1. Purpose and Scope

The University awards honorary degrees and fellowships to recognize excellence. This procedure is to be followed when making nominations for the award of an honorary degree which recognizes an individual who has given distinguished eminent service to the University or the community under clauses 63(2) and 63(3) of the University of New South Wales By-law 2005 or, for a UNSW Honorary Fellowship. It operates in accordance with the Guidelines set out in the Terms of Reference for the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC).

The procedure for the award of an honorary degree for distinguished eminence in some branch of learning is set out in clause 63(1) of the University of the New South Wales By-law 2005.

2. Definitions

2.1 Honorary Degree

Persons nominated for honorary degrees will normally fall into one of the following categories, which are listed in descending order of coincidence with the profile of the University:

(i) Outstanding scholars whose work in fields represented at UNSW has transformed the knowledge base of the field.

(ii) Persons whose ideas have transformed our understanding of the world and the ways in which we arrange our lives.

(iii) Persons who have given eminent service to UNSW, either as employees or by virtue of having had a significant connection with the University, or through significant benefaction to the University.

(iv) Persons of outstanding achievement in any major field of endeavour.

(v) Persons who have given eminent service to society by advancing important causes.

The following Doctoral Degrees may be awarded honoris causa:

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The following Doctoral Degrees may be awarded honoris causa:
Doctor of the University
Doctor of Letters
Doctor of Science
Doctor of Medicine
Doctor of Laws
Doctor of Education
Doctor of Music
Doctor of Juridical Science
Doctor of Information Technology
Doctor of Business
Doctor of Engineering

2.2 Honorary Fellowship

The UNSW Honorary Fellowship recognizes conspicuous continued involvement with the University in one of the following:

- Support of the interests and welfare of the University of New South Wales or of a particular part of the University's activities
- Promotion of the academic purposes of the University or facilitating those purposes in any particular activity of the University
- Fostering links between the University and other institutions within and without Australia
- Enlarging education opportunities to enter the University among persons with limited prospects of so doing for reasons which they could not overcome
- Philanthropic contribution to the University.

The award may be conferred upon any person considered by Council to have provided an outstanding contribution and distinguished and eminent service to the University beyond the expectations of the person’s particular field of endeavour either within or outside the University.

3. Procedure

3.2 Nominations

3.2.1 All discussion, investigations and recommendations relating to a nomination, including the names of proposers shall be treated confidentially. A person nominated shall not be consulted beforehand, or at any time whilst the nomination is being deliberated upon.

3.2.2 Nominations must be discussed with the Vice-Chancellor before a written nomination is submitted.

3.2.3 Written nominations must be submitted using either the Nomination for Honorary Degree form, or the Nomination for UNSW Honorary Fellowship form, both of which are available by contacting Governance@unsw.edu.au.

4. Consideration of Nominations

4.1 The Honorary Degrees Committee is empowered to recommend to the University Council approval of a nomination for the award of an honorary fellowship or honorary
degree. Any such recommendation shall require the affirmative vote of a least five members of the Committee before being recommended to Council.

4.2 A nomination that is determined to be urgent, may, at the discretion of the Presiding Member of the Honorary Degrees Committee, be considered:

a) At a special meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee, with a subsequent recommendation to Council, or
b) By circulation of a ‘Flying Minute’ to members of the Honorary Degrees Committee with a subsequent recommendation to Council

4.3 Where a nomination is not approved for presentation to Council, the proposer shall be advised by the Secretary to the Honorary Degrees Committee.

4.4 Where a nomination is approved by Council, the nominee will be contacted in writing by the Chancellor to seek their consent for the award.

5. Receipt of Awards

If the award is accepted, the office with responsibility for graduations will arrange for the honorary fellowship or honorary degree to be conferred at a relevant scheduled graduation ceremony, which is mutually convenient for both parties.

The Secretary to the Honorary Degrees Committee will:

a) maintain a record of nominations which do not proceed, which are rejected during the deliberative process, declined by the recipient or which are awarded.
b) publish on the University website the list of award recipients and associated citations.

6. Review & History

This policy is due for review three years from its date of effect.

Appendix A: History

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1.0  Executive Director, University Services 10 January 2012 10 January 2012 Major review and integration of procedure for Honorary Degrees and Honorary Fellowships. Replaces resolutions CL95/93, CL96/026, CL96/027 and CL06/86.

1.1  Head of Governance 28 May 2014 16 May 2014 Updated contact officer and Nomination for Honorary Degree Form

1.2  Acting Head of Governance 15 September 2015 15 September 2015 Updated paragraph 3.2.3 by removing links to forms and directing readers to Governance.