1. **NAME**
The name of the committee is the Honorary Degrees Committee, hereafter referred to as the HDC.

2. **STATUS**
2.1 The Higher Education Act, (No. 101 of 1997), as amended, makes provision in section 65C for the conferment of advanced degrees, including an honorary doctoral degree *honoris causa* as an academic award in any faculty of the institution, provided that the recipient of such a degree is not entitled – on the basis of such a degree – to fulfil any function, carry out any activities or practise a profession;

2.2 Since the award is a Council award, it is considered by Council, on the recommendation of a combined Council and Senate Committee constituted in terms of this Charter.

3. **COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE**
3.1 The committee for the consideration of honorary doctoral degrees (the Honorary Degrees Committee) comprises the following members:

3.1.1 Chairperson of Council (Chairperson);
3.1.2 Vice-Chancellor and Principal;
3.1.3 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic;
3.1.4 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Library and Information Centre;
3.1.5 One additional Deputy Vice-Chancellor, nominated by the Management Executive Committee;
3.1.6 Registrar;
3.1.7 At least three external members of Council appointed by Council;
3.1.8 Three Senate representatives who are also members of the Executive Committee of Senate (SENEX), nominated by SENEX.

4. **FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE**
The function of this Committee is to make recommendations to Council on the award of an honorary doctoral degree of the University of Johannesburg in terms of the criteria and governance principles detailed below. In this regard the HDC:

4.1 Considers proposals for the conferral of an honorary doctoral degree;
4.2 Recommends to Council, after having consulted Senate, the conferral of an honorary doctoral degree to a candidate;
4.3 Protects and monitors the possible reputational risk for the University related to the conferral of an honorary doctoral degree.

5. **CRITERIA FOR AWARDING AN HONORARY DOCTORATE**

5.1 Outstanding intellectual contributions of high academic distinction; and/or

5.2 Relevant meritorious or outstanding contributions to public life or significant benefit to society at large. An “outstanding contribution” is usually an input and/or product in a national and/or international context that attests to a creative spirit and intellect. Mere success in a career or social role is insufficient. There should be evidence of a contribution that is innovative, beyond the norm and characteristic of a leader in the field, self-initiated and self-directed;

5.3 An international candidate should have demonstrated distinguished social or intellectual achievement related to the University’s vision, mission, values and strategic goals and objectives;

5.4 The University strives for a robust pool of honorary doctoral degree recipients enriched by individuals from all backgrounds and therefore encourages nominations of distinguished individuals with a connection to the University or its precursor institutions, the City of Johannesburg or the Gauteng region whose accomplishments are worthy of academic celebration;

5.5 The extent to which the candidate meets such criteria must be highlighted in the submission;

5.6 Nominations reflecting multiple conferrals of honorary degrees by South African Universities, are considered on a case-by-case basis.

6. **ELIGIBILITY**

6.1 Serving Council members and permanent and fixed-term contract employees of the University of Johannesburg are not eligible for the conferral of an honorary degree;

6.2 An honorary doctoral degree may be conferred posthumously.

7. **GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURE**

7.1 The Registrar circulates a written invitation twice each year to all members of Council and Senate to submit fully motivated proposals, which also reflects the extent to which the candidate meets the criteria stated in 5 above. The proposal must:

7.1.1 be recommended by the Faculty Board concerned, or

7.1.2 be proposed by three members of Council and/or Senate, signed by the primary proposer and at least two other members of Council/Senate, indicating support for the proposal(s);

7.2 The proposal(s) are subsequently considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee which then may:

7.2.1 not support a proposal based on non-compliance with the criteria or any other legitimate reason;

7.2.2 recommend to Council the conferral of an honorary degree subject to: (a) unanimous support by the members of the HDC;

(b) the committee having sought the advice of the Dean’s Committee of the faculty in which the honorary degree would fall or, if the honorary degree is not clearly faculty-specific, the committee seeks the advice of the Executive Dean of the faculty in which the discipline of the nominee’s contribution falls on the basis of which the submission for
the honorary doctoral degree was made (note: section 65C of Act 101 of 1997 stipulates that the conferment of an honorary degree must be limited to the degrees of a faculty); and

(c) Senate’s support (at least two thirds of Senate members attending the Senate meeting concerned, must vote in favour of the conferral of the honorary degree);

7.3 The Council decides on the conferment of an honorary doctoral degree by means of consensus or, if consensus cannot be reached, by means of a secret ballot of Council members present at the meeting; an honorary degree will only be conferred on a candidate if at least 80% of the Council members present vote in favour of the conferment of an honorary degree;

7.4 Once Council has approved the conferral on an honorary degree, the Registrar informs the candidate of such decision in writing, requesting acceptance (or not);

7.5 Once the candidate (or family members in the case of a posthumous conferral) has accepted the award, the honorary degree is conferred at a graduation ceremony of the University, subject to appropriate logistical arrangements;

7.6 An honorary doctoral degree is an academic award that entitles the awardee to hold the doctoral title honoris causa in recognition of his/her outstanding academic contributions or outstanding contribution to public life, but that do not, however, meet the requirements set in the University Rules or the Act for the conferment of a doctoral degree as a result of the successful completion of a recognised programme of study of the University;

7.7 At the relevant graduation ceremony of advanced degrees of the home faculty within which an honorary doctoral degree falls, an honorary doctoral degree is awarded in a field described within the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (once this Faculty offers a doctoral degree), the Faculty of Economic and Financial Sciences, the Faculty of Management Sciences, the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment or any other branch of education in which the study could be undertaken in a recognised faculty of this University;

7.8 During the consideration of the proposal(s), the University’s governance principles regarding the consideration of confidential business must be strictly adhered to;

7.9 A conservative awards policy is followed, in order to emphasise the extraordinary and inherent value of the awards.

Amended Charter approved by Council 22nd September 2011
Amendment (5.6) approved by Council 27 September 2012
Titles aligned with approved ELG Organogram 2013