

Procedure for the Appointment and Re-Appointment of Distinguished Professors

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The English version of this document is the operative version and the Afrikaans version is a translation thereof.

The core of the procedure

An essential factor in Stellenbosch University's (SU) pursuit of success as a 21st-century university is that exceptional academic excellence be recognised and promoted. Such recognition is aligned with Vision 2040 and the Strategic Framework 2019 - 2024 and a material enabler for systematically optimising and diversifying the knowledge base at senior level. Therefore, the University offers the opportunity for a limited number of professors to be appointed for a fixed period of time as distinguished professors. In this way such distinguished professors are also granted appropriate status in relation to senior professors at other South African universities.

1. Understanding of the terms “appointment” and “reappointment”

The opportunity of holding the title of distinguished professor does not amount to a separate appointment. Instead, it is an honour bestowed upon an individual in recognition of academic excellence. Hence, the title is only bestowed upon existing SU employees or suitable persons from outside SU who are to be appointed directly as distinguished professors. Accordingly, for the purposes of this document, the terms “appointment” and “reappointment” refers to the bestowal of the title of distinguished professor upon an individual by SU.

2. Requirements

2.1 General requirements

The following general requirements apply when considering appointment as distinguished professor:

- 2.1.1 In general, an SU academic staff member must have been appointed as professor for at least five years and must meet the requirements set out in 2.2 and 2.3. (This applies equally to permanent staff at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Military Science upon whom the University has conferred the academic rank of professor.)
- 2.1.2 In cases where suitable persons from outside SU are to be appointed directly as distinguished professors, the relevant Faculty Appointment and Promotion Committee (AAPC) and the Appointments Committee of Senate (AC(S)) must be satisfied that the persons concerned meet the requirements set out in paragraph 2.2.

2.2 Specific requirements

Candidates for a distinguished professorship must exhibit an optimal fit with the objectives that SU pursues according to Vision 2040 and the Strategic Framework 2019–2024, including demonstrating the values of excellence, compassion, accountability, respect and equity, must have international stature and impact (depending on the context of the specific faculty) and show evidence of (a) exceptional performance and (b) leadership in higher education, especially in the following areas:

- research and publications
- postgraduate supervision
- learning and teaching
- social impact

Professors in PASS environments, such as deans and rectorate members, do not qualify.

2.3 Performance

In addition to the specific requirements set out above, a candidate's performance marks should be within the top 10% of performance marks in a particular faculty for the preceding three years. All distinguished professors must maintain this performance level for the duration of the period of appointment, failing which the appointment can be terminated before the end of the appointment period. Equivalent performance is expected from external candidates.

3. Term of appointment

- 3.1 A term of appointment is for a maximum period of five years.
- 3.2 Thereafter, applications by the relevant committees or the individual (see paragraph 5) may motivate for the possible reappointment for another term as distinguished professor.
- 3.3 When a distinguished professor reaches SU's normal retirement age of 65, the appointment expires automatically unless such an individual has been allowed to continue service beyond age 65. In the latter case, the individual's appointment as distinguished professor terminates at the end of the five-year period.
- 3.4 No appointment/reappointment of an individual as a distinguished professor will be considered where the individual is age 65 or older and irrespective whether the individual has been allowed to continue in service beyond age 65.

4. Limited numbers

- 4.1 Appointment as distinguished professor is an honour with appointees being widely recognised as influential individuals on both the national and global stage by virtue of their esteemed academic status and recognition of their overall academic achievements. Therefore, any such appointments will be considered only in exceptional cases where sustained excellence over an extended period has been clearly demonstrated. The number of distinguished professors appointed at any given time should represent up to 15% of full professors at SU.
- 4.2 The category of distinguished professors must reflect the objectives pursued according to Vision 2040 and the Strategic Framework 2019–2024 – also including inclusivity and the transformation imperative, as well as taking the principles of the Code for Employment Equity and Diversity into consideration.
- 4.3 As a general point of departure SU strives towards appointing distinguished professors from the full spectrum of academic disciplines at the University rather than limiting such appointments to a few environments.

5. Appointment and reappointment process

- 5.1 The continuation of the practice of the appointment and reappointment of distinguished professors is dependent upon financial sustainability and further subject to an individual meeting the requirements for distinguished professors as set out in paragraph 2.2 and 2.3.
- 5.2 Depending on vacancies and the availability of funding, the appointment and/or reappointment process for distinguished professors will be initiated by HR annually.

- 5.3 Deans must follow a faculty process, involving the Faculty Academic Appointments and Promotion Committee (AAPC), to identify and recommend potential candidates for appointment as distinguished professor and to consider reappointments of current distinguished professors.
- 5.4 The AAPC must submit a motivation including an updated curriculum vitae that focuses exclusively on the specific requirements (set out in paragraph 2.2 and 2.3) to the AC(S) for consideration and further recommendation regarding appointability as distinguished professor.
- 5.5 All applications must be supported by at least two independent external referee reports (external to SU) as selected by the faculty that focus pertinently on the candidate's performance regarding the specific requirements set out in paragraph 2.2.
- 5.6 Candidates may also apply by means of self-nomination by submitting an application directly to the relevant Dean for submission to and consideration by the faculty AAPC as set out in paragraph 5.3 above.
- 5.7 Faculty AAPCs must indicate a priority preference regarding all applications from their particular environment. If no priority preference is received, the applications will not be considered.
- 5.8 The AC(S) must consider all applications and make a final evaluation of the quality and suitability, including appointability of the applicants.
- 5.9 The AC(S) evaluates the candidates on the following:
 - Maintained a performance mark within the top 10% of performance marks in the particular faculty for the previous three years
 - Exhibits optimal fit with the objectives that SU pursues
 - International stature and impact
 - Proven exceptional performance and leadership in Higher Education, especially in the following areas:
 - Research and publications
 - Postgraduate supervision
 - Learning and Teaching
 - Social Impact
 - Curriculum Vitae
 - External Referee Reports (external to SU)
 - The objectives of Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019 – 2024 including the need for inclusivity, diversity and the transformation imperative.

6. Remuneration (Allowance)

A distinguished professor will be paid a monthly allowance of at least 10% of the Basic Remuneration Level of a professor for the duration of the term of appointment.

7. Supporting documents

Item no.	Name of document	Status

	None	
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8. Related documents

Item no.	Name of document	Status
	Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019 - 2024	
RM0081	Remuneration Policy	
PM0301	Performance Management Policy and Strategy	
AP0050	Code for Employment Equity and Diversity	
CS0054	Regulation for appointment and/or continuation of service after the age of 65	

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