

Gazette Supplement



Recognition of Distinction 2014: call for applications for the conferment of the title of professor, University of Oxford

1 Introduction

Applications are invited for the 2014 Recognition of Distinction Awards to confer the title of professor at the University of Oxford. The closing date for applications will be **noon on 14 February 2014**. The University now intends to hold Recognition of Distinction exercises annually. The most recent Recognition of Distinction exercise was held in 2010/2011.

Applications will be considered by a Recognition of Distinction Committee in each academic division on behalf of divisional boards. Proposals will be made by the Recognition of Distinction Committees to the Senior Appointments Panel of the University's Personnel Committee which consists of the Vice-Chancellor (chair); the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Personnel and Equality, and for Education; and the Registrar; and, for this purpose, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research). Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome by the Vice-Chancellor.

Applications from individuals working in Continuing Education or in the Academic Services and University Collections, or from individuals who are not employed by the University, will be considered by the academic division in which the individual's academic contribution is being made. Individuals whose work is interdisciplinary and spans more than one division, or who hold contracts in more than one division, should make an application to the division they consider to be most relevant, and may consult their head of department for advice as necessary. Divisions will confer as necessary about interdisciplinary applications.

With effect from 1 October 2014, all non-medical lecturers (ie University Lecturer, ULNTE, CUF Lecturer and Faculty Lecturer), titular or supernumerary titular ULs/CUFs and Keepers in ASUC, who are in post and who have been deemed to meet the criteria for the conferment of the title of professor, will (unless they already receive recruitment or retention payments at this level or above) receive an increase to their salary of £2,600 per annum whether or not they actually choose to use the title of professor. They will then become eligible for consideration in subsequent exercises for professorial distinction awards.

All applicants can be assured that the standards now to be applied will be no higher than hitherto, and financial constraints will not affect individual decisions.

It is suggested that those considering applying should take advice on their potential case from their head of department, their faculty board chair, or equivalent; though it should be clear that encouragement to apply cannot guarantee a successful outcome. Lecturers with the title of reader had a significantly higher success rate among those applying for the title of professor in the last round, and the Personnel Committee hopes that, in the present round, further lecturers with the title of reader will be able to demonstrate that they now meet the criteria for the conferment of the title of professor.

Conferment of the title of professor will have no implications for the duties of the individual concerned.

2 Eligibility

All those employed by the University in academic or senior research roles are eligible for consideration, as are other University employees who are making a significant and sustained academic contribution to the University.

Individuals not employed by the University, but who are employed on a long-term basis by an Oxford college or by a Recognised Independent Centre or by the NHS and who, in the view of the divisional committee, are making a significant and sustained academic contribution to the University's work, are eligible to be considered for title. Any applicant not employed by the University should apply in the normal way, and the divisional committee will first decide whether the nature and extent of the applicant's contribution to the University, and the opportunities for it to continue, are sufficient for eligibility; the committee will notify their decision regarding eligibility direct to the applicant before seeking references on academic quality and before embarking on any qualitative assessment against the criteria for the conferment of title.

3 Criteria for conferment of the title of professor

The criteria by which cases for the conferment of the title of professor will be considered cover three areas: research, teaching, and good citizenship.

There are three separate thresholds for award of the title of professor, all of which must be met. There are no circumstances in which narrowly

undershooting any one of these thresholds can be compensated, in terms of the award of the title, by exceptional achievements in respect of the other thresholds.

The threshold criteria are as set out in the boxes below:

Research

An ongoing research record which is characterised by a significant influence on the field of study and is of a high order of excellence and of international standing, and the quality of which in terms of research distinction is at least equal to that expected of those appointed to full professorships at other leading international research universities.

'Research' is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding, including work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, and artefacts, including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products, and processes, including design and construction.

This requirement goes significantly beyond the level of research achievement necessary for reappointment to the retiring age in a University lectureship at Oxford. The University will be looking for evidence of an appropriate combination of some or all of the following activities and outputs, considered in the context of excellence in the discipline:

- research outputs or scholarship recognised in terms of originality, significance and rigour;
- academic leadership in shaping the future of the discipline (which may include the establishment of successful research groups and/or significant engagement with major collaborations);
- an effective contribution to the research culture of the department/faculty at Oxford, eg through the supervision and mentoring of the next generation of researchers;
- a proven record of successful DPhil supervision;

- a record of securing external research funding from relevant sources, where appropriate;
- influence of the research activity beyond academia, including engagement with technology transfer and/or technical developments and/or knowledge exchange, where appropriate;
- recognition of the excellence of research, for example through election to learned societies and research bodies/invitations to deliver prestigious lectures/appointment to editorial boards of leading journals.

Not all of these seven points have to be met (and this is not an exhaustive list of possible research achievements). However, strong performance across several aspects is expected for the conferment of the title of professor, and the title is not likely to be conferred on applicants with achievements in just a few of the above areas, nor in the absence of research outputs or scholarship recognised in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

Teaching

A record of effective teaching for the University and for colleges concomitant with the duties of the University post and the college fellowship (where one is held).

'Teaching' covers either undergraduate or graduate teaching, or both.

Good citizenship

A record of involvement in University and/or college administration and demonstrable competence in such administration.

Account may also be taken of editorship of journals, service on committees working in a national context, and other forms of public engagement, as well as activities connected to enterprise, links with industry and business etc.

4 Applications

Applications for the Recognition of Distinction exercise should be submitted via the online system (see paragraph 9 below) by **noon on 14 February 2014** and include a *curriculum vitae* arranged in order under the headings listed below. This document should be as concise as possible, and must comprise **no more than 12 sides of A4** in total (with a font size no smaller than the equivalent to Arial 10), including lists of publications etc.

(1) Any relevant information such as might normally appear in a *curriculum vitae*, including employment history and current post.

(2) Advanced study and research, including publications, grants etc, marking with an asterisk the six most significant publications.

(3) University lectures and classes given, including any participation in curriculum development, syllabus design etc - over the last three years or such period as may be required to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.

(4) Graduate supervision and other graduate teaching undertaken - over the last three years or such period as may be required to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.

(5) University examining - over the last three years or such period as may be required to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.

(6) University administration, academic leadership, contribution to the subject outside the University, editorship of journals, service on committees working in a national context, other forms of public engagement, any enterprise activities or links to industry or business in appropriate cases - over the last three years or such period as may be required to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.

(7) Undergraduate teaching for college(s) - over the last three years or such period as may be required to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.

(8) College administration - over the last three years or such period as may be required to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.

(9) Future plans for research.

(10) The preferred precise title which applicants think would be appropriate, eg Professor of English Literature, Professor of Engineering Science. The title should be as concise as possible. Final decisions on the precise titles to be conferred on successful applicants will be made by the University. Applicants are free to specify that if their applications are successful they would not wish to use the title of professor.

5 Disclosure of personal circumstances

Applicants should feel free to disclose circumstances that may, over a considerable period of time, have had a substantial effect on their record of research. This is intended to cover not only circumstances protected under employment and equality legislation, but also unusually high loads of teaching and/or administration and/or clinical duties. In respect of the last five years, applicants who were permitted submission in the REF with a reduced number of outputs may wish to report that decision (this applies in particular to those who may have kept their particular circumstances confidential, in which case they need not supply the underlying details).

6 References

The references listed below should be requested by applicants and be submitted by the referees to the relevant Divisional Recognition of Distinction Committee by **noon on 14 February 2014** (please see section 9 for divisional email addresses). It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that their references are submitted by the deadline and to check with their referees (*not* with the divisional office) that references have been sent:

- (1) from **the head of department or the faculty board chair** (who may delegate the writing of the reference). In respect of those who are working in Continuing Education, or the Academic Services and University Collections, and those who are not University employees, there should also be a reference from the head of the department/faculty board chair with which their academic work is most closely associated;
- (2) from **one research referee** of their own choice. The research referees may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if they wish to do so;
- (3) from **the head of house** (who may delegate the writing of the reference) in all cases where the individual has a college attachment.

The principal function of the references from the head of department or faculty board chair and the head of house is to give an assessment of the individual's contributions against the criteria for teaching and good citizenship. These references may also address the research criterion if they wish. Where an applicant does not have a college attachment the assessment of teaching and good citizenship

criteria will rely on the reference from the head of department or faculty board chair.

In addition to the references arranged by applicants as outlined above, divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will seek at least two additional references for each applicant which focus on the extent to which applicants meet the research criterion. The combination of research references should be sufficient to give the clearest evidence as to whether the research criterion has been met, noting that that criterion requires a research record at least equal in distinction to that expected of those appointed to full professorships at other leading international research universities. The divisional committees may seek supplementary information, as they see necessary, in order to reach fair and consistent decisions. The research referees may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if they wish to do so.

Where it has not proved possible for a division to obtain at least two additional references within the timescale of the exercise, consideration of the application shall be suspended by the divisional committee; the applicant will be notified in such circumstances and asked whether they wish the application to be retained for consideration within a future exercise (such applicants may decide subsequently to submit an updated application).

7 Divisional Recognition of Distinction Committees and the Senior Appointments Panel

Each divisional board will delegate the consideration of applications and the making of recommendations for the award of title to a single Recognition of Distinction committee, normally chaired by the head of the division. The membership of these committees will be published in the *Gazette* and on relevant University webpages.

Divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will assess each case strictly by reference to the criteria set out above, account having been taken of any personal circumstances disclosed by the applicant.

Divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will consult between themselves in cases where an individual falls for consideration by more than one board. Particularly careful consideration (especially in relation to the seeking of research references) will be given to applicants whose work is interdisciplinary.

The divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will forward their recommendations in respect of all applications to the affected Senior Appointments Panel, who will scrutinise the cases for proper procedure and for fair application of standards and may refer any case back for further consideration.

8 Timetable for the Recognition of Distinction exercise 2014

December 2013–January 2014

Applicants prepare their applications and request references to be supplied to the relevant divisional email address (please see section 9 for details).

Individuals considering making an application are strongly encouraged to take advice on their application from the relevant head of department, faculty board chair, or equivalent; the head/chair may refer them to other senior members of the department or faculty for such advice.

10 January 2014

The online application process will be open for applications to be submitted.

noon, 14 February 2014

Deadline for submission of applications including:

- a *curriculum vitae* arranged as outlined above to be submitted via the online process;
- a statement of personal circumstances, if relevant, to be submitted via the online process;
- references requested by applicants, including from head of department/faculty board chair, head of house and one research referee. Referees should send the reference by email to the relevant divisional email address set out above.

Please note that no exceptions can be made to the **noon on 14 February** deadline.

February–March 2014

Divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will: review applications; request additional research references for each applicant; confer with other divisional committees about interdisciplinary applicants; seek any additional material as evidence if required; and review applications from those who are not employees of the University and notify such applicants with a decision about their eligibility for consideration.

May 2014

Divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will meet to make proposals for the conferment of title to the Senior Appointments Panel.

July 2014

The Senior Appointments Panel will meet to make decisions based on divisional committee proposals. The Vice-Chancellor will write to all applicants to notify them of the outcome. Titles for successful applicants will take effect immediately the decision is notified.

Feedback from divisional committees will be available from the head of division in cases in which it is agreed not to confer the title of professor.

October 2014

A list of people on whom the title of professor has been conferred will be published in the *Gazette*. Additional payments to those eligible will take effect from 1 October.

Departments and colleges are asked not to publish details of successful applicants on their websites until 1 October.

9 Instructions for applicants

The online system will be open for applications between **10 January 2014 and noon on 14 February 2014**.

Please remember that you must arrange for references to be sent to the relevant division by email by noon on 14 February 2014. The addresses are:

- Humanities: distinction@humanities.ox.ac.uk
- Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences: ROD-MPLS@mpls.ox.ac.uk
- Medical Sciences: distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk
- Social Sciences: distinction@socsci.ox.ac.uk

Please note that the online system is normally intended for people applying for jobs and there is therefore some information on the screens which is not relevant to applications for the conferment of title. Please ignore the information that only applies to job applications.

In order to submit your application you will need the following:

- a memorable password

- your application (**no more than 12 sides of A4 with a font size no smaller than the equivalent to Arial 10** – see section 4) in its final form; you will not be able to make any changes to it once you have submitted it

- where applicable, your separate disclosure of personal circumstances.

(i) Go to www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/recognition and click on the link for your division. This takes you to a page headed 'Job Details' with the subheading 'Recognition of Distinction (division)'. Click on 'Apply' at the bottom of the page.

(ii) Register with the online system by clicking on 'Register Now'.

(iii) Enter your email address, a memorable password, your forename and surname. Make a note of these logon details for future reference, then click on 'Register'.

(iv) Complete the brief personal details form which will appear on your screen once you have registered. Click on 'Save and Continue'.

(v) A screen headed 'Application Checklist' will now appear. You will be asked to complete a brief equal opportunities monitoring form and answer some additional questions (the data collected from both sections will be anonymised and used for statistical reporting once the exercise is completed). When you are ready to upload your application, click on 'Attach Documents'. Then click on 'Browse' to find your application (and separate disclosure of personal circumstances if appropriate), and click on 'Upload'.

(vi) Now click 'Return to Checklist', and you will see the 'Application Checklist' page again. From this page:

- you can review your application if you wish by clicking on 'Preview Form';
- you can also save your application on the system *without submitting it* so that you can return to it later should you wish to modify it before submission (to return to such a pending application, click on the appropriate link from www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/recognition, log into the online system using your email address and the password you created at registration, click on 'My Applications' from the left-hand menu, and then click on the small square to the right of the red x to return to the 'Application Checklist' screen);

- when you are ready, you can submit your application by clicking on the 'Submit' button. **You must use 'Submit' to submit your application no later than noon on Friday, 14 February 2014.**

(vii) You may now log out of the system. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application. NB: this will be a standard system acknowledgement email; please ignore the reference to shortlisting and the request to complete a questionnaire.