

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

Criteria and Procedures for Application

(Updated October 1, 2025)

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.

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. The number of new appointments made each academic year shall be at the discretion of the Provost.

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 academic unit'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 academic unit evaluations.

Application and Review Procedures

Application Procedures: The candidate will present his/her application portfolio to the chair of the academic unit's appropriate 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 academic unit to make such an assessment, and even more so for those making evaluations outside the academic unit. 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.
- 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 academic unit evaluations.
- Evidence of effective service, consistent with the applicant's academic unit 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 academic unit evaluation committee shall solicit input and recommendations from all faculty members of Professor rank in the academic unit (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 academic unit, excluding the Academic Unit Leader and candidate. In cases where there are fewer than three faculty members at the Professor rank within an academic unit (not including the candidate), the evaluation committee will be complemented by Professors from other academic units within the applicant's college, selected by the Dean of the College in consultation with the applicant and Academic Unit Leader.
- After all faculty input is collected, the appropriate evaluation committee will meet and vote on the recommendation. The committee's recommendation and the dossier of materials will then be forwarded to the Academic Unit Leader.
- The Academic Unit Leader will add his/her recommendation and forward both recommendations and the 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 evaluation committee, the Academic Unit Leader, 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.