



## Policy and Rules for the Awarding of Honorary Doctorates

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## **Policy and Rules for the Awarding of Honorary Doctorates<sup>1</sup>**

Against the background of the dream to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care, the council of the North-West University (NWU) has adopted this policy for the awarding of honorary doctorates on 26 September 2019.

### **1 Interpretation and application**

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with -

- 1.1 The Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 (section 65C)
- 1.2 The Statute of the NWU (Para 79)

### **2 Purpose and scope of the policy and rules**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a fair and transparent process for the nomination of candidates for the conferral of honorary doctorates by the NWU.

### **3 Policy statement**

It is the policy of the North-West University that honorary doctorates may be awarded to recognise distinguished individuals for their exceptional contributions or achievement in the categories of merit referred to in paragraph 5.

### **4 Scope of application**

Council authorises the award of an honorary doctorate upon completion of a prescribed process according to the Rules and Procedure prescribed in Annexures 1 and 2.

### **5 Categories of merit**

An honorary doctorate may be awarded to a person who has shown exceptional merit or has made exceptional contributions in the following categories:

- 5.1 achievement of outstanding academic merit in a discipline offered at the NWU;
- 5.2 the making of exceptional contributions to the promotion of the vision and mission of the NWU;
- 5.3 making exceptional public contributions to South African society, or
- 5.4 bringing about a significant paradigm-shift in a discipline offered at the NWU.

### **6 Conditions of the award of an honorary doctorate**

- 6.1 The award of an honorary doctorate must honour the University.
- 6.2 The award of an honorary doctorate supposes a lasting reciprocal relationship between the NWU and the recipient.

## **RULES FOR THE NOMINATION AND AWARD OF HONORARY DOCTORATES**

### **1. CONDITIONS FOR AWARDS**

- 1.1. The final decision and accountability concerning the award of honorary doctorates reside with council.
- 1.2. Any member of the NWU community may submit a nomination for a candidate to the appropriate faculty board.
- 1.3. Honorary doctorates may, in exceptional cases, be awarded posthumously.
- 1.4. In exceptional cases, the award of an honorary doctorate to persons who have already received honorary doctorates from other universities, may be considered, especially where the nominee has made a new contribution worthy of an honorary doctorate since receiving another award.
- 1.5. The following categories of persons are not eligible for honorary doctorates of the NWU:
  - 1.5.1. active employees of the NWU, and
  - 1.5.2. donors, where the impression might be created that the award is aimed at securing further financial contributions to the NWU.

### **2. LIMITATIONS ON FACULTIES FOR MAKING NOMINATIONS**

- 2.1. Honorary doctorates will normally be limited to one per faculty annually.
- 2.2. In exceptional circumstances, a faculty may make two nominations in a specific year, but may then not make a nomination the following year.
- 2.3. Given the requirement of exceptional merit, there may be years in which no awards are made.

### **3. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 3.1. Bearing in mind the high symbolic value of such awards, and to protect the privacy and dignity of candidates, strict confidentiality and proper discretion must be observed in the processes of compiling and considering any proposal for the award of an honorary doctorate, up to the final approval of a nomination by council.

## **PROCEDURE FOR THE NOMINATION AND AWARD OF AN HONORARY DOCTORATE**

### **1. NOMINATION PROCEDURE**

- 1.1. Nominations must be accompanied by a motivation of about two pages, showing how the nominee fulfils the criteria for an honorary doctorate, and must be completed on a template provided by the registrar.
- 1.2. The faculty board considers the nomination and pronounces on the suitability of the nomination.
- 1.3. Upon approval by the said faculty board, the relevant faculty committee coordinator forwards the nomination directly to the committee coordinator of the Honorary Awards Committee with a copy to the registrar.

### **2. SELECTION COMMITTEE TO ADVISE SENATE AND COUNCIL**

- 2.1. The Honorary Awards Committee, whose function it is to make recommendations to senate and council, consists of the following standing members:
  - 2.1.1. The vice-chancellor who is the chairperson of the committee (in the absence of the vice-chancellor, the vice-principal officiates as chairperson);
  - 2.1.2. The chairperson of the council;
  - 2.1.3. The deputy chairperson of the council;
  - 2.1.4. The three members of council who have been elected by the senate;
  - 2.1.5. The registrar.
- 2.2. The executive dean of the faculty from which a nomination was received, attends the meeting of the Honorary Awards Committee to present the relevant nomination.
- 2.3. The selection committee must co-opt specialists in the relevant fields in which the nominations have been made for advice to the selection committee.
- 2.4. In any given case, two or three specialists from the field in which an award is under consideration and as identified by the relevant executive dean, are invited by the secretariat to provide input into the said nomination that is to be considered by the selection panel.

### **3. MANDATE OF THE HONORARY AWARDS COMMITTEE IN THE CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS TOWARDS THE AWARD OF HONORARY DOCTORATES**

- 3.1. The Honorary Awards Committee considers each nomination against the Policy and, where any doubt exists, the Committee should err on the strict side rather than being too lenient in selecting a candidate for an honorary doctorate.
- 3.2. Once the Committee is satisfied that the proposed candidate(s) would clearly meet the criteria, it recommends the name(s) of the candidate(s) together with motivations to the senate for consideration.

### **4. MANDATE OF SENATE IN THE CONSIDERATION OF NONIMATIONS FOR THE AWARD OF HONORARY DOCTORATES**

- 4.1. A meeting of the senate where the submission(s) of the Honorary Awards Committee for the award of an honorary doctorate takes place *in camera*.
- 4.2. Members of the senate may not debate the merit of the recommendations, but may ask questions on receiving clarification on the proposal before the matter is decided upon by secret ballot.
- 4.3. The recommendation by the senate needs to be approved by a majority of the members of senate.
- 4.4. Upon completion of the process by senate, this body makes a recommendation to council on the selected candidates.

### **5. MANDATE OF COUNCIL IN THE CONSIDERATION OF NONIMATIONS FOR THE AWARD OF HONORARY DOCTORATES**

- 5.1. A meeting of council where the recommendation of the senate for the award of an honorary doctorate takes place *in camera*.
- 5.2. Council members may not debate the merit of the recommendations of Senate but may ask questions on receiving clarification on the proposal before the matter is decided upon by secret ballot.
- 5.3. The recommendation needs to be approved by a majority of the members of council.

5.4. Upon final approval by council, the registrar informs the recipients and the relevant executive deans of the decision by council.

**6. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN PREPARATION OF THE AWARDING CEREMONY**

- 6.1. The office of the executive dean from the faculty that has nominated the person for an honorary doctorate, in consultation with the chief director Student Academic Lifecycle Administration and the office of the relevant campus deputy vice-chancellor commences with a process to take care of the logistical arrangements for the conferral of the honorary degree at a suitable campus degree ceremony, and remains in close communication with the recipient towards the awarding ceremony.
- 6.2. The office of the executive dean is responsible for the following arrangements:
- 6.2.1.all travel and accommodation costs related to the awarding of an honorary doctorate,
  - 6.2.2.all arrangements related to a guest lecture to be delivered by the recipient of the honorary doctorate.

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