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**GHANA TERTIARY
EDUCATION COMMISSION**

Driving a World Class Tertiary Education System for National Development

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December 8, 2025

To: See Distribution Below

Dear Sir/Madam,

**POLICY ON CONFERMENT OF HONORARY DEGREES BY TERTIARY
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA**

The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) hereby notifies all Heads of tertiary education institutions in Ghana and the general public of its policy on the conferment of honorary degrees by tertiary education institutions in the country.

We count on your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. AHMED JINAPOR ABDULAI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL



DISTRIBUTION LIST:

HEADS, TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

CC: CHAIRMAN, VCG
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Office Location:

GA-452-0871

East Legon - Trinity - IPS Road (Legos Avenue); Adjacent Chartered Institute of Bankers Ghana, Accra - Ghana

POLICY ON CONFERMENT OF HONORARY DEGREE BY TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

1.0 Preamble

The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), mandated under the Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023), is responsible for regulating, supervising, and ensuring the maintenance of standards in tertiary education in Ghana.

The conferment of honorary degrees is an important academic and national recognition. However, in recent years, the proliferation of unregulated awards, misuse of honorary titles, and collaboration between accredited institutions and unaccredited bodies have raised concerns about academic integrity, public trust, and Ghana's international reputation.

This Policy provides a clear national framework to guide universities and tertiary institutions on the proper, ethical, and legally compliant conferment of honorary degrees in Ghana.

2.0 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to:


- a) Establish a minimum national standard for the conferment of honorary degrees;
- b) Prevent abuse, commercialisation, and politicisation of honorary awards;
- c) Protect the integrity of Ghana's higher education system;
- d) Ensure compliance with GTEC directives and the laws of Ghana;
- e) Provide sanctions for institutions and persons who violate established norms regarding the conferment and use of honorary degrees.

3.0 Scope and Application

This Policy applies to:

- a) All chartered private universities and public universities established by an Act of Parliament with legal authority to confer degrees in Ghana;
- b) All honorary degrees conferred within or outside Ghana by Ghanaian institutions;
- c) Any collaboration with external bodies related to honorary awards;
- d) All recipients, nominators, and institutional actors involved in honorary degree processes.

Tertiary institutions under mentorship, unaccredited institutions, or bodies shall not confer honorary degrees in Ghana. Awards from these categories of institutions or bodies shall not be recognised.



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To qualify to award honorary degrees, Chartered institutions must have at least five (5) accredited terminal academic programmes running for at least three (3) years. Professional doctorates do not count as terminal degree.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory Authority

This Policy is issued pursuant to:

- a) The Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020 (Act 1023);
- b) Relevant GTEC directives and regulatory instruments;
- c) Institutional statutes and charters approved by GTEC and the Ministry.

GTEC retains full legal authority to regulate, direct, investigate, and sanction any institution concerning the award of honorary degrees.


5.0 Definitions

- a) **Honorary Degree:** an award given by a university to a person as a recognition of significant achievement or accomplishment.
- b) **Honorand:** A person who receives an honorary degree.
- c) **Nominee:** A person proposed for an honorary degree.
- d) **Tertiary Education Institution (TEI):** Any public university established by an Act of Parliament, accredited/chartered private university, or tertiary institution recognised by GTEC.
- e) **Unaccredited Body:** Any entity not recognised by GTEC or relevant international higher education regulators.

6.0 Principles Governing Honorary Awards

All honorary degrees conferred by TEIs in Ghana must comply with the following national principles:

- a) **Integrity** - Awards shall reflect genuine merit and uphold academic dignity.
- b) **Non-commercialisation** - No honorary degree shall be granted in exchange for money, donations, or material influence.
- c) **Transparency** - Processes must be documented and subject to audit by GTEC.
- d) **Public Interest** - Awards must align with Ghana's development priorities and enhance national prestige.
- e) **Moderation** - Institutions shall confer honorary degrees sparingly to maintain their value.



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7.0 Eligibility Criteria for Nominees

Nominees for honorary degrees must have demonstrated exceptional distinction in one or more of the following:

- a) National or international service;
- b) Academics, science, innovation, or technology;
- c) Leadership in public life;
- d) Humanitarian work, philanthropy, culture, arts, or social development;
- e) Outstanding contribution to the institution or Ghana.

Routine service, financial donation alone, or political affiliation shall not constitute grounds for an honorary award.

8.0 Prohibitions and Restrictions


The following individuals shall not normally be considered:

- a) Persons with recent or serious criminal convictions involving dishonesty or moral turpitude;
- b) Current staff, students, or Governing Council Members of the awarding institution;
- c) Individuals whose behaviour or reputation may bring the institution or Ghana into disrepute;
- d) Individuals nominated solely for donor-related motivations.

9.0 Nomination and Vetting Requirements

Each institution shall develop a written internal procedure approved by the Governing Council and guided by the GTEC policy, which must include:

- a) A formal nomination form;
- b) A fully documented citation and justification;
- c) At least two independent references;
- d) Comprehensive due diligence checks covering:
 - Criminal records (where applicable);
 - Public integrity and ethical conduct;
 - Verification of achievements;
 - Potential conflicts of interest;
 - Institutions must maintain all documentation for audit purposes.



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10.0 Institutional Honorary Degrees Committee

Every TEI authorised to award degrees shall establish an Honorary Degrees Committee, with:

- a) Senior academics;
- b) At least one external member of high standing;
- c) A governance/legal representative;
- d) Registrar or Secretary to Council as secretary.

The Committee shall review nominations and recommend approved names to the Academic Board and Council.

11.0 Approval Process

The conferment of an honorary degree shall require:

- a) Recommendation by the Institutional Honorary Degrees Committee;
- b) Notification of the public for input or query at least 30 days;
- c) Approval by the Academic Board;
- d) Final approval by the University Council.

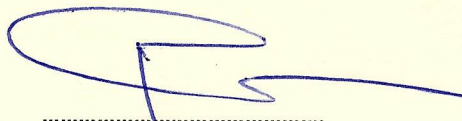
GTEC may query, withhold, or cancel an intended award where necessary to protect national interest based on justifiable proven cause.

12.0 Frequency and Number of Awards

- a) Institutions shall confer honorary degrees sparingly and only when justified.
- b) An institution that is seen to have the penchant of giving honorary degrees may be queried.
- c) GTEC may direct institutions to reduce, defer, or cancel awards where excessive or inappropriate.

13.0 Conferral and Documentation

- a) All honorary awards must be conferred at approved institutional ceremonies.
- b) Honorary Doctorate awards cannot be discipline specific, eg. Honorary Doctor of Agricultural Entrepreneurship or Accounting. It should be Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa
- c) Certificates must clearly state "Honorary Degree - Honoris Causa".
- d) Each institution must keep a permanent register containing:
 - Name of honorand;
 - Award type;



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- Citation summary;
- Date and approval references.

14.0 Use and Misuse of Honorary Titles

To protect academic integrity:

- a) Honorary degrees do not entitle recipients to use the title “Dr.”.
- b) Recipients may state, in full, that they were awarded an honorary degree, e.g., “Honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt., Honoris Causa) - Awarded by [Institution], 2025” under achievement/accomplishment not educational background.
- c) Any misuse or misrepresentation - especially the use of “Dr.” as an earned academic title - shall attract sanctions including withdrawal or revocation.
- d) Institutions shall provide written guidance to honorands on appropriate usage.

15.0 Collaboration with External Bodies

No TEI in Ghana shall:

- a) Collaborate with unaccredited foreign or local bodies in conferring honorary degrees;
- b) Host, endorse, or publicise honorary degrees from fraudulent or unrecognised entities;
- c) Allow its premises or platforms to be used for the conferment of illegitimate honorary awards.

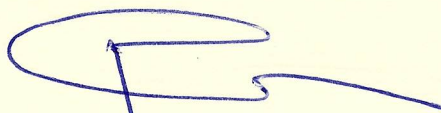
Violations shall attract institutional sanctions, including revocation of the awards.

16.0 Sanctions for Non-Compliance

GTEC may impose any of the following sanctions on institutions or individuals that violate this Policy:

- a) Written warning or directive to reverse the action;
- b) Suspension of the institution’s right to confer honorary degrees for a specified period;
- c) Withdrawal or nullification of improperly awarded honorary degrees;
- d) Administrative penalties as provided under Act 1023;
- e) Publication of the violation for public notice;
- f) Referral to law enforcement agencies where criminality is involved.

Repeated violations shall be treated as misconduct affecting recognition or charter status.



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17.0 Revocation of Honorary Degrees

Institutions must revoke an honorary degree if:

- a) It was awarded based on fraudulent information;
- b) The recipient misuses the title in a manner that deceives the public.

18.0 Review of Policy

GTEC shall review this Policy every five (5) years, or earlier if required by legal, regulatory, or strategic developments.

19.0 Effective Date

This Policy becomes effective immediately upon issuance by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission.




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