

**Supplemental Guidelines**  
**for**  
**Application for Honorary Degrees at University of Louisville**  
*Approved by Graduate Council 10-27-09*

**Purpose**

The award of an honorary degree by the University of Louisville should serve any or all of several purposes: first and foremost, it serves to honor individuals on whom the degree is conferred; secondly, it invites individuals into communion with the community of scholars that constitutes the University, i.e. it makes the honorees alumni of the University; and thirdly, it demonstrates to the world the kind of persons, activities, and accomplishments that are valued by the University. In other words, an honorary degree provides the world with a basis on which to judge the University.

**Nomination Criteria**

The reputation of the individuals to whom an honorary degree is awarded may range from local to international. The honorees may be friends of the University who are otherwise unknown, but whose friendships are so valued that the University community feels pride in inviting them to join their members. On the other hand, honorees may be people of international renown whose works are highly regarded and relevant as to support this invitation to membership.

The nominee might have made some important contribution—either tangible or intangible – to the University and/or the community. The nominee’s work might influence or somehow touch on similar work being performed at the University. The award might in one or more ways attract attention to the University in a beneficial manner.

The university will not grant honorary degrees to those who have served in any of the following categories within the last five years: an elected official of Kentucky, member of the Board of Trustees, or an employee of the University of Louisville. Honorary degrees will not be awarded posthumously.

**Nominator Criteria**

Nominations can be made by any person in the academic community and should be sent to the Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee.

**Application Process**

The application process includes two stages. At the initial stage, the nominator is requested to provide a two page letter of support and the nominee’s curriculum vitae, resume or bio. The letter should include, if applicable, a discussion of the nominee’s academic excellence, a list of achievements that merit this honor, community service, personal and moral integrity and recognition of peers. Additionally, the nominator must address how the nominee exemplifies the high standards and ethics of the university.

Submission of a nomination does not guarantee a successful outcome. It is at the discretion of the nominator whether the honorary degree candidate will be informed in the preliminary stage of nomination.

Upon review of the preliminary nomination materials and approval by the Committee to move onto the second stage of the process, the nominator will be asked to facilitate the receipt of up to four additional support letters. Letters of support from individuals who are particularly competent in the field of the candidate would be most valuable to the Honorary Degrees Committee. The nomination will be strengthened with letters of support from individuals within and outside of the university community. At least one letter of support from outside of the university is strongly encouraged. The content of these letters should follow the guidelines established above for the preliminary support letter.

### **Type of degree**

The Honorary Degrees to be considered include:

- Doctor of Laws
- Doctor of Letters or Doctor of Fine Arts
- Doctor of Science
- Doctor of Humane Letters
- Doctor of Public Service

The types of degrees conferred honoris causa permit the recognition of different individuals for many different reasons.

### **Application deadlines**

Honorary degrees are typically awarded at the May and December commencements. Nominations must be submitted no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> for consideration of an honorary degree to be awarded at the December Commencement and no later than February 15<sup>th</sup> for the May Commencement. This three month period will allow the two stage review process to be completed by the Honorary Degrees Committee, and if the nomination is deemed commendable by the Committee, approval by the Graduate Council and Board of Trustees will also need to be sought. If a nominator would like an individual to be considered for an honorary degree nominee at an alternate ceremonial event sanctioned by the University's President Office, the Honorary Degrees Committee would be willing to review the application given a three month notice of the nomination.

### **Decision**

The Honorary Degree Committee will consider the letter of support and any accompanying documentation from each nominee when deciding on whether to proceed with the second stage of the nomination process. The Chair of the committee will communicate the decision of the committee to each nominator and if a favorable review was noted, request the additional materials required in the second stage of the nomination process as discussed above.

The Honorary Degrees Committee will then review the complete dossier of each award applicant and decide on whether to recommend approval to the Graduate Council. The Honorary Degrees Committee shall present the names of each applicant with their corresponding recommendation decision to the Graduate Council. Those recommended by the Graduate Council will be forwarded to the President for presentation to the Board of Trustees for final authorization of the degrees.