

Criteria for preparing and assessing nominations for Special Degrees and Honorary Awards

1. Purpose of the Criteria

These criteria are intended to guide the Special Degrees and Honorary Degrees Committee in assessing all nominations for special degrees and honorary degrees in a manner that is:

- consistent and principled
- aligned with the values, mission and strategic ambition of Adelaide University
- consistent with contemporary practice across Australia's Group of Eight universities
- protective and enhancing of the University's reputation.

2. Threshold Principle

Honorary and special degrees represent the highest form of recognition conferred by Adelaide University.

They are awarded sparingly and only where the nominee's achievements and standing are demonstrably exceptional.

3. Eligibility and Standing of the Nominee

In considering a nomination, the Committee will assess whether the nominee:

- is a person of eminent standing and distinction or influence in their field, profession, or sphere of public life
- is widely recognised through independent evidence for sustained, outstanding achievement or contribution

4. Nature of Contribution

The Committee will consider whether the nominee has made demonstrably exceptional and sustained contributions in one or more of the following domains:

- 4.1. Contribution to Knowledge, Scholarship or Discovery

- 4.2. Distinguished and widely recognised achievement in research, scholarship, creative practice or innovation.
- 4.3. Work that has materially advanced knowledge, shaped disciplines or practice, or generated significant and enduring societal benefit.
- 4.4. Contributions that align with and advance Adelaide University's commitment to discovery, innovation and future-making research.

In assessing the nature and significance of a nominee's contribution, the Committee will not treat professional success, seniority, or attainment as determinative in and of itself. The Committee must be satisfied that the nominee's contribution has produced demonstrable benefit to society, the public good, or the University community, and reflects values and conduct consistent with the standing of a public university.

5. Contribution to Society or the Public Good

- 5.1. Outstanding leadership, service or influence that has delivered clear and measurable benefit to communities, industries or society at large.
- 5.2. Demonstrated impact at a national or international level, evidenced by independent recognition or outcomes.
- 5.3. Contributions that reflect ambition, integrity, accountability and respect in public or professional life.

6. Contribution to Adelaide University or its Founding Institutions

- 6.1. Exceptional service, advocacy, leadership or partnership that has materially advanced the University's mission, standing or strategic objectives.
- 6.2. Meaningful, sustained and substantive engagement with Adelaide University or its predecessor institutions.
- 6.3. Contributions that clearly embody trust, collegiality and respect for the University's values and academic standing.

7. Alignment with Adelaide University Values

The Committee must be satisfied that conferring the award would be affirmatively consistent with Adelaide University's core values of:

- Trust – demonstrated integrity, ethical leadership and accountability;
- Inclusivity – respect for diversity, equity and the dignity of others;
- Ambition – pursuit of excellence, leadership and transformative impact;
- Respect – conduct befitting the standing of the University and its community; and
- Discovery – commitment to learning, progress, innovation or cultural advancement.

A nomination must not give rise to a material risk of misalignment with these values, whether having regard to the nominee's past conduct, current standing or foreseeable future associations.

8. Reputational Considerations

In assessing nominations, the Committee will have regard to whether conferral of the award:

- 8.1. enhances, or at a minimum does not detract from, the reputation, standing and interests of Adelaide University;
- 8.2. would withstand reasonable public, sectoral and media scrutiny; and
- 8.3. does not expose the University to material reputational, ethical or governance risk.

The nominee's past conduct, public record and foreseeable future associations may be taken into account where relevant.

9. Independence and Conflict Considerations

Consistent with good governance practice:

- 9.1. honorary and special degrees will not ordinarily be conferred on serving Council members, senior staff or current employees. Any exceptional departure from this principle must be justified on its merits and explicitly recorded by the Committee; and
- 9.2. actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be disclosed and managed in accordance with University governance requirements.

10. Evidence and Substantiation

Nominations must be supported by:

- 10.1. clear, verifiable and independent evidence of the nominee's achievements and standing;
- 10.2. referees of appropriate seniority, credibility and independence; and
- 10.3. sufficient detail to enable informed and rigorous assessment against these criteria.

The absence of robust evidence or independent corroboration may be grounds for deferral or a decision not to recommend the nomination.