
Honorary Degrees and Hunter Fellowships Statute

Governance Policy Group

1 Purpose

This statute sets out the regulations and procedures governing the conferment of Honorary Degrees and the award of Hunter Fellowships.

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide statute.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this statute, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

- Committee: The Committee on Honorary Degrees and Hunter Fellowships.
- Honorary Degree: An Honorary Doctorate – the highest honorary academic award the University can bestow.
- Hunter Fellowship: The most distinguished general award the University can bestow.

4 Statute Content and Guidelines

4.1 Honorary Degrees and Hunter Fellowships

- (a) The Council may at its discretion confer the following Honorary Degrees:
- (i) Doctor of Commerce (Hon. DCom)
 - (ii) Doctor of Laws (Hon. LLD)
 - (iii) Doctor of Literature (Hon. DLitt)
 - (iv) Doctor of Music (Hon. DMus)
- Note: see Section 4.2(d)*
- (v) Doctor of Science (Hon. DSc)
- (b) The Council may at its discretion award the title “Hunter Fellow” (‘Fellowship’).

4.2 Conferment of an Honorary Degree

- (a) The Committee may recommend to the Council, for conferment of an honorary doctorate:
- (i) A graduate of Victoria University of Wellington (“the University”) who has achieved national or international distinction in their chosen field, whether or not that field be directly related to the current academic interests of the University; or

- (ii) A person who, not being a graduate of the University, has achieved national or international distinction in disciplines and fields of relevance to the academic programmes of the University. In this context, preference will be given to an individual who also has a connection with, or has given service to, the University or Wellington City; or
 - (iii) A person who has provided significant support for the academic interests and programmes of the University, particularly when that support has been provided over a sustained period.
- (b) An honorary degree shall not be awarded in recognition of the achievements of a staff member during his/her term of employment in the University, nor to a current member of the University Council in recognition of Council duties. However, this shall not preclude the possibility that a former staff member may be recognised for achievements outside the responsibilities covered by the employment contract/agreement, or that recognition may be given to a previous member of the University Council.
 - (c) As an academic institution, the University seeks to honour persons whose achievements demonstrate the intellectual and imaginative powers that the University has a responsibility to acknowledge and foster. The awarding of an honorary degree is the means by which the University acknowledges the distinguished contributions of certain individuals to those goals pursued by the University and welcomes those individuals to the body of graduates of the University.
 - (d) Honorary degrees in Music may be conferred by either Massey or Victoria University of Wellington. The University with the closest alliance to the background of the candidate shall be the preferred University to host the conferring. The host university shall consult the New Zealand School of Music about the proposal and advise the other University before taking a recommendation to its Council.

4.3 Award of a Hunter Fellowship

- (a) The Committee may recommend to the Council, for the award of a Hunter Fellowship a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the University, either directly or through its associated bodies, in activities relevant to the University's strategic directions and interests.
- (b) A Hunter Fellowship shall not be awarded in recognition of the achievements of a staff member during his/her term of employment in the University, nor to a current member of the University Council in recognition of Council duties. However, this shall not preclude the possibility that a former staff member may be recognised for achievements outside the responsibilities covered by the employment contract/agreement, or that recognition may be given to a previous member of the University Council.
- (c) The awarding of a Hunter Fellowship is the means by which the University acknowledges the outstanding support by certain individuals of the goals pursued by the University.

4.4 Nomination Process

- (a) Nominations for Honorary Degrees and Hunter Fellowships may be made to the Vice-Chancellor confidentially in writing by any member of the Council, the Academic Board, the Committee on Honorary Degrees and Hunter Fellowships, or the staff of the University.
- (b) Each nomination shall be accompanied by a statement of the nominee's career and achievements, and the grounds for conferring the degree or fellowship in terms of the

criteria specified in 4.2 and 4.3 above. Its preparation must not involve consultation with the nominee. The Vice-Chancellor shall bring each nomination and the accompanying statement before the Committee.

- (c) Honorary Degree – the Vice-Chancellor shall bring the recommendation of the Committee before the Academic Board. The Academic Board may provide advice on the recommendation to the Council. The Vice-Chancellor shall then bring the recommendation before the Council, which shall determine whether the honorary degree proposed in the recommendation shall be conferred.
- (d) Hunter Fellowship – the Vice-Chancellor shall bring the recommendation of the Committee before the Council, which shall determine whether the fellowship proposed in the recommendation shall be conferred.
- (e) All proceedings under this Statute shall be confidential and taken in committee. A resolution of Council conferring an honorary degree or a fellowship shall also be taken in committee and shall remain confidential until the offer is accepted.

4.5 Conferment/Award

- (a) Unless otherwise determined by the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor, Honorary Degrees shall be conferred in Wellington at the University's Graduation Ceremonies in May and December.
- (b) Hunter Fellowships shall be awarded in Wellington at the annual Reception for Hunter Fellows.

5 Legislative Compliance

The University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing this statute is the:

[Education and Training Act 2020, sections 282 and 284.](#)

[The Victoria University of Wellington Act 1961](#)

6 References

Previous Version: [Honorary Degrees and Hunter Fellowships Statute](#)

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: [Honorary Degree Nomination Form](#)

Appendix 2: [Hunter Fellowship Nomination Form](#)

8 Approval Agency

University Council

9 Statute Sponsor

Vice Chancellor

10 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this statute:

Secretary to Council

Ext: 5196