

5.4.2 GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT HONORS

(These rules are established by and may only be amended by the elected Faculty Senators in the University Senate.)

5.4.2.1 Authority

Pursuant to KRS 164.240, the University Faculty is assigned by law the authority to recommend to the Board of Trustees those conditions of merit and circumstance that the Board may establish relating to certain honors associated with degrees. Pursuant to KRS 164.240, the University Faculty is also assigned the authority to recommend to the Board of Trustees those persons upon whom the Board may confer these honors. For the purposes of these *University Senate Rules*, and within the meaning of KRS 164.240, such honors conferred to students upon their graduation are referred to as “degree honors,” while such awards to others are referred to as “Honorary Degrees” (capitalized).

The Board of Trustees has delegated to the body the “University Faculty,” the Board’s final approval authority in the establishment of conditions of merit and circumstance for “degree honors” as well as its final authority to confer such honors, within the framework of the University Senate. [BOT 12/10/1917] The Board of Trustees has specifically identified the elected Faculty Senators (as the representatives of the University Faculty) as being the body authorized to act for the University Faculty in making final policy and decisions concerning “degree honors.” [BOT 06/10/2005; GR IV.A,C]

With respect to “Honorary Degrees,” the Board of Trustees has reserved its statutory authority to make final approval of conditions of merit and circumstance for, as well as final approval of the award of, such degrees, with the *proviso* that as per KRS 164.240, its final action on either conditions or nominees is contingent upon the recommendation by the elected Faculty Senators in the University Senate. [BOT 06/10/2005; GR IV.A,C]

5.4.2.2 Conditions of Merit and Circumstance for Degree Honors

- A.** Students shall be graduated "Summa Cum Laude" who attain a grade point average of 3.8 or higher for at least three years of work at the University of Kentucky (excepting correspondence study). [US: 10/11/94; US: 4/11/94]
- B.** Students shall be graduated "Magna Cum Laude" who attain a grade point average of 3.6 or higher for at least three years of work at the University of Kentucky (excepting correspondence study). [US: 4/11/94]
- C.** Students shall be graduated "Cum Laude" who attain a grade point average of 3.4 to 3.6 for at least three years of work at the University of Kentucky (excepting correspondence study). [US: 4/11/94]
- D.** Students with a minimum of two but less than three years of work at the University shall receive the appropriate commencement honors if they attain a grade point average of 0.2 greater than the above.

* Courses taken under the Study Abroad and National Exchange Student programs (and for which students pay their tuition to the University of Kentucky)

are considered as courses taken at UK for purposes of both Rule 5.4.1's residency requirement and for graduates to be conferred commencement honors at the time of award of their degrees under sections A-D of Rule 5.4.2.2. [SREC: 2/14/01; SREC: 5/31/05]

E. The degree with honors from a professional college shall be based solely upon work done in the professional college.

F. The bachelor's degree with honors in a student's major or a degree with honors from a professional college will be conferred upon a student whom the faculty or the student's department, or college in the case of a professional college, and the dean of the student's college recommend receive the degree. A student may be required to complete work in addition to that required for the bachelor's or professional degree to receive a degree with honors. [US: 12/13/82]

G. All students in the Honors Program of the University who do not have a grade point standing of 3.5 or better but are in the top ten percent (10%) of their college's class are eligible to graduate in the Honors Program if they satisfy the other requirements and have approval of the Honors Program Director.

- * A student who has invoked the academic bankruptcy rule (SR 5.3.1.5) during his/her University career shall be considered, for the purposes of commencement honors, as having attended the University only for those hours earned subsequent to readmission. [SREC: 6/21/83]
- * A student need not be enrolled full-time to fulfill the years of work necessary to receive commencement honors. Two years of work means 60 credit hours; three years means 90 credits. [SREC: 5/8/85]
- * The SREC interpreted that under this rule, it is the cumulative GPA that is used to test for qualification for graduation honors, and that the minimum number of hours that must be included in that GPA calculation is 90 hours, and that the student does not have to be a full-time student to be eligible for qualifying for graduation honors. [SREC: 2/24/06]

5.4.2.3 Conditions of Circumstance for Honorary Degrees

A. Role of the University Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees (UJCHD)

The elected Faculty Senators in the University Senate here opt to incorporate by reference the composition and charge to the University Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees as described in AR 11:4. Using the conditions of merit for Honorary Degrees specified SR 5.4.2.4 below, the UJCHD develops recommendations on nominees for Honorary Degrees. The UJCHD submits its recommendations to the elected faculty senators in the University Senate.

The UJCHD may submit to the elected Faculty Senators, through the elected Faculty representatives to the Senate Council, policy recommendations concerning conditions of merit and circumstance for the award of Honorary Degrees.

- * The prerogative of the elected Faculty Senators to “opt” to utilize the charge to and composition of the University Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees described in the cited Administrative Regulation connotes that changes in the charge or composition specified in the regulation are made only with the concurrence of the elected Faculty Senators. [SREC: 8/09]

B. Role of the Elected Faculty Senators in the University Senate

1. Within the framework of a University Senate meeting, and prior to consideration of any specific nominations, the elected Faculty Senators may exercise its option to decide that no nominees for honorary degrees will be recommended to the Board of Trustees that academic year.
2. If the elected Faculty Senators do not opt for the above outcome (SR 5.4.2.3.B.1), then the elected Faculty Senators shall consider the UJCHD recommendations concerning:
 - (a) the qualifications of the submitted nominees;
 - (b) the appropriateness of the recommended honorary degree title for each;
 - (c) the alternative occasion on which the degree is recommended to be conferred (if not at either the December or May Commencement); and
 - (d) any other recommendations of the committee for departure from the conditions of circumstance specified herein.
3. The respective recommendation for each nominee shall be considered and voted on individually by the elected Faculty Senators. The elected Faculty Senators may in addition approve, or may modify, the recommendation on the degree title or other circumstance of award of the degree. Those nominees, degree titles, and circumstances of award that are approved by the elected Faculty Senators shall be forwarded through the Chair of the Senate (the President) to the Board of Trustees for final action. Prior to the vote by the elected faculty Senators, the Chair of the Senate (or that Chair’s designee), may address the University Senate as to the qualifications of a particular nominee or as to exceptions to the conditions of circumstance.
4. Under extraordinary circumstances, and with written justification to the Board of Trustees through the Chair of the Senate, the elected faculty representatives in the University Senate may through a deliberative process commensurate to the circumstance recommend for an honorary degree a person not among the nominees recommended by UJCHD. This option is not dependent upon the exercise of SR 5.4.2.3.B.2, above.

C. Circumstances for Award of Honorary Degrees

1. The number of honorary degrees awarded during any academic year shall be limited to five, with no more than four at any single Commencement. [US: 2/14/11]
2. The honoree must be present to receive the honorary degree.

3. The honorary degree shall be conferred at either the December or May regular university commencement ceremony, unless otherwise approved by the elected Faculty Senators pursuant to SR 5.4.2.3.B.2.(c). [US: 2/14/11]

D. Titles of Honorary Degrees

The titles approved by the elected Faculty Senators for Honorary Degrees are:

Honorary Doctor of Arts
Honorary Doctor of Laws
Honorary Doctor of Science
Honorary Doctor of Engineering
Honorary Doctor of Humanities
Honorary Doctor of Letters

5.4.2.4 Conditions of Merit for Honorary Degrees

A. Principles

In awarding Honorary Degrees, the University accomplishes several purposes: It pays tribute to those whose life and work exemplify professional, intellectual, or artistic achievement. It recognizes and appreciates those who have made significant contributions to society, the state, and the University. It highlights the diverse ways in which such contributions can be made. And it sends a message that principles, values, and contributions are important. Well-chosen honorees affirm and dignify the University's own achievements and priorities.

Honorary degrees may be conferred upon those who have achieved distinction through outstanding intellectual or creative achievements, or through outstanding leadership in education, business, public service or other appropriate sectors of society.

B. Conditions

1. The honorary degree shall be awarded to recognize only exceptional accomplishments as outlined in the above principles. The nominee's special achievement or contribution to society shall be the fundamental consideration and shall be evaluated without regard to the nominee's attainment of influential position or financial status.

2. The nominee shall have gained distinction worthy of recognition extending well beyond his/her own field of endeavor and geographical area of activity.

3. Although it is recognized that it is desirable for the nominee to have a tie to the University of Kentucky or the Commonwealth of Kentucky, such a connection shall not be a requirement.

4. As long as the nominee clearly meets the criteria, his/her selection shall not be affected by the number of previous similar honors received.

5. Former faculty and staff of the University of Kentucky shall meet the same criteria as other nominees; current faculty and staff are not eligible.

6. Elected or appointed officials of the Commonwealth of Kentucky shall not be eligible as honorary degree candidates during their terms of office.