

# Honorary Degrees

ACA-62

## About This Policy

**Effective Dates:**

03-13-1979

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**Responsible University Administrator:**

President of Indiana University

**Policy Contact:**

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## Scope

All Indiana University campuses.

## Policy Statement

1. The honorary doctorate is the highest academic recognition Indiana University can bestow. Candidates for these degrees should have demonstrated in their life and in their work high standards of excellence as evidenced by scholarship or creative activity; by professional development and achievement; by public service to the world, the nation, the state, or the community; in wholehearted commitment to the development of Indiana University; or through excellence in any calling or occupation which visibly contributed to the development of society and serves as a model for present and future generations. In all honorary degree candidates, these scholarly, creative, professional, service, or occupational achievements should be placed in a framework of high personal integrity and concern for the public good. By awarding honorary degrees to individuals of such outstanding qualities, the university seeks to present to its several constituencies veritable models worthy of emulation and respect. Students, faculty, alumni, and the people of the state as a whole should recognize in the honorary degree recipients qualities they consider particularly relevant to their own experiences, whether these be scholarship, creative activity, a profession, public service, university service, or avocation.
2. Candidates for the honorary degree may have, but are not required to have, ties to the state of Indiana or to Indiana University through birth, residence, education, service, or notable achievement. Allowing for a continuum of possibilities, one candidate might have a strong Indiana connection with considerable accomplishments, while another might have national or international distinction tied to scholarly endeavors at Indiana University.
3. Honorary degrees are not normally awarded to candidates for political office or to elected officials currently in office or to faculty, staff, or administrators currently in service. Retired or former faculty members must meet the same high standards for nomination as all other honorary degree candidates.
4. The honorary degree may not be awarded in absentia; but, if an approved candidate cannot be present at the graduation or other ceremony at which the degree was intended to be awarded, the recommendation for the degree shall be reviewed annually by the Honorary Degrees Committee (HDC).
5. All nominations are referred to the HDC, whose recommendations are transmitted by its chair to the University Faculty Council (UFC). Upon approval by the UFC, the nominations are transmitted to the President of the university for submission to the Board of Trustees for formal action, together with the President's recommendations as to the appropriate ceremony for the award and any associated considerations.
6. Since nominations for honorary degrees can be initiated by any member of the university community, the achievement of individuals which prompt nominations will reflect the broad spectrum of values expressed in

contemporary culture. The faculty and Board of Trustees share the important and challenging task of selecting those candidates most appropriate for recognition as exemplary models for all of us. The award ceremony focuses attention at the interface between the university and society and the qualities of the individual honored reveal the values of academia.

7. The HDC invites the participation of all interested individuals in this important process and awaits the nomination of candidates of truly outstanding achievement for conferral of honorary doctoral degrees at graduation and other public academic ceremonies on all campuses of the university.

## Reason For Policy

The conferral of honorary doctoral degrees provides a special opportunity for the university to recognize individuals of outstanding accomplishment. Indiana University, as a leading public university in the state of Indiana, recognizes a particular responsibility to acknowledge and honor individuals of outstanding achievement who have significant ties to the state or the university. As an institution particularly responsible for advanced teaching and research in the various academic and professional fields, Indiana University has an equally important responsibility to identify and honor individuals of national and international eminence who are the leaders of their fields of creative or professional endeavor.

## Procedure

1. Candidates for an honorary doctorate may be nominated by any member of the university community. Nominations are submitted for the first stage of review to the Honorary Degrees Committee (HDC), which is a standing committee of the UFC.
2. The HDC shall be composed of four members of the faculty selected by the Executive Committee of the UFC and four members selected by the President. Members shall be selected so as to assure diversity among campuses, disciplines, and perspectives. The chairperson shall be selected by the Executive Committee in consultation with the President.
3. Nomination materials need not be extensive, but should indicate the extraordinary nature of the candidate's life and contribution and should document the backing of the campus faculty and administration. The following initial documentation is suggested:
  - a. A letter of nomination from the primary nominator.
  - b. A short (one-page maximum) narrative explaining why the candidate is worthy of an honorary doctorate from our institution.
  - c. A curriculum vitae.
  - d. Several letters of recommendation from within the university, usually from senior professors, distinguished scholars, and/or administrators, and a letter from the head of the College, School, or other unit making the nomination.
4. Nominators may be asked by the HDC to expand the dossier and to solicit statements of support from distinguished individuals outside the university.
5. The HDC shall identify resources within the university to assist in supplying input where appropriate to the selection of nominees for honorary degrees.
6. Approved candidates are recommended by the HDC to the University Faculty Council for a second stage of review and approval. The list shall be accompanied by the nominees' curriculum vitae and a written justification from the HDC for each selection based on the established criteria. A copy of the criteria shall be included.
7. A candidate cannot be considered to have been approved unless the total of affirmative votes is greater than the total of both the negative and the further-study votes.
8. Upon approval by the UFC, the President will transmit the dossiers of approved candidates to the Board of Trustees for review and final, formal action.
9. It should be noted that the process of HDC, UFC, and board review is a long one, often taking one to two years from inception to the actual awarding of the degree. To assist university colleagues in their efforts, nominators should start the process early.

## Additional Contacts

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## History

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