



## **HONORARY DEGREES OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The National University of Ireland, founded in 1908, comprises four autonomous Constituent Universities: University College Dublin; University College Cork; National University of Ireland, Galway; and National University of Ireland, Maynooth. While NUI dates to 1908, its Constituent Universities, founded on older institutions, have longer histories. UCC and NUI, Galway were originally Queen's Colleges, founded in 1845. UCD traces its history to the Catholic University of Ireland founded by John Henry Cardinal Newman in 1851, while NUI, Maynooth has a shared history with St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, established in 1795. Other higher education institutions enjoy the status of Recognised Colleges of the University. Currently, the Recognised Colleges are: the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (founded 1784); the National College of Art and Design (founded 1746 ); Shannon College of Hotel Management (founded 1951); the Institute of Public Administration which in 2007 celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation; and Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, established in 1968.

The Senate of the University provides the central forum of the National University of Ireland. Each of the Constituent Universities is represented in the membership of the Senate and in addition, representatives of the Recognised Colleges participate in its proceedings.

Each of the Constituent Universities is empowered under the Universities Act 1997 to award degrees, including honorary degrees. Similarly, under the Irish Universities Act 1908, the Senate is empowered to award degrees. All of these degrees are degrees of the National University of Ireland.

Every year, honorary degrees of the National University of Ireland are awarded by its Constituent Universities and also by the Senate. The doctorate degrees awarded *honoris causa* are the highest awards of the University. The purpose of these degrees is to recognise distinction in a particular field of human endeavour, related to the expansion of knowledge, discovery and understanding; the deepening of scholarship in every discipline whether of the humanities or the sciences; the critical appreciation and the practice of literature, music and the visual and performing arts. In the main, these degrees are intended to further the purposes of the University by honouring academic distinction in all disciplines.

In particular, NUI seeks to honour those whose academic distinction is linked in some way to the culture, scholarship, traditions and values of the National University of Ireland. In honoring distinguished individuals, NUI seeks to promote its own cultural and scholarly traditions and values, including its commitment to the Irish language and Celtic Studies. In addition to degrees honouring scholarship and creativity, honorary doctorates of the University are conferred on individuals, who, whether in their personal or representative capacities, through their energies, service and actions, have contributed significantly to public life, the betterment of society, or individual freedom and dignity, in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere internationally.

This document sets out the criteria, guiding principles and procedures for the award of honorary degrees by the NUI Senate. Honorary degrees of the Constituent Universities will be awarded in accordance with the criteria and procedures determined by each constituent university in furtherance of its own purposes and strategic objectives. A list

of those honoured by the University in the centenary since its foundation is available on the NUI website [www.nui.ie](http://www.nui.ie).

## **2. THE GRANTING OF NUI HONORARY DEGREES TO BE CONFERRED CENTRALLY**

Decisions on the granting of honorary degrees to be conferred at the central NUI conferring are made by the Senate.

## **3. CRITERIA AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE AWARD OF NUI HONORARY DEGREES**

- (i) The award of an honorary degree by the NUI is an honour of the highest level. Honorary degrees are awarded to persons meriting recognition at this level, and who, in turn, bring honour to the NUI.
- (ii) The award is for distinction in the candidate's own right or in his/her representative capacity.
- (iii) In the conferring of an honorary degree, the main purpose is to honour distinction in scholarship and creativity. Honorary doctorates are awarded in every discipline in the Humanities and the Sciences and in every branch of the visual and performing arts.
- (iv) In addition to honouring scholarship and creativity, honorary degrees may be awarded to individuals who, whether in their personal or representative capacities, through their energies and service, have contributed significantly to public life, the betterment of society, and the interests of humanity, in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere. In general, honorary degrees for individuals who have distinguished themselves in political life will be awarded to them only after they have retired from office.
- (v) Special consideration will be given annually to a nomination made by the Recognised Colleges.
- (vi) Honorary degrees will not be conferred *in absentia*.
- (vii) The optimum number to be conferred at a single ceremony is five. Every effort will be made to ensure that the list of honorary graduands for each ceremony includes both men and women and reflects diversity in the areas in which the candidates have distinguished themselves and the degrees to be conferred.

## **4. PROCEDURES GOVERNING PROPOSALS**

### **4a Candidates**

- (i) A list of candidates to be considered for conferring at the annual NUI conferring will be selected by the Honorary Degrees Committee, a sub-committee of Senate appointed by the Senate from among its most senior academic members.

Chaired by the Chancellor, the Committee will include four other members of Senate, two nominated by him and two nominated by Senate. The NUI Registrar will act as secretary to the Committee.

- (ii) Proposals for the conferring of honorary degrees may be presented to the committee by:
  - the Chancellor
  - the Presidents of the Constituent Universities as members of Senate
  - the Recognised Colleges jointly (see (iv) below)
  - any four members of Senate.

(In any one year, a member of Senate may join in proposing no more than one candidate for an honorary degree)

- (iii) Proposals for consideration by the committee should be presented in the standard format to the Registrar, with full supporting information. The committee shall have discretion as to which names are to be recommended to the Senate.
- (iv) Each of the Recognised Colleges, in annual rotation, will propose a candidate annually for an honorary degree. The Registrar will arrange a consultative process with the other Recognised Colleges following which the agreed candidate will be presented to the Senate Committee for Honorary degrees.

#### **4b. Report of Honorary Degrees Sub-committee to Senate**

The proposals together with supporting information and CVs will be considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee. Having considered the proposals received, in the light of the appointed criteria and having taken account of the possible configuration of the conferring ceremony, the range of degrees to be conferred and the balance of candidates, the Senate Committee will propose a list of names to the Senate. In its report the Sub-Committee will recommend the Degrees to be awarded, and the introducers of the candidates for the central conferring. The list proposed will normally contain no more than five names.

#### **4c. Senate Voting and Decisions**

At the meeting of Senate a secret ballot is taken. To be approved for the award of an honorary degree, a candidate must receive at least two thirds of the votes of those present and voting.

In the event of a candidate being unwilling or unable to accept the degree, the Honorary Degrees Committee will be asked to propose an additional candidate for consideration by the Senate.

#### **4d. Arrangements for Special Situations**

In situations where it appears appropriate to invite a visiting dignitary to accept the award of an honorary degree, the Chancellor is empowered to act promptly, after the Members of Senate have been consulted by the Registrar. Where it is necessary for the Senate to make a decision on a proposal for the award of an honorary degree between meetings, this will normally be done by postal ballot (to include e-mail).

#### **4e. Timescale**

The Registrar will write to members of Senate, normally in July, inviting them to make proposals for the awarding of honorary degrees. The proposals will be considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee which will make recommendations to the next appropriate meeting of Senate.

### **5. TITLES OF HONORARY DEGREES (approved by Senate September 2007)**

Degree of Doctor of Arts	DArts
Degree of Doctor of Celtic Studies	DLittCelt
Degree of Doctor of Economic Science	DEconSc
Doctor of Education	DEd
Doctor of Engineering	DEng
Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts	DFA
Degree of Doctor of Laws	LLD
Degree of Doctor of Literature	DLitt
Degree of Doctor of Medicine	DMed
Degree of Doctor of Music	DMus
Degree of Doctor of Science	DSc