

Honorary Degree Nomination Process

An honorary degree is the highest form of recognition offered by the University of Tennessee. The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees authorizes the awarding of honorary degrees to recognize individuals who have benefited the institution or society through outstanding achievements or leadership.

As stated in [University of Tennessee System-Wide Policy BT0005 - Policy on Awarding of Degrees and Certificates in Memoriam](#):

- Each campus may award up to three honorary degrees each year.
- Honorary degrees awarded shall be doctoral degrees, with the specific title to be appropriate to the campus and the recipient. Honorary degree titles must not duplicate the title of any existing for-credit academic degree. The honorary degree title shall be included in the materials provided to the Board.
- All degrees, honorary and for-credit, are awarded by the Board, based on recommendations by the faculty of a specific campus. As such, it is possible for an individual to be nominated for and receive more than one honorary degree from the University. Any additional honorary degree shall, in most instances, be from a campus other than the first honorary degree. No recipient shall receive more than one honorary degree with the same specific title.
- All honorary degrees awarded shall be in the name of The University of Tennessee and shall adhere to the Diploma Guidelines.
- The University expects honorary degree recipients to participate fully in commencement exercises; however, exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances.
- University employees shall not be eligible for nomination during their employment.
- Members of the UT Board of Trustees and elected officials shall not be eligible for nomination prior to completion of their terms of service.

Campus Nominating Committee Composition

The nominating committee for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, will receive and screen nominations and recommend candidates to the chancellor for consideration. The process is in accordance with [University of Tennessee System-Wide Policy BT0005 - Policy on Awarding of Degrees and Certificates in Memoriam](#).

The nominating committee will be composed of six tenured faculty members who have at least five years of continuous service at UT. The Faculty Senate leadership will select three faculty representatives of the nominating committee, and the chancellor will select three faculty representatives of the nominating committee. The Faculty Senate leadership and the chancellor will work together in good faith to ensure compliance with the Board policy requirement that the committee be composed of individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise.

The initial terms of the members of the nominating committee shall be one, two, and three years. Two members shall serve a one-year term (one member selected by the Faculty Senate leadership and the other selected by the chancellor); two members shall serve a two-year term (one member selected by the Faculty Senate leadership and the other selected by the chancellor); and two members shall serve a three-year term (one member selected by the Faculty Senate leadership and the other selected by the chancellor). For all subsequent appointments, members of the nominating committee shall be appointed to serve terms of three years beginning July 1 of the year of appointment and ending on June 30 of the following year. Each year, two faculty members will roll off the nominating committee. The faculty senate leadership will select one new member each year, and the chancellor will select the other new member. Notwithstanding anything in this paragraph to the contrary, the members of the nominating committee for the 2022-23 academic year shall serve from the date of appointment through June 30, 2023.

Faculty Senate leadership will select replacements for any representatives appointed by Faculty Senate leadership who resign before the end of their term. The chancellor will select replacements for any representatives appointed by the chancellor who resign before the end of their term. Replacements will serve the duration of the remaining term of the resigning representative.

The Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor will serve ex-officio as chair of the nominating committee and may vote in the event of a tie.

All members of the committee are required to function in a confidential manner, respecting the privacy of all candidates, including those recommended and those not recommended.

Procedure

1. The nominating committee will solicit nominations broadly from the campus community. Options to solicit nominations include issuing a call through campus, college, or departmental newsletters, stand-alone broadcast email, etc.
2. Nominations will be submitted through a form located on the chancellor’s website. Nominators must hold a current faculty appointment with UT. The form will require a UT NetID and password.
3. Nominators must complete all information on the form and submit all required documentation. Incomplete nominations will not be considered.

Form Information	Required Documentation
Nominee’s name and contact information	A letter from the nominator, including the honorary degree title they wish to award, and supporting documentation detailing why the candidate is worthy of an honorary degree from UT

Statement of nominator's relationship to candidate, including any potential or perceived conflicts of interest	The candidate's CV or a biographical statement
Name and, if possible, contact information of at least three individuals who may be solicited for letters of recommendation.	

4. The nominating committee will review nominations and recommend candidates, by majority vote, to the chancellor for consideration.
5. The Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor will send a letter to the nominator of any candidate not recommended. Candidates may be reconsidered upon re-nomination.

Expedited Timeline for 2022-23

The following is an expedited timeline as the campus transitions from the former process to the new process.

May

- Faculty Senate leadership will select three faculty representatives on the nominating committee for the upcoming year
- The chancellor will select three faculty representatives on the nominating committee for the upcoming year
- The provost will host a kickoff meeting with the nominating committee.

July

- The nominating committee will solicit nominations.

August

- The nominating committee will review nominations

By September 1

- The nominating committee will make its recommendation to the chancellor

Standard Timeline

October

- Faculty Senate leadership will select faculty representatives for the nominating committee.
- The chancellor will select faculty representatives on the nominating committee for the upcoming year

January

- The provost will host a kickoff meeting with the nominating committee.

By February 10

- The nominating committee will solicit nominations.

March

- The nominating committee will review nominations

By April 1

- The nominating committee will make its recommendation to the chancellor

Additional Eligibility Criteria

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville has established criteria in addition to the criteria described in the board policy:

- Typically, candidates will have connections to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, or to Tennessee and will have achievements of national or international significance, or outstanding and sustained service to our state or community. Extraordinary candidates without these connections will also be considered.
- Financial contributions to UTK, or prior service as an elected official, shall not be the sole deciding factor in the nominations process.