

Legal Notice 182 of 2017 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,818 – 30 June 2017
Amended by:
Legal Notice 307 of 2023 – Malta Government Gazette No. 20,170 – 26 December 2023

**EDUCATION ACT
(CAP. 327)**

Award of *Honoris Causa* Degrees Regulations, 2017

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred upon him by articles 74 (5) and 75 (6) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following regulations made by the Senate of the University of Malta by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by articles 75 (3) and 79 (b) of the said Act:

Citation and Interpretation

1. (1) These regulations may be cited as the Award of *Honoris Causa* Degrees Regulations, 2017.

(2) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires –

“the Award” means the *Honoris Causa* degree; and

“the Committee” means the *Honoris Causa* Degrees Committee as appointed by Senate and Council.

Applicable from 1 January 2024 onwards:

“the Committee” means the Honours Committee (which *inter alia* covers the Award of Fellowships and the Naming of Buildings and Spaces).

Applicability

2. These regulations shall be applicable from 1 June, 2017, onwards.

Preamble

3. (1) An *honoris causa* degree is the highest award the University can bestow.

(2) Through its choice of *honoris causa* degree recipients, the University makes a public declaration of its values.

(3) By awarding *honoris causa* degrees, the University recognizes those individuals whose accomplishments are of such excellence that they provide inspiration and leadership to its academic staff, its graduates, its students and to society at large.

***Honoris Causa* Degrees Committee**

4. (1) Senate and Council shall establish an *Honoris Causa* Degrees Committee to propose to Senate and Council individuals for the conferral of *honoris causa* degrees.

(2) The Committee shall consist of:

The Rector (Chairman);
Two members appointed by and from Council; and
Two members of the academic staff appointed by Senate.

Applicable from 1 January 2024 onwards:

Honours Committee

4. (1) Senate and Council shall establish an Honours Committee to propose to Senate and Council individuals for the conferral of *honoris causa* degrees.

(2) The Committee shall consist of:

The Rector (Chair);
Three members appointed by and from Council; and
Three members of the academic staff appointed by Senate.

(3) The period of appointment shall be of one year, renewable for a maximum of four years.

(4) The Committee shall have the power to regulate its functions by establishing Rules of Procedure for such purpose and/or to supplement the criteria stipulated within these regulations.

Criteria for the Conferment of an *Honoris Causa* Degree

5. (1) In selecting individuals, the Committee shall seek to choose persons of such calibre that, in honouring them, the University too is honoured. Through its recommendations of nominees, the Committee shall seek to reflect the character and diversity of the country and of the University itself.

(2) On the recommendation of the Committee and Senate, the Council may, at its discretion, order the conferment of an *honoris causa* degree on:

(a) any alumnus of the University who has achieved national or international distinction in a particular field of expertise; or

(b) any individual who has provided significant support to the University, its faculties or programmes of study sustained over a number of years; or

(c) any individual who has given distinguished service to the University or society in areas such as educational, artistic, cultural, industrial, environmental or public service; or

(d) any individual who is likely to contribute in enhancing the University's reputation and in furthering its strategic plans and development; or

(e) any individual whose outstanding contribution to a particular field or to society at large may have not yet been widely recognized; or

(f) any other person the University may deem worthy of such a distinction.

(3) An *honoris causa* degree shall not be awarded to:

(a) members of staff, still in employment at the University; or

(b) any employees or members of any board or committee or the University Council or any entity of the University during their tenure; or

(c) members currently elected on the Maltese House of Representatives or members of the European Parliament representing Malta.

(4) Newly retired members of staff of the University shall only be considered for *honoris causa* degrees in exceptional circumstances.

Honoris Causa Degrees

6. (1) The *honoris causa* degree to be awarded shall be the most appropriate one, depending on the background and achievements of the individual being proposed.

(2) The University shall have the power to confer the following *honoris causa* degrees on individuals for their outstanding achievements:

(a) Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa* (D.Litt.): awarded for outstanding achievement, usually of a scholarly or creative nature, in literature and the arts, and including the social sciences and law;

(b) Doctor of Science, *honoris causa* (D.Sc.): awarded for outstanding achievement, usually of a scholarly or creative nature, in the pure and applied sciences, and including engineering and medicine;

(c) Doctor of Philosophy, *honoris causa* (D. Phil.): awarded for outstanding achievement in a general or pluri-disciplinary area of knowledge, not easily reducible to any one of the other two categories mentioned above; and

(d) Master of Letters, *honoris causa* (M.Litt.).

Nominations for the Award of *Honoris Causa* Degrees

7. (1) Nominations for the award of *honoris causa* degrees shall be made confidentially in writing by any member of Senate to the Rector at any time of the year. The individual being nominated shall not be made aware of the proposal being made.

(2) Proposals shall be supported by:

(a) a statement by the proposer outlining in detail the motivation for the proposed Award; and

(b) the *Curriculum Vitae* of the person being proposed.

(3) In considering proposals for Award, the Committee may request independent testimonials by individuals of repute (not related by consanguinity to the nominee), vouching for the nominee's merits for the Award.

(4) Nominations shall not be accepted if made by a person on his own behalf.

(5) The Rector shall submit all proposals received, together with the accompanying documents, to the Committee.

Proceedings of the Honours Committee

8. (1) All members of the Committee shall keep the proceedings of the meetings of the Committee in the strictest confidence and the names of the proposed recipients shall not be disclosed to any person outside the Committee.

(2) The Committee shall consider all nominations proposed to it according to the criteria stipulated in these regulations. The Committee shall ensure that the number of awards is kept restricted and that the selected individuals are of a truly high calibre.

(3) The Committee shall make its recommendations to Senate and Council at their next scheduled meetings. Once the individual proposed is approved, the

Rector shall write formally to the recipient about the University's wish to confer an *honoris causa* degree.

(4) The name of the person proposed for an Award shall remain confidential until the intended recipient accepts the offer of the Award. In cases where the proposed recipient is not approved by the Committee, the nominee shall not be informed. No written communication shall be provided by the Committee except to positively recommend to Senate.

Conferment of the *Honoris Causa* Degree

9. (1) *Honoris causa* degrees shall only be conferred during a convocation for the Award of *Honoris Causa* degrees, to be held on a date as approved by Senate, normally in November/December.

(2) *Honoris causa* degrees shall only be awarded *in absentia* in exceptional circumstances, these being:

(a) the inability of the nominee to attend for certified medical reasons; or

(b) the inability to travel to Malta for reasons beyond the control of the nominee, which reasons must be accepted by the Committee as valid and sufficient.

(3) If the recipient is unable to receive the *honoris causa* degree on the date proposed to him, the University may offer to defer the conferment to a future occasion.

(4) *Honoris causa* degrees shall only be awarded posthumously in very exceptional circumstances.

(5) *Honoris causa* graduates may use the post-nominals indicated in paragraph (2) of regulation 6. Such graduates may not adopt the prefix 'Dr'.

Revocation of the *Honoris Causa* Degree

10. (1) On a recommendation of the Senate, which shall explain the motivation for its decision in writing, Council may, at its discretion, revoke *honoris causa* degrees, already awarded by the University. Revocation shall subsist for grave reasons only, namely a conviction by a court of criminal jurisdiction, involvement in human rights abuses, and/or evidence of corruption. These reasons, or knowledge thereof by the Committee, shall not precede the conferment of the *honoris causa* degree but should be discovered or become available to the Committee after the conferment of the *honoris causa* degree.

(2) The University shall, promptly and expeditiously, publish the news of a revocation and have such information duly entered in its register of *honoris causa* graduates.

(3) The University reserves the right to pursue the appropriate legal proceedings should the *honoris causa* graduate persist in making reference to the *honoris causa* degree by virtue and/or via any means of communication, including publications, websites and social media.