

DISTINGUISHED PREFIX REVIEW COMMITTEE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. DEFINITIONS

The definitions below originated in the February 27, 1992, University of Wisconsin System guidelines for Distinguished prefix interpretation.

Distinguished prefix is defined as follows:

A Professional, Instructional or Research academic staff member at the Distinguished level performs at a level of proficiency typically requiring extensive experience and advanced knowledge and skills. The expertise of an academic staff member at this level is commonly recognized by his or her peers and through a reputation which extends beyond his or her work unit. A Distinguished academic staff member is expected to develop new approaches, methods or techniques to resolve or prevent problems with little or no expert guidance and to cope independently with new, unexpected or complex situations. At this level, an academic staff member can be expected to guide or train other academic staff or to oversee their work. Currently, only Category A academic staff in the Professional title series and selected Category B academic staff in the Instructional and Research title series are eligible for the Distinguished prefix (see the [Unclassified Title Guideline \(UTG\)](#)).

A **work unit** is defined as follows:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is considered a "work unit" for purposes of prefix assignment. Departments, schools, or colleges within the institution are not considered "work units" for this purpose.

Peer recognition is defined as follows:

Peers should not be interpreted to mean "colleagues". While an employee may be recognized for excellence, achievement or exceptional skill by academic staff colleagues within the institution and within the UW System, "peer recognition" applies to a reputation of excellence in a profession, recognized by individuals or groups in the same profession normally found or organized outside the UW System.

II. ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION

Promotion to the rank of **Distinguished** is reserved for a small number of academic staff (normally at the senior level or top level of their title series) whose superlative accomplishments are evidenced by widespread peer recognition. Candidates for consideration for the Distinguished prefix are expected to have had at least ten years of progressively more responsible experience in their field. Attainment of the Distinguished prefix is not the end result of normal career progression. Neither seniority nor longevity is sufficient for award of this designation. Candidates will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section III (below) of this document entitled "Guidelines". Nominations may be initiated by the candidate's director, departmental chair or unit head or **by the candidate**. The candidate has the right to withdraw from the process at any point during the review.

III. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to help develop documentation for nomination for the Distinguished prefix:

- A. A candidate nominated for the Distinguished prefix is expected to be truly outstanding in his or her field of expertise, as evidenced by peer recognition. The candidate must have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance. Academic staff members on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus have varying commitments to teaching, research, clinical activities, outreach, service and administration. It is expected that any single candidate for **Distinguished** status will be outstanding in one or more of these areas. In addition to evaluation of specific areas of function, qualities such as those listed below should be evaluated and this information incorporated into the document. These qualities are not listed in order of importance, nor will all necessarily apply to every candidate:

- Initiative and self-motivation
- Problem solving ability and creativity
- Technical competence
- Productivity and quality of work
- Judgment
- Ability to communicate and interact with colleagues, patients and students, etc.
- Supervisory skills
- Willingness and ability to assume responsibility
- Coordinative abilities

- B. The Distinguished Prefix Review Committee (DPRC), charged with reviewing and approving nominations, shall review three major criteria for awarding the **Distinguished** prefix.

1. **Expert Status**

The candidate must be a recognized expert in his or her field. The level of peer recognition should normally extend outside the University of Wisconsin System, i.e., state, regional, national, or possibly international.

Evidence of expert status may include, but is not limited to:

- Serving as a consultant for professional organizations or agencies
- Providing expert advice or testimony in field of expertise
- Serving as a reviewer for scholarly or technical publications
- Presenting papers, abstracts, etc. at regional, national and international meetings
- Serving as an editor for professional publications
- Serving as a reviewer for granting organizations
- Being invited to contribute book chapters
- Being selected as the University of Wisconsin-Madison representative at workshops, meetings, collaborative projects, etc.
- international use Preparing articles, teaching materials, or other materials that receive national or
- Being selected to receive an award for excellence in the field

2. **Outstanding Accomplishments**

The candidate must demonstrate unique and outstanding performance in his or her field of expertise. Evidence of outstanding performance may include, but is not limited to:

- Research, technical or related publications
- Awards from professional organizations
- Extramural grant awards
- Summaries of teaching or other performance evaluations
- Recognition of outstanding performance by clients or other members of the public

3. **Breadth of Impact**

The candidate's expertise and accomplishments must be of such stature as to influence significantly the direction of his or her field of work. Evidence of breadth of impact may include, but is not limited to:

- Development of innovative methods, techniques or professional skills that are normally recognized and applied beyond the University of Wisconsin System
- Service in leadership positions within the candidate's field that can influence the direction of the profession
- Contributions that affect legislative or governmental policy

IV. **DOCUMENTATION**

A. **REQUIRED**

In order to facilitate the Distinguished Prefix Review Committee (DPRC) review of documentation for academic staff recommended for the Distinguished prefix, the following minimum materials are to be provided as a single packet:

1. A completed "Request for Rate and/or Title Change" form.
2. A one- or two-page personal statement by the candidate indicating why he or she is qualified for the Distinguished prefix.
3. A cover letter from dean or director. (If the appointment is split among two or more units, the packet must include letters from all deans/directors involved.)
4. A cover letter from the unit head or departmental chair, including an indication of the vote of the Executive Committee or equivalent, if applicable. (If the appointment is split among two or more units, the packet must include letters from all department chairs or unit heads involved.) This letter should include a proposed effective date of the Distinguished prefix. Since the most important consideration is the extraordinary qualities of the candidate, the letter should describe the distinctive capabilities, performance and contributions of the individual. A statement from the unit or department evaluating the candidate's value to the department, unit or program is required.
5. A cover letter from the candidate's supervisor if that person is not the unit head or departmental chair. (If the appointment is split among two or more units, the packet must include letters from all supervisors involved.)

6. A job description for the current position, including the nature and scope of the duties and responsibilities. Documentation should reflect the relative weight of each area and contributions of the candidate in each area.
7. A detailed résumé or curriculum vitae indicating background and experience, annotated as appropriate to provide information on previous training, job responsibilities and professional development efforts.
8. A minimum of four and a maximum of six letters of recommendation from those who can speak to the talents of the individual and evaluate his or her performance. At least two letters must be from outside the University of Wisconsin System. Letters should compare the quality and productivity of the candidate with others of similar rank and experience, if applicable. A copy of the soliciting letter from the departmental chair or unit head must be included along with a brief explanation of how individuals were selected for this process and their relationship to the candidate. In addition, a short description of the qualifications of each respondent must be included. A copy of **all** letters of response to the departmental or unit head must be submitted to the DPRC for review. The candidate should not submit letters written by a member of this Committee.

B. OPTIONAL

Any additional material the candidate or nominating unit feels would be helpful in the evaluation process may be submitted. This may include but is not limited to unsolicited letters from clients, patients, students, or outside agencies.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE PACKET

The packet should be fastened with a metal clip and include a Table of Contents with all pages numbered sequentially. The following order is suggested as optimum for preparation and presentation of the document:

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| Section 1: | Completed Request for Rate and/or Title Change Form |
| Section 2: | Personal statement |
| Section 3: | Cover letter from the dean or director |
| Section 4: | Cover letter from the unit head or departmental chair |
| Section 5: | Cover letter from supervisor |
| Section 6: | Job description |
| Section 7: | Résumé or curriculum vitae |
| Section 8: | Letters of recommendation |
| Section 9: | Any optional material |

VI. SAMPLE PACKET

An exemplary sample packet is available for examination in the Academic Personnel Office (APO), 166 Bascom Hall.

VII. SUBMISSION OF PACKET

Packets may be submitted at any time. Packets received by the Distinguished Prefix Review Committee before February 1st will be reviewed at the Committee's Spring meeting(s). Packets received before August 1st will be reviewed at the Committee's Fall meeting(s).

VIII. REVIEW PROCESS

- A. The candidate's materials should be forwarded to the appropriate department or unit office.
- B. Following review by the candidate's director, departmental chair or unit head, 1 copy of the packet together with a cover letter shall be forwarded to the appropriate dean's or director's office.
- C. The dean's or director's office shall submit 13 copies of the complete packet together with a cover letter to the Secretary of the Academic Staff which will forward 12 copies to the members of the Distinguished Prefix Review Committee (DPRC), and will also notify the candidate of receipt of the packet.
- D. After review, the DPRC will send its recommendation and one copy of the complete packet to the Secretary of the Academic Staff. The Secretary of the Academic Staff will notify the dean or director, the candidate and the department(s) or unit office(s).
- E. Within 30 working days, the dean or director will accept or reject the recommendation and will notify the candidate in writing with copies to Secretary of the Academic Staff, the Academic Personnel Office, and the candidate's department(s) or unit(s).

IX. APPEAL PROCESS

- A. If the DPRC finds that a **candidate meets the criteria** for the Distinguished prefix:
 - 1. If the dean or director agrees with the recommendation of the DPRC, the candidate receives the Distinguished prefix. Disputes about starting date, salary increase, etc. shall be resolved within the department or unit, with assistance from the dean's or director's office, to the extent possible. If the candidate is not satisfied with the resolution, disputes may be handled under the regular grievance procedure of ASPP Chapter 7.
 - 2. If the dean or director does NOT agree with the recommendation of the DPRC, the candidate does not receive the Distinguished prefix. The dean or director shall notify the candidate in writing of the reasons for the decision. A copy of this letter shall be forwarded to the chair of the DPRC, the Secretary of the Academic Staff, the Academic Personnel Office, and the department or unit. The candidate may appeal under the grievance procedure outlined in ASPP Chapter 7, but the grievance commences at Step 2 (appeal to dean or director).
- B. If the DPRC finds that a **candidate does NOT meet the criteria** for the Distinguished prefix:
 - 1. The candidate may ask DPRC to reconsider the candidate's qualifications; the candidate may provide additional information to DPRC; the candidate may ask to make a 10-minute presentation to the Committee in defense of the candidate's qualifications.
 - 2. If the dean or director does NOT agree with the recommendations of the DPRC, the candidate receives the Distinguished prefix. In cases where the DPRC's recommendation is not being followed, the dean or director shall explain the reasons in writing to the chair of the DPRC. Copies are to be sent to the Chancellor, the Secretary of the Academic Staff, the Academic Personnel Office, and the candidate.

3. If the dean or director agrees with the recommendations of the DPRC, the candidate does NOT receive the Distinguished prefix. The candidate may appeal only as follows:
 - a. The scope of review is limited to the question of whether the DPRC's decision was based in any significant degree upon one or more of the following factors, with material prejudice to the individual candidate:
 - (1) Factors proscribed by applicable state or federal law regarding fair employment practices were present.
 - (2) The procedures required by the DPRC were not followed.
 - (3) Available information provided by the candidate bearing on the quality of the candidate's qualifications was not considered by the DPRC.
 - (4) Unfounded, arbitrary or irrelevant assumptions of fact were made by the DPRC about the candidate's qualifications.
 - b. The burden of proof in such an appeal shall be on the candidate.
 - c. The Academic Staff Appeals Committee shall hear the appeal.
 - d. The Academic Staff Appeals Committee shall present written findings of fact and recommendations to the Chancellor or designee and to the appropriate dean or director, with a copy to the candidate. The Chancellor or designee shall implement the recommendations or give the candidate written reasons for modifying the recommendations. The decision of the Chancellor or designee shall be final.

X. COMMITTEE AND STRUCTURE

- A. **Membership:** The Distinguished Prefix Review Committee shall consist of 12 members who have either served on an Area Review Committee for indefinite status or been granted the Distinguished prefix. The committee shall be appointed by the Chancellor or designee upon recommendations made by the Academic Staff Executive Committee with the advice of the Nominating Committee.
- B. **Term:** Each term shall be for three years. Appointments to complete the terms of members who resign shall be made by the Chancellor or designee upon recommendation of the Academic Staff Executive Committee.

XI. REPORTS

The chair of the DPRC shall provide an annual report to the Personnel Policies and Procedures Committee detailing the number of nominees reviewed, the Committee's recommendations and the number of Distinguished prefixes awarded.