

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

Criteria and Procedures for Application

Criteria for Distinguished Professor Rank

1. Promotion to the Distinguished Professor rank is the highest honor that the University bestows on a faculty member. It is intended to signify a select group of faculty members who are leaders in their respective fields as attested by national and/or international reputation. Because the title “distinguished” implies that a limited number of faculty members will attain this rank, no more than two new appointments shall be made each academic year.

There is no expectation that an appointment will always occur. Appointment to the rank of Distinguished Professor will be made only if it is clearly established that the individual is committed to sustaining a record of exemplary intellectual/creative accomplishments necessary to maintain national and/or international reputation.

While the main criterion is a record of extraordinary performance in research or creative activity, candidates will also demonstrate excellent performance in teaching and service as defined by their department’s merit performance guidelines. An excellent record of teaching, broadly defined, would not in itself sufficiently qualify a candidate for promotion to this rank. However, a Professor who has an excellent record in teaching and has gained a national or international reputation (e.g., through peer-reviewed publications) on his/her pedagogical methods or theories could readily qualify.

2. Such recognition may have been established at this or another institution as a result of extraordinary accomplishments in the area of research/creative activity. To be eligible for Distinguished Professor rank an individual must have Professor rank for a minimum of five years, with at least three years in the rank at Missouri State University; have a record of extraordinary performance in research with a national or international reputation; have a sustained record of excellence in both teaching and service.

It is the candidate’s duty to document all claims made regarding the outside nature of his/her performance. Candidates will provide:

- a. An extensive record of original work in leading publications/venues at the national/international level, with original work refereed by credible sources in the candidate’s particular discipline. Documentation of scholarship quality should include a collection of the following: awards, published journal rankings in the applicant’s field, acceptance rates, impact factors, citation indices, critical reviews, and evidence of leadership roles in national/international organizations relative to the area of candidate’s expertise or pursuant to their accomplishments;
- b. Evidence of effective teaching and service as determined by departmental evaluations.

Application and Review Procedures

Application Procedures: The candidate will present his/her application portfolio to the chair of the department's appropriate departmental evaluation committee, who will be responsible for the security of the portfolio. A complete application includes the following:

- Cover letter: The applicant's cover letter should provide appropriate documentation explaining significance and impact of the applicant's work. The applicant must recognize that it may be difficult for members of his/her own department to make such an assessment, and even more so for those making evaluations outside the department. Therefore, it is the applicant's responsibility to provide an exposition of the documentation that addresses the significance of his/her work, and to do so in a manner comprehensible to faculty members from a wide variety of disciplines.
- *Curriculum vitae*
- Copies of selected publications, abstracts, and other supporting documentation.
- External letters or recommendation:
 - External evaluations from individuals who are themselves qualified to assess the candidate's reputation and contributions are essential to establishing the candidate's national or international reputation. A minimum of three letters will be required.
 - The process of soliciting external evaluations ideally should start in the spring semester prior to the academic year in which the candidate intends to apply for promotion, following the schedule set out for other promotions. Due to the release of these criteria and opportunity, applicants are expected to begin in early summer and follow the established timelines for other promotions as outlined in the published T&P calendar. The applicant and Department Head will meet to develop two listings from which external reviewers will be selected. Ideally, the faculty will submit four names and the Department Head will submit four names, working collaboratively with the appropriate departmental evaluation committee, to create the pool of potential peer reviewers.
 - Because the key criterion for the rank is national or international reputation for contributions in the applicant's professional field, it will be essential to identify reviewers who are themselves qualified to make such judgment. It will be the responsibility of the individual recommending the reviewer (applicant or Department Head) to provide documentation of that reviewer's qualifications. The list will be reviewed by the applicant's dean to verify that the credentials of the potential reviewers meet the appropriate standards.
 - The applicant and Department Head, in conjunction with the appropriate departmental evaluation committee, will consult to establish a ranked list of external reviewers, with at least two names from each list.
 - Once a pool of potential reviewers has been established, the Department Head will follow the rankings and make initial contacts with potential reviewers to determine if they would be willing to provide an evaluation, and able to do so within the time frame required. Solicitations should be made to ensure at least one reviewer each from the candidate's and Head's lists.

- The applicant's evidentiary material should be compiled and sent to the external reviewers as soon as the candidate receives notification from the Provost Office of his/her eligibility for promotion to Distinguished Professor. The solicitations for external review should be accompanied by a cover letter describing the criteria for the Distinguished Professor rank, and should ask reviewers to address specifically the professional aspects of those requirements. The cover letter should clearly state that reference letters will not be confidential.
- Failure of any individual external referee to return an evaluation will not be prejudicial to the promotion decision. However, external evaluations are essential to establish the candidate's national or international reputation in his/her field, and they will be weighted heavily in the promotion decision.
- A five-year plan, describing the applicant's future research agenda. This plan should indicate to evaluators that the applicant has concrete goals for continuing professional work at a very high level.
- Evidence of effective teaching, consistent with the applicant's departmental evaluations.
- Evidence of effective service, consistent with the applicant's departmental evaluations.

Review Procedures: The review procedure will generally follow the steps for other promotions as described in the Faculty Handbook. However, because promotion to Distinguished Professor rank is distinct from other promotions, some steps in the process must of necessity be altered.

- The appropriate departmental evaluation committee shall solicit input and recommendations from all faculty members of Professor rank in the department (excepting the candidate), regarding a candidate's application for promotion to Distinguished Professor. The input may be shared anonymously in written form and/or via a face-to-face meeting.
- Voting members of the appropriate evaluation committee will include all Professors within the department, excluding the Department Head and candidate. In cases where there are fewer than three faculty members at the Professor rank within a department (not including the candidate), the evaluation committee will be complemented by Professors from other departments within the applicant's college, selected by the Dean of the College in consultation with the applicant and Department Head.
- After all faculty input is collected, the appropriate departmental evaluation committee will meet and vote on the recommendation. The department's recommendation and the dossier of materials will then be forwarded to the Department Head.
- The Department Head will add his/her recommendation and forward both recommendation and dossier to the Dean.
- The Dean makes his/her recommendation, and may seek input from a college personnel committee if desired.
- The recommendations from the department committee, the Department Head, and the Dean will be forwarded to the Provost. The Provost, who may seek input from the Provost's Advisory Council on Tenure and Promotion, makes the final recommendation to the President and the Board of Governors.
- The recommendation and written rationale at each level of the application process shall be shared with the applicant, who will sign the document indicating that he/she has been informed of the recommendation.

- Throughout the entire process, confidentiality of information must be maintained. Faculty members at every level of decision-making must assume personal responsibility to ensure confidentiality is not violated.

Salary Adjustment for the rank of Distinguished Professor

Those individuals attaining the rank of Distinguished Professor represent a select group of our faculty members. As such, the promotion is accompanied by a salary increment commensurate with the distinction and funded in accordance with current promotion practices.