

Honorary Queen's Counsel nominations: deadline Monday 9 August 2021



PUBLISHED JUN 9, 2021
BY [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is inviting nominations for the award of Queen's Counsel *Honoris Causa*. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to MOJ by 12pm on Monday 9 August 2021.

QC *Honoris Causa*, or Honorary QC, is an honorary award unique to the legal profession. It is a dedicated opportunity, made by royal prerogative, to recognise those in the profession who have made a major contribution to, and impact on, the law of England and Wales and how it is advanced, outside the courtroom.

We are looking for nominations for the Honorary QC award to honour those who have made a significant, positive impact either on the shape of the law of England and Wales, or on the profession. More details on what we mean by 'significant, positive impact', and who is eligible, follow.

What is the award for?

Honorary QC is an opportunity to award individuals who have made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales outside practice in the courts.

This criterion can be interpreted broadly, either as a major contribution to the shape of the law (for example, by influencing case law), or to how it is advanced (for example, by positively impacting the shape of the profession). What is most important is that nominations clearly evidence the significant, positive impact an individual's efforts have had.

Examples of what these different contributions may look like are:

Making an impact on the law by influencing legislation or case law (e.g. through academic research, particular personal impact through engagement or campaigning, or pro bono work).

Making a considerable impact on the legal profession (e.g. through initiatives that have an impact on social mobility or diversity, innovation in legal education, or that promote UK legal services overseas and increase the competitiveness of the sector).

Making an impact through a standout achievement or through innovation (e.g. by breaking through into new territory, such as making an impact through work on Lawtech).

It is not a long-service award – honours may be awarded for a significant impact over a long period of time, but they may equally be awarded for such an impact over a shorter period – it is the scale of impact that is important.

We are keen to recognise the diversity within the profession, with awards that reflect the range of different legal careers that make up the profession. You can see examples of previous successful nominees by viewing their case studies.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the award, the individual must be a qualified lawyer or legal academic. The nomination must be for achievement outside practice in the courts. In other words, an award would be made for non-advocacy work.

Examples of those eligible may include (but are not limited to):

Solicitors without higher rights of audience

Legal executives

In-house lawyers, including Counsel

Legal academics

Holding a fee-paid judicial office in addition to normal practice

would not exclude lawyers who meet the eligibility criteria above.

The award is not a working rank, and is separate to substantive QC appointments administered by Queen's Counsel Appointments. Where someone is eligible to apply for silk in their role, we would not normally consider them for an Honorary QC award.

Where someone from outside the legal profession has made a significant impact on the law of England and Wales, or how it is advanced, they would not qualify for this award. We would welcome those nominations as part of the main honours system.

There is no exact equivalent in Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, this does not mean that achievements of a similar nature cannot be recognised in those jurisdictions. If you would like to nominate someone for an honour whose work is in Scotland or Northern Ireland, you can contact the Scottish Government or the Honours Secretariat for Northern Ireland.

Someone who has been honoured in the main honours system within the last two years, or who has been nominated for such an honour this year, would not be eligible to receive an Honorary QC award. Where someone was awarded an honour more than two years ago, the panel will consider the individual's contribution to and impact on the law since that honour was awarded.

Please note that anyone nominated may be subject to criminal record checks with ACRO Criminal Records Office.

How to make a nomination

We welcome nominations for Honorary QC from anyone, including from people outside the legal profession, who can explain the impact the nominee has made.

Please make sure nominations are made on the Honorary QC nomination form (ODT, 17.4KB), as we will only accept nominations which are submitted on this form.

When completing the form, please explain the contribution that has been made, providing clear evidence of its impact. We would advise against simply providing a career history of the nominee, and suggest keeping your nomination to a limit of 500 words.

You may nominate as many people as you like, but please ensure that you keep their details on separate nomination forms.

You need to complete the nomination form and send it to us by 12pm on Monday 9 August 2021 preferably by email due to current remote working circumstances:

HonoraryQC@justice.gov.uk or alternatively post to:

Hon QC awards team

Legal Services Division

Ministry of Justice

Post Point 9.20

102 Petty France

London SW1H 9AJ

Timing

Please ensure that your nominations reach us no later than 12pm on Monday 9 August 2021. Nominations made after 12pm on this date cannot be accepted.

How are awards made?

The process is administered by MOJ. Nominations are considered against the criterion by a panel of representatives from the legal profession, civil service, judiciary, and academia, which is chaired by MOJ.

The panel of representatives provide the Lord Chancellor with a shortlist of 12 appointable nominees and recommend which 6 individuals should be presented with an award. The Lord Chancellor, whose role is to ensure that the process has been

carried out in a fair, open and transparent way, will then consider and decide the final recommendations. The recommendations are then referred to the Queen for agreement, who grants the awards under the royal prerogative.

How is the information about nominees used?

In order to assess suitability for the award and as part of the selection process, information about the nominees will be used to carry out:

cross Whitehall checks to confirm whether the individual or their work may be known by, or of interest to, another government department

checks against nominees on the main honours system as per the eligibility criteria

evaluation by the selection panel of the individual's legal qualifications and evidence of their contribution and impact on the law of England and Wales.

Contact us

If you would like additional information on Honorary QC awards or how to make a nomination, please feel free to contact us by email: HonoraryQC@justice.gov.uk.

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of GOV.UK, on Jun 9, 2021. For more information subscribe and follow us.

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