

Policy regarding the Granting of Honorary Degrees

**Approved by Senate February 6, 2023
S23.16**

Preamble

An honorary degree is the highest honour conferred by Simon Fraser University. The degree recognizes individuals whose extraordinary achievements or service to society sets them apart.

Honorary degrees celebrate individuals who have had a transformative and enduring impact and who represent diverse backgrounds and fields of endeavour, including:

- Leading academics in all disciplines,
- Creative and literary arts and performance,
- Public intellectuals and opinion-makers,
- Visionary leaders in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors,
- Community builders

Honorary degree recipients' achievements celebrate what the university values and serve as an inspiration to our graduands and our entire community.

Purpose

To outline requirements for granting a Simon Fraser Honorary Degree

Policy

- a) Awarding Honorary Degree

The Senate Committee on University Honours (SCUH) is responsible for adjudicating nominations for honorary degrees and recommending honorary degree recipients to Senate for confirmation.

Honorary degrees are conferred *honoris causa*, "for the sake of honor". Honorary degrees are awarded as one of four types: Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*; Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*; Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, or Doctor of Fine Arts, *honoris causa*.

All nominations for an honorary degree are to be kept confidential and information will only be made public if a nominee confirmed for an honorary degree by the Senate accepts an invitation for an honorary degree.

Anyone, including members of the public, can nominate individuals they feel meet the below criteria for a Simon Fraser University Honorary Degree. Anonymous nominations will not be considered in order to prevent self-nominations.

Nominees must have demonstrated:

- (i) extraordinary achievement within a field of work (either academic or non-academic), nationally or internationally;
- (ii) transformative and enduring contribution or service to Simon Fraser University or society at large; or
- (iii) inspirational leadership in society (public, private, or not-for-profit sectors).

Current members of the Board of Governors, faculty, staff and students are not eligible for nomination. Honorary degrees are normally not to be awarded posthumously or granted in absentia.

To avoid perceptions of conflict of interest, those currently holding public office or serving in senior public service roles will not normally be considered.

SCUH's recommendations for honorary degrees will be presented in a closed session of Senate and will be confirmed by a simple majority vote.

b) Revoking Honorary Degrees

The Senate Committee on University Honours (SCUH) is responsible for adjudicating requests to revoke honorary degrees and making a recommendation to Senate if SCUH determines that a revocation of the degree is appropriate.

Simon Fraser University has a robust process to award honorary degrees and revocation of an honorary degree should only be considered in exceptional or extraordinary circumstances including:

- Action or conduct of the recipient undermines the credibility or integrity of the honorary degree.
- The original grounds for conferring the degree are determined to be unfounded.

Normally, an honorary degree will not be revoked posthumously.

Requests to revoke an honorary degree can be made by any person. A request must be made in writing and include specific reasons for the request. Anonymous requests will not be considered.

The quorum for consideration of revoking an honorary degree shall be 2/3 (two-thirds) of the committee membership.

A recommendation by SCUH to revoke an honorary degree will require 2/3 (two-third's) majority vote by members of SCUH present following deliberation. Upon receipt of such a recommendation from SCUH, the Senate shall consider the recommendation in an in-camera session, and require 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote of the senators present to revoke the degree.

Conflict of Interest

Members of SCUH are not eligible to nominate a candidate to receive an honorary degree nor are they eligible to request an honorary degree be revoked.

Members of the Senate must recuse themselves from any Senate proceedings for awarding or revoking an honorary degree if they submitted the nomination for an honorary degree or submitted the request to revoke an honorary degree.

Roles and Responsibilities

Following the policy and associated procedures the Senate Committee on University Honours (SCUH) is responsible for recommending to Senate those individuals to be awarded Honorary Degrees. SCUH is also responsible for making a recommendation on the revocation of degrees.

Senate holds the final authority for awarding and revoking the degrees based on the recommendation of SCUH.

Related Legal, Policy Authorities and Agreements

University Act R.S.B.C. 1996

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.B.C.

Submissions for Honorary Degrees are supplied in confidence and will not be shared outside of the SCUH.

Policy Review

Every five years

Questions of interpretation or application of this policy or its procedures shall be referred to SCUH. If interpretation of the policy is required outside the regularly scheduled meeting of SCUH the Chair and Vice Chair shall jointly make a decision.

Retention and Disposal of Records

Information and records made and received to administer this policy are evidence of the University's actions to award and revoke honorary degrees. Information and records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with the records retention schedule.