



Honorary Doctorate Awards Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the guiding principles and procedures for the conferring of Honorary Doctorate Degrees by Atlantic Technological University (ATU).

An Honorary Doctorate Degree is a highly prestigious award which the University can bestow on distinguished individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to scholarship, society, culture and /or civil society and / or the region.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the nomination, evaluation, selection, and conferral of honorary degrees by the University. It is intended to guide all members of the University community, including faculty, staff, alumni, and students, who participate in or are affected by the honorary degree process.

3. External Reference Documents

Technological Universities Act 2018

4. Policy

The University recognises the importance of honouring individuals for exceptional achievement and who have made a significant contribution to academia, society, the arts, sciences, or other fields relevant to the University's mission. Awarding honorary degrees is a means of acknowledging such achievements and connecting exemplary individuals to our University.

The honorary degrees which may be conferred by Atlantic Technological University is / are:

Doctor of Philosophy, D Phil

The degree parchment conferred will clearly state the honorary nature of the award.

4.1 Honorary Doctorate Committee

The *Honorary Doctorate Committee* is a sub-committee of the ATU Governing Body and has responsibility for reviewing nominations and making recommendations to the Governing Body to confer the award of an ATU Honorary Doctorate to a candidate. Every effort will be

made to ensure that nominations take cognisance of the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. At the start of each meeting the Chair will invite all members of the committee to confirm that they have no conflict of interest in respect of any agenda item

The Honorary Doctorate Committee is comprised of:

- Governing Body Chairperson (Chair of Committee)
- ATU President (Deputy Chair of Committee)
- Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar
- One external member of Governing Body
- One elected member of Academic Council
- One student representative from Academic Council

4.2 Eligibility Criteria for Candidates

To be eligible for the award of an Honorary Doctorate Degree, candidates must be recognised for one or more of the following:

- Distinction in scholarship, especially in fields of interest to ATU
- Distinction, and outstanding services, in their profession, or field of endeavour
- Outstanding contributions and services to science, engineering, the arts, literature, culture, and sport
- Outstanding services to civil society and the public good, including peace and reconciliation
- Outstanding contributions and services to business, enterprise, and industry

ATU will not award Honorary Doctorate Degrees to:

- Current, or retired members of Staff
- Serving members of Governing Body
- Serving Irish public representatives

Honorary Doctorates are not awarded posthumously and only in exceptional circumstances may be awarded *in absentia*.

4.3 Nomination Process

1. The President of ATU shall periodically invite nominations for the award of Honorary Doctorate of the University. There is no requirement on the University to award Honorary Doctorates on an annual basis.

2. Nominations may be received from Academic Council or from any member of the ATU community.
3. To ensure the integrity and impartiality of the process, self-nomination is not allowed.
4. Nominations should be addressed to the President of ATU and marked “strictly confidential”.
5. Nominations should be submitted to the President using the official nomination form. The nomination form should include a comprehensive rationale for the nomination, relevant biographical details, and any additional supporting documentation.
6. It is recommended that no more than three Honorary Doctorates should be awarded annually.

Note: Should a candidate be approved for an ATU Honorary Doctorate, the nominator will be asked to prepare a citation to be read at the conferring ceremony and may be asked to read the citation at the ceremony.

4.3.1 Submission timelines

Nominations can be submitted at any time during the call period. They will be considered at a scheduled meeting of the Honorary Doctorate Committee approximately two months prior to a conferring ceremony.

Meetings of the Honorary Doctorate Committee will normally be convened on the day of a meeting of the full ATU Governing Body.

The President’s Office will undertake to:

- Schedule the meeting and notify members of the Committee at least two weeks in advance of the Governing Body meeting.
- Ensure the Committee is quorate before the meeting can proceed.
- Circulate, under strict confidentiality, the nomination papers to members of the Committee for advance review one week prior to the meeting.

4.4 Recommendations of the Honorary Doctorate Committee

Recommendations will fall into three categories:

1. Nominations endorsed by the Honorary Doctorate Committee.
Candidates will be put forward for approval at the next scheduled meeting of the Governing Body.
2. Nominations which the Honorary Doctorate Committee deems should be held for future consideration (*e.g.* where there is more information required). These nominations will be held by the President's Office for a period of no more than three years. If, in that time, a nomination has not been endorsed by the Honorary Doctorate Committee, it will no longer be considered an active nomination.
3. Nominations which the Honorary Doctorate Committee deems do not meet ATU's criteria for the award. In this case, the decision is recorded, the proposer is informed of the outcome by the President's Office, and any documentation submitted in relation to the nomination is destroyed.

4.5 Confidentiality

All discussions and deliberations during the nomination and selection process should be treated as confidential. Details of unsuccessful nominations should not be disclosed outside of the Committee.

Nominees should not be informed of their nomination until the process has been finalised and the awarding of the honorary degree approved.

4.6 Conditions of the Award

The awarding of an Honorary Doctorate Degree by ATU is subject to the candidate's agreement to accept the award. The President, or a designee, is responsible for contacting the candidate to determine if they will accept the award.

Where the candidate is willing to accept the award, ATU will either confer the Honorary Doctorate Degree at the relevant discipline-specific graduation ceremony or, in certain cases, may confer at a special Honorary Doctorate awards ceremony.

Until such time as the candidate has indicated their willingness to accept the award, the entire nomination process will remain strictly confidential.

4.7 Right of Withdrawal

ATU reserves the right to withdraw an Honorary Doctorate if the Honorary Doctorate recipient through their subsequent actions or behaviour causes reputational damage to ATU or brings the university into disrepute. The decision to withdraw will be made by the Governing Body, upon recommendation from the President or the Honorary Doctorate Committee.

5. Associated Documents Generated by this Policy

ATU Honorary Doctorate Degree Candidate Nomination Form

6. Revision History

Review date: 12 months from issuance of the policy.

Revision No	Description of Change	Approval Date
000	New Policy Approved by Academic Council 27/10/2023 and reviewed again 8/12/2023. Approved by Governing Body 11/12/2023	27/10/2023