

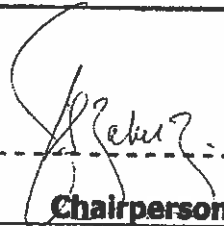


**WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY
HONORARY DEGREES
POLICY**

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HONORARY DEGREES POLICY

Sponsor Division	REGISTRAR
Responsible Division	HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE
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Honorary Degrees	
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POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON HONORARY DEGREES

POLICY STATEMENT

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) may, without attendance or examination, confer *honorary degrees of Master or Doctor* in any faculty upon any person who has rendered a distinguished service in the advancement of any branch of learning or technology, or who it deems worthy of such a degree.

The objective of this policy is to regulate the award of honorary degrees, by setting out the criteria and processes for determining who is eligible for such an award.

This policy has the status of Institutional Rules as contemplated in section 81(3) of the Institutional Statute.

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SECTION A: POLICY

1 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

"Honorary" means given for honour only, without the usual requirements, duties, privileges, emoluments, etc.;

"Institutional Management Committee (IMC)" means a committee as defined in the Institutional Statute;

"Nominee", "proposed nominee", or "candidate" means any person who is being considered for the award of an honorary degree; and

"WSU" means Walter Sisulu University.

2 PURPOSE AND AIMS

- 2.1 The University shall award an Honorary Degree to persons whom it deems worthy on the basis of a person's (a) distinguished service in the advancement of any branch of learning or technology, or (b) exceptional contribution to society in general or to WSU;¹
- 2.2 The award aims to recognize, especially, individuals who have rendered unselfish humanitarian service to others and/or extraordinary service in science, engineering, technology, religious, governmental, community, cultural, economic, and artistic or other spheres of life;
- 2.3 The award aims further to acknowledge and affirm achievements and/or contributions that affirm our country's foundational constitutional values of human dignity, equality and freedom, as well as efforts to transform our society into one that is truly democratic and respectful of human rights; and which promotes openness and accountability as well as reconciliation and reconstruction; and
- 2.4 Nominees' achievements must not be incompatible with WSU's vision, mission and values.

3 ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 Honorary degrees shall be conferred on public persons, outside WSU's employ. Honorary degrees will not be awarded to current staff, but may be awarded to former staff members who meet the set criteria;
- 3.2 Honorary degrees will not be awarded to persons 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; and
- 3.3 Notwithstanding posthumous awards in the past, an honorary degree shall not be awarded posthumously unless a candidate died after s/he had been nominated **and approved by Council.**

¹ Section 81 the Statute of the Walter Sisulu University, GN 37235, GG 17 January 2014; section 65C of the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997 (as amended).

4 CRITERIA

- 4.1 The following criteria may be indicative of the type of person and/or endeavour that would qualify for honorary recognition (the list is illustrative, not exhaustive):
- 4.1.1 Outstanding achievements in a chosen field of endeavour;
 - 4.1.2 Well-established local, national or international recognition;
 - 4.1.3 A record of personal support to worthy causes in society in general;
 - 4.1.4 A demonstrable record of contributions beyond the call of duty;
 - 4.1.5 Distinction in scholarship, research, teaching, advancement of learning; and
 - 4.1.6 Distinguished public service distinction at community, provincial national and/or international levels.

5 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Honorary degrees are awarded by the University, not a particular faculty; although awards should be ~~limited to degrees in~~ **compatible with fields of study offered by WSU** faculties; and
- 5.2 Honorary degrees should be spread across faculties and care should be taken not to concentrate awards to one or a few faculties.

6 PRIVILEGES

- 6.1 Recipients of an honorary doctorate become members of Convocation, and have all the rights, privileges and obligations associated with such membership;
- 6.2 Recipients of an honorary doctorate may if they wish adopt the title of "doctor"; and
- 6.3 A recipient of an honorary degree may add the degree title post nominally, provided that the word "honorary" or "honoris causa" or "h.c." are added in parenthesis after the degree title.

7 HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall comprise:
- 7.1.1 Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson);
 - 7.1.2 A representative nominated by Council;
 - 7.1.3 A representative nominated by Convocation;
 - 7.1.4 A representative nominated by the Institutional Forum;
 - 7.1.5 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic Affairs;
 - 7.1.6 Two representatives nominated by Senate;
 - 7.1.7 One academic staff member per Campus, nominated by each Campus Senate; and
- 7.2 The Registrar shall be the Secretary of the Committee.

8 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 The nomination process is strictly confidential;
- 8.2 Stakeholders and nominators should be made aware of the importance of confidentiality during the process;
- 8.3 In particular, in order to avoid potential embarrassment for any person or the University, there should be no interaction with any nominee or proposed nominee, except as stipulated in this Policy;
- 8.4 Only the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar and the Marketing and Communications Division may correspond with proposed nominees, nominees or candidates; and
- 8.5 Only the Marketing and Communications Division may make public announcements in connection with honorary awards.

SECTION B: PROCEDURES

9 PROCEDURES

- 9.1 The Registrar is responsible for administering the procedures;

Call for Nominations

- 9.2 In May of each year the Registrar shall call for nominations for Honorary Degrees to be awarded at the graduation ceremonies in the following year;
- 9.3 The closing date for submitting nominations to the Registrar shall be 30 June of each year **provided that the Honorary Degrees Committee may in its discretion accept a late nomination;**
- 9.4 The call for nominations, together with the required criteria, shall be made by University Notice posted on the University website and by email distribution to members of Council, Members of the Convocation Executive and all staff;
- 9.5 All nominations must be nominated and seconded by at least three persons who must be either members of Council, Convocation or staff;
- 9.6 **(a)** Nominations must be in writing and must be formulated in accordance with the format and criteria stipulated in this policy;
(b) The Honorary Degrees Committee may in its discretion correct technical non-material errors in nomination documents;

Consideration by Honorary Degrees Committee

- 9.7 The Registrar shall collate all properly-submitted nominations and convene the first meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee in July of each year and thereafter any further meetings that might be necessary;
- 9.8 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall consider the nominations and prepare a shortlist of no more than three nominees per annum for submission to Senate;
- 9.9 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall in particular:
 - 9.9.1 confirm the eligibility of individual nominations against the relevant criteria;

- 9.9.2 confirm the suitability of individual candidates for the honorary degree proposed;
- 9.10 Candidates must receive a two-thirds majority of votes to be recommended to Senate;
- 9.11 The Higher Degrees Committee shall in particular propose the honorary degree to be awarded to each shortlisted candidate;**

Consideration by Senate

- 9.12 The Registrar shall prepare ballot papers and brief synopses of the nominees for submission to Senate at its meeting in August/September of each year;
- 9.13 Senate members shall consider the shortlisted nominees and the information presented to them and, without debate, cast their votes on the suitability of each candidate;
- 9.14 Voting shall be by secret ballot;
- 9.15 The Senate Chairperson shall appoint as **ballot** scrutinisers TWO (2) members of the Senate who are not members of the Honorary Degrees Committee;
- 9.16 To be recommended to Council, each candidate must receive a simple majority vote of Senate members present at the meeting;
- 9.17 The process shall be strictly confidential and at the end of the process all documentation must be returned to the Registrar for shredding;

Consideration by Council

- 9.18 Council considers Senate's recommendations at its meeting in September of each year, together with the documentation prepared for and considered by Senate;
- 9.19 Voting shall be by secret ballot;
- 9.20 To be confirmed, each candidate must receive a simple majority vote of **Senate Council** members present at the meeting;
- 9.21 The process shall be strictly confidential and at the end of the process all documentation must be returned to the Registrar for shredding;

Notification and Confirmation

- 9.22 The Registrar shall write to all successful candidates to inform them of Council's intention to award them an Honorary Degree and to enquire from them their willingness to accept the honorary degree concerned;
- 9.23 Where a candidate accepts the proposed award of an honorary degree, the nomination is thereby confirmed;
- 9.24 Where a candidate declines the proposed award of an honorary degree, the nomination offer shall lapse;
- 9.25 The Registrar shall convey the candidates' decision to accept or not to accept the award of the honorary degree to Council at its meeting in November of each year;

Preparation for conferral of the award

- 9.26 The Registrar shall make the arrangements for the presentation of candidates at an appropriate graduation ceremony in May of the following year;
- 9.27 The Registrar shall notify the Marketing and Communications Division of the acceptance of the nominee. That Division shall be responsible for invitations, academic dress and preparations regarding the conferment of honorary degrees at the graduation ceremony;
- 9.28 The Registrar shall ensure that the nominator, together with the appropriate Dean, prepares an appropriate citation document to be read out when the degree is awarded; and
- 9.29 At the appropriate graduation ceremony, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs shall present the candidate for the award of the honorary degree and shall read out the citation.

10 REQUIRED NOMINATION DOCUMENTATION

- 10.1 The nomination document consists of a formal written motivation of between 500 and 1000 words, signed by the principal nominator and at least TWO (2) seconders;
- 10.2 The nominator should recommend the appropriate honorary degree to be conferred;
- 10.3 The nomination document must contain a clear justification of the proposed honorary degree, indicating, in particular, how the candidate meets the eligibility criteria and how the candidates achievements and/or service meet the aims and other criteria stipulated in this policy;
- 10.4 The nomination should contain the following supporting documentation:
 - 10.4.1 The nominee's curriculum vitae or any 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; and
 - 10.4.2 Any other supporting documentation, attached as annexures.

11 IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 11.1 The project owner of this policy is the Registrar, who shall ensure that the policy provisions are implemented and that it is presented for revision and review at the appropriate time; and
- 11.2 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall oversee compliance.

12 POLICY REVIEW

- 12.1 Council shall review the policy on a five-yearly cycle;

- 12.2 Nothing in this clause shall prevent Council from reviewing this policy at any time prior to the stipulated five-year cycle, in which event a new cycle shall commence from the date of such review; and
- 12.3 Council shall not review or consider any amendment to this Policy without prior input from Senate and the Higher Degrees Committee.