



PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors

Effective: October 16, 1984

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Policy 1984-12-A: *Honorary Degrees*

See Also

Adopted: October 16, 1984

Amended: July 9, 1998, and July 12, 2018; Oct. 10, 2024

A. Purpose and Scope

Subject to the regulations of the State Board of Education (22 Pa. Code §§ 31.61, 31.62, and 31.63), to provide the Board of Governors, and the respective councils of trustees, administrations, and faculties of the universities of the State System of Higher Education the general criteria, procedures, and definitions for the awarding of an honorary degree.

B. Definitions

Honorary degree designations are limited to degrees not given in course as earned degrees by any institution of postsecondary education authorized by the Commonwealth to grant such degrees, and may include but are not limited to the following:

Litt.D.	Doctor of Letters (<i>litterarum doctor, honoris causa</i>)
L.H.D.	Doctor of Humane Letters (<i>litterarum humaniorum doctor, honoris causa</i>)
LL.D.	Doctor of Laws (<i>legum doctor, honoris causa</i>)
Sc.D.	Doctor of Science (<i>scientia doctor, honoris causa</i>)
D.P.S.	Doctor of Public Service (<i>doctor beneficiorum publicorum, honoris causa</i>)
Ped.D.	Doctor of Pedagogy (<i>doctor institutionis, honoris causa</i>)

C. General Criteria/Policy

The honorary degree may be awarded to recognize distinguished service, creativity, scholarship, or other individual accomplishment in the service of humanity, whether in scientific, social, academic, creative, business, public, or other appropriate sphere.

In keeping with the regulations of the State Board of Education, honorary degrees may not be awarded to currently serving board of trustee members, administrators or faculty members except in extraordinary cases meriting special consideration. Honorary degrees should not be awarded to former trustees, administrators, or faculty members until they have been separated from the university for at least six months.

D. Policy and Procedures

Each university, in consultation with the Council of Trustees, shall develop a policy that shall address the awarding and revocation of honorary degrees in accordance with the State System's and its universities' mission, vision, and values.

E. Limit

Normally, no more than two degrees may be awarded at any university in any calendar year.

F. Notice

The chancellor shall be notified at least 30 days before an honorary degree is to be awarded of the identity, qualifications, and citation to be attached to such degree.