

Operational Guidelines for the Revocation of Honorary Degrees

1. Purpose

- 1.1 These guidelines outline the general process for receiving and making a determination on a request for the revocation of an Honorary Degree, as provided for in, and in accordance with, section 7 of the HDCC Guidelines.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 Requests for the revocation of an Honorary Degree are initiated by members of the University community or community-at-large and shall be made in writing and submitted to the Chair of the HDCC, with copy to both the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and the Secretary-General.
- 2.2 The Principal and Vice-Chancellor may initiate a request based on information available to the Principal, in consultation with the Chair of the HDCC and the Secretary-General.

3. Preliminary Review of Request for Revocation of an Honorary Degree

- 3.1 Upon receipt of a request to revoke an Honorary Degree, the Chair of the HDCC, in consultation with the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and the Secretary-General, shall determine whether the request presents sufficient information and reason to proceed to a full and formal consideration.
- 3.2 The determination at section 3.1 revolves around whether the words or deeds alleged in the request would be prejudicial to the University's reputation or in contradiction to its mission and principles.
- 3.3 For the purposes of reviewing the request under section 3.1, the Chair of the HDCC may, at their discretion, ask for additional supporting information, documents or materials.
- 3.4 Consistent with the University's commitment to academic freedom and to freedom of expression within the law, disagreement with views expressed by a recipient is not, in and of itself, grounds for review or revocation. The Chair of the HDCC shall seek advice or information from the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) on requests for revocation that involve academic freedom considerations.
- 3.5 If the determination at section 3.1 is in the affirmative, the Chair of the HDCC shall convene an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the HDCC in accordance with section 7 of the HDCC Guidelines for the consideration of the request including any supporting information, documents or materials and to advise the HDCC on a decision for or against revocation.

A request initiated under section 2.2 proceeds directly to such a consideration.

4. Review by the Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Confidentiality

- 4.1. The Ad Hoc Subcommittee meets in closed session. All documents and deliberations of the Subcommittee will be treated in strict confidence by the Subcommittee, the HDCC and Senate.

Mandate

- 4.2. The mandate of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee is to review the words or deeds alleged in a request with objective to determine whether maintaining the Honorary Degree at issue would prejudice the University's reputation or contradict its mission, principles and values. To that end, the Subcommittee may question whether maintaining the conferral of the Honorary Degree:

- a. calls into question the original rationale for conferring the Honorary Degree;
- b. constitutes an abuse of the rights and privileges associated with the Honorary Degree;
- c. runs counter to the University's mission and principles or undermines its work; or
- d. risks significant damage to the reputation and distinction of the University.

Special Advice and Legal Assistance

- 4.3. The Chair of the HDCC, in consultation with the Ad Hoc Subcommittee, may appoint a Special Advisor with relevant expertise drawn from within the University community or beyond.

- 4.4. At the request of the Chair, the Special Advisor may, with due regard for the privacy of the recipient:

- a. assist the Subcommittee in the solicitation, collection, and assessment of materials relevant to the review.
- b. facilitate any consultations with any stakeholder groups, both internal and external to the University, from which the Subcommittee wishes to solicit representations it deems relevant to its review.

Notice of Review

- 4.5. The Ad Hoc Subcommittee, through the Secretary-General, shall notify the recipient of the Honorary Degree that a request to revoke their award is under consideration. In such circumstances, and if relevant, this notice shall advise the recipient that they may provide pertinent information respecting the matter within the time period prescribed in the notice.

- 4.6. At the discretion of the Principal, a notice of review may be communicated to the University community.

Materials, Evidence and Submissions for the Subcommittee's Consideration

- 4.7 In addition to the request for review and any supporting information, documents or materials submitted therewith, the Ad Hoc Subcommittee may review the following for consideration:
- a. Materials forming the Nomination package upon which the HDCC's recommendation to Senate to confer the Honorary Degree was based, along with the materials presented to Senate, upon which the decision to confer the Honorary Degree by Senate was based.
 - b. Representations provided to the Secretary-General by the recipient as per section 4.6.
 - c. Representations and materials collected by the Special Advisor, if one is appointed.
 - d. Any other materials deemed relevant by the Subcommittee.
- 4.8 The Subcommittee may seek further advice, information, or verification from other members of the University community and externally, supported, as needed, by the Special Advisor to the Subcommittee, if appointed, and the Secretariat.
- 4.9 Where new information, documents or materials are uncovered during the review process, the Ad Hoc Subcommittee will normally notify and/or share these with the recipient for comment, through the Secretary-General, with a reasonable delay to be set by its Chair.
- 4.10 The Ad Hoc Subcommittee will normally invite the recipient to answer questions through the Secretary-General.

5 Deliberations

- 5.1 Without limiting the generality of section 4.2, the Subcommittee shall discuss the request, with reference to the criteria set out in Section 2 of the [HDCC Guidelines](#). The Subcommittee will also take into account the following questions (or other questions appropriate to the matter at hand):
- What was the original rationale for granting the Honorary Degree?
 - Is the principal legacy of the Recipient fundamentally at odds with the University's vision, mission, and principles?
 - Were the Recipient's contributions to the University itself and, if so, how fundamental were these contributions?
 - Is harm to the University's reputation or its community associated with the upholding of the Honorary Degree, and how severe is this harm?
 - Does the Honorary Degree have a negative impact on members of the University community, their sense of belonging, or on members outside of the University community? Does fact of the Honorary Degree impair the University in its pursuit of its equity, diversity, inclusion, or reconciliation goals?
 - Whether the Honorary Degree is maintained or revoked:
 - Would it contribute to a climate of inclusion?
 - Would it be considered meaningful or a benefit to the persons it is designed to speak to, both in the immediate and longer terms?

6. Decision & Recommendation to the HDCC

- 6.1 Following the review and deliberations, the Ad Hoc Subcommittee will submit to the HDCC a confidential report advising on a recommendation to revoke or uphold the Honorary Degree.
- 6.2 If the Subcommittee report recommends the upholding of the Honorary Degree, the review is concluded and the HDCC shall submit the decision to the Senate for information.
- 6.3 If the Subcommittee report recommends the revocation of the Honorary Degree, the HDCC may either:
- Recommend to the Senate that the Honorary Degree be revoked, or
 - Refuse the Subcommittee's recommendation and submit a report laying out its reasons, to the Senate, in closed session, for information.
- 6.4 The Chair of HDCC or the Chair of Senate, if the Senate approves the recommendation to revoke the Honorary Degree - shall inform the recipient of the decision, and the reasons for the decision.