

Honorary Degrees 2024

Following meetings of the Oversight Group for Honorary Degrees (OGHD), the candidates below were recommended for honorary degrees and approved by Údarás na hOllscoile:

Autumn (August Conferring Ceremonies)

- **Mary Bennett** (Doctor of Economic Science (DEconSc))
Distinguished and well-known Galway business woman, devoted to the development of Galway City and the local region.
- **John Davoren** (Doctor of Science (DSc))
Farmer, businessman and innovator from Caherconnell County Clare. Co-Director of Caherconnell Archaeology Field School and owner of Caherconnell Fort Visitors Centre.
- **Gerry Kilcommins** (Doctor of Engineering (DEng))
Former Vice-President of Global Operations, Medtronic. Former President of the American Chamber of Commerce, Ireland.
- **Danny McCoy** (Doctor of Economic Science (DEconSc))
Chief Executive Officer of Ibec, member of the Royal Irish academy and an Honorary Fellow of the Irish Academy of Engineering.
- **Professor Jerome Sheahan** (Doctor of Science (DSc))
Retired Statistician/mathematician (University of Galway). Winner of President's Awards and a National Teaching Hero award.

Winter (November Conferring Ceremonies)

- **Rachael Blackmore** (Doctor of Laws (LLD))
MBE, National Hunt Jockey. First female jockey to win the Grand National, first woman to be leading jockey at the Cheltenham Festival with six victories and first female jockey to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup.
- **Tony Connelly** (Doctor of Literature (DLitt))
Journalist and Author, Europe Editor for RTÉ News. Has reported from conflicts in Rwanda, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza. Recipient of a number of journalism awards.
- **Marina Fiddler and Tara Nic Dhiarmada** (Doctor of Laws (LLD))
Founders of MADRA – Mutts Anonymous Dog Rescue & Adoption. Dedicated to the welfare of dogs and animals.
- **Keith Finnegan** (Doctor of Literature (DLitt))
The voice of Galway Bay FM. Broadcaster and journalist. Awarded Freedom of Galway City in May 2024.
- **Martin Griffiths** (Doctor of Laws (LLD))
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Has consistently called for a ceasefire and humanitarian access in Gaza.
- **Dolores Keane** (Doctor of Music (DMus))
Internationally-renowned, traditional Irish folk singer - Doctor of Music
- **Dr Éanna Ní Lamhna** (Doctor of Science (DSc))
Botanist and Entomologist, presenter and broadcaster. A distinctive voice on the 'Mooney Goes Wild' radio show. Author of several books on wildlife.
- **Owen Reidy** (Doctor of Laws (LLD))
General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). Experienced Union official for 25 years, leading out on several significant disputes during that period.
- **Professor Paul Yock and Dr Joshua Makower** (Doctor of Science (DSc))
Founders of Stanford Biodesign and supporters of establishment of BioInnovate Ireland. Have positively impacted millions of patients' lives through medical innovations.

Membership, Terms of Reference of Oversight Group for Honorary Degrees (OGHD) and Criteria for the award of Honorary Degrees:

1. The Standing and Strategic Planning Committee will establish a group (9 members) for Honorary Degrees (OGHD), which shall be charged with working with the President to agree a set of proposed candidates for honorary degrees. The Group will be chaired by the President, and will have eight further members:
 - 2 *ex officio*:
 - President (Chair)
 - Registrar and Deputy-President
 - 2 external members from Údarás na hOllscoile
 - 2 members from Academic Council, including the SU President or nominee
 - 1 member co-opted by the President from either of the constituencies: Údarás na hOllscoile **or** Academic Council
2. The Group's period of office will be coterminous with Údarás na hOllscoile.
3. In the first instance, the President will, at least once a year, invite suggestions, **on a strictly confidential basis**, from members of Governing Authority, from all members of staff, from students, retired staff and alumni, as to potential candidates for honorary degrees.
4. The President's proposals will be considered by the OGHD, and the Group will recommend a list of candidates to Údarás, on a **strictly confidential basis**.
5. The list will be placed before Údarás na hOllscoile for approval. A two-thirds majority of those present at the Údarás meeting will be required for confirmation of the award to each candidate.
6. In addition to candidates emerging from this process, the President may, from time to time, as appropriate, directly propose appropriate candidates for approval by Údarás.
7. It will be the exclusive responsibility of the President's Office to communicate, as appropriate, with those nominated for honorary degrees; such communication will normally take place only after the approval of the nomination by Údarás.

The 2024 membership of the Oversight Group for Honorary Degrees is:

- President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh (*ex officio*)
- Deputy President & Registrar, Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh (*ex officio*)
- Mr Mike Jennings (*Udarás na hOllscoile external member*)
- Dr John O'Donnell (*Udarás na hOllscoile external member*)
- Professor Anne Byrne
- Mary Dempsey (*Academic Council member*)
- SU Vice President Raimsey O'Boyle 2023/24 (*Academic Council member/SU President nominee*):

Criteria governing the award of Honorary Degrees by University of Galway

- (i) The award of an honorary degree by University of Galway should be regarded as an honour of the highest level. Honorary degrees are awarded to persons meriting recognition at this level, and who, in turn, bring honour to University of Galway.
- (ii) The award should be for personal distinction in the candidate's own right or in their representative capacity.

- (iii) In the conferring of an honorary degree, the primary purpose is to honour distinction in scholarship and creativity. Nominations will be particularly welcomed of individuals with a connection to University of Galway's hinterland, including our diaspora who have connections with and have contributed to our broader region.
- (iv) In addition to honouring scholarship and creativity, honorary degrees may be awarded to individuals who, whether in their personal or representative capacities, through their energies and service, have contributed significantly to public and cultural life, the betterment of society, and the interests of humanity, in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere, and who share University of Galway's values of respect, openness, sustainability and excellence. In general, honorary degrees for individuals who have distinguished themselves in political and public life will be awarded to them only after they have retired from office.
- (v) Recognising University of Galway's responsibility to our native Irish language, honorary degrees may be awarded to individuals who have transformed and promoted Gaeilge agus cultúr through their endeavours nationally and internationally.
- (vi) Honorary degrees may not be conferred *in absentia*.
- (vii) Honorary degrees will be conferred on individuals as part of the regular University of Galway conferring ceremonies. The list of honorary graduands will embrace gender and diversity balance and should be sufficiently varied in terms of the areas and themes in which the candidates have distinguished themselves and the degrees to be conferred.
- (viii) Criteria guiding principles and procedures for the award of honorary degrees by the NUI Senate and titles of degrees (2018).