

HONORARY DEGREES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: PROVOST & EXEC. VICE PRES. FOR ACAD. & STUDENT AFFAIRS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/8/2017

NEXT REVIEW DATE: PREVIOUS REVIEW PLUS FOUR (4) YEARS – 6/10/2029

BOARD OF REGENTS REPORTING: PRESIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATION

I. POLICY STATEMENT

An honorary degree is one of higher education's most significant accolades. Northern Kentucky University awards honorary degrees on a selective basis to distinguished individuals who merit special recognition for outstanding achievement or leadership in a field or activity consistent with the ideals and mission of the University. This policy sets forth the following procedures for granting honorary degrees. Final decision on the granting honorary degrees rests with the Board of Regents.

1. Approved honorary degrees for Northern Kentucky University are Doctor of Fine Arts, Doctor of Humane Letters, Doctor of Humanities, Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Business, Doctor of Letters, Doctor of Music, Doctor of Education, and Doctor of Science.
2. The selection of candidates will seek to reflect the breadth of interests and activities of the University.
3. An honorary degree may be awarded to a person who satisfies the following criteria:
 - a. Eminence, in the course of a career, in some field of scholarship, in public service, or in an artistic, literary, governmental, religious, business, or other endeavor; and/or
 - b. Significant accomplishments, which have a direct bearing on the advancement of Northern Kentucky University.
4. While the number of nominations is not limited, except under unusual circumstances when the Board of Regents determines otherwise, the University shall not award more than two honorary degrees per academic year.
5. The University will seek opportunities to award honorary degrees to recipients who reflect the variety of disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences reflected both among those who work and study on our campus and in the communities we serve.
6. Honorary degrees will not be awarded to current Northern Kentucky University employees, but may, in exceptional cases, be awarded to former University employees.
7. An honorary degree recipient shall not receive a speaker's fee or honorarium for accepting an honorary degree or delivering a commencement address or the equivalent.
8. Except under unusual circumstances, Northern Kentucky University shall not grant honorary degrees in absentia.

II. ENTITIES AFFECTED

This policy applies to all members of the University community involved in the nomination or selection of candidates for honorary degrees.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, as chair of the Honorary Recognition Committee, is responsible for implementing the policy.

IV. COMMITTEE

Honorary Recognition Committee. See details in Procedures below.

V. PROCEDURES

A candidate for an honorary degree may be suggested by anyone, but must be formally nominated by an organized faculty body within the University, usually an academic department or faculty of a college. All nominations are confidential and potential nominees should not be contacted directly. Review is ongoing and candidates may ultimately be selected several years after their initial nomination.

1. The Honorary Recognition Committee (HRC) serves as advisory to the President in the recommendation of honorary degrees to be granted by the University's Board of Regents.
2. The Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs shall serve as chair of the HRC.
3. The HRC membership the committee shall be comprised of the presidents of the governance organizations and the Alumni Council.
4. The deadline for submission of nominations is determined by the HRC. The nominating form may be found on the Academic Affairs website.
5. The HRC shall review nominations and submit their recommendation(s) to the President. Only nominations approved by a majority vote of the HRC will be forwarded to the President.
6. The President shall review the nominations and forward a final slate of candidates to the Board of Regents for their final approval.

REVISION HISTORY

REVISION TYPE	MONTH/YEAR APPROVED
Minor Revision for Kentucky House Bill 4 (KY HB4) Compliance to #5 in sec. 1 , Edits, & Name Change	June 10, 2025
New Policy – “Granting Honorary Degrees”	November 8, 2017



Office of the President
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November 15, 2017

Ms. Sue Ott Rowlands
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
830 Lucas Administrative Center

Dear Ms. Ott Rowlands:

The Northern Kentucky University Board of Regents, at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 8, 2017, approved that a policy be established for the granting of honorary degrees by Northern Kentucky University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Gerard St. Amand". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

Gerard St. Amand
Interim President