

**RECOGNITION OF DISTINCTION 2021  
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS AND PROCEDURES  
CONFERMENT OF THE TITLE OF FULL PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

## **1. Introduction and outline of exercise**

Applications are invited for the 2021 Recognition of Distinction exercise to confer the title of full professor at the University of Oxford. The opening date for applications is **24 March 2021** and the closing date will be **12 noon on Tuesday 4 May 2021**.

It is recommended 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 noted that encouragement to apply cannot guarantee a successful outcome.

Applications are especially welcome from under-represented groups in order to address the under-representation of women and minority ethnic staff among the University's senior academics.

Applications will be considered by a Recognition of Distinction Committee in each academic division on behalf of Divisional Boards. Recommendations 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-Chancellor (People and GLAM), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Senior Appointments Panel will review the divisional recommendations and supporting documentation. It may seek further information, consideration or comment from the divisional committees. It will ratify the recommendations when it is satisfied that proper procedures have been followed and that standards have been applied consistently. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome by the Vice-Chancellor and titles will take effect immediately.

Conferment of the title of professor will have no implications for the duties of the individual concerned. Successful applicants whose substantive post is in one of the University Associate Professor grades or who are Keepers in GLAM, will receive an increase to their salary of £2,804 per annum (August 2020 rates) from 1 October 2021 (unless they already receive recruitment or retention payments at this level or above) and will also be eligible for consideration in professorial merit pay exercises.

## **2. Eligibility**

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

Applications from individuals whose work is interdisciplinary and spans more than one division, or who hold contracts in more than one division, will be considered by the division which the applicant considers to be most relevant. Divisions will confer as necessary about such applications, and should indicate in their report to the Senior Appointments Panel that they have done so.

Applications from individuals working in Continuing Education or GLAM will be considered by the academic division appropriate to their academic contribution.

Individuals not employed by the University, but who are employed on a long-term basis by an Oxford College or Permanent Private Hall, 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 to the division most appropriate to their academic contribution. The divisional committee will first decide whether the nature and extent of the applicant's contribution to the University, and the opportunities for that to continue, are sufficient for eligibility; the committee will notify its decision regarding eligibility direct to the applicant. If the divisional committee judges that a non-employee is not eligible for consideration no further assessment of the case will be undertaken.

Divisional boards may confer the title of visiting professor on an individual who is not an Oxford University employee if it is considered that the individual more appropriately fits that category and is of appropriate distinction.

### **3. Criteria for Conferment of the Title of Full Professor**

There are three criteria for the conferment of the title of full professor: research, teaching, and good citizenship. **All three criteria must be met.** In this exercise there are no circumstances in which narrowly undershooting any one of these criteria can be compensated by exceptional achievements in respect of the other criteria.

The criteria are set out below:

#### *Research*

An ongoing research record characterised by a significant influence on the field of study, of a high order of excellence and 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.
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'Research' is to be understood as original investigation undertaken 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. The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it is published. However, the research output must be complete and its content available for the Committee to review if it wishes.

This requirement goes significantly beyond the level of research achievement necessary for reappointment to the retiring age in an Associate Professorship 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, innovation, 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, e.g. 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 including patents, 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 full 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*

An ongoing 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).
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'Teaching' covers either undergraduate or graduate teaching and supervision, or both.

#### *Good citizenship*

An ongoing record of involvement in University and/or college administration concomitant with the duties of the University post and the college fellowship (where one is held), and demonstrable competence in such administration.
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"Good citizenship" may include activities such as the holding of University and/or college offices, service on University and/or college committees, amongst others. 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. Unsuccessful Applications**

Feedback to unsuccessful applicants will be included in decision letters at the end of the process.

Unsuccessful applicants may reapply for title in subsequent exercises. It is strongly recommended that applicants seek the advice of the relevant head of department or faculty board chair before applying again. Applicants are advised that success in subsequent exercises will require additional evidence against the criteria. While an important publication (or the equivalent) may provide significance evidence within one year of an unsuccessful application, it is expected that the accumulation of evidence may take two or more years.

Departments and faculties should ensure that appropriate mentoring arrangements are put in place for applicants who are not awarded title. Particular consideration should be given to arrangements for mentoring individuals who have applied unsuccessfully on more than one occasion and for those who work overseas. Mentoring should assist potential applicants to understand the application process for the recognition of distinction, and the criteria and standards that a successful application would need to satisfy.

## **5. Timetable for the Recognition of Distinction exercise 2021**

### **5.1 Action by applicants**

#### ***a) Hilary Term***

- i) Discuss candidacy with head of department/faculty board chair or other senior colleagues as appropriate, and attend a briefing session where these are offered.
- ii) Prepare application and any disclosure of personal circumstances and/or statement of changes since a previous application as explained in sections 6 and 7 below.
- iii) Arrange for referees (head of department/faculty board chair, head of house if relevant, and one research referee) to send references to the division by the closing date.
- iv) Submit application by the closing date following the instructions in Section 9.

#### ***b) Michaelmas Term***

Receive notification of outcome from the Vice-Chancellor. Titles for successful applicants will take effect immediately the decision is notified.

### **5.2 Action by divisions**

#### ***a) Hilary Term***

- i) Set up Divisional Recognition of Distinction Committees and arrange dates.

Divisional Committees, normally chaired by the head of division, should be broadly based, covering as far as possible the major disciplines or broad areas of study under the aegis of the particular board, and must have significant external membership (4 or 5 externals on a committee of 15-20 members in total). Distinguished emeriti who have had broad involvement outside Oxford may be included to a limited extent as 'externals' but should not form a major element of external representation. The internal members of the divisional

committees should comprise only statutory or *ad personam* professors, those holding the title of professor, and heads of department/faculty board chairs.

ii) Publish the composition of the divisional Recognition of Distinction committee on the divisional website and pass a list of members to Personnel Services for publication in the *Gazette*.

iii) Publicise the forthcoming exercise to all those divisional staff eligible to apply. This includes drawing the attention of all eligible candidates to the exercise, making available the composition of the divisional committee, and publicising any briefing sessions in the division. In publicising the exercise the division will draw attention to any groups under-represented at full professorial level in that division, emphasising that it would especially welcome applications from those groups.

### **b) Trinity Term**

i) Receive applications and references requested by applicants by the published closing date.

ii) Divisional committees must consult between themselves in cases where an individual falls for consideration to more than one board. Particularly careful consideration (especially in relation to the seeking of independent research evaluations) should be given to applicants whose work is interdisciplinary.

iii) Divisional committees confer to:

- Assess the eligibility of applications from individuals not employed by the University and inform them of the outcome. Those judged ineligible will not be considered further.
- Agree the names of independent research assessors for each applicant (see section 8).
- Plan consultation with divisional committees in other academic divisions where an individual's research spans more than one division. Particularly careful consideration (especially in relation to the seeking of independent assessors) should be given to applicants whose work is interdisciplinary.
- In the case of applications based in Continuing Education or GLAM, plan for the divisional committee to obtain appropriate input from Continuing Education or GLAM.

External committee members should be invited to any initial meeting to decide on independent assessors and the eligibility of applicants who are not employees, but do not necessarily have to attend initial meetings provided that they are fully consulted (i.e. invited to send in views beforehand and to comment afterwards on the decisions before any action is taken).

### **c) Michaelmas Term**

i) Divisional committees meet to review applications and agree their recommendations to the Senior Appointments Panel. External committee members must be present at this meeting. Each application must be assessed strictly by reference to the criteria in section 3 above,

taking into account any disclosures of personal circumstances submitted by applicants (see section 7), and comments from other divisions on interdisciplinary applicants. Retention issues should not be taken into account. The divisional committee may seek supplementary information, as it sees necessary, in order to reach fair and consistent recommendations.

ii) Divisional committees forward recommendations to the Senior Appointments Panel including a statistical analysis of diversity with regard to application and success rates, noting any statistical or other anomalies of which the committee was aware, and any explanation for such anomalies. For each applicant the report should include:

- The applicant's job title.
- The number of external evaluations taken into account (where insufficient independent evaluations were received, a note to this effect).
- A summary of the committee's evaluation against each criterion.
- A recommendation as to whether the title of full professor should be conferred or not. Where the recommendation is to confer the title, and the applicant has not indicated that he or she wishes not to use the title, the committee should recommend the title they consider appropriate.
- A note of whether personal circumstances were disclosed and taken into account.
- For interdisciplinary applicants, a note on whether other divisions were consulted.
- All documentation considered by the divisional committee including the application, any disclosure of personal circumstances and all references/evaluations.

#### ***d) Michaelmas Term***

i) If requested by the Senior Appointments Panel, provide any further information or comment.

ii) Inform any applicants for whom fewer than 3 independent evaluations were received that it was not possible to consider their application.

iii) Inform departments/faculties of the outcomes.

iv) Arrange payments to take effect from 1 October for those successful applicants who are eligible for additional payments (those in the Associate Professor and GLAM Keeper grades who are awarded the title, unless they already receive recruitment or retention payments at this level or above).

v) A list of successful applicants may be published on divisional and/or departmental/faculty websites once the outcomes for all candidates in the division/department/faculty are known.

### **5.3 Action by the Senior Appointments Panel**

#### ***Michaelmas Term***

i) Meet to review the documentation provided by each divisional committee and demographics of applications and success rates across the university to ensure proper procedure and consistent application of standards across divisions.

- ii) Either ratify the recommendations, or
- iii) Seek further information, consideration or comment from the divisional committees and ratify the recommendations when it is satisfied that proper procedures have been followed and that standards have been applied consistently.
- iv) Individuals will be notified of the outcome of their application by the Vice-Chancellor during the Long Vacation.

#### **5.4 Other action after the conclusion of the exercise**

- i) A list of those on whom the title of full professor has been conferred will be published in the *Gazette* in Michaelmas Term. (It is important that departments/faculties and colleges do not publish details of successful applicants on their websites until all their applicants have been informed of the outcome.)
- ii) A report on the outcome of the exercise will be submitted to the Personnel Committee for consideration, including an analysis of patterns of application and success by gender, ethnicity, etc. If significant evidence emerges that suitably qualified academics are not applying under these arrangements, the Personnel Committee will make proposals to Council to try to address this.

### **6. Applications**

Applications for the exercise should be submitted via the on-line system (see section 9 below for instructions) by **12 noon on Tuesday 4 May 2021**.

Applications must consist of one document comprising **no more than 12 sides of A4** in total (with a font size no smaller than the equivalent of Arial 10), including the details of your 6 most significant publications and/or research outputs. Any additional information, such as a covering letter (should you wish to include one), must be included within the 12-side page limit.

The document should include a *curriculum vitae* arranged in order under the headings listed below (where applicable), with brief notes to explain the context and significance of your work. It would be helpful for each page to have a running header with your surname and department/faculty. ***Please note that your application may be at a disadvantage if you do not follow the guidance below and present the information clearly. Your attention is particularly drawn to the requirement to asterisk your six most significant publications and/or research outputs in point (2). You are strongly recommended to ask another person to check your application for clarity before submitting it.***

- (1) Any relevant information such as might normally appear in a curriculum vitae, including employment history and current post. Please include your whole career (summarising as appropriate), not just recent achievements.

- (2) Advanced study and research, including publications, grants, etc. Please indicate the dates and values of grants, and show which external invitations to speak represent major markers of international recognition. Please mark with an asterisk your six most significant research publications and/or significant research outputs (for example, datasets and software), and indicate why you have selected it. This need only be one sentence and should focus on the influence of the output in the field of study. You should also clearly indicate on which papers you are the corresponding author and on which grants you are the PI. Your case will be judged on work which is complete and available for inspection. Forthcoming work and the stage it has reached (e.g. commissioned, in press) should be included to show what you are currently working on, but should not be included amongst your six most significant outputs.
- (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, leadership of EDI initiatives, 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 you think would be appropriate, e.g. 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. You are free to specify that if your application is successful you would not wish to use the title of professor.

Applicants who have been away from their normal role for the past three years (e.g. on research leave) are asked to provide details of their teaching and good citizenship prior to that date, as well as details of any relevant activities undertaken during the period away.



Teaching and good citizenship undertaken at other institutions prior to appointment at Oxford may be taken into account for recently-appointed staff.

Applicants who have applied for title in a previous round in the past 3 years should also submit a short summary (no more than half a page) outlining significant changes since their previous application against the criteria. Any such summary should be provided as a separate document, not included as part of the 12-page application.

Each applicant's case will be judged as it stands on the closing date, and applications may not be updated with new information after that date. Potential applicants anticipating significant events, such as an important publication and/or other significant research output, between the closing date and the final consideration of applications by the Senior Appointments Panel may wish to consider waiting until the next exercise, when any new evidence can be considered.

## **7. Disclosure of Personal Circumstances**

Applicants are encouraged to disclose circumstances that may, over a 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 such as maternity leave, but also unusually high loads of teaching and/or administration and/or clinical duties. Any circumstances that have arisen as a result of the pandemic will also be given due consideration. Any personal disclosure should be provided as a separate document, not included as part of the 12-page application. Disclosures will be seen by the divisional committee and the Senior Appointments Panel but not by independent assessors and will be treated as strictly confidential.

## **8. References and Evaluations**

The references listed below should be requested by applicants and be submitted by the referees to the relevant Divisional Recognition of Distinction Committee by **12 noon on Tuesday 4 May 2021** (please see section 9 for divisional e-mail addresses).

- a. From **the head of department or the faculty board chair** (who may delegate the writing of the reference). If the applicant is a head of department or faculty board chair, the head of division should provide the reference. In respect of those who are working in Continuing Education or GLAM, there should also be a reference from the head of the department/faculty board chair with which their academic work is most closely associated.
- b. From **one research referee** of their own choice, who may be either internal to Oxford or external. It would be most helpful to divisional Recognition of Distinction committees if the research reference explained how the applicant's work fits within the field of research, as this will assist them in evaluating the work and in interpreting the other research evaluations. The research referee may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if he or she wishes to do so.

- c. From **the head of house** (who may delegate the writing of the reference) in all cases where applicants have a college attachment which carries the expectation that they will undertake some teaching and/or good citizenship (e.g. acting as college advisor to a group of graduate students). However, if an applicant has a college association which amounts to no more than, say, occasional SCR dining rights, there is no need for the head of house to provide a reference.

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 referees may also address the research criterion if they wish. Where an applicant does not have a college attachment the assessment of the teaching and "good citizenship" criteria will rely on the reference from the head of department or faculty board chair.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their referees at an early stage, at least 3 weeks before the closing date, in order to ensure that they are able to meet the 7 January deadline. Heads of department/faculty board chairs and heads of house may have multiple references to write and early contact will help them considerably.

Applicants should ask their referees to mark their references "Confidential". 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.

In addition to the references arranged by applicants as outlined above, divisional Recognition of Distinction committees will seek at least three additional independent evaluations for each applicant which focus on the extent to which applicants meet the research criterion. By submitting an application in the exercise, applicants give permission for their application to be forwarded to divisional committees and to the Senior Appointments Panel (who will see any disclosures of personal circumstances), and to external assessors (who will not see any disclosures of personal circumstances). Applicants are advised not to include personal data such as home address or details of personal circumstances in their 12-page application document if they would not wish external assessors to have that information.

The combination of research reference and independent evaluations 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 independent assessors may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if they wish to do so.

The papers seen by the divisional committee and the Senior Appointments Panel will consist of the application, references from the head of department/faculty board chair and head of house where appropriate, and the independent evaluations sought by the divisional committee. The divisional committees may, however, seek supplementary information, as they see necessary, in order to reach fair and consistent recommendations.

Where it has not proved possible for a division to obtain at least three additional independent evaluations within the timescale of the exercise, consideration of the application will be suspended by the divisional committee. A minimum of 5 external assessors will be approached to give evaluations.

## 9. How to Apply

The online system will be open for applications between **24 March 2021 and 12 noon on 4 May 2021**.

Please remember that you must arrange for references to be sent to the relevant division by e-mail by 12 noon on **4 May 2021**. The addresses are:

- Humanities: [distinction@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:distinction@humanities.ox.ac.uk)
- Mathematical Physical and Life Sciences: [ROD-MPLS@mpls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ROD-MPLS@mpls.ox.ac.uk)
- Medical Sciences: [distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk)
- Social Sciences: [distinction@socsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto: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 of Arial 10** – see section 6 above) 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;
- where applicable, your separate statement of changes since your previous application in not more than half a page.

Please include your surname, initials and the type of document in the filename of your application documents e.g. Bloggs JJ Application, Bloggs JJ Disclosure.

- Go to <http://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 sub-heading “Recognition of Distinction (division)”. Click on “Apply” at the bottom of the page.
- Register with the on-line system by clicking on “Register Now”.
- Enter your Email Address and a memorable password, your Forename and Surname. Make a note of these logon details for future reference, then click on “Register”.
- 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 used for anonymous statistical reporting once the exercise is completed). If you are a university employee, equal opportunities information provided will be transferred to your Personnel record where currently missing. 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/statement of changes since previous application 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 <http://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 will see an on-screen message confirming that your application has been submitted correctly.

**You must use "Submit" to submit your application no later than 12.00 noon on 4 May 2021.**

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 e-mail; please ignore the reference to shortlisting.

viii. In the course of completing this application, you have provided information about yourself ('personal data'). We (the University of Oxford) are the 'data controller' for this information, which means we decide how to use it and are responsible for looking after it in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and associated data protection legislation. The full details are outlined in the privacy notice for applicants in the Recognition of Distinction exercise which can be found on the website:

[\(http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/recognition/\)](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/recognition/)