

Honorary Degrees – Principles and Criteria for Selecting Honorary Degree Recipients

Effective Date: May 17, 2024

1. General Principles

The awarding of an honorary degree is an important symbol in the life of the University. An honorary degree recognizes exceptionally meritorious accomplishments, activity, and positive impact both in the academic arena and in broader areas of benefit to society, that reflect the values esteemed by a great university. Honorary degrees are conferred on those whose achievements are of such excellence that they inspire exemplary leadership to the graduates of the University.

In choosing recipients for this honour the University is also guided by the principle that in honouring individuals for their contributions, the University is also honouring itself by its association with people of such special merit.

2. Criteria for Selection

The following specific criteria are used by the Honorary Degrees Committee in its consideration of candidates. The Committee's goal each year is to present a slate of recipients across a range of academic disciplines and non-academic areas of achievement. Honorary degree recipients, when possible, will be chosen to match the purposes of the Convocation at which the degree is to be granted.

- a. Through the selection of an Honorary Degree recipient, Western is making public our institutional values. Consideration should be given to the alignment of a nominee's accomplishments, activity and impact with the goals and aspirations included in Western's strategic plan.
- b. Recognition will be given to those whose exceptional accomplishments have contributed to enhancing culture and society in Canada or elsewhere in the world.
- c. The University normally will give preference to honouring individuals who have made outstanding contributions in fields and professions in which the University itself is active.

Principles and Criteria for Selecting Honorary Degree Recipients

- d. The University on occasion will honour those who have made extraordinary contributions to the development of the University or the region or have achieved international standards of excellence in their endeavours.
- e. Nominations should support the breadth of the university's academic community in the diversity of indigeneity, race, gender identity/expression, ability, sexual orientation, religion and all equity-deserving groups.
- f. Nominations should represent a local, national and international field of candidates.
- g. Based on an earlier tradition in the University, an honorary degree (jure dignitatis) will usually be conferred upon the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Ontario [who is the Official Visitor of the University].

3. Exclusions

- a. Active members of faculty, staff, the Board of Governors and the Senate are not eligible for honorary degrees. Such members of the University community are not to be considered for nomination until a minimum of one year has passed since their departure from active service to the University.
- b. Honorary degrees are not granted in absentia or posthumously.
- c. Normally, active politicians will not be awarded an honorary degree. An exception may be made in the case of a Special Convocation for the installation of the Chancellor or President when the University may wish to recognize a person in a high position. In such a case, criteria in section 2. above shall apply.

4. Degrees

- a. **Doctor of Laws (LL.D.):** Awarded for accomplishments and impact in a field not covered by one of the other honorary degrees or for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Because of its non-specificity, this is the most frequently awarded honorary degree.
- b. **Doctor of Science (D.Sc.):** Awarded for accomplishments and impact in the pure and applied sciences, usually through research.

Principles and Criteria for Selecting Honorary Degree Recipients

- c. **Doctor of Letters** (D.Litt.): Awarded for accomplishments and impact in the humanities, usually of a scholarly nature.
- d. **Doctor of Music** (D.Mus.): Awarded for accomplishments and impact in the field of music.
- e. **Doctor of Civil Law** (D.C.L.): Awarded for accomplishments and impact in jurisprudence.
- f. **Doctor of Divinity** (D.D.): Awarded by Huron University College for outstanding service to or scholarship in the religious community.

With the exception of the D.D., the degree to be awarded to a candidate for an honorary degree is decided by the Honorary Degrees Committee of the Senate.

Nominators may be invited to participate in the conferral of the degree as hooders, presenters or hosts, where and when possible, on the basis of their relevant relationship to the field of accomplishment of the nominee.