



LP 2.4

Effective:
12/2/2020

Revised:
12/13/2022

Policy Owner:
Board of Trustees

Policy Administrator:
Provost

Affected Parties:
Employees

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Awarding of Honorary Degrees

1 Summary

This document defines the policy and processes for the nomination and selection of a potential recipient of an honorary degree from Lander University and the conferral of the honorary degree.

1.1 An honorary degree is one of higher education's most significant forms of recognition. Lander University awards honorary degrees on a selective basis to distinguished individuals who merit special recognition for genuine achievement and distinction in a field or activity consistent with the mission of the university and whose selection will further the mission and purpose of the university.

1.2 Only the Board of Trustees may authorize the awarding of an honorary degree.

1.3 A Lander University honorary degree should represent lasting recognition of exemplary achievement and/or service of an outstanding individual. A recipient of a Lander University honorary degree should enhance the reputation of, and be a notable representative for, the university.

2 Criteria for consideration

An honorary degree may be awarded to a person who satisfies the following criteria:

2.1 A recipient of an honorary degree should be a person outstanding in their contributions or service to Lander University, South Carolina, the nation, the international community, or their profession or field of endeavor. Areas of excellence shall include, but not be limited to, scholarship; the arts; the learned professions; public service; and/or cultural, scientific, economic, or humanitarian activities.

2.2 A candidate for an honorary degree should represent the highest values of the university. Strength of character as it relates to the values and mission of the university is essential.

3 Process for nomination, invitation, and conferral

- 3.1 Any constituent of Lander University may submit a nomination for an honorary degree. A nomination for an honorary degree should be made using the [nomination form](#).¹ The nomination form should be submitted to the Office of the Provost. A nomination can be made at any time during the year.
- 3.2 A nomination will be reviewed by the Honorary Degree Review Committee consisting of:
- Chief Academic Officer
 - Member of the Board of Trustees
 - Two Faculty Representatives
 - Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- 3.3 The review committee will carefully consider each submitted nomination and request additional information on the nominee, if needed. If more than one nomination is received, the review committee may select up to four highly qualified candidates and will present them, along with a list of all submitted nominations, to the president of Lander University. The president shall review and rank-order the candidates and present his or her recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- 3.4 The Board of Trustees shall vote to confer an honorary degree on a candidate accepting the invitation to be honored by the university.
- 3.5 A person selected as a candidate for conferral of an honorary degree shall be notified privately of the proposed honor by the president and given the opportunity to accept or decline the offer.
- 3.6 The honorary degree citation shall be prepared by the president (or designee).
- 3.7 The honorary degree should be awarded at a Lander University commencement ceremony. The degree may be awarded at a significant occasion other than commencement if deemed appropriate.

¹ Nomination form URL:

https://www.lander.edu/sites/lander/files/Documents/About/Leadership/Policies/Honorary_Degree_Nomination_Form.pdf

4 Guidelines and restrictions

4.1 Confidentiality

- 4.1.1 An honorary degree nomination and the honorary degree deliberation process shall be confidential. No discussions concerning a nominee should be conducted outside of the formal evaluation and selection meetings.

4.2 Type of degree

- 4.2.1 The president, in consultation with the provost, shall determine the degree to be conferred (e.g., Doctor of Humane Letters, Doctor of Science). The degree shall be designated “Honoris Causa.”

- 4.3 The university may confer an honorary degree on an approved candidate at any time within two years of the Board’s vote to confer the degree. After that time, the candidate’s nomination must be reconsidered.

- 4.4 An honorary degree shall not be conferred on an active faculty member, administrator, staff member, or current trustee except under special circumstances.

- 4.5 Lander University should not award more than two honorary degrees at any commencement ceremony. It is not mandatory to award any honorary degrees. The availability of highly qualified candidates shall control the awarding of honorary degrees.

- 4.6 Generally, no honorary degree shall be awarded in absentia, except when awarded posthumously. Accordingly, if the Board of Trustees has approved more than one honorary award recipient, the president shall customarily engage in a cycle of invitations until one or more are accepted.

5 Revocation

- 5.1 Honorary degrees are awarded for life. Awardees reflect the values and personify the mission of the university. If at any time during the life of an awardee the university becomes aware of documented evidence of criminal, unethical, or immoral behavior or activity, the University has the right to rescind the honorary degree.

- 5.2 The president will present to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees evidence warranting the revocation of an honorary degree. The Executive Committee will review and consider this evidence and, where it finds sufficient evidence to warrant revocation, forward its recommendation regarding revocation to the full Board of Trustees for a vote.

- 5.3 If revocation is approved, an awardee will be notified in writing of the board's decision by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

6 Attributions and Citations

The revocation section of this policy was modeled after Georgetown University's *Policy on the Awarding of Honorary Degrees*.²

7 Policy Revision History

- First draft of policy approved by the Board of Trustees on Policy Coordinator on 12/11/2015.
- Reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees Policy Committee on 11/29/2022 with reorganization of section headers and content for readability and the addition of a revocation section (Section 5).
- Addition of revocation section approved by president on 11/29/2022.
- Revision approved by the Lander University Board of Trustees on 12/13/2022.

² Georgetown University *Policy on the Awarding of Honorary Degrees* URL: <https://governance.georgetown.edu/honorary-degrees/>