



## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

on

## HONORARY DEGREES

<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	REG P10	<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Registrar
<b>OVERSEEING COMMITTEE(S)</b>	Honorary Degree Committee – Senate – Council		
<b>APPROVAL DATE</b>	20 September 2019	<b>REVISION DATE</b>	20 September 2024

### POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Zululand (UNIZULU) in accordance with provisions in the Higher Education Act, Act No. 101 of 1997 (as amended), subsections 65C (1) and (2) and the Statute of the University of Zululand contemplates that a public higher education institution, subject to its institutional statute, may, without examination, confer *honorary degrees of doctor* in any faculty upon any person whom the public education institution may deem worthy of such a degree. The awarding of a degree contemplated in subsection (1) does not entitle the holder to practice any profession; that is, the honorary degree may not be used to alter the candidate's professional status.

The University shall award an honorary degree on the basis of a person's exceptional contribution to society in general and in particular to UNIZULU.

The objective of this policy is to ensure a procedure that recognizes and regulates honorary degrees, criteria and other relevant aspects in accordance with which UNIZULU acknowledges an individual's or contribution to society in general.



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## SECTION A: POLICY

### 1. DEFINITIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

“**Honorary**” means given for honour only, without the usual requirements, duties, privileges, emoluments, etc.

“**UNIZULU**” University of Zululand

**Management Committee (MANCO)** means a committee composed in terms of paragraph 68 (a) of the statute of UNIZULU.

### 2. PRINCIPLES

- The University shall award an Honorary Degree on the basis of a person’s exceptional contribution to society in general. The process to nominate should be established;
- An Honorary Degree shall not be awarded posthumously, unless a candidate has died after he/he had been nominated;
- The University will not single-out any specific office or position; the conferment of Honorary Degree will be guided by some criteria and consistency must be maintained;
- Honorary Degrees will not be awarded to current staff of UNIZULU, but may be awarded to former UNIZULU staff member who meets set criteria.
- Recognising individuals who have rendered continued exceptional, dedicated, conscientious and/or unselfish service in science, engineering, technology, religious, governmental, community, cultural, economic, and artistic or other spheres of life;
- Mindful of social equity considerations, especially the need to instill public confidence in the fact that leadership, excellence and the pursuit thereof in any sphere of life is not predetermined by any group or class consideration, and mindful further of the discriminatory history of the country, nominators should also make efforts to affirm and acknowledge the achievements and/or contributions of previously disadvantaged individuals;
- Recipients of an honorary doctorate may if they wish adopt the title of "doctor". The recipient of an honorary degree may add the degree title post nominally, but it should always be made clear that the degree is

honorary by adding "honorary" or "honoris causa" or "h.c." in parenthesis after the degree title.

- Nominees' achievements must not be incompatible with the principles, values, vision, mission and goals of UNIZULU.

### **3. CRITERIA AND RULES**

- (i) Honorary degrees shall be conferred on any person, outside the employ of UNIZULU, who have rendered exceptional, dedicated, conscientious and/or unselfish service.
- (ii) The nominee should normally be a person who has made outstanding achievements in his/her chosen field of endeavour or may have a well-established local, national or international recognition.
- (iii) The nominee must have a record of personal support to worthy causes in society in general, or must have a demonstrable record of contributions beyond the call of duty in his/her chosen field of endeavour.
- (iv) The nominee must have the time and energy to embark on some of the major University causes by means of lending his/her influence, networks and attendant resources for these causes.
- (v) Mindful of social equity considerations, especially the need to instil public confidence in the fact that leadership, excellence and the pursuit thereof in any sphere of life is not predetermined by any group or class consideration, and mindful further of the discriminatory history of the country, nominators should also make efforts to affirm and acknowledge the achievements and/or contributions of previously disadvantaged individuals.
- (vi) The spread of the honorary degrees/awards across faculties shall be taken into account and the conferment of an honorary degree should insofar as this would be possible be limited to the degrees of a faculty of UNIZULU
- (xii) An honorary doctorate may be granted by UNIZULU to a candidate who has an exceptional record of distinction and achievement in scholarship, research, teaching, advancement of learning or public service at national and/or international levels.
- (xiii) Such an award may also be granted to a person whose well-established distinction and achievement, though not fitting the above criteria, manifests outstanding personal qualities that would bring acclaim to UNIZULU.

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY**

The nominee must not be serving on any structures, organisations, bodies or entities to which the University is expected to report on its public mandate, or with which the University interacts closely as part of its normal business.

### **SECTION B: PROCEDURES**

#### **5. PROCEDURES**

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the policy and its administrative procedure are implemented and updated as required, and shall monitor compliance.

The members of UNIZULU staff establishment, the MANCO, Senate and Council shall submit nominations in accordance with identified criteria for the honorary degrees to the Council and Senate Secretary (Registrar) before or on the closing date that the latter will communicate.

The Honorary Degrees Committee of UNIZULU shall deal with nominations for the honorary degrees in accordance with the constitution of the committee and criteria for conferring of the honorary degrees, as well as this policy and its administrative procedure, and shall advise the Senate and Council accordingly.

UNIZULU Council, on recommendation of the Honorary Degrees Committee and the Senate, shall reach a final decision in this regard.

The Registrar shall notify the Communication & Marketing Division of the acceptance of the nominee. The Communication & Marketing Division is responsible for invitations, academic dress and preparations with regard to the conferment of honorary degrees at UNIZULU graduation ceremonies.

#### **6. PROCEDURE FOR NOMINATIONS**

- (i) By 1 May annually, the Registrar issues a formal call for nominations, and the criteria for the conferment of honorary degrees are provided to all who may send in nominations.
- (ii) Where a nomination is related to a candidate's contribution to any of the management divisions of the University, such a nomination must be submitted in writing through the relevant Executive Manager.
- (iii) Nominations must be submitted in writing to the Registrar.
- (iv) The deadline for nominations will be 30 June of each year, except where Council approves an extension.

## **6.1 Documentation required**

Nominations must be supported by the following information:

- (i) The nomination, a written motivation and sufficient documentation (attached as addendums) must be signed by the principal nominator and at least ONE (1) seconder.
- (ii) In the event of an honorary degree being recommended, it is also expected of a nominator to recommend with motivation the appropriate honorary degree to be conferred.
- (iii) A curriculum vitae or other summary of the candidate's qualifications, employment history, career highlights, university or community service contributions, significant other awards received, and (where appropriate) publications and other scholarly or professional achievements.
- (v) A clear case justification of the proposed honorary degree, indicating particularly how the candidate's record of contribution of service relates to the specific criteria for the degree concerned.
- (vi) The nomination should be accompanied by a formal motivation (maximum 500 words) aligned with the criteria for nominations. The citation of the recipient would be prepared at an appropriate time by the office of the appropriate dean. The Registrar must ensure that this is done.

## **6.2 Confidentiality and discretion**

- (i) The process of nomination is intended to be confidential. The utmost confidentiality must at all times be maintained with regard to all matters affecting honorary awards. Only the Vice-Chancellor shall make public announcements in connection with honorary awards.
- (ii) Stakeholders and nominators should be made aware of the importance of confidentiality during the process, i.e. the understanding should be there even though it would not necessarily be foolproof.

## **6.3 Consideration by Honorary Degrees Committee**

### **6.3.1 First meeting of the committee in a specific year**

At the first meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee scheduled to take place directly after the deadline for the

submission of nominations the committee considers nominations based on written documentation by nominators in order to:

- (i) confirm the eligibility of individual nominations against the relevant criteria;
- (ii) confirm the suitability of individual candidates for the honorary degree proposed;
- (iii) confirm the number of degrees to be conferred in a particular year;
- (iv) determine a deadline for submission of citations to the committee, as well as a date and time for a second meeting during which citations will be discussed.

Candidates must receive a majority of votes to progress to the next round.

#### 6.3.2 Second meeting of the committee in a specific year

At the second meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee, the committee shall:

- (i) consider citations on the basis of discussion and stringent selection procedures;
- (ii) The Committee shall determine a proposed shortlist by a majority vote of the members of the committee present at the meeting for submission thereof to Senate for consideration

### 6.4 Consideration by Senate

- (i) At the Senate meeting in August/September of each year (or later as determined by Council) the recommendations of the Honorary Degrees Committee, the proposed short-listed candidates and supporting documents are evaluated and debated by Senate with a view to confidentiality after which the recommendations of Senate are forwarded along with the proposed short-listed candidates and supporting documents to Council for a final decision.
- (ii) Proposals must receive a simple majority vote of Senate members present at the meeting.
- (iii) Voting shall be by secret ballot. The Senate Chairperson shall appoint as scrutinisers TWO (2) members of the Senate who are not members of the Honorary Degrees Committee.

### 6.5 Consideration by Council

- (i) At the Council meeting in September or later as determined by Council, the Vice-Chancellor will present to Council the agreed recommendations from the Honorary Degrees Committee and

Senate. Summary data on each candidate will be included with the recommendations to support the honorary degree proposed.

- (ii) Conferral at this stage shall still be confidential and provisional, pending informal contact by the Secretary (Registrar) to confirm the nominee's willingness to accept the honorary degree concerned (in which case the conferral will be confirmed), or to confirm the nominee's unwillingness to accept the honorary degree concerned (in which case the honorary degree conferral will not be confirmed).

## **6.6 Notification**

The Council Secretary shall then write to all successful candidates to inform them of Council's decision on the award.

## **6.7 Conferral by Council**

- (i) At its meeting in November of each year, the Council Secretary will convey to the Council the acceptances indicated to that time and ask Council formally to confer the honorary degrees concerned.
- (ii) Where a candidate has declined the prospect of an honorary degree, the nomination shall be deemed to have lapsed and the honorary degree conferral will not be confirmed.

## **6.8 Invitation and preparation for conferral of award at UNIZULU Graduation Ceremonies**

- a) The Council Secretary will then write to all successful candidates to inform them of Council's conferral of the honorary degree and to make arrangements for their presentation at the appropriate UNIZULU graduation ceremonies in the following year.