UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Procedure for the Revocation of Honorary Degrees

1. Powers under Charter, Statute and Ordinances

1.1 The Charter grants the University the power to award and revoke honorary degrees.

1.2 Ordinance 6.5.3.2 gives Senate the power, 'on what it shall deem to be good cause to deprive persons of any Degrees or other distinctions conferred on them, and to revoke any Diplomas or Certificate granted to them by the University'.

1.3 The award of honorary degrees is a joint responsibility of Senate and Council. Ordinance 27.3 states, 'Proposals made by the Joint Committee shall be considered by both the Council and the Senate, and an honorary degree shall not be conferred unless the proposal shall have been approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of each body present and voting'.

1.4 Ordinance 6.5.3.3 states that both Senate and Council have the power ‘to approve or disapprove the names’ of persons proposed for honorary degrees; it is possible to read the Ordinances as only requiring a decision of Senate to revoke an award but this may be open to challenge. The following wording will be proposed for addition to Ordinance 6.5.3.2: 'provided that no person shall be deprived of any Honorary Degree except with the approval of Council.'

2. Procedure

2.1 Representations for the revocation of an award should be made to the Secretary to Council. The Secretary to Council will refer the representations to the Chair of the Joint Committee of Senate and Council for Honorary Degrees and the Chair of Council to determine whether there is a prima facie case for review.

2.2 If it is determined that there is a prima facie case for review the Secretary to Council will, on behalf of the institution, advise the award holder and invite them to make representations concerning their award.

2.3 The Honorary Degrees Committee will consider the evidence submitted for the revocation of the award and any representations from the graduate and determine one of the following:

2.3.1 that the matter should not be taken forward;
2.3.2 that the evidence is such that it recommends to Senate and Council that the award be revoked;
2.3.3 that a Sub-committee of 3 members should consider the matter and interview such persons as it considers appropriate and call for more evidence if it considers appropriate, and return to the Honorary Degrees Committee with a recommendation.

Note: The meeting of the Honorary Degrees Committee may be by correspondence.

2.4 A recommendation to revoke an honorary degree will be considered by Senate and Council and requires the approval of both.

Note: The meetings of Senate and Council may be by correspondence.

3. Criteria for the Revocation of an Award

3.1 An honorary degree may be revoked where the rationale for the decision to make the award is no longer valid.
3.2 An honorary degree may be revoked where it is agreed that the values and behaviour of the award holder represent a fundamental contradiction of the values of the University. It may be possible for an award to stand if the rationale for the decision remains and the subsequent behaviour of the award holder is not considered sufficiently serious or relevant to invalidate the original decision to make the award.

3.3 A review of an honorary degree will normally be undertaken if an honorary graduate is convicted of a serious criminal offence or is struck off by a professional body.

3.4 The University will not normally consider the revocation of awards to persons who are deceased but reserves the right to do so where there is new evidence that, if available at the time, would have meant that the rationale for the award was not valid; or it becomes known that the behaviour of the recipient represented a fundamental contradiction of the University’s values at the time of the award.

4. **Appeals**

Appeals may take the form of a Grievance to Council and should be submitted to the Secretary to Council within three months of being notified of the decision. Council will not normally intervene to change decisions by University Officers or formal bodies that have been properly exercised or determined unless procedural fault, bias, irregularity or other inadequacy is found.

KJL/hap
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