



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.4143

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Honorary Degrees

DATE: October 1, 2012

REVISED: November 1, 2015, September 23, 2019, December 11, 2023

REVIEWED: September 17, 2021

Authorized by: Robert Fischer, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

Western Kentucky University awards honorary degrees to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the University, the state, the nation, or the world. Recipients of honorary degrees are recognized for their general excellence and for their extraordinary achievements in areas of human endeavor which reflect the ideals and objectives of the University. Individuals who receive honorary degrees will exemplify the University's values, vision and service mission. Honorary degrees may be awarded to outstanding citizens of the Commonwealth, outstanding alumni of the University, outstanding living benefactors of the University, or individuals of national or international prominence whose contributions have enhanced society as a whole.

II. Policy

1. The Board of Regents of Western Kentucky University has exclusive authority to authorize the awarding of honorary degrees on behalf of the University. The Board will act only upon the recommendation of the President and with the advice of the Honorary Degree Review Committee.
2. Honorary degrees that may be awarded include
 - a. Doctor of Business Leadership
 - b. Doctor of Fine Arts
 - c. Doctor of Letters

- d. Doctor of Humanities
 - e. Doctor of Laws
 - f. Doctor of Public Service
 - g. Doctor of Science
3. Honorary degrees may only be awarded to living individuals and may not be awarded to members of the Board of Regents or members of the faculty and staff of the University during their term of service or employment.
 4. Honorary degrees may be conferred during any appropriate function of the University, including commencements and special events or ceremonies.
 5. Due to the highly selective nature of honorary degrees, no more than two will be conferred in any one academic year.
 6. The Honorary Degree Review Committee is convened by the Provost (or designee) and is comprised of the Chair of the Faculty Senate, the Chair of the Staff Senate, the Vice President for Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement, a representative from Public Affairs, and four University Distinguished Professors selected by the Provost (or designee). The Committee will select the Chair.

III. Procedure

1. A call for nominations will be made by the Office of the Provost at the beginning of each fall semester. For full consideration, nominations should be submitted by September 10. Any nomination received after September 10 will normally be held for consideration until the following year. The subsequent timeline is attached as an Appendix to this policy.
2. Nominations for possible recipients of honorary degrees may be made by students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, or friends of the University and should be directed to the Office of the Provost. Nominations should use the application format provided at the end of this policy document.
3. **CONFIDENTIALITY IS A CRUCIAL ELEMENT OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS.** Under no circumstances should the nominee be informed that his or her name has been put forward. The nominator should not solicit letters of support on behalf of the nominee from people outside the University.
4. The Honorary Degree Review Committee will review the nominations and, after careful consideration of the application packet, submit a written recommendation to the Provost (or designee) as to which nominee(s) should be considered for an honorary degree. The packet will be the sole basis of the committee's recommendation. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality during the review process.
5. The Provost (or designee) will evaluate the recommendations of the Honorary Degree Review Committee and will recommend any candidate(s) for honorary degrees to the President.

6. The President will evaluate the recommendations of the Provost and will recommend any candidate(s) for honorary degrees to the Board of Regents for approval.
7. Upon approval of the Board of Regents, the President will, on behalf of the Board of Regents, inform successful nominees of the University's desire to confer an honorary degree upon them. The Office of the President will discuss with the honoree suggestions for an appropriate venue and make necessary arrangements for the degree to be conferred

IV. Reason for Revision

November, 2015

Non-substantive changes as part of the five year policy review per Policy 0.000V Policy on Policies.

September, 2019

Changes made to clarify the process of contacting the nominee(s) and selecting appropriate venue for recognition/degree conferral, and appropriately align the process with the quarterly Board of Regents meeting schedule.

December, 2023

Updating Provost, providing an application, adjusting policy wording to align with application, and adjusting timeline for submission and review.

APPENDIX – TIMELINE

August 30:	Call for nominations sent from Academic Affairs
November 1:	Provost (or designee) Selects Review Committee and schedules a date/time to convene the committee on or shortly after September 11. The Review Committee will select a chair and set a date prior to September 20 to review nomination materials.
November 1:	Nominations due to Academic Affairs
November 15:	Review Committee submits recommendations to the Provost (or designee)
November 30:	Provost submits recommendations to the President
January:	President reviews Provost's recommendation and contacts successful nominee(s) to confirm acceptance of the honorary degree. President (or designee) notifies the Provost (or designee) of acceptance or decline.
Feb/Mar BOR Meeting:	President submits formal recommendation to Board of Regents in collaboration with the Provost (or designee).
March:	Following Board of Regents approval, President (or designee) contacts the honorary degree recipient(s) to make formal arrangements for recognition/degree conferral.

***NOTE: If any of the dates above fall on a weekend or holiday, the task will be due the next business day.

APPENDIX – WKU Honorary Degree Nomination Application

Stipulations: Please carefully read Policy 1.4142 Honorary Degrees Policy for the stipulations on who can be nominated and awarded an Honorary Degree from WKU.

Directions: Please complete the application in full.

Application:

1. Name of nominee and any titles
2. Suggested doctorate (from section 11.2 of the Honorary Degrees Policy)(select one)
 - a. Doctor of Business Leadership
 - b. Doctor of Fine Arts
 - c. Doctor of Letters
 - d. Doctor of Humanities
 - e. Doctor of Laws
 - f. Doctor of Public Service
 - g. Doctor of Science
3. Name and position(s) of nominator(s)
4. Relationship of nominator(s) to nominee
5. Describe nominee's eligibility for this award in regard to their exemplary contributions to WKU, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the USA, or the World. Please be clear about the importance of their achievements in terms of general excellence, highlighting what you consider as extraordinary achievements. (500-word maximum)
6. Explain how the achievements of the nominee fit within the values, vision, and service mission of WKU (please address each). In this section, you should be specific about the extent of the nominee's interactions with individuals or entities at WKU, including their length and range of such interaction. You may wish to review the WKU mission, statement of purpose, and core values available on the WKU website. (500-word maximum)
7. Please include two additional letters from individuals other than the nominator in support of this nomination. The text of each letter should be no more than 500 words. To maintain confidentiality, please request that these individuals do not contact the nominee or otherwise discuss their nomination.
8. To assist with the nomination process and the review of candidates, a guiding rubric is provided on the next page.

Criteria	Weak (1)	Adequate (2)	Strong (3)	Excellent (4)
Has made notable contributions to the University, state, nation, OR world	Has not made any notable contributions	Has made few notable contributions	Has made some notable contributions	Has made numerous notable contributions
Exemplifies University Values, Vision, & Mission	No evidence of integrity, ethics, cooperation, enabling or inspiring others, a commitment to "do and be something"	Few mentions	Some evidence	Evidence consistently demonstrated
Important connections to WKU	No evidence	Few mentions	Some evidence	Evidence consistently demonstrated

Weighting: 50, 40, 10 (Contributions, WM, Connections)