

Honorary Degrees

Functional Lead: VPAA

Division: AA

Responsible Office: FDOC

1. Purpose. The policy defines the processes for the granting of honorary degrees to noteworthy recipients.

2. Background. Honorary degrees, or honoris causa (Latin: “For the sake of honor”) are commonly awarded by educational institutions to bestow honor on recipients who do not otherwise meet the normal academic requirements for the degree.

3. Policy

a. Marine Corps University (MCU) has established the honorary degree of Doctor of Warfare Studies (D.WfS.).

b. Prerequisites. There is no universally defined standard of awarding honorary degrees; however, institutions typically award them based on some combination of three reasons: to recognize extraordinary achievement in a field of endeavor, to honor service to the institution and/or society at large, and to promote emulation of the honoree by the student body. Nominations for an honorary degree should clearly articulate how the proposed recipient merits such recognition.

c. Recipients may list the title of Doctor of Warfare Studies (honoris causa), and associated affiliation with MCU, on any publication or professional document.

4. Procedures

a. Nomination Process

(1) Nominations from Marine Corps University faculty, staff, or students will be addressed to the President, Marine Corps University, in standard naval letter format, via the school/section director, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), and forwarded electronically to VPAA.

(2) Nominations must describe in detail the achievements, service, and character traits of the nominee, and how they relate to the University mission and/or professional leadership development, which warrant consideration for the degree. Directors will endorse recommendations with substantive comments.

(3) Nominations must be received by the office of VPAA by 1 February to be considered for presentation at the subsequent MCU graduation exercise. Nominations received after 1 February will be tabled for consideration during the following academic year.

(4) VPAA will submit the nomination to the Deans of the educational programs and to the Board of Visitors (BOV) for review, comment, and recommendation.

(5) VPAA will consolidate recommendations from the Deans and the BOV, and forward them to the President, MCU.

(6) The President, MCU, will consider the nomination and recommendations of the Deans and BOV, and then render a decision.

b. Recognition. Individuals nominated will NOT be informed of the nomination under any circumstances prior to the determination of the President, MCU to approve the awarding of an honorary degree. Upon approval, VPAA will obtain an academic hood for presentation, and the MCU Registrar will prepare an honorary degree diploma.

c. Hood. The honorary degree hood will be tri-colored; the velvet edge hood color will be white to represent the art of warfare (and to distinguish it from a Ph.D.) and the satin field and chevron (the hood lining colors) will be scarlet and gold to represent the Marine Corps and military science.

d. Diploma. The honorary degree diploma will reflect that the honor is bestowed “in recognition of distinguished (describe type, e.g., military or academic) service to the Marine Corps and the United States of America” and contain the phrase “honoris causa.” It will be signed by the President, MCU and VPAA.

e. The honorary degree will be bestowed on the recipient at the next MCU graduation ceremony following approval, unless the honoree is unavailable. In such a case, VPAA will coordinate an appropriate alternative ceremony, which may include a subsequent graduation ceremony.

Related Forms and Policies:

Emeritus Status

Promulgated: 21 Sep 2020

Last Reviewed: 16 Jun 2021

Last Update to Procedures: 21 Sep 2020