

Complete Policy Title:	Guidelines for the Awarding of Honorary Degrees
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Position Responsible for Developing and Maintaining the Policy:	University Secretariat
Contact Department	<u>University Secretariat</u>

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I Potential Candidates

There are three general categories of people upon whom the University confers honorary degrees:

- (i) individuals who are distinguished scholars or who have made outstanding contributions to the creative or performing arts;
- (ii) individuals who have distinguished reputations in the area of public service at the national or international levels, or who have had long and distinguished careers in professions such as law, or as educators, for example; and
- (iii) individuals who have made important and noteworthy contributions to McMaster University and/or the local community.

Individuals in any one of these three categories are given special consideration if they are alumni of the University or are, or have been, associated with the University in some way.

II Number of Degrees Granted

Normally, two honorary degrees are granted at each Convocation ceremony, although this varies from one to three depending on the circumstances and the honorary degree recipient. For example, if the honorary graduand is a particularly well-known and distinguished individual, such that a second honorary graduand would be overshadowed, then there would be only one honorary degree conferred. Or, if there are before the Honorary Degrees Committee a relatively large number of individuals who are well-qualified to receive honorary degrees, then the Committee might recommend that three honorary degrees be conferred at a particular Convocation.

There are, at present, eight Spring Convocations, one for the Divinity College, one for each of the Faculties of Business, Engineering, Health Sciences and Science, one for the Faculty of Humanities and the Arts and Science Programme, and two for the Faculty of Social Sciences. There are also two Fall Convocations which include graduands from all disciplines and Faculties. Usually there is a relationship between the recipient's field of interest and the Convocation at which the honorary degree is conferred.

III Degrees Conferred

At this time, the University confers four honorary degrees:

- (i) Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) - awarded on the recommendation of the McMaster Divinity College for outstanding service to or scholarship in the religious community.
- (ii) Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) - awarded for outstanding achievement in the humanities, or in the performing or fine arts.
- (iii) Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) - awarded for outstanding achievement in the pure and applied sciences, usually through research.
- (iv) Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) - awarded for outstanding academic achievement in the Social Sciences and/or for significant community contributions at the local, national, or international levels.

Any decision to award a degree other than these specified here would require a formal resolution to Senate. It should also be noted that the matter would have to be referred to the Senate Committee on University Ceremonials for the designing of the appropriate academic regalia.