

GUIDANCE ON NOMINATIONS FOR HONORARY DEGREES OF THE UNIVERSITY

2021/22

Do you know someone who has made a major contribution to academic / regional / national life?

Have you considered nominating them for an honorary degree of the University of Birmingham?

Nominations may be made by anyone who is a student, alumnus, employee, member of honorary staff or lay member of Council of the University.

The University seeks to honour people through the award of Honorary Degrees, which are normally conferred at one of our Degree Congregations in July or December. In conferring the honour, we bring interesting people into the University, as a basis for further development of their relationship with the University and to provide an inspiration to those who are graduating.

Who is eligible to be nominated?

The University is looking to recognise those who are particularly eminent in their field and whose work is of regional, national or international significance. Nominees have been drawn from science and technology, public service, industry, broadcasting, academia, the arts, commerce, or sport.

Honorary Graduands are individuals who are particularly eminent in their field and whose work is of exceptional international, national, or regional significance as appropriate.

Nominees normally have links with, or have made a contribution to, the University, the City of Birmingham, or the West Midlands. This is, however, not an essential requirement. For example, academics of exceptional distinction in fields where the University of Birmingham is distinguished may be considered.

There should be clear potential for a continuing or future relationship between the nominee and the University.

To avoid possible misconceptions, the University does not normally consider nominees who are currently serving politicians or persons who have direct or significant influence over funding bodies.

The University does not normally consider conferring a second honorary degree on the same individual.

Serving or retired members of staff (including those holding honorary staff titles) are not normally considered for an award simply on the basis of their service to the University, but may be considered on grounds of exceptional service at a regional, national, or international level.

Nominations of women and members of ethnic minorities would be particularly welcome as they have historically been under-represented in nominations for honorary degrees.

How do I make a nomination?

Nominations may be made by anyone who is a student, alumnus, employee (academic, academic-related and support staff), member of honorary staff or lay member of Council of the University.

An individual may not nominate themselves for consideration for an honorary degree.

Please contact Neal Sidney, Secretary to the Honorary Degrees Committee (email: n.sidney@bham.ac.uk) who can confirm that the person you have in mind has not already been honoured by the University.

The form enables the Honorary Degrees Committee to receive and consider nominations consistently. **Nominations must be submitted on the nomination form. Forms with incomplete information will be returned to the proposer.**

A short curriculum vitae (such as an extract from *Who's Who*) must be provided in all cases. Further information may also be provided in support of the nomination.

The Nomination form should be sent to Neal Sidney, Secretary to the Honorary Degrees Committee, Registrar & Secretary's Office, by post, or by email to n.sidney@bham.ac.uk, by the deadlines below (but if submitting electronically you must ensure that the form is signed (usually a scanned document in PDF format)).

All nominations are welcome, but you are asked to consider the criteria for eligibility above before submitting a nomination. You can find a list of Honorary Graduates since 2000 on the website at www.birmingham.ac.uk/honorary-degrees, which will provide an indication of the standard of nominations.

All valid nominations will be considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee, which will subsequently make recommendations to Senate. There are three meetings of Honorary Degrees Committee through the year: 5th October 2021, 15th February 2022, and 10th May 2022. Nomination forms must be submitted by **7th September 2021, 18th January 2022, and 12th April 2022** respectively in order to be considered at the next meeting. However, nominations may be submitted at any time and will be considered for the next available meeting.

The business of the Honorary Degrees Committee is conducted in strict confidence. **To avoid embarrassment, no mention should be made to the nominee.** The whole process is confidential, and no names are published until the nomination has been approved by the Senate and until the individuals concerned have been formally approached and have accepted their nomination.

What is the role of the relationship manager?

All individuals offered an Honorary Degree are assigned a relationship manager. The relationship manager is usually the proposer of the nomination and will be considered the first point of contact between the University and the individual. The relationship manager is responsible for ensuring that opportunities to build a mutually beneficial relationship, as outlined in the nomination form, and any arising opportunities are appropriately taken.

The business of coordinating the Honorary Graduands visit on the day of the ceremony will be coordinated by Stakeholder Relations and organised by teams in the College, as is current practise. To enable a personal relationship with the Honorary Graduand to develop, relationship managers are expected to attend either the congregation lunch or the pre or post-ceremony drinks receptions.

On an annual basis the Division of Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) will contact relationship managers to ensure that contact details for Honorary Graduands are accurate and that developments in the relationship are captured on the Raisers Edge database and that particularly noteworthy activity is reported to Honorary Degrees Committee.

Honorary graduates will receive a minimum of three points of meaningful contact on an annual basis. DARO will be responsible for delivering this activity. Relationship managers are asked to keep DARO informed of changes to contact details so that all honorary graduands receive this information.

If you wish to have a discussion regarding the role of the relationship manager, then please contact Becky Mitchell, Head of Volunteering (0121 414 6682, r.mitchell.1@bham.ac.uk).

What happens next?

All proposers will be informed, in confidence, of the outcome of their proposal following the meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee. As the business of the Honorary Degrees Committee is conducted in strict confidence, it is not possible to provide any additional feedback in regards to nominations. Please also note that nominations should only be re-submitted in the event that there has been a significant change in the case for the nomination.

When the nomination has been approved by the Senate, a formal approach and offer will be made by the Vice-Chancellor's Office to the honorary graduand.

The offer gives the full range of graduation dates in the Congregation period, and seeks details of the graduand's availability. When Congregations are allocated to ceremonies we try to ensure that, as far as possible, the graduand is matched to the appropriate School or discipline. While efforts will be made to associate the conferment with a specific group or School if requested, this is dependent on the availability of honorary graduands, the numbers expected to graduate and hence the allocation of Schools to ceremonies. We unfortunately cannot guarantee to be able to match the honorary graduand to a specific group on every occasion.

Neal Sidney
Secretary to Honorary Degrees Committee