasons why Maynooth University should award an honorary degree to the proposed candidate?	

5. Please attach a brief curriculum vitae of the person concerned.

Note that the process is strictly confidential and under no circumstances should proposers have any discussion with a prospective candidate in regard to the nomination

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please submit proposals to Registrar's Office, Maynooth University marked Higher Degree Proposals - CONFIDENTIAL