

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR POLICY

Section	Organisation Management and Governance
Contact	Vice-Chancellor
Last Review	March 2023
Next Review	March 2028
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Effective from	March 2023

Purpose:

This Policy sets out the principles, criteria, and process for the award of the role and title of Distinguished Professor at Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa.

Background:

The title of Distinguished Professor has been established by the university to recognize professorial staff members who have achieved positions of eminence internationally in their field. The award of this title brings with it the highest recognition the university can bestow on a member of its academic staff and reflects the importance it places on the work and achievement of the recipients.

Awarding Distinguished Professorship also aligns with the university's Strategy to '*invest in research dissemination and actively benchmark our outputs to global standards to inform excellence and standing in research performance*' and '*demonstrating authentic leadership in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand*' (Pou Rangahau); and '*to build connections, both domestically and internationally*' (Pou Hono).

Policy:

Eligibility

1. Nominees must be full-time or part-time (minimum of 0.5 FTE) members of the professor staff who have been employed by Massey University continuously for the past five years prior to the date of nomination. Nominees who have not yet attained the required five years' continuous prior service at Massey University may only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
2. Nominees must:
 - (a) have attained prominence of international standing as a pre-eminent authority and have made outstanding contributions which are widely recognised as making a substantial intellectual contribution (rather than an incremental extension of existing knowledge) and as having redirected scholarship, in their field; and
 - (b) exhibit exemplary national and international leadership in teaching, research, creative activity and/or enterprise and research commercialisation and/or service; and
 - (c) conform with professional standards and conduct that could be reasonably expected of a person at their current level of appointment.

Criteria

The rationale for making the award of Distinguished Professor are:

- to acknowledge excellence among existing professorial staff members and confer upon them a special status which in turn enhances the reputation of the university.
- to attract excellent new talent to the university; and
- to act as a retention mechanism by which the university might retain an excellent performer in a competitive employment environment.

The primary criterion for selection will be the eminence, not merely excellence, of the nominee's work as attested to by the national and international recognition of the highest order which they have received from the scholarly community, with a baseline of sound integrity and respectful engagement. Typically, this will be measured across all three areas of academic responsibility – research and scholarly activity, teaching, and service.

Some non-exclusive examples of specific criteria are:

- international recognition through notable citations of published works.
- international acclaim of creative works.
- distinguished leadership through innovative pedagogy and curriculum development.
- the receipt of awards, prizes, or fellowships from international bodies, noting that in fields with few or no awards other recognised indicators of acknowledged intellectual leadership may be provided.
- invited presentations of keynote lectures or esteemed plenary sessions at international meetings.
- the successful application of patents and licences based on original research.
- distinctive and distinguished academic service contributions to the discipline/institution/nation.

A limited proportion of the university's active Professoriate will hold this title commensurate with its status, with normally no more than fifteen Distinguished Professors in employment with the university at any time.

Nominations process

Upon invitation from the Vice-Chancellor, which will take place no less than every three years, nominations for Distinguished Professor may be made by any Pro Vice-Chancellor of the university. It is not possible to apply for the role of Distinguished Professor.

The following information should be included in the nomination in the order set out below:

- A cover page listing the name of the nominee, Department/Institute/School, number of years of employment at the university and a supporting statement prepared by the nominator which should also attest that there are no known issues of integrity or character reputation that would not be befitting for holding the title.
- A current curriculum vitae of the nominee including identification of their most distinguished contributions at national and international level, as relevant to the discipline.
- Discipline-relevant supporting material should be provided.
- Supporting statements from the applicable College Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- External Referee Reports from highly respected peers which reflect the required standards being met and strongly endorsing the Distinguished Professor designation (up to five with a minimum of three reports, with the university reserving the right to source additional referees).

Selection process

The Pro Vice-Chancellor or the candidate may nominate the external referees, but the Vice-Chancellor reserves the right to approach any or all of them, as well as any other referees of the Vice-Chancellor's choice.

Once the Vice-Chancellor has made their selection of referees, and referee reports have been obtained, those referee reports will be made available to members of the Distinguished Professor Selection Committee, along with the information provided in support of the candidate's nomination, to consider the nomination.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor of the nominee's College will be invited to present the individual case to the Distinguished Professor Selection Committee but will not be present for deliberations of the Committee.

The Distinguished Professor Selection Committee will be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, and comprise members of the Professorial Promotions Committee, the Chancellor, or their nominee from among the lay members of Council, one Professor, external to the university, appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, and a current Massey University Distinguished Professor. The Committee shall include a Māori member who may either be drawn from staff or from Council.

Before an appointment as a Distinguished Professor is made, the Vice-Chancellor will ensure that the outcome of the Distinguished Professor Selection Committee is endorsed by Council.

Tenure and Responsibilities

Recipients shall hold the role and title of Distinguished Professor for the duration of their substantive appointment at Massey University.

A supplementary employment contract recording the award, and its terms and responsibilities, will be entered into between the university and the recipient of the Distinguished Professorship. The contract may provide for expectations around delivery of regular public addresses by the Distinguished Professor.

Appointment as a Distinguished Professor will be subject to a requirement by the individual to observe professional standards including university policies on conduct, the [Policy on Staff Conduct](#), research, teaching and public commentary. To protect the integrity of the award and the reputation of the university, the title of Distinguished Professor may be discontinued, or the status withdrawn at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor. There is no appeal process to such a decision.

In the event that the university considers discontinuing a Distinguished Professorship, it must observe the principles of natural justice and due process, including notifying the applicable Distinguished Professor of the alleged conduct and of the potential for loss of the title; providing an opportunity for them to respond; and considering that response before making any decisions.

Awarding the title 'Emeritus/Emerita Professor' may be considered by the university in a case where a Distinguished Professor's appointment at Massey University, and therefore their Distinguished Professorship, comes to an end. There are separate Regulations supporting the process of awarding the title of 'Emeritus/Emerita Professor'.

Remuneration

The university may offer financial or in-kind remuneration to a Distinguished Professor, and this must be recognised in a supplementary employment contract between the individual staff member and the university.

Such remuneration will be paid on an annual basis as a separate allowance and will be applied consistently across the university for all staff awarded the title of Distinguished Professor.

Definitions:

Distinguished Professor: A highly prestigious and honorary title accorded to eminent professors who have made exceptional and sustained contributions to their field, discipline, or industry, and who may demonstrably contribute to building the reputation of Massey University within New Zealand and internationally.

Distinguished Professor Selection Committee: A committee tasked with the selection of Distinguished Professors, which committee is constituted as described in this Policy, and is chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

Audience:

Pro Vice-Chancellors
Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Provost
Heads of Academic Schools (or equivalent)
Massey University Professors

Relevant legislation:

None

Legal compliance:

None

Related policies and procedures:

[Policy on Staff Conduct](#)
[Regulations and Criteria for the Conferment of Honorary Degrees, Professor Emeritus/Emerita Titles, and Awarding of University Medals](#)