



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

# Rhodes University Honorary Degrees Policy

<b>Policy Volume</b>	Academic Faculty & Students
<b>Policy Chapter</b>	Registrar's Division Policies
<b>Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty</b>	The Honorary Degrees Committee
<b>Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager</b>	Registrar
<b>Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals</b>	New Policy
<b>Policy Approval Pathways (e.g. committee, Senex, Senate, Council)</b>	Registrar, Vice-Chancellor, Honorary Degrees Committee, Faculty Boards, Senate, Council.
<b>Revision History: Approved Reviews</b>	N/A
<b>Review Cycle (e.g. every 2/5/7 years etc)</b>	Every 5 years
<b>Next Review Date</b>	2023

## 1. POLICY PARTICULARS

<b>1.1 Policy Title</b>	Rhodes University Honorary Degrees Policy
<b>1.2 Policy Statement</b>	Honorary degrees are awarded <i>honoris causa</i> , "for the sake of honour." An honorary degree does not require the completion of a university level study but is granted in recognition of the recipient's exceptional scholarly, literary, scientific, artistic, public service, or professional achievements or in recognition of the recipient's outstanding contributions to society or humankind. Through the conferral of an honorary degree on any distinguished person the University makes a public statement on its values, mission and vision.
<b>1.3 Reason for Policy</b>	In accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act (101 of 1997) (as amended), subsection 65C (1) and 65C (2), and the Rhodes University Statute (Government Notice 234 of 15 March 2005), Section 55, Rhodes University may confer honorary degree of Doctor. An honorary degree is the highest accolade the University can bestow on any person. Rhodes University confers honorary degrees in order to recognise and honour individuals whose profound, sustained and distinguished contribution to the nation and beyond help advance the creation of a better society and a better world. These are individuals whose selfless service and sacrifices serve as an inspiration and an example worthy of emulation.
<b>1.4 Policy Objective/s</b>	This policy establishes principles, eligibility criteria and the process and procedure for the receipt, review and recommendation of nominations for the honorary degrees.
<b>1.5. People affected by this Policy</b>	All staff, students, alumni, Board of Governors and Council of Rhodes University.
<b>1.5 Who should read this Policy</b> (People who need to heed this policy to fulfil their duties)	Any member of the Rhodes University community including academics, students, administrative and support staff, alumni, members of Council, and members of Board of Governors.
<b>1.6 Implementers of this Policy</b>	The Registrars' Division
<b>1.7 Website address/link for this Policy</b>	<a href="https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policylibrary/">https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policylibrary/</a>

## 2 RELATED DOCUMENTS FORMS AND TOOLS

(University Policies, Protocols and Documents (such as rules/policies/protocols/guidelines related to this policy))

<b>Relevant Legislation</b> (Legislation/Regulatory requirements/Organisational Reports – name these)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996</li> <li>• Higher Education Act (101 of 1997)</li> <li>• Rhodes University Statute</li> <li>• National Qualifications Framework</li> <li>• Rhodes University Vision and Mission Statement</li> <li>• Any other applicable legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Related Policies:</b>
None
<b>Related Protocols:</b>
None
<b>Forms and Tools</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nomination Form</li> </ul>

## 3 POLICY DEFINITIONS

(Technical or Conceptual terms used in the policy)

No	TERM	DEFINITION
3.1	<b>Doctoral degree</b>	A doctoral degree is the highest academic qualification offered at Rhodes University.
3.2	<b><i>Honoris causa</i></b>	Honoris causa (Latin: “for the sake of honour”) means a degree is awarded to honour the recipient.
3.3	<b>Honorary Degrees Committee</b>	The Honorary Degrees Committee is a joint committee of Senate and Council whose remit is to receive and review nominations for the honorary degrees and make recommendations for consideration by Senate and Council.
3.4	<b>Honorary degree</b>	An honorary degree is a degree for which the University has waived the usual requirements, such as matriculation, residence, study and the passing of examinations. The degree is typically a doctorate and may be awarded to someone who has no prior connection with the institution. Usually the degree is awarded as a way of honouring a distinguished individual’s contributions to a specific field, or to society or humankind, in general,.
3.5	<b>Rhodes University Statute</b>	The Rhodes University Statute contains the fundamental constitutional and governance provisions of the University. The Rhodes University Statute flows from section 32 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997).

## 4 PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THIS POLICY

<b>OVERVIEW</b>
Rhodes University strives to carry out the following, as far as is reasonably practicable:
<b>4.1</b> <i>Doctors</i> : Doctor of Laws (LLD), Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA), Doctor of Letters (DLitt), Doctor of Economics (D Econ), Doctor of Music (D Mus), Doctor of Science (D Sc).
<b>4.2.</b> If the <i>primary</i> purpose of the honorary degree is to acknowledge outstanding contribution and exceptional achievement in:  4.2.1 Economic Sciences, the degree Doctor of Economics ( <i>honoris causa</i> ) will be awarded; 4.2.2 Natural Sciences, the degree Doctor of Science ( <i>honoris causa</i> ) will be awarded; 4.2.3 Literature, the degree Doctor of Letters, DLitt ( <i>honoris causa</i> ) will be awarded; 4.2.4 Music, the degree Doctor of Music, D Mus ( <i>honoris causa</i> ) will be awarded; 4.2.5 Fine Art, the degree Doctor of Fine Art, DFA ( <i>honoris causa</i> ) will be awarded; 4.2.6 Education, Humanities, Social Sciences, the degree Doctor of Laws, LLD ( <i>honoris causa</i> ), will be awarded; 4.2.7 Public service, humanitarian endeavours, or Law, the degree Doctor of Laws, LLD ( <i>honoris causa</i> ) will be awarded.
<b>4.3</b> The degree Doctor of Laws (LLD ( <i>hc</i> )) is the default honorary degree in the event a candidate is recognised for exceptional achievements and outstanding contribution that span a wide range of human endeavours.
<b>4.4.</b> Any member of the Rhodes University community including academics, students, administrative and support staff, alumni, members of Council, members of Board of Governors may nominate an individual for the award of an honorary degree.

## 5 DIRECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

(Actions and processes by which the objectives of the policy will be achieved.)

<b>5.1. Principles and eligibility</b>  5.1.1 Honorary degrees are awarded on “distinguished persons” who merit special recognition for their outstanding achievement or exceptional contribution to society or humankind. 5.1.2 A candidate for an honorary degree should be someone of high ethical standards and who exemplify the values and ideals of Rhodes University. 5.1.3 An honorary degree is not normally awarded to a current member of staff or student of Rhodes University. However retired members may be nominated at least three years after retirement. 5.1.4 An honorary LLD degree is normally awarded on retired Rhodes University Vice-Chancellors in the year after their retirement. 5.1.5 Normally, an active politician is not eligible for nomination for an honorary degree. 5.1.6 An honorary degree is not awarded in exchange for financial contribution. 5.1.7 An honorary degree is awarded at a University’s graduation ceremony. Only under extraordinary circumstances may an honorary degree be awarded in absentia. The Chairperson of Honorary Degrees Committee may motivate, in exceptional circumstances, for the conferral of an honorary degree in absentia. 5.1.8 An honorary degree is not normally awarded posthumously. If, however, a candidate passes away after accepting the University’s invitation to receive an honorary degree, but before the graduation ceremony at which the degree were to be awarded, the honorary degree will be awarded. In this case, a person designated by the family of the deceased will receive the award on behalf of the deceased at the graduation ceremony at which the degree were to be awarded. 5.1.9 Rhodes University will normally not confer an honorary degree on persons who have already had honorary degrees awarded on them by a number of other institutions. 5.1.10 In making its recommendations for the award of honorary degrees, the Honorary Degrees Committee must give due regard to, and endeavour to strike a balance in terms of, the diversity and social composition (race and gender), outstanding South African and international nominees, and between those who have not yet been recognised with an honorary degree and those who have already received a similar recognition elsewhere. 5.1.11 Normally, no more than one honorary degree is awarded per graduation ceremony.
<b>5.2. Procedure for nomination</b>  5.2.1 Each year the Registrar must issue a call to all members of the Rhodes University community to submit nominations for the conferral of honorary degrees. This invitation must be sent out in English and in isiXhosa.

5.2.2	The Registrar must set a closing date for the submission of nominations so that they are received in time for consideration by the Honorary Degrees Committee at its first meeting of the year which is normally held in May.
5.2.3	Throughout the process of nominating, recommending and approving a candidate for an honorary degree, utmost care should be taken to ensure confidentiality of the process. Under no circumstances should the person nominated for an honorary degree be made aware of the proposal so as to avoid possible embarrassment that may ensue if the proposal does not receive adequate support.
5.2.4	Self-nominations will not be considered.
5.2.5	Each nomination for an honorary degree candidate must be in writing and should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.2.5.1 the name of the nominator(s),</li> <li>5.2.5.2 a curriculum vitae (CV) or a brief biography of the proposed candidate,</li> <li>5.2.5.3 a concise description of the accomplishments, achievements or contributions that make the nominee worthy of a recognition through an honorary degree,</li> <li>5.2.5.4 a strong motivation for Rhodes University, in particular, to confer the degree.</li> </ul>
<b>5.3. Approval of candidates for the conferral of honorary degrees</b>	
5.3.1	The Senate and Council vote on the proposals recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee.
5.3.2	Separate votes are conducted for the two bodies.
5.3.3	In each case the electronic voting system will be used.
5.3.4	If 25% of the members of either body, vacancies and members on leave excluded, vote against a proposal, the proposal is deemed not to be successful.
<b>5.4. Invitation to have an honorary degree awarded</b>	
5.4.1	The Registrar conveys the outcome of the voting by Senate and Council to the Vice-Chancellor, and indicates which proposals have been approved.
5.4.2	The Vice-Chancellor sends a written invitation to each of the approved recipients of honorary degrees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.4.2.1 The invitations state clearly that a maximum of two economy class air tickets will be provided</li> <li>5.4.2.2 If invited to speak, a limit of 15 minutes or 1200 words is specified.</li> </ul>
5.4.3	When replies have been received, the Vice-Chancellor releases a statement to the University community announcing the intention to confer honorary degrees at the forthcoming graduation ceremonies.
5.4.4	The Registrar sends each honorary graduand details of the ceremonies, including a copy of the order of proceedings, and, where appropriate, indicates that flexibility is permitted in the way in which they present themselves (for instance, a musician may wish to sing/play music in place of making a speech).
5.4.5	No mention is made of the names of proposed recipients who were not supported by Senate or Council, nor of the names of persons who have declined the invitation to have an honorary degree awarded.
<b>5.5. Rescinding an honorary degree</b>	
5.5.1	The University reserves the right to rescind an honorary degree should circumstances so demand.
5.5.2	The Honorary Degrees Committee shall consider and make a recommendation to Senate and Council for the rescinding of an honorary degree in circumstances where reputational damage may be caused to the University from being associated through the honorary degree with the person.
5.5.3	A decision to rescind an honorary degree shall be based on clear, credible and conclusive evidence established through due process of the honoree having engaged in a conduct that is at variance with the values, ideals and mission of Rhodes University.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Roles and responsibilities of Key personal/Divisions/Faculties/Departments)

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>6.1 The Vice Chancellor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor sends a written invitation to each of the approved nominees of honorary degrees.</li> <li>6.1.2 The invitation must clearly state that a maximum of two economy class air tickets will be provided.</li> <li>6.1.3 If invited to address the graduation ceremony, the length of time allocated must be communicated to the speaker.</li> <li>6.1.4 When affirmative replies have been received, the Vice-Chancellor informs the Division of Communications</li> </ul>

	Advancement accordingly so that a statement to the University community announcing the intention to confer honorary degrees at the forthcoming graduation ceremonies may be released.
<b>6.2 The Registrar</b>	<p>6.2.1 Each year the Registrar must issue a call to all members of the Rhodes University community to submit nominations for the conferral of honorary degrees. This invitation must be sent out in English and in isiXhosa.</p> <p>6.2.2 The Registrar must set a closing date for the submission of nominations so that they are received in time for consideration by the Honorary Degrees Committee at its first meeting of the year which is normally held in May.</p> <p>6.2.3 Throughout the process of nominating, recommending and approving a candidate for an honorary degree, utmost care should be taken to ensure confidentiality of the process. Under no circumstances should the person nominated for an honorary degree be made aware of the proposal so as to avoid possible embarrassment that may ensue if the proposal does not receive adequate support.</p> <p>6.2.4 Self-nominations will not be considered.</p> <p>6.2.5 Each nomination for an honorary degree candidate must be in writing and should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the name of the nominator(s),</li> <li>• a curriculum vitae (CV) or a brief biography of the proposed candidate</li> <li>• a concise description of the accomplishments, achievements or contributions that make the nominee worthy of a recognition through an honorary degree,</li> <li>• a strong motivation for Rhodes University, in particular, to confer the degree</li> </ul> <p>6.2.6 In collaboration with the Conference &amp; Events Office, the Registrar sends each honorary graduands details of the ceremonies, including a copy of the order of proceedings, and, where appropriate, indicates that flexibility is permitted in the way in which they present themselves (for instance, a musician may wish to sing/play music in place of making a speech).</p>
<b>6.3 The Honorary Degree Committee</b>	<p>6.3.1 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall receive, consider and recommend for approval by Senate and Council outstanding persons for the conferral of Rhodes University honorary degrees.</p> <p>6.3.2 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall recommend the appropriate graduation ceremony in which an approved honoree should be recognised with an honorary degree.</p> <p>6.3.3 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall consider and make a recommendation to Senate and Council for the rescinding of an honorary degree in circumstances where reputational damage may be caused to the University from being associated through the honorary degree with the person.</p> <p>6.3.4 The Honorary Degrees Committee will review the Honorary Degrees Committee and recommend changes and/or amendments for consideration and approval by Senate and Council.</p> <p>6.3.5 The Honorary Degrees Committee shall consider and recommend for approval by Senate and Council the title of “Professor Emeritus/Emerita” on a full professor or “Associate Professor Emeritus/Emerita” on an associate professor of Rhodes University who has reached a retirement age.</p>
<b>6.4 Senate</b>	<p>6.4.1 Senate shall vote on the persons recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of honorary degrees.</p> <p>6.4.2 If 25% of the members of Senate, vacancies and members on leave excluded, vote against a proposal, the proposal is deemed to be unsuccessful.</p> <p>6.4.3 Senate shall receive and consider a recommendation from the Honorary Degrees Committee for the rescinding of an honorary degree, where such becomes necessary and due process has been followed.</p> <p>6.4.4 Senate shall receive and consider recommendations for amendments and/or changes to the Honorary Degrees Policy.</p>
<b>6.5 Council</b>	<p>6.5.1 Council shall vote on the persons recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of honorary degrees.</p> <p>6.5.2 If 25% of the members of Council, vacancies and members on leave excluded, vote against a proposal, the proposal is deemed to be unsuccessful.</p> <p>6.5.3 Council shall receive and consider a recommendation from the Honorary Degrees Committee for the rescinding of an honorary degree, where such becomes necessary and due process has been followed.</p> <p>6.5.4 Council shall receive and consider recommendations for amendments and/or changes to the Honorary Degrees Policy.</p>

## 7. CONTACTS

Area of Concern	Division/Faculty/Department	Telephone	Email
Registrar's Division	Registrar's Division	046 603 8101	registrar@ru.ac.za
Chair of Senate (Vice-Chancellor)	Vice-Chancellor	046 603 8148	vc@ru.ac.za

## 8. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

(Actions and processes by which the policy will be reviewed)

The Honorary Degrees Committee will review this policy every 5 years.
<b>Communication of the review process</b>
The Honorary Degrees Committee will engage stakeholders through <a href="mailto:TopList@lists.ru.ac.za">TopList@lists.ru.ac.za</a> ; <a href="mailto:studentnews@lists.ru.ac.za">studentnews@lists.ru.ac.za</a>

## 9. POLICY CONTEXT: RELEVANT DOCUMENTS CITED/CONSULTED/ADOPTED

1	Higher Education Act (101 of 1997)
2	Rhodes University Statute

## LIST OF APPENDICES



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### Rhodes University honorary degree nomination form

The nomination for a Rhodes University honorary degree is **strictly confidential**. Under no circumstances should there be any communication with a potential candidate prior to the finalisation of the whole process.

Policy provision:	Honorary degrees are awarded <i>honoris causa</i> , "for the sake of honour". An honorary degree does not require the completion of a university level study but is granted in recognition of the recipient's exceptional scholarly, literary, scientific, artistic, public service, or professional achievements or in recognition of the recipient's outstanding contributions to society or humankind. Through the conferral of an honorary degree on any distinguished person the University makes a public statement on its values, mission and vision. Rhodes University confers honorary degrees in order to recognise and honour individuals whose profound, sustained and distinguished contribution to the nation and beyond help advance the creation of a better society and a better world. These are individuals whose selfless service and sacrifices serve as an inspiration and an example worthy of emulation.
Nominator:	
Department/Division:	
e-mail address:	
Signature:	
Names of those who second the nomination:	
Nominee's name:	
Address and contact details of the nominee.	



<p>Current professional position of the nominee.</p>	
<p>Brief biographical details of the nominee or attach an abridged CV (if possible).</p>	
<p>Please provide a concise description of the accomplishments, achievements or contributions that make the nominee merits a recognition through an honorary degree.</p> <p>Please indicate how the nominee meets the criteria for the conferral of a Rhodes University honorary degree.</p>	
<p>Please provide a strong motivation on why Rhodes University, in particular, should confer an honorary degree on this nominee.</p>	
<p>Please list other honorary degrees held by the nominee.</p>	

*This nomination form will be available for online completion.*