

## Fellowships and Honorary Degrees: Frequently Asked Questions

### Contact

To discuss all aspects of fellowships and honorary degree nominations please contact Joanna Brown ([jo.brown@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:jo.brown@kcl.ac.uk)).

### Why should I submit a nomination?

**Honorary awards allow King's to mark the contribution made by exceptional individuals to King's and/or to the wider society. The awards bring prestige to King's and to recipients. We therefore strongly encourage those who are eligible to do so to submit a nomination.**

The Fellowship/Honorary Fellowship of the College has been conferred on hundreds of eminent individuals since 1847 (see [Fellows of Kings](#) for its history and a list of current holders). King's has awarded Honorary Degrees since 2007, initially on behalf of the University of London and since 2008 on its own behalf. Recipients of Honorary Degrees have included:

Sir John Eliot Gardiner FKC (world-leading orchestra conductor);

The Hon. Sylvia Wynter, OJ (Professor Emerita at Stanford University);

Baroness Hale of Richmond (the first woman to be appointed a Law Lord);

Lord Sainsbury of Turville FRS (Minister of Science and Technology 1998-2006);

Professor Peter Higgs FRS FRSE (alumnus, physicist and proposer of the Higgs boson particle);

Dr Rowan Williams (former Archbishop of Canterbury);

Senator George Mitchell (former US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace);

Bill Bryson (author);

The Right Hon Sir John Major (former British Prime Minister);

The Right Hon the Lord Judge (Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales);

The Hon Mr Justice Edwin Cameron (human rights lawyer and Judge of Appeal in the Supreme Court of Appeal in South Africa);

Professor Thomas Jessell FRS (internationally distinguished neuroscientist);

The 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Wellington OBE DL (former Chairman of King's College Council); and

Professor Mona Siddiqui OBE FRSE (academic, intellectual and broadcaster on religion, ethics and public life).

### Who can submit (or second) a nomination?

Nominations may be submitted by anyone who is a **member of the College**, as defined in the Ordinances. This means that to submit a nomination, you must be:

- a current full-time or part-time student of King's; or
- a current full-time, part-time or honorary staff member of King's; or
- a Fellow/Honorary Fellow; or
- an independent member of the College Council; or
- the Visitor of the College (currently the Archbishop of Canterbury).

Nominations will not be accepted from individuals who fall outside these categories.  
Nominations will not be accepted from relatives.

### Which awards are available?

King's has three types of honorary awards: the Fellowship of King's College London, the Honorary Fellowship of Kings College and the Honorary Degree of King's College London. Holders of the Fellowship and the Honorary Fellowship are both designated by the letters 'FKC'.

The awards have different criteria and are available to different types of individuals:

- the **Fellowship** is available to current or former staff of King's, current or former students of King's, and current or former members of the College Council. It is awarded "in recognition of their exceptional achievement and/or service rendered to the College".
- the **Honorary Fellowship** is available to individuals who are not eligible for the Fellowship (i.e. individuals who are **not** current or former staff of King's, current or former students of King's, or current or former members of the College Council). It is awarded "in recognition of their exceptional achievement in fields usually outside academic life".
- the **Honorary Degree** is available to anyone (regardless of their connection with King's), and is awarded "in recognition of an individual's conspicuous merit as demonstrated by their outstanding distinction".

Please note that only in exceptional circumstances will an individual who is eligible for the Fellowship of the College be considered for the Honorary Degree instead. The Honorary Degree will generally be considered the appropriate award for heads of state (or those in similar positions) and nominees without a connection to the College whose distinction is their intellectual excellence. It is extremely unlikely that someone would be awarded both an FKC and an Honorary Degree.

The College will not normally confer more than ten awards in each category in each calendar year.

### Who can I nominate?

You can nominate anyone other than yourself (self-nominations will not be accepted) or a family member. However, whether the individual has a connection to King's will determine the type of award for which you can nominate them:

- if the person is a current or former student of King's, a current or former staff member of King's, or a current or former member of the College Council: you can nominate them for a **Fellowship** or an **Honorary Degree**.

- if the person is **not** a current or former student of King's, a current or former staff member of King's, or a current or former member of the College Council: you can nominate them for an **Honorary Fellowship** or an **Honorary Degree**.

As well as considering whether the individual has a current or previous connection with the College, you should also consider the criteria for awards to determine which award is most appropriate (see *What awards are available?*, above).

#### How do I submit a nomination?

By completing and returning the [nomination form](#) which can be downloaded from the web page of the Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee. Forms must be received by [Joanna Brown](#), Office of the Chairman and Secretariat, by the date indicated on the form. Please provide the form in an electronic format which is readable in Word, as information will be extracted from the form and incorporated into other documents. Electronic signatures are acceptable, but are not required if the form is sent by the nominator (with the seconder copied in) from a recognised email account (e.g. a KCL email account).

As well as your own details and signature, you will be asked to provide:

- the details and signature of your seconder, who should also be a member of King's (see *Who can submit a nomination?*, above);
- the type of award (Fellowship, Honorary Fellowship or Honorary Degree) for which you are submitting a nomination. (Note that the Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee may recommend a different award from the one which you have selected, if it believes that award is more appropriate);
- biographical details of your nominee;
- the benefits that you believe conferring the award will bring to King's, e.g. by enhancing its academic reputation (include any exceptional contributions to the College or to society in line with King's values, and any established networks or connections to King's); and
- the reason why you believe the award should be conferred on your nominee, expressed in the form of a draft citation. Please note that the focus should be on the nominee's broader contributions to society.

The information which you provide will be used by the Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee to decide whether to recommend to the College Council that an award should be conferred on your candidate. **If your nomination is successful your text will be used as the basis for the citation read out at the graduation ceremony, and may be used in web announcements and other publications, therefore please ensure that the information you provide is as complete and accurate as possible. The ideal length of the citation is around 400 words.**

Only one nomination may be submitted per form. If you wish to nominate more than one person for an award, please complete a form for each nominee.

#### Should I discuss the nomination with the candidate?

This is for you to decide, but we recommend that you do not, as many nominations are unsuccessful and lack of success is not necessarily a reflection on the quality of the candidate. If your nomination is successful, King's will contact the nominee to determine whether she/he is

willing to accept the award. You will not be informed of a successful outcome until we have heard back from the nominee.

#### What happens next?

All valid nominations will be considered by King's Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee, which normally meets once per year (usually in November). The Committee will decide which candidates it wishes to recommend to the College Council for the award of Fellowships, Honorary Fellowships and Honorary Degrees. The Committee's recommendations are subject to the approval of the Council, usually at its November meeting.

Once the Council has approved the awards, King's will contact nominees to determine whether they are willing to accept the award and if so, when they are available to receive it. Fellowships and Honorary Fellowships are usually conferred at the College's summer graduation ceremonies. Honorary Degrees are usually conferred at a special ceremony in November, about one year after the relevant meeting of the Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee.

#### Will I be informed about the outcome of my nomination?

If your nomination is successful, you will usually be informed once King's has contacted the nominee and they have confirmed that they are willing to accept the award. Note that this process can take some time. You should treat this information as strictly confidential until the award is publicly announced by King's.

If your nomination has been unsuccessful, or the Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee has decided to carry your nomination over for consideration in the following year, you will be informed as soon as possible after the Council's meeting.

#### If my nomination is unsuccessful, can I resubmit it the following year?

Yes. Please submit a new nomination form ensuring that details are up-to-date.

The Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee will occasionally decide to carry a nomination over from one year to the next. If this happens, during the next round you will be invited to update the information which you previously submitted.

#### Will I be given feedback on my nomination?

No. The Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee does not generate records which enable feedback to be provided on nominations.

#### Will my nomination be treated as confidential?

All nomination forms are treated by King's as strictly confidential to the nominator and the individual nominated. We will not disclose the information which you provide without your permission. If your nomination is successful, some of the information which you provide may be used to produce a citation and other published information, such as announcements on King's web pages about the conferral of awards. This information will only be published after it has been approved by the individual who is the recipient of the award.

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