



COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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**DRAFT GOOD  
PRACTICE GUIDE  
– HONORARY  
DEGREES AND  
PROFESSORSHIP**

**Draft 1**

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## Foreword

Conferment of honorary degrees and honorary professorships is a long-standing tradition in South African universities. This practice is in accordance with Section 65 C of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, as amended, which allows universities to award such degrees to well deserving members of society, some of whom can be outstanding leaders, activists, academics, artists and any other persons who have made meaningful contributions to society. Honorary degrees are conferred on individuals whether or not the candidate has met the ordinary academic or promotion requirements for the conferral of degrees and professorships.

Despite the good intentions behind such awards, concerns have been raised about potential abuse of the practice. Concerns have also been raised about misuse of honorary degrees and professorships by recipients.

In December 2021, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation requested the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to conduct a study into the award and use of honorary academic degrees and titles. In response to this request, the CHE established a Task Team to conduct an investigation and produce a report. The Good Practice Guide on honorary degrees and honorary professorships emanates from this report.

The Good Practice Guide focusses on the rigour to be exercised in the selection processes, the eligibility of potential recipients, and clear guidance about how and under what circumstances honorary titles may be used.

The CHE believes that this Guide will be a useful tool to assist higher education institutions in exercising their mandate in addition to providing useful information on the use of honorary academic degrees and titles to the general public.

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations used

<b>ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>CHE</b>	Council on Higher Education
<b>CV</b>	Curriculum Vitae
<b>DHET</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>Dr</b>	Doctor
<b>DTech</b>	Doctor of Technology
<b>HEIs</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>HEQSF</b>	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>PhD</b>	Doctor of Philosophy
<b>PHEIs</b>	Private Higher Education Institutions
<b>Prof</b>	Professor
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority
<b>USAf</b>	Universities South Africa

## Glossary of Terms

**Honorary degree:** Degree awarded by a university to an individual who is not a student but who has made a significant contribution to scholarship, research, leadership, and/or development for the betterment of society. The normal requirements are waived.

**Honorary professorship:** an honorary title conferred in recognition of a person's special contribution to the subject areas associated with the faculty's academic activities.

**Honorary title:** an honorary title is a title bestowed upon individuals or organizations as an award in recognition of their merits. Sometimes the title bears the same or nearly the same name as a title of authority, but the person bestowed does not have to carry out any duties, except for ceremonial purposes.

**Good Practice:** is an approach, method, technique or way of doing things that is generally accepted as being correct or more effective in delivering desired results or outcomes.

**Institution:** refers to a higher education institution, whether public or private, recognised as such in terms of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended). A public higher education institution comes into being through a government declaration in terms of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997, as amended); whilst a private higher education institution is legitimate only if it is registered or provisionally registered as such by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

**Principle:** are fundamental truths or propositions that serve as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning.

## Preamble

Honorary degrees and honorary professorships are awarded by universities and higher education institutions worldwide to recognise and honour outstanding achievements by individuals.

In South Africa, honorary degrees are awarded in the same way, to recognise exceptional contributions of individuals to knowledge, academic scholarship or research, the university, or society in general.

There are no universally agreed or approved rules for the award of honorary degrees and professorships, or the use of honorary titles, and policies and practices are often unclear. The position is similar in South Africa, where the policies, practices and regulations for making these awards vary widely and are at times unclear or inconsistent.

There are concerns that this lack of clarity can lead to a lack of rigour in the processes of award, and to the risk of problematic practices whereby the honours may be inappropriately or illegally awarded or claimed. This in turn can lead to misuse of titles and erosion of the reputation of institutions and a lack of public trust in the higher education system. Such concerns have been raised in the South African higher education sector.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) has responsibility for assuring the quality of programmes and qualifications in the higher education sector, and of advising the Minister responsible for higher education. In this capacity, the CHE has developed this Guide, following an investigation into national practices for award of honorary degrees and professorships.

This Guide addresses the current policies and practices and makes recommendations for policy and good practice to ensure rigour, consistency and transparency in awarding of honorary degrees and professorships, and the use of the associated titles. This is important for quality and integrity in the system, and it will also help to inform all stakeholders in higher education, government and the general public.

## 1. Background and Context

There have been reported cases of problematic practices, and a lack of clarity on criteria for award of honorary degrees, professorships, and the use of the associated honorary titles.

Matters of concern have arisen where there are variations, inconsistencies, and lack of clarity in institutional policy and practice, and in national regulations relating to the conditions and the purpose for the award of an honorary degree or professorship. Such lack of clarity can create public dissatisfaction or distrust and can allow unscrupulous organisations or individuals to take advantage.

There are also concerns where honorary titles are seen to be awarded for commercial advantage, political leverage and/or institutional self-aggrandisement, leading to devaluing of universities and the degrees that they confer. Another concern is that the honorary titles are excessively and inappropriately conferred.

A Task Team was established by the CHE, to investigate all aspects of the honorary degrees and professorships in South Africa. The investigation considered policies and practices, including the criteria used in higher education institutions for the award of honorary degrees and honorary professorships, as well as the criteria for appointment or promotion to ordinary professor, and possible drivers/enablers of any problematic practices. The information gathered included comparisons between institutions in their policies, practices, and criteria, some commonly accepted good practices, and existing legislation, policies, guidelines or conventions.

The investigation involved the collection and analysis of a substantial quantity of relevant literature, and the gathering and analysis of information from 38 public and private higher education institutions and science councils, focusing on institutional policies and practices regarding honorary degrees and professorships, including the number of such awards and related purposes, criteria, procedures, expectations and perceptions. Using the data and information collected, and through discussion and critical reflection, the Task Team considered various aspects of honorary degrees and



professorships, comparing the latter with the criteria for appointment of normal professors. The Task Team completed their (unpublished) report in March 2023<sup>1</sup>.

## **2. Summary of findings regarding existing international and national practices**

The findings of the Task Team on Honorary Degrees and Professorships are summarised below.

### **2.1. International practices**

Internationally, universities are legally authorised to award honorary degrees and professorships. The primary purpose is to recognise, and honour, an individual's outstanding achievements. The awards are conferred irrespective of whether the candidate has met the ordinary academic or promotion requirements for the conferral of degrees and professorships.

There are no universally accepted or fixed rules for use of the styles and titles of honorary degrees, and there is little consistency in regulation of honorary titles. Good practices involve diligence in selection processes, the eligibility or otherwise of potential recipients, and clear guidance about how and under what circumstances honorary titles may be used.

### **2.2. Current South African national practices**

Policies around honorary degrees and honorary professorships in South Africa largely conform to international practice, in that institutional rationales are generally openly stated, and they broadly align with the expected graduate attributes of earned doctoral qualifications. However, there are variations, inconsistencies, and a lack of clarity and detail in some institutional practices with regard to honorary degrees and professorships. In some cases, the policies and practices need to be clarified. In others, there is a need for more consultation with stakeholders to ensure broad understanding.

Improved rigour, consistency and transparency would ensure the integrity of processes and awards and would also be informative for the broader community.

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<sup>1</sup> Council on Higher Education (2023). Honorary degrees and Professorships in South Africa (March 2023). CHE, Pretoria.

There is an argument for more inter-institutional discussion, in order to achieve some consistency across the national higher education sector.

### **2.3. Honorary degrees**

Honorary degrees are intended to recognise exceptional contributions of individuals to knowledge, the university or society in general, and academic scholarship or research, especially so if this promotes or brings recognition to the university itself. Most South African universities award honorary degrees, of various types. These include Honorary Doctorates (in specified fields) and Honorary Masters.

It is generally agreed by universities that only institutions with accredited doctoral programmes should offer honorary degrees. While all South African universities surveyed (in the CHE Task Team investigation) were in favour of awarding honorary degrees, there is general agreement that the award of honorary degrees can be problematic. Concerns arise where the award may be made for financial or political gain or mere self-promotion.

There is a lack of assurance of standards, rigour and regulation, a lack of clear information, and in some cases, inconsistent and problematic use of titles. Respondents were largely unaware of any of the (few) existing guidelines or regulations regarding honorary degrees and professorships and expressed a need for the development of principles of good practice. It is also generally considered that honorary degrees should not be awarded to serving politicians or government officials. Most universities also consider current employees and affiliates to be ineligible to receive an honorary degree, and several also exclude current members of Council and anyone currently holding public or political office.

It is generally considered that honorary degrees should be revoked if recipients are guilty of criminal misconduct or express unacceptable social or political views. Universities differ substantially with regard to who may nominate candidates for honorary degrees, from the broadly defined 'university community' to the much narrower 'executive management and Senate' or 'academic staff'. Honorary degree selection procedures generally involve deliberation by screening committees, Senate and Council, with voting usually by secret ballot.

Most institutions appear to give minimal guidance to recipients on the use of honorary degree titles. Universities differ on whether recipients of honorary doctorates may use the title of 'Doctor' in public and outside of the awarding university's specific context. In general, recipients of honorary degrees receive no remuneration, enjoy no special privileges and have no specific duties or obligations.

#### **2.4. Honorary professorships**

Only universities confer honorary professorships. Universities differ substantially regarding to whom they award honorary professorships; these are often academics who are external to the university and who usually (but not always) meet the standards for the rank of ordinary professor.

The main rationale for awarding honorary professorships is to recognise and harness the exceptional expertise of individuals who are usually external to the university. Universities might also award honorary professorships in order to strengthen their research and attract acclaim, and possibly to increase financial income.

There are no limitations on the number of honorary professor appointments a university can make annually, and nor is there any regulation at national level on the award of these positions. Decisions on appointment are made at the level of either middle or senior university structures, or by specified committees.

Honorary professors are usually remunerated in some way (often on an *ad hoc* basis for specific tasks). They are given access to the awarding university's facilities and services (Library, IT support, etc.) and are usually expected to undertake research, to supervise students and/or deliver lectures.

Most universities provide recipients of honorary professorships with information about how the title may be used. Universities are divided about whether honorary professors are permitted to use the title of 'Professor' in public and outside of the awarding university's specific context.

Many universities also confer other professorial titles, including Distinguished or Senior Professor, Extraordinary Professor, Visiting Professor, Professor Emeritus, Professor of Practice and Adjunct Professor.

The processes for appointment are generally similar to the appointment or promotion of ordinary professors, with some variations. In a university, the title 'Professor' is normally conferred on an academic in recognition of their academic standing, as judged by peers, against their academic distinction and scholarly achievements. Academic rank is based on contribution in the intellectual/scholarly endeavour, including teaching and learning, research and/or creative outputs, community engagement, professional involvement, leadership and management. Any individual who holds the title 'Professor' has been promoted to the most senior academic rank based on his/her scholarly achievements.

The titles "Distinguished Professor" and "Professor Extraordinaire" are normally awarded to academics who already hold a professorship in a university. These titles are generally conferred on a professor who has achieved extraordinary recognition of distinction in his/her research or creative outputs.

## **2.5. Problematic practices**

Globally, the most widespread problematic practices with regard to the award and use of honorary degrees and honorary professorships involve unaccredited or unauthorised institutions, organisations or individuals, often located in foreign countries or based entirely online, offering to 'confer' an honorary degree or professorship, usually in return for payment.

In some cases, there are reports, or allegations, that the honours are offered in return for financial payment or in order for the individual to have some particular influence in the awarding institution.

Other problematic situations occur where individuals are ignorant of the nature and authority of the institution offering them an honorary ward, and neglect to investigate the institution, and where individuals fraudulently claim to have been awarded honorary degrees by existing or bogus institutions.

Matters of concern have arisen in South Africa where there are variations, inconsistencies and a lack of clarity in institutional policy and practice, and in national regulations relating to the conditions and the purpose for the award of an honorary

degree or professorship. Such lack of clarity can create public dissatisfaction or distrust and can allow unscrupulous organisations or individuals to take advantage.

There are also concerns where honorary titles are seen to be awarded for commercial advantage, political leverage and/or institutional self-aggrandisement, leading to devaluing of universities and the earned degrees that they confer. Another concern is that the honorary titles are excessively and inappropriately conferred.

In some cases, universities include on their rules the provision that they reserve the right to revoke an honorary degree or professorship. However, the specific procedures and the criteria involved are not in all cases made explicit.

### **3. Recommendations of the Task Team**

The report of the Task Team contained several Recommendations, which included the following (in summary):

1. The CHE, in collaboration with the DHET and USAf, must develop a national Code of Good Practice pertaining to the award and use of honorary degrees and honorary professorships, for use by all higher education institutions as a means of ensuring greater rigour, clarity, convergence between institutions, and good practice. A brochure-type document based on the Code of Good Practice must also be developed as a tool to create public awareness and understanding. The guidelines adopted by USAf should be drawn on to develop the Code of Good Practice.
2. All higher education institutions must use the national Code of Good Practice to revisit and, if necessary, refine or develop their institutional policies, including their rationales, criteria and procedures, for the award and use of honorary degrees and honorary professorships, and make their policies publicly available.
3. The national role-players, DHET, CHE and USAf, must use the national Code of Good Practice and brochure to implement a public awareness and education drive on the award and use of honorary degrees and honorary professorships.
4. In terms of Section 66 of the Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997, as amended), any unauthorised person or institution who offers or pretends to offer or confer an honorary degree or honorary professorship, and any person who pretends to have been awarded an honorary degree or honorary

professorship, may be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which may be imposed for fraud.

Accordingly, it is incumbent on individuals offered honorary degrees or honorary professorships from private, foreign or online institutions to first verify the standing of that institution with the CHE, SAQA and/or the DHET, prior to accepting the award.

Should any member of the public become aware of the existence and activities of such unaccredited or unauthorised institutions, along with any attempts by such institutions to offer or award honorary degrees or honorary professorships, or any attempts by individuals to solicit or purchase honorary degrees or honorary professorships from such institutions, they should report these activities to the CHE or DHET.

5. All higher education institutions should ensure that all recipients of honorary degrees and honorary professorships are fully informed, in writing, about the appropriate use of pre-nominals and post-nominals (including whether, where or how recipients may use titles such as 'Doctor' or 'Professor'), and at the same time clarifying, in writing, the difference between the recipient's honorary degree or professorship and an earned degree or professorship.

#### **4. Purpose of the Good Practice Guide**

The Guide has been developed in response to the recommendation of the Task Team that the CHE should develop a National Code of Good Practice for the award and use of honorary degrees and honorary professorships. The purpose of the Good Practice Guide is to provide clear guidance to all South African higher education and research institutions, as well as national role-players, regarding the award and use of honorary degrees and honorary professorships. The Guide seeks to contribute towards greater rigour, clarity and convergence between institutions.

The Guide can be used by all higher education institutions to ensure rigour, clarity, consistency between institutions, and good practice in awarding honorary degrees and professorships. It seeks to provide clear information on current practices, and to outline the principles and good practices for improvements to enhance the quality of policies, processes and practices in the award of honorary degrees and professorships. The Good Practice Guide also gives guidance regarding the practical

aspects of the award of honorary degrees and professorships, and information that must be provided to recipients of such honours.

The Good Practice Guide will also help to inform and educate the broader community, including those in positions of leadership and influence, whether in higher education, government or the media, as well as amongst the general public

## **5. Scope**

This Good Practice Guide covers the rationale for awarding of honorary degrees and professorships and includes guidance on the processes of nomination and selection of awardees. The Guide applies to both public and private higher education institutions (PHEIs).

The Good Practice Guide presents principles and good practices that higher education institutions (HEIs), quality assurance agencies, professional bodies and national and international role players can use in understanding the significance of honorary degrees and professorships and the use of the associated honorary titles.

## **6. Guidelines**

The following Guidelines, comprising of principles and good practices, are intended to improve clarity regarding the conditions and policies for honorary awards. They should also enhance consistency across institutions and should apply to all higher education institutions and stakeholders. The guidelines are informed by the work and the report of the Task Team established by the CHE, which included representatives from government and the higher education sectors, with skills and experience in university policy and practices related to higher degrees and academic achievement. The Guidelines are aligned with the findings and the recommendations of the CHE Task Team.

### **6.1. The right to award honorary degrees and professorships.**

In South Africa, the right to award honorary degrees is enshrined in legislation. Section 65C of the Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997, as amended) empowers public higher education institutions to confer honorary degrees. Only universities may confer honorary degrees. Section 65C Honorary degrees states:



- (1) Subject to its institutional statute, a public higher education institution may, without examination, confer honorary degrees of master or doctor in any faculty upon any person whom the public higher education institution may deem worthy of such a degree.
- (2) The award of a degree contemplated in subsection (1) does not entitle the holder to practice any profession.

For their part, PHEIs “may confer a professorship or an honorary degree” so long as the institution is registered as a university or university college (RSA 1997: Section 54(8)).

[This last stipulation, added as an amendment to the Act in 2016, is to ‘come into operation on a date to be determined by the Minister by notice in the Gazette’, which date has not yet been determined].

Principle:

**Public universities are empowered by the Higher Education Act to award honorary degrees to individuals who the University deems worthy of recognition and honour. Institutions which are not identified specifically in the Higher Education Act, are not permitted to award honorary degrees.**

Good practices:

1. An institution that is not a university may not award honorary degrees.
2. Universities should provide evidence of their authority to award an honorary degree, to any nominated candidate.
3. Individuals who are offered honorary degrees or honorary professorships, especially from private, foreign or online institutions, should first verify the standing of that institution with the CHE, SAQA and/or the DHET, before accepting the award.
4. Should a member of the public, or of a university community, become aware of unaccredited or unauthorised institutions offering honorary degrees or professorships, they should report them to the DHET or the CHE.
5. Should a member of the public, or of a university community, become aware of unfounded or illegitimate claims by an individual of having been awarded an honorary degree or professorship, they should report them to the DHET or the CHE.

## **6.2. Policy for Award of honorary degrees**

In the award of honorary degrees, it is essential that adequately clear and comprehensive policies are in place; that processes follow policy; and that institutions



offering honorary awards carry out adequate due diligence in nomination, selection and award processes.

An institutional policy for the award of honorary degrees should be in place and it should, at the minimum, address the aspects captured below.

#### 6.2.1. Rationale for award of honorary degrees

##### Principle:

**The honorary degree is awarded *honoris causa* "for the sake of honour." An honorary doctorate is distinctly different from an earned doctorate in that it is an honour rather than a qualification.**

##### Good practices:

1. The institutional policy on award of honorary degrees must clearly outline the rationale for award of an honorary degree. The policy should contain a statement such as (but not limited to):

"The purpose of the honorary degree is to recognise and honour a distinguished individual who has made an exceptional contribution to scholarship, research, leadership, and/or development for the betterment of society".

#### 6.2.2. Academic requirements for award of honorary degrees

##### Principle:

**An honorary degree is awarded to recognise a distinguished contribution to humanity, science or academic scholarship, and does not require the awardee to have completed university-level study. The nominee does not need to have satisfied the academic requirements for the equivalent earned degree.**

##### Good practices:

1. The institutional policy on award of honorary degrees must clearly state that the awardee does not require any particular academic qualifications.

### 6.2.3. Accessibility of the policy for award of honorary degrees

Principle:

**The institutional policy and criteria for the award should be clear and accessible to the university community and be open to the broader community.**

Good practices:

1. The institutional policy on award of honorary degrees must clearly explain criteria used in selection of honorary awardees.
2. The policy should be available in the General Rules, on the university's website, and in its institutional communication media.

### 6.2.4. Nomination procedures

Principle:

**Any *bona fide* member of the University staff (including academics, students, administrative and support staff, alumni, members of Council) should be permitted to submit a nomination for the award of an honorary degree. The nomination will then be subject to the institutional process for consideration of nominations and selection of awardees.**

Good practices:

1. The institution's policies must be clear on who is eligible to nominate candidates for honorary degrees, and the process for doing so.
2. The process for submission and acceptance of nominations, and the route for approvals should be clearly set out in the university policy.
3. The process for submission and acceptance of nominations, and the route for approvals should be made available in the institution's General Rules and in public domain.
4. Nominations must include:
  - a. the name of the nominator(s) and the nominee
  - b. a curriculum vitae (CV) or biographical summary of the proposed candidate
  - c. a clear account of the accomplishments, achievements or contributions that make the nominee worthy of recognition through award of an honorary degree.
  - d. clear motivation for the institution to confer the honorary degree to this individual.

## 6.2.5. Eligibility to receive and retain an honorary degree

Principle:

**Honorary degrees are awarded to distinguished individuals who merit recognition and honour for their outstanding achievement or exceptional contribution to scholarship, research, leadership and society broadly.**

**Candidates must fulfil the criteria set out in the university policy, which should include the following:**

- **Alignment with the mission, values and purpose of the institution**
- **High ethical standards**
- **Significant achievements and contributions**

Good practices:

1. Honorary degrees are not awarded to current members of the university staff or student body, or members of the Council, governing bodies, or trustees.
2. Honorary degrees may be awarded to retired members of the University, to alumni and members of Convocation.
3. Honorary degrees are not normally awarded to serving politicians or government officials, or anyone currently holding public or political office.
4. Exemptions from this practice (Item 3) might be allowed if an institution has clear justification and the institutional policy allows for this under clearly expressed conditions.
5. An honorary degree must not be awarded in exchange for financial contribution or a position of influence in the university, or in anticipation of favourable positioning of the university.
6. An honorary degree should be revoked if recipients are guilty of criminal misconduct or unethical behaviour, or unacceptable (according to the principles of awarding institution) social or political views.

## 6.2.6. Selection processes

Principle:

**The selection process for award of honorary degrees involves deliberation by screening committees, the Senate and the Council, through separate confidential voting processes.**

Good practices:

1. The approval process should include:

- a. Pre-screening for eligibility (for example, by the Registrar's office)
- b. Judicious and diligent checking of the background and track record or the nominated individual, as well as their political, social and ethical conduct, to ensure that they conform to the criteria listed above, and those listed in the university's policy.
- c. Consideration of, and recommendation by the relevant institutional selection committee (e.g., Higher Degrees Committee or Honorary Degrees Committee).
- d. Consideration of the nomination should be conducted through multiple steps, at a number of levels, and by a number of sectors in the institution, to allow for adequately broad discussion of suitability of the award.
- e. Voting (separately) by the Senate and the Council on the proposals recommended by the relevant Committee.
- f. Confidential voting should be used, and a pre-defined majority must be achieved.

#### 6.2.7. Award ceremony

##### Principle:

**The Vice-Chancellor sends the invitation to accept an honorary degree to the selected candidates, stating clearly the motivation for the award and any conditions of the award, and explaining the practical arrangements for attendance at the award ceremony. The award is normally made at a graduation ceremony.**

**Once the invitation has been accepted, a public announcement may be made. The awardee then attends the ceremony if at all possible and makes an appropriate presentation.**

##### Good practices:

1. Each honorary degree recipient receives details of the ceremony, with the order of proceedings, and information on the presentation they are required to make (which may involve a performance and/or a speech).
2. Only under extraordinary circumstances will an honorary degree be awarded in absentia. The Chairperson of the Honorary Degrees Committee may motivate, in exceptional circumstances, for the conferral of an honorary degree in absentia.

3. An honorary degree is not normally awarded posthumously, unless a candidate passes away after accepting the University's invitation to receive an honorary degree, but before the graduation ceremony; a person designated by the family of the deceased may then receive the award on behalf of the deceased at the graduation ceremony.

#### 6.2.8. Information for recipients and use of the title "Doctor"

##### Principle:

**The recipient of an honorary doctorate must be informed of the following:**

**The honorary award does not accord the awardee, who does not already possess an earned doctoral degree, the right to use the title of "Dr" in the broader community.**

**The title "Doctor" may be used within the university, in formal communications and in engagements with the university.**

##### Good practices:

1. The degree certificate for an honorary degree should make explicit the rights and privileges that the degree gives the recipient.
2. The degree certificate should also make explicit the obligations and duties that might be expected of the recipient.
3. All formal communication with an honorary doctorate awardee will be addressed by the university using the honorary title 'Dr' (unless s/he has a higher academic title which will be used).
4. An honorary doctoral degree recipient should not insist nor expect to be referred to with the title 'Dr' in a setting outside of the University's events or activities.
5. It is inappropriate for an honorary doctorate degree recipient to place the title 'Dr' in front of their name in written correspondence/documents (except in correspondence with the awarding institution).
6. A recipient of an honorary degree may list their honorary degree in their curricula vitae, resumes or biographies. In a CV or resume, the honorary degree should be listed under 'Awards and Honours', and not under 'Education' or 'Academic qualifications'.

### 6.3. Honorary Professorships and Use of the title “Professor”

An 'honorary professorship' is distinctly different from an earned professorship in that it is conferred as an honour and not a result of one's all-around scholarly contribution to knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination.

#### 6.3.1. Conferring of honorary professorship on staff member

##### Principle:

**Universities may confer the title 'Professor' on a staff member for a special reason; for example, when an individual who assumes a senior leadership or management position, (such as Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor) in a university.** In this case, the title 'Professor' is not conferred on the grounds of academic achievements or distinction.

##### Good Practices:

1. In this situation, the individual cannot legitimately use the title 'Professor' once they have vacated the senior executive or management position.

#### 6.3.2. Conferring of honorary professorship on non-staff member

##### Principle:

**Universities may confer the title 'Professor' on individuals who are not necessarily in the full-time employment of the institution but have an association with it through non-tenured or temporary contract teaching of one or more courses or supervision of postgraduate students.**

##### Good Practices

1. The appointment letter for an honorary professorship should make explicit the rights and privileges that the appointment gives the recipient.
2. The appointment letter should also make explicit the obligations and duties that might be expected of the recipient.
3. The services rendered by such people may be remunerable or non-remunerable. This must be made clear at the time of appointment.
4. Prefixes such as 'Adjunct', 'Honorary', or 'Visiting' are placed before the title 'Professor' in special cases such as in medical schools where doctors do some limited and part-time teaching in their medical schools.

### 6.3.3. Use of honorary professor titles

#### Principle:

**An 'honorary professorship' does not accord the awardee who does not already possess an earned professorship the right to use the title of "Prof or Professor" in the broader community.**

#### Good Practices

1. The use of the title 'Prof or Professor' is used in engagements with the university that awarded the honorary professorship.
2. Formal communication with an awardee will be addressed by the awarding university using the honorary title 'Prof or Professor'.
3. An honorary professor recipient should not insist on nor expect to be referred to with the title 'Prof or Professor' in a setting outside of the awarding University's events or activities.
4. It is inappropriate for an honorary professor recipient to place the title 'Prof' in front of their name in written correspondence/documents.
5. A recipient of an honorary professorship may list it in their curricula vitae, resumes or biographies. In a CV or resume, the honorary degree should be listed under 'Awards and Honours'.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities of role players in the implementation of the Good Practice Guide**

- 7.1.** The Good Practice Guide expresses fundamental principles and practices which agencies and institutions within the higher education sector should consider with respect to the awarding of honorary degrees and professorships.
- 7.2.** All role players are responsible for giving effect to the Principles and Good Practices set out in the Good Practice Guide and align their policies and processes accordingly.
- 7.3.** The Good Practice Guide is not necessarily fully comprehensive, and universities and agencies may need to develop additional principles and processes to align with their values and policies.
- 7.4.** All HEIs should regularly review their actions in implementing the Good Practice Guide and may provide feedback to the CHE regarding concerns and successes.

- 7.5.** The CHE will offer appropriate support to institutions regarding the implementation of the Guide.

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