



# UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

COMMISSION CIRCULAR NO.908

No. 20, Ward Place,  
Colombo 07.

11<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

Vice- Chancellors of Universities,  
Rectors of Campuses,  
Directors of Institutes.

## GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED BY UNIVERSITIES IN CONFERRING HONORARY DEGREES TO DISTINGUISHED PERSONS

The Commission at its 750<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 07.02.2008 decided to issue the following guidelines to be considered by Universities in conferring Honorary Degrees to distinguished persons.

The conferring of Honorary Degrees is the autonomous responsibility of each University. Even so, the UGC is of the opinion that Faculties, Senates and Councils should be guided by a uniform set of criteria on every occasion that Honorary Degrees are granted. The aim is to promote the establishment of a tradition that will win public regard, prestige and esteem for recipients of Honorary Degrees. The guidelines are intended to achieve this aim.

1. Three categories of persons may be considered for honorary degrees.

### Category A

A Person who is widely recognized as a person of eminence, an outstanding personality in a field of knowledge or other creative or intellectual activity at a national, sectoral or regional level.

By *sectoral* is meant a distinct field of knowledge or creative or intellectual activity, including subject areas which are rare or abstruse: by *regional* is meant persons of eminence in a regional or provincial rather than a countrywide national context (thus, "sectorally" a theoretical physicist whose work is only known to practitioners in his or her field; or "regionally" a doctor who has made an enormous, longstanding and innovatory contribution to medical health in a rural area; or a locally-based researcher to the study of the history and culture of a distant and little-accessed province or district otherwise not well-researched by "national" specialists).

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Persons in this category must be of such a degree of renown that all but their detractors must readily acknowledge that they are deserving of high academic and intellectual recognition.

### **Category B**

A person who has made outstanding, innovative and landmark contributions to knowledge, or other creative or intellectual activity in a sustained way (or of such vital and critical importance to the subject area in question) and who is recognized as such by most of his or her contemporaries, judged fundamentally by publications or similar contributions.

Persons in this category are essentially to be judged by the intellectual quality and quantity of their published or performed work, subject to the proviso that quality must take precedence over quantity. The evaluation of quality, needless to say, varies from field to field and from time to time.

### **Category C**

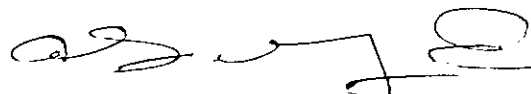
A person who has a long and distinguished contribution to the institution, development and maintenance of a field of knowledge, or other creative or intellectual activity, in a supportive or ancillary capacity but whose contribution has also been marked by a visible level of intellectual or creative capacity.

Persons in this category are essentially to be judged by the critical importance of their contribution to one or more fields of knowledge or other creative or intellectual activity, the level and quality of such contributions.

2. An Honorary Degree should be conferred by a University only on the recommendation of its Senate and the approval of its Council. This is a mandatory pre-requisite. Usually proposals for Honorary Degrees should be considered in the first instance by an Honorary Degrees Committee comprising nominees of the Senate and the Council. A consensus should be reached at informal discussions before formal discussions take place at Faculty, Senate and Council level in order to avoid possible embarrassment to the prospective recipient and the University in the event that the proposal is not favourably entertained at.

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3. The same categories and principles mentioned above should be applicable to non-Sri Lankans, and their credentials should be carefully examined, as institutions here may not always be cognizant with the rules and regulations and standards that are applied in the award of degrees, use of title, nature of appointments, affiliations etc. in other countries.



( Prof. Gamini Samaranayake )  
Chairman

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