



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Guidelines

Guidelines for Non-Course-Credit-Based Awards, Honors, and Recognitions to be Bestowed at Commencement or Convocation

This document provides practical guidance regarding the institutional expectations for the review and approval of student awards to be bestowed at any TTUHSC El Paso graduation commencement and/or convocation.

Definitions:

- **Non-course-credit-based awards, honors, and recognitions:** For the purposes of this guideline, non-credit-based awards, honors, and recognitions refers to the granting of any formally documented special recognition to a student other than an earned diploma or certificate (subsequently referred to in this guideline as “awards”).
- **Commencement:** For the purposes of this guideline, commencement is a ceremony in which degrees or diplomas are conferred on graduating students.
- **Convocation:** For the purposes of this guideline, convocation is a large formal assembly typically conducted at the end of a course of study and prior to graduation, for the purpose of celebrating academically-related achievements, relevant and noteworthy transitions (including but not limited to military commissioning), and other pertinent honors.

Review and approval of non-course-credit based awards, honors, and recognitions to be bestowed at commencement:

Recognizing that convocation and commencement are the most important and consequential academic ceremonies conducted under the direct authority of TTUHSC El Paso as a State chartered and accredited degree-granting institution of higher education, the criteria, selection process, and form of all non-course-credit-based awards to be bestowed at these events shall be formally reviewed and approved as follows:

- **Timeline for the approval of convocation and commencement awards:** Under ordinary circumstances, proposals for awards to be bestowed at convocation or commencement should be reviewed and approved according to the processes outlined below at least 10 months prior to the commencement or convocation at which the award is to be introduced. Requests for expedited approval and implementation of a convocation or commencement award shall be submitted to the vice president for academic affairs, who will present recommendations to the president, and the president’s decision will be final.
- **For initial school or program level awards:** The sponsoring program or unit shall submit a detailed proposal, including the justification, selection criteria, selection process, and

form of award, to the highest educational policy setting committee of the relevant school as designated by the school's faculty bylaws. Requests to add, reaffirm, or retire an award must be initiated on the [Convocation and Commencement Awards Approval Form](#); see attachment. That committee shall submit recommendations regarding the award to the dean, and the dean shall submit a recommendation to the president. The president's decisions regarding the proposal, including any stipulations modifying the presentation or form of the award, are final.

- **For awards sponsored by an institutional office or extramural entity for the institution:** The sponsoring institutional office or extramural entity for the institution shall submit a detailed proposal, including the justification, selection criteria, selection process, and form of award to the TTUHSC El Paso Academic Council. The TTUHSC El Paso Academic Council shall submit recommendations regarding the award to the president. The president's decisions regarding the proposal, including any stipulations modifying the presentation or form of the award, are final.

Awards bestowed at convocations or commencements prior to January 1, 2022, shall be considered approved by virtue of prior review and tradition, and shall be unaffected by this guideline except as follows:

- **Elimination of established awards presented at convocation or commencement:** All schools, according to their convocation and commencement planning processes, are to work with the assistant vice president for student services and student engagement to confirm a list of the awards to be bestowed at convocation or commencement at least 2 months in advance of those events. The vice president for academic affairs is to be notified of the elimination of any previously established convocation or commencement awards.
- **Review of established awards:** Beginning in January, 2024, and every three years thereafter, the assistant vice president for student services and student engagement will work with the dean of each school (or their designees) to create a list of the approved convocation and commencement awards for review by the TTUHSC El Paso Academic Council in March. The TTUHSC El Paso Academic Council may reaffirm the awards and/or submit recommendations to the president. The president shall review the TTUHSC El Paso Academic Council's recommendations and may direct the vice president for academic affairs to work with the relevant parties to revise and update the list of approved convocation and commencement awards through the elimination of established awards and/or the approval of new awards through the processes outline above.