



## HONORARY DEGREES

No: SAAP 1-12

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**Authority:** UW System Unclassified Personnel Guideline #11  
Regent Policy Document 4-6

**Initiator:** Chancellor

**Responsible Party:** UWM Honorary Degree Committee

### POLICY STATEMENT

UW System policy authorizes UWM to bestow honorary doctoral degrees on individuals of exceptional accomplishment and distinction who have made significant contributions to the university, region, state, ~~or~~ nation, or world; or within their field of endeavor. This policy sets forth the guidelines that UWM follows in awarding such degrees.

UWM is not obligated to award honorary degrees under this policy.

### GUIDELINES

UWM has designated a standing committee, called the Honorary Degree Committee, to consider and recommend candidates for honorary degrees. The University of Wisconsin System president and the UWM Chancellor, or their designees, shall be ex-officio members of this committee. UWM's Honorary Degrees Committee will devote particular attention to the identification of women and minority candidates for consideration for honorary degrees. At least one-half of those presented as candidates for honorary degrees should have some connection with the University System, the City or the State.

Candidates who are recommended by UWM's Honorary Degree Committee must be approved by UWM's Chancellor and the Board of Regents. Board of Regent approval must be obtained at least two months prior to the commencement at which the degree is to be conferred. For a Spring commencement, the nominations must be received by the Board of Regents for their February meeting; ~~and~~ for a Winter commencement, nominations must be received ~~not later than the October by~~ Board of Regents for their October meeting.

As a matter of policy, the Board of Regents limits ~~to one~~ the number of honorary degrees any individual may receive from the UW System to one. In order to avoid duplication, the chairperson of UWM's Honorary Degrees Committee must clear nominees with the UW System Office of Academic Affairs prior to determination of UWM's final selections and submission to the Board of Regents. The Chancellor, conjointly with the UW System president, will recommend UWM's nominees to the Board of Regents.

All activities related to the nomination of candidates, ~~the~~ review of documentation supporting each nominee, and recommendations to the Board of Regents must be conducted with a confidentiality appropriate to personnel matters.

Upon Board of Regents approval of a nominee for an honorary doctorate, the Chancellor will invite the candidate to attend the commencement convocation at which the award is to be conferred. Honorary degrees are not awarded in absentia. A degree may be awarded posthumously ~~if to a candidate if his/her~~ the candidate's death occurs after accepting the Chancellor's invitation but before the scheduled conferral. Recipients will receive no honoraria, but UWM shall assume all reasonable expenses associated with the recipient's participation in the commencement.

Honorary degree designations shall include the following:

- (1) The specialized doctoral degrees as best reflect the recipient's accomplishments. (See examples of titles of doctorates previously awarded at: <https://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2018/05/Honorary-Degrees-Awarded-by-UWM-17-18.pdf>)
- (2) Doctor of Laws (LL.D.),
- (3) Doctor of Science (SC.D.),
- (4) Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.), and
- (5) Doctor of Humanities (D.H.), ~~and~~

To insulate the honorary degree from partisanship, to protect the award from possible conflicts and to protect nominees from possible compromising positions, the following three categories of individuals are ineligible for an honorary degree from UWM:

- (1) Public Officials and Political Appointees (meaning serving members of the Wisconsin Legislature and the Wisconsin congressional delegation; elected and appointed officials; and all members of the state judiciary),
- (2) Regents (meaning serving members of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents), and
- (3) University of Wisconsin System Employees (meaning currently employed faculty or staff at each university and in UW System Administration).

Persons in any of these three categories could be eligible for consideration two years or more after they have vacated office or terminated employment. However, former faculty are not eligible for honorary degrees unless they have achieved distinction in a second career beyond their work at their university (e.g., i.e. receiving the Nobel Prize after leaving the institution).