



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION



CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER (CMO)

No. 09
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: REVISED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES ON THE CONFERMENT OF HONORARY DOCTORATE DEGREES BY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994," and by virtue of Resolution No. 013-2021 of the Commission *en banc* dated January 19, 2021, the following Revised Policies and Guidelines are hereby adopted by the Commission for information, guidance and compliance by all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines on the conferment of honorary degrees.

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Based on its long historical origin and international academic practice, an honorary degree (*honoris causa*, "for the sake of the honor" in Latin), is an extra-ordinary academic degree awarded to a prominent individual (who may be an alumnus/alumni, or one who has never been connected with the awarding institution).

Consistent with the institution's mission, vision, objectives, goals and values, the honorary doctorate degree shall be awarded in recognition of an individual's meritorious contribution/s to the advancement of a field in a particular discipline, through exemplary accomplishment/s, and/or contribution/s in instruction, research and practice; personal humanitarian/philanthropic engagements which led to the development of the community, society, and the nation as a whole.

Exemplary accomplishment is any creative work, scholarly output, productive advocacy, and philanthropic work in the corresponding field that have brought honor and distinction to the institution and the country at large, as well as contribution to significant advancement to his/her particular field of endeavor/interest.

The honorary doctorate degree is conferred with an appropriate ceremony as may be determined by the awarding HEI, usually during commencement exercises or a special convocation designated for the purpose. There should be only one (1) honorary degree recipient per ceremony.

The recipient should be present during the ceremony for the degree to be awarded. Under the new normal, virtual presence of the recipient through an online platform, is allowed.

If a recipient dies after notification and before the ceremony, a degree may be awarded posthumously.

II. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

These revised policies and guidelines aim to enhance the integrity, value and meaning of awarding honorary doctorate degrees conferred by qualified higher education institutions, and are hereby adopted for their guidance:

A. Scope and Categories

The honorary doctorate degrees to be awarded by qualified public and private higher education institutions must be related to the definite and relevant accomplishments of the recipient which should be one among the institution's doctorate program offerings.

B. Requirements

1. For Awarding Institution

The Higher Education Institution (HEI) that shall award an honorary doctorate degree must meet the following requirements:

- 1.1 Must have existed as a higher education institution for a period of at least twenty-five (25) years.
- 1.2 Must have well-acknowledged academic reputation and institutional mission, vision, objectives, goals and values as adjudged by the CHED.
- 1.3 Must have CHED recognized doctoral programs.
- 1.4 Only HEIs that meet the above requirements are qualified to confer an honorary degree.

Private HEIs with autonomous/deregulated status, will be allowed to award honorary doctorate degree without seeking approval from CHED. The HEI should inform the CHED Central Office through the CHED Regional Office at least one (1) month prior to conferment for record purposes. The CHED OPSD shall inform the CEB on the honorary degrees conferred by the HEIs.

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) with at least SUC Level III shall secure approval from the Commission.



1.5 Educational Institutions created through a Presidential Decree and classified and treated as a foreign school/institution of special character, i.e. DAP, AIM, will be allowed to award honorary doctorate degree without seeking approval from CHED. The HEI should inform the CHED Central Office through the CHED Regional Office at least one (1) month prior to conferment for record purposes. The CHED OPSD shall inform the CEB on the honorary degrees conferred by these HEIs.

2. For Recipients/Honorand

- 2.1 Honorary doctorate degree shall be awarded to individuals meritorious contribution/s to the advancement of a field in a particular discipline, through exemplary accomplishment/s.
- 2.2 Honorary doctorate degree shall be awarded only to individuals with at least a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent earned from a CHED-recognized program.
- 2.3 No honorary doctorate degree shall be awarded to incumbent members or representatives of the board, and administrators of the awarding HEI.
- 2.4 Incumbent officials and/or employees of CHED, especially to the incumbent Chairman and/or Commissioners, shall likewise be barred from being nominated.
- 2.5 The conferment of honorary degree by higher education institutions shall be limited to two (2) honorary degrees per year per institution except in cases when a prior written approval is granted by the Commission *en banc* for the grant of more than two (2) honorary degrees per year per institution.
- 2.6 Those previously granted honorary degree and those who will be conferred honorary degree, shall affix the appropriate title after their name with, (*Hon. Causa*), e.g. Doctor of Public Administration (*Hon. Causa*)/DPA (*Hon. Causa*).
- 2.7 Honoris Causa is not an earned degree thus, shall not be a criterion for any evaluation purpose such as, but not limited to, ranking, promotion and qualification requirements, for any organizational/institutional position reclassification.
- 2.8 The Honorary degree does not entitle the recipient to any bar/board-related professional practice.



C. Procedures

1. All qualified HEIs shall secure approval from CHED to grant honorary doctorate degrees. The HEI, through the CHED Regional Office (CHEDRO) shall submit conferment documents to the CHED Central Office two (2) months prior to the scheduled date of conferment. The CHED Office of Programs and Standard Development (OPSD) shall secure approval from the Commission *en banc*.
2. The request for authority to confer an honorary degree shall be filed two (2) months before the scheduled date of conferment. Only applications with complete documentary requirements will be processed by the concerned CHEDRO. Non-compliance of the two-month period will warrant denial to process the application.

The following documentary requirements must be submitted in hard and electronic copies for evaluation:

- 2.1 Written request duly signed by the head of the HEI, for an authority to confer honorary degree must be addressed to the CHED Chairperson, Attention: The Office of Programs and Standards Development (OPSD), as submitted through the CHED Regional Office (CHEDRO);
 - 2.2 The request of the HEI to confer an honorary degree should contain a duly signed conforme from the honorand;
 - 2.3 CHEDRO Evaluation with recommendation, using the prescribed template; (see Annex A)
 - 2.4 Copy of the curriculum vitae of the recipient;
 - 2.5 Citations and accomplishments of the recipient with attached specific evidence (evidence from any of the exemplary accomplishments undertaken - e.g. in creative work, scholarly output, philanthropic work, productive advocacy, etc.);
 - 2.6 Justification/s for the conferment of the award to the recipient; and
 - 2.7 Copy of the Board Resolution duly signed by the Board Secretary stating approval of the conferment, and citing significant contributions and accomplishments of the recipient.
3. The CHEDRO shall receive the application and evaluate the completeness of the documents and the accuracy of the information provided by the HEI, particularly in determining if the qualifications of the recipient are consistent with the institution's mission, vision, objectives, goal and values. The CHEDRO shall be given six (6) working



days to act on the application and forwards the same to the OPSD, together with the CHEDRO evaluation and recommendation.

4. The OPSD shall then process the application, on the basis of existing institutional and program standards, and shall submit its recommendation to the Commission *en banc* (CEB) within three (3) working days after receipt of the set of documents from the CHEDRO.
5. The Commission as a collegial body shall deliberate and decide on the proposed conferment at least ten (10) working days prior to the actual date of conferment.
6. The following is an illustrative timeline for the processing of request for the grant of honorary degree:

Total Number of Working Days for Processing: 20 days

Half (1/2) day - Filing of application by HEI

Six (6) days - Application is processed at the CHEDRO level

Three (3) days - Application is processed at the OPSD

Nine (9) days - Period by which the requests may be submitted to the CEB for deliberation and decision

One (1) day - CEB releases decision on the application

Half (1/2) day - CHEDCO notifies the HEI through the concerned CHEDRO (approval/denial)

D. Other Conditions

1. The conferment of honorary degrees upon foreigners by a Philippine HEI shall strictly be held in the Philippines.

The conferment of honorary doctorate degree to foreigners may be given consideration by the CEB provided that, the country of origin of that foreigner, is giving the same recognition/privilege to Filipino citizens.

2. No publicity shall be issued regarding the recipient until final approval by the Commission *en banc* is issued/released.
3. The Commission exercises its discretion in the grant of honorary degree to individuals with exceptional achievements or accomplishments and may exempt them from the documentary/procedural requirements prescribed in these guidelines.



4. The Commission has the prerogative to deny or withdraw, withhold or declare null and void the conferment of an honorary degree by an HEI due to any of the following causes:
 - 4.1 when any of the submitted credentials are fabricated; and
 - 4.2 when the recipient's conduct or stand on certain issues contravenes public morals and policy.
5. Any HEI found in violation of the provision of this CMO shall be subjected to appropriate administrative/legal proceedings, such as the imposition of sanctions that includes, but not limited to, the suspension/blacklisting of granting honorary degrees for at least five (5) years.
6. All application documents acted upon must be returned to the HEI applicant.

III. APPLICABILITY

This CMO shall be applicable to all HEIs in the Philippines.

IV. REPEALING CLAUSE

This CMO repeals other issuances of the Commission which are in conflict with the provisions of this guideline.

V. EFFECTIVITY

This CMO shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Commission and fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

All other specific provisions of previous issuances related to this matter shall automatically be deemed repealed accordingly.

These revised policies and guidelines shall remain in force and effect until revoked or further amended.

Issued at Quezon City, Philippines on May 31, 2021

For the Commission:

J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA
Chairman

