



University of Limerick

**POLICY FOR THE AWARD OF
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORSHIPS**

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Policy is designed to provide the University of Limerick (UL) with a mechanism to award exceptional staff the designation of Distinguished Professor.

The designation of Distinguished Professor is the highest academic honour bestowed by the University of Limerick and exists to enable the University to honour individual faculty members of distinction and to demonstrate to the broader community that excellence is the foundation of the University.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the Policy for Award of Distinguished Professor apply?

This Policy applies to all current academic staff who have held the rank of Professor at the University of Limerick for at least 5 years.

Current members of the University Executive Committee and Governing Authority are ineligible.

The maximum number of Distinguished Professorships that can be awarded in any calendar year is limited to one; it is not necessary for the University to award a Distinguished Professorship each year.

Individuals making a nomination should be cognisant of the extremely exceptional nature of this title when nominating a colleague.

1.2.2 In what situations does the Policy apply?

Candidates for the award of Distinguished Professor should be chosen to ensure that only the worthiest candidates are honoured and that the prestige of such awards is not diluted.

1.2.3 Responsibilities and Rights of a Distinguished Professor

- A Distinguished Professor shall continue to hold their current rank as Professor in their current academic department in accordance with their contract of employment. The Distinguished Professor's contract of employment will remain unaffected by the awarding of this title. The individual may be listed as Distinguished Professor on public documents such as departmental listings, University websites, and official correspondence.

- The awarding of a Distinguished Professorship does not entitle the holder to any additional remuneration, the terms and conditions of their contract of employment remain unchanged.
- The title of Distinguished Professor may be held until retirement of the person or a cessation of their employment relationship with UL.
- Each Distinguished Professor will be invited to deliver one public lecture or presentation on a topic of their choosing. The lecture or presentation shall be widely advertised within and outside the University community.
- The assignment of a Distinguished Professorship will not conflict with the normal teaching, research, leadership, service and other activities of a professional nature as assigned by the Head of Department.
- Given the highly prestigious nature of a Distinguished Professorship, an excellent standard of conduct is expected by those holding a Distinguished Professorship title. The title of Distinguished Professor may be revoked by the President in the case of a grievance, Dignity & Respect, or disciplinary matter being upheld against the person on the basis of their conduct.

1.2.4 Who is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented and monitored?

The implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of the Provost, with the relevant Dean of Faculty playing a key procedural role.

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

2.1.1 Universities Act, 1997

Section 27.2(f) of the Universities Act, 1997 grants authority to the University “to make recommendations for the awarding of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, prizes or other awards”.

2.1.2 Employment Equality Acts, 1998 -2015

The Equality Employment Acts 1998-2015 prohibit discrimination under the grounds of Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Race, Age, Religious belief, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Membership of the Traveller Community. Decisions taken in regard to conditions of employment should ensure that discrimination has not taken place on the basis of any of the grounds named above.

2.2 Other Context

2.2.1 University of Limerick Strategic Plan 2019-2024

The University of Limerick's Strategic Plan 2019-2024 "UL@50" outlines the operating context for the University and the specific aims of the University to further build its reputation internationally as a university recognised for its research, impact and distinctiveness and as a significant contributor to solving global challenges.

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for the Policy for the award of Distinguished Professorships

3.1.1 Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Operation of the Policy

The operational structure of the scheme is designed to employ procedures which are seen to be transparently fair and thorough and which are accepted as such by the academic community.

4 Related Procedures for Policy for the Award of Distinguished Professorships

4.1 Criteria

Nominees must have achieved international recognition for the excellence of their contribution to their field through their research and scholarship. In addition, the individual must have either been clearly identified by students, colleagues, or external agencies as an outstanding teacher, or must have contributed significant public service through their efforts and accomplishments in their academic discipline.

4.2 Procedure

Any Department or current member of the University community may nominate an individual who meets the foregoing qualifications for a Distinguished Professorship.

Nominations shall be addressed to the Dean of the Faculty via a Distinguished Professorship nomination form and shall include as much supporting documentation as possible. The Dean shall forward any nominations they support with a written recommendation to the Provost.

Each Dean is responsible for ensuring that members of faculty throughout their careers are well informed regarding the exceptional levels of achievement required before an individual should be considered for a Distinguished Professorship.

4.3 Nomination Documentation

The nomination must include a completed Distinguished Professorship nomination form and include as much supporting documentation as possible. Nomination documents are available at the Human Resources website.

4.4 Assessment

4.4.1 Composition of Committee

Nominations for awards of Distinguished Professorships will be considered by a committee, to be termed “the Distinguished Professorship Committee”, with the following composition:

- President (Chair)
- Provost
- Vice President Research
- Dean of the home Faculty
- One Academic representative nominee from Governing Authority
- One nominee from Academic Council
- One nominee from existing Distinguished Professors (where applicable, and as chosen by the President)
- At least one external subject specialist (where members of the academic community, they must be at Professorial/Head of Department level)
- A HR representative (non-voting) will be present at meetings.

4.4.2 Voting members of the Committee should reflect an appropriate gender balance (minimum 40%).

4.4.3 In the event of a Committee member(s) becoming unavailable for the Committee review meeting, it will be open to the President to nominate a replacement(s) or to determine whether the process proceeds or not.

4.4.4 A nominee may not be a member of the Committee and will be replaced by a nominee of the President.

4.5 Decision

4.5.1 The Committee will, in the context of the totality of the information available to it, decide on the nominations and (a) make a positive recommendation to

Governing Authority for adoption, or (b) make no recommendation and, in such cases, no Distinguished Professorships will be awarded.

4.5.2 Where awarding of a Distinguished Professorship is not recommended, the nominee will be informed of the decision in writing by the Committee. Such communication should make it clear that the recommendation of the Selection Board is subject to the approval of the Governing Authority.

5 Implementation of a Positive Recommendation

5.1 Appointment

Appointments recommended by the President and confirmed by the Governing Authority will be recognised during a meeting of the University convened for this specific purpose.

6 Document Control

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