

Gazette Supplement



Recognition of Distinction (2010–11)

This paper sets out the arrangements for the 2010–11 round of the recognition of distinction exercise, in which applications are invited by 31 October 2010 for the conferment of the title of professor.

1. Introduction

Following successive consultation exercises over the period since 2005, the Task Force on Academic Employment put definitive proposals to Council for future arrangements for the conferment of titles on academics and for merit pay for lecturers.

Council commended these proposals to Congregation in April 2010, stating however that it would not be possible in 2010–11 to devote any funding to the new arrangements. In the absence of any opposition or amendments, the proposals were declared approved in full by the Vice-Chancellor in May 2010. The details of the new arrangements may be seen at http://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2009-10/supps/1_4915.pdf.

The consequence of Congregation's approval of these new arrangements is that in 2010–11 an exercise will be held to consider applications for the conferment of the title of professor. No applications will be accepted or considered for the conferment of the title of reader, or for merit pay for lecturers. There will also be no exercise to consider new or enhanced distinction awards for substantive professors and readers.

Individuals working in an academic capacity in the collegiate University are therefore now invited to apply for the conferment of the title of professor: applications must be received by 31 October 2010.

The duties and stipends of successful applicants will not change; nor will successful application in itself have any implications for the outcome of any future

exercise for merit pay for lecturers: any such exercise will be run independently.

2. Timetable and eligibility

Individuals are now invited to submit themselves for consideration in this exercise. Applications should be submitted via the online form available at: <https://secure.admin.ox.ac.uk/distinction> by **31 October 2010**. Applications received after this date will **not** be considered. Section 5(c) below details the required format for applications. All applications will then be sent forward for consideration by divisional Recognition of Distinction Committees, on behalf of the relevant divisional board. Divisional comments should be sent to Personnel Services by **31 March 2011**. The central Recognition of Distinction Committee will then consider all the material and make final decisions on each application in Trinity Term 2011. Titles will be awarded retrospectively, **to take effect from 1 October 2010**.

Individuals who retire on or before 30 September 2010 will not be eligible to apply.

It is essential for exercises such as this to be conducted as openly as possible. Divisional boards are asked to send this circular to all eligible academic staff on their establishment, together with covering information about the composition of the divisional Recognition of Distinction Committee which will comment on the applications. If such covering information is not yet available, this circular should be sent on now with a covering note to that effect; a further circulation about the actual composition of the committee should be sent as soon as that is known.

All employees of the University and also persons not employed by the University who are making a significant and sustained contribution to it in an academic capacity are eligible to apply. Separate circulars are

being sent to heads of departments and equivalent (who are asked to draw the exercise to the attention of their academic and related staff) and to colleges. Divisional boards are also asked themselves to ensure that eligible persons in their subject area who are not members of the academic staff are aware of the exercise.

3. Previous applicants

Applicants who were unsuccessful in previous rounds may of course apply again, although they should note that reconsideration by the Recognition of Distinction Committee of the same material would result in the same outcome: there is no sense in which the committee will in any year take a more lenient line than in previous years, since there was and remains no 'quota' of successful candidates. Applicants from previous rounds who wish to apply again must submit new applications via the online system (see section 5 below).

4. Criteria

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

The **thresholds for award of the title of professor** (all of which must be met) are as follows:

*Research**

A research record of a high order, the quality of which is comparable in distinction with that expected of professors appointed on the grounds of research achievement at other major 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.

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).

* 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.

*This may include activities connected to enterprise, links with industry and business etc. in appropriate cases.

5. Detailed procedures

(a) General points

(i) Potential applicants are encouraged to take advice on their applications from their head of department, faculty board chairman, or equivalent, should they wish to do so.

(ii) All employees of the University (i.e. not merely academic staff), and also persons not employed by the University but who are making a significant and sustained contribution to it in an academic capacity, are eligible to apply for the conferment of the title of professor, save that among lecturers normally only those with tenure may apply for the title.

(iii) Lecturers in their initial period of office at Oxford and who have a very distinguished prior record of achievement may apply for the conferment of the title of professor, but before doing so may wish to reflect and take informal advice on whether they would yet be likely to meet the precise Oxford criteria.

(iv) Only those who apply by the closing date will be considered.

(b) The application process

(i) The exercise is publicised widely to all eligible academics and other eligible potential applicants, to heads of department/faculty board chairmen, to heads of house and to divisional offices, and on the Personnel Services website and in the

Gazette. Divisional offices are asked to send personal copies of the exercise details to all eligible lecturers in their areas.

(ii) Applicants complete an online application form and attach the body of their application.

(iii) Personnel Services makes all applications available electronically to the relevant divisional offices.

(iv) Applicants arrange for references to be provided from heads of department/faculty board chairmen and heads of house, and these are received and collated by Personnel Services and passed to divisional offices.

(v) Divisional Recognition of Distinction Committees seek nominated and independent research references and make recommendations to the central Recognition of Distinction Committee.

(vi) The central Recognition of Distinction Committee receives the reports from divisional committees and makes final decisions.

(vii) Applicants are notified of the outcome of their applications by the Vice-Chancellor.

(c) Application details

Applicants are asked to complete the online application form at: <https://secure.admin.ox.ac.uk/distinction> with their personal details and details of their referees. Note, for security reasons this form can only be accessed from a computer connected to the University data network (i.e. whose identity ends in 'ox.ac.uk'); any applicants who do not have access to such a computer are asked to contact Dr David Dongworth in Personnel Services for advice (recognition.distinction@admin.ox.ac.uk).

Page 1

Please complete the details as requested, noting the points detailed below.

University employee number: applicants who are University employees are asked to complete this to enable their details to be cross-checked automatically. Note that this number is printed on payslips: it is NOT the same as your University card number. Applicants who are not University employees (e.g. NHS staff, college-only staff) should leave this box blank.

Preferred title: please specify your preferred title if awarded, e.g. Professor of English Literature, Professor of Engineering Science. Applicants are asked to propose as concise a title as possible. Note that this preference will be taken into consideration by the divisional and central Recognition of Distinction Committees, but there is no

guarantee that if the title of professor is awarded by the University the applicant's preferred title will also be approved.

Academic degrees: please list in the format 'BA Toronto, PhD Leeds'.

Continuing Education or ASUC unit: if, **and only if**, your primary department/unit is Continuing Education or an Academic Services and University Collections (ASUC) unit (e.g. Ashmolean Museum, Bodleian Library etc.) please select this from the drop-down list, and then **also** select from the lists below the academic division and department with which you are most closely associated.

If your primary department/unit is **not** Continuing Education or an ASUC unit, leave the selection in this box as the default 'Not Applicable'.

Division: applicants who work in more than one division should select one division from the list here, and use the text field labelled 'Sub-unit' to indicate the other division.

Sub-unit: use this field if your department or unit does not feature in the drop-down list; if you work in a sub-unit within a larger department e.g. the Laboratory of Molecular Biophysics in the Department of Biochemistry; or if you work in more than one department or division.

Contact address: the address of the department you selected from the drop-down list will appear here automatically. Please amend if you prefer to be contacted at an alternative address (e.g. at college).

Click on 'next page' to move to Page 2.

Page 2

Applicants must supply the names of referees as follows:

(i) **Head of department or chairman of faculty board** (who may however delegate the writing of the reference). Applicants who are not University employees should give the head of the department/chairman of the faculty board with which they are most closely associated;

(ii) **Head of house** (who may however delegate the writing of the reference) in all cases where applicants have a college attachment.

In addition, applicants from Continuing Education or an ASUC unit (e.g. Ashmolean Museum, Bodleian Library etc.) must also provide details of the head of that department/unit (who may however delegate the writing of the reference).

In all cases, the online form will default to the head of department/unit or faculty and

head of house selected from the drop-down lists on Page 1; if this person has delegated the writing of the reference to another person, please give the other person's details as prompted.

The heads should assess the applicant against the criteria for teaching and 'good citizenship', and may also address the research criteria, providing evidence to support their judgement.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that these referees send their references, without further request, direct to recognition.distinction@admin.ox.ac.uk, or to Dr David Dongworth in Personnel Services, by 30 November 2010.

Applicants who are based in more than one department should ensure that the heads of both departments are asked to provide references, and must provide the name of the second referee as prompted on the online application form.

Applicants should, however, NOT themselves ask their research referees to submit references (see (iii) below).

(iii) In addition, applicants must also list **four research referees** in order of preference, who should ideally be outside Oxford, and who would be willing to assess the applicant against the criteria for research (and may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if they are qualified to do so), providing evidence to support their judgement.

The **divisional Recognition of Distinction Committee** will select at least two of these research referees to approach for their comments. In addition, the divisional committee will identify and approach at least **two further independent research referees**.

Finally, attach a Word file or PDF with a *curriculum vitae* arranged in order under the headings listed below. Applicants are encouraged to make this document as concise as possible. Applications should comprise no more than **12 sides of A4** in total, including lists of publications etc.

All of those who put themselves forward should feel free to mention any factors (domestic or otherwise, including unusually high loads of teaching and/or administration) which may have led, for instance, to academic achievements appearing more limited than they would otherwise have been.

(1)	Any relevant information such as might normally appear in a <i>curriculum vitae</i> , including employment history and current post	
(2)	Advanced study and research, including publications, grants, etc., applicants marking with an asterisk the six most significant publications	
(3)	University lectures and classes given, including any participation in curriculum development, syllabus design etc.	
(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	
(6)	University administration, academic leadership, contribution to the subject outside the University, any enterprise activities or links to industry or business in appropriate cases	
(7)	Undergraduate teaching for college(s)	
(8)	College administration	
(9)	Future plans for research	

Click on 'Register' to send the form and attachment.

All applications must be received by **31 October 2010**.

All data supplied by applicants will be used only for the purposes of assessing their

application for a title of distinction and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's Data Protection Policy.

6. The divisional Recognition of Distinction Committees

(a) It is **not** open to divisional boards or their committees to invite individuals who have not put themselves forward to consider doing so.

(b) Each divisional board should delegate the consideration of the applications to a single Recognition of Distinction Committee, chaired by the head of the division. Divisional committees should be broadly based, covering as far as possible the major disciplines or broad areas of study under the aegis of the particular board. Boards may, if they wish, arrange for departmental/faculty board scrutiny of applications before consideration by the divisional committee; in such cases the divisional board should provide any necessary guidance to the department/faculty board.

(c) Divisional committees (including any local departmental/faculty committees) should not contain anyone who is a member of the central Recognition of Distinction Committee. Provided suitably qualified individuals exist, each committee must have an appropriate gender balance and mix of internal and external members. If it is not possible for external members to attend the meeting(s) of the committee, external advice should be obtained by correspondence. The internal members of the divisional committees should comprise only statutory or *ad hominem* (but not e.g. titular) professors.

(d) Divisional committees should obtain at least **two research references** for each applicant from the names supplied, and at least **two further research references** from individuals not nominated by the applicant and usually from outside Oxford.

(e) Divisional committees must assess all of the applicants in the light of the material they have submitted and *all* of the references received, including the external ones, and strictly by reference to the criteria in section 4 above. The committee must seek whatever supplementary information it may need, beyond the referees' comments, in order to assess fairly and consistently whether the applicant meets these criteria.

(f) Divisional committees should send to Personnel Services, by **31 March 2011**, the research references they have obtained and any other relevant material, together with

a report for consideration by the central Recognition of Distinction Committee setting out their final recommendation in relation to each applicant. The divisional committee is expected to provide a reasoned statement which addresses explicitly in each case, including the most straightforward ones, the question whether in its opinion the individual meets each of the criteria.

(g) In their reports to the central Recognition of Distinction Committee, divisional committees are also asked to comment on the suitability of the full title (e.g. Professor of Engineering Science) proposed by the applicant and, if appropriate, to recommend an alternative title.

(h) In making their comments to the central Recognition of Distinction Committee, chairmen or secretaries of divisional committees should state expressly that these bodies have observed the following elements of the above procedure: composition of divisional committees, circulation of all information to all eligible academic staff, consideration of factors affecting academic performance, and consideration of all information against the criteria, and in particular whether they interpreted the criteria in any specific way.

(i) Divisional committees must consult between themselves in cases where an individual has asked for consideration by more than one board.

7. The central Recognition of Distinction Committee

(a) The central Recognition of Distinction Committee is a sub-committee of Council's Personnel Committee, and has delegated authority from Council to confer the title of professor in this exercise. It is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and is composed of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Personnel and Equality) *ex officio*, five statutory or *ad hominem* professors covering the MPLS and Medical Sciences divisions plus one external member representing those subject areas, and five statutory or *ad hominem* professors covering the Humanities and Social Sciences areas plus one external member representing those subject areas. The full membership of the central committee for the 2010-11 exercise will be published in the *Gazette* as soon as possible.

(b) The central Recognition of Distinction Committee considers the complete dossier for each applicant, including the divisional recommendation, and makes decisions, by reference to evidence relating to the criteria, on whether the title of professor should be conferred. In doing so, it may seek

any further information which it requires in order to assess the applicants fairly and consistently against the criteria, including further external references and clarification from divisional committees of any points of doubt.

(c) The Vice-Chancellor will inform applicants of the outcome individually. The names of successful applicants for the conferment of the title will be published in the *Gazette*.

8. Title of visiting professor

Note that divisional boards may confer the title of visiting professor on an applicant who is not a University employee if the divisional and central Recognition of Distinction Committees consider that the applicant more appropriately fits that category.

9. Feedback

(a) Unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to receive feedback; this will normally be from a named member of the divisional committee, but in some cases it may be more appropriate for feedback to be given by the chairman or another member of the central committee.

(b) Those who are not satisfied with the outcome after having received feedback may appeal against the decision.

10. Appeals process

(a) Appeals will be considered by an appeals committee chaired by a suitable Pro-Vice-Chancellor (functional or ceremonial), with four other members, one from each of the academic divisions. None of the members will have been involved with the case previously, either as referees or committee members.

(b) Appellants must appeal in writing to the secretary of the appeals committee within the specified deadline.

(c) The appeals committee will receive the appellant's appeal submission and the full dossier that was presented to the central committee.

(d) The appeals committee will ask the chairmen of the divisional and central committees to respond in writing to the grounds of the appeal and to justify their previous assessment of the appellant; the chairmen may consult their committee members as required before responding. The appeals committee may seek any further information which it requires, including holding a meeting with the appellant and/or seeking written clarification from him/her.

(e) The appeals committee's decision is final and there is no further possibility of appeal.

11. Analysis of outcomes and future procedures

The Personnel Committee will consider, and forward to Council, a report on the outcomes of each exercise. This will include an analysis of patterns of application and of success by gender, ethnicity, etc.

If significant evidence emerges of patterns of under-application by suitably qualified academics, the Personnel Committee will make proposals to Council to try to address this.