

Award of SOAS Honorary Degrees and Fellowships			
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<p><i>Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.</i></p>			

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. SOAS bestows a number of honorary degrees on distinguished individuals who merit special recognition for exceptional scholarly or intellectual achievement in a field or activity consonant with the mission and strategy of the University. Admission to the SOAS Honorary Fellowship is granted in recognition of exceptional service rendered or a significant or outstanding contribution, including philanthropic support, made to the University.

## 2. Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee

- 2.1. The Board of Trustees will be advised by an Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee, the membership and Terms of Reference for this Committee is outlined in Standing Order Annex XIII. Recommendations for potential awardees will then be submitted to the Governance and Nominations Committee prior to final consideration and decision by the Board of Trustees.
- 2.2. The Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee shall receive annually an updated summary of Honorary Degrees and Honorary Fellowships conferred by SOAS.

## 3. Criteria for Award of SOAS Honorary Degrees and Fellowships

- 3.1. The Board of Trustees may approve the award of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships of SOAS, on the recommendation of the Honorary Degree and Fellowship Committee and the Governance and Nominations Committee.
- 3.2. Recipients of Honorary Degrees are expected to be persons of conspicuous merit, outstanding in their field, with national or international recognition, or who has given exceptional service to the School.

- 3.3. Awards of Honorary Fellowships should be made to a person of significant achievement and distinction, who has made an outstanding contribution to the School's reputation, mission or objects over a period of time.
- 3.4. Nominations will not normally be acceptable for any individual who meets any of the following criteria:
- A self - nomination, or a nomination received from a relative
  - A current member of SOAS staff. An Honorary Fellowship may normally only be offered to former SOAS employees once a minimum of two years has elapsed since their leaving their position at SOAS.
  - A current member of the Board of Trustees
  - A serving politician or Head of State (Executive) / Country Leader. Noting there are some individuals who hold the title as a ceremonial Head of State, where nominations will not be excluded
  - An individual who has previously been nominated for an award which has already been declined by the Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee, the Governance and Nominations Committee or Board of Trustees.
- 3.5. Nominations for and award of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships may be made posthumously.
- 3.6. The total number of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships conferred each year will align to the number of graduation ceremonies scheduled.
- 3.7. An honorary degree or honorary fellowship will not, except for in exceptional circumstances, be conferred in absentia.

### 3.8. Criteria for Honorary Degrees

- 3.8.1. Honorary Degrees are awarded principally in recognition of exceptional scholarly or intellectual achievement, and important contributions in academic fields or in public life.
- 3.8.2. The honorary degrees that may be awarded are as follows:
- a) Doctor of Arts
  - b) Doctor of Social Sciences
  - c) Doctor of Humanities
  - d) Doctor of Law
  - e) Doctor of Science

An individual's contribution to a specific discipline can also be noted on the award.

*For example: Doctor of Humanities for outstanding contribution to film and media.*

### 3.9. Criteria for Honorary Fellowships

- 3.9.1. The Board of Trustees may elect as an Honorary Fellow any person who has rendered exceptional service or made a significant or outstanding contribution, including philanthropic support, to SOAS.

## 4. Nominations Procedure

- 4.1. Nominations can be submitted throughout the year, however in advance of a scheduled Honorary Degree and Fellowship Committee, a notice inviting nominations for award of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships in the ensuing calendar year shall be issued.
- 4.2. Nominations may be made by current members of staff and current members of Board of Trustees. An individual may make a maximum of two nominations in one academic year. Nominations may be received by current students or alumni, however these should be made via the student union or Advancement Team as appropriate.
- 4.3. Nominations for Honorary Degrees and Fellowships shall be submitted through the online nomination form. Nominations must be received by the Governance Directorate no later than the deadline stipulated in the call for nominations.
- 4.4. Up to two nominations for Honorary Degrees and two nominations for Honorary Fellowships in any academic year may be made at any time by the Vice-Chancellor directly to the Board of Trustees, following such prior consultation as they may deem appropriate. Direct nominations by the Vice-Chancellor may be brought to any meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- 4.5. Nominators will be advised of the outcome of their nomination as decisions are made at either the Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee, the Governance and Nominations Committee or Board of Trustees.

## 5. Confirmation of Awards to be Conferred at Graduation

- 5.1. The Executive Board will consider and agree the list of proposed honorands for the forthcoming graduation ceremony from the list approved by the Board of Trustees, and will take into account a number of factors, including (but not limited to):
  - The overall balance of the academic subjects, and the areas of public services
  - A representation of the geographies which SOAS is focussed on
  - The relative eminence of each nominee in their own particular field
  - The reach of the nominee's impact/contribution to society
  - The diversity of the nominees
  - The timing of awards in particular subject areas, particularly where there is alignment with other awards that the Individual may be recognised for
  - The extent the nominees' achievements are consonant with the mission and values of the University

## 6. Certificates

- 6.1. The certificate for an honorary degree or fellowship conferred should contain the following:
  - a) the University logo;

- b) the name of the University;
- c) the name of the recipient and the degree;
- d) For Honorary Degrees the words “the honorary degree of ...” before the name of the degree OR the words “honoris causa” after the name of the degree;
- e) For Honorary Fellowships the words “an honorary fellowship of SOAS University of London was conferred upon, before the name of the recipient;
- f) the date of conferment;
- g) the signatures of the Vice-Chancellor and the President, or the Chairman of the Board
- h) the University Seal.

## **7. Awards Conferred**

- 7.1. A dedicated page on the SOAS website will maintain a record of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships awarded

## **8. Revocation of an Honorary Degree or Fellowship**

- 8.1. The revocation of an honorary degree or fellowship can be decided by the Board of Trustees.