

PERSONNEL/CONFIDENTIAL

November 2025

To: Heads of Department
cc: Heads of Administration and Finance

Recognition of Distinction Exercise 2026

I am sharing a link to the [Information for RoD Applicants and Procedures](#) for the 2026 Recognition of Distinction Exercise agreed by the People Committee. Please note that applications may be submitted from 17 November 2025 and the **closing date for applications is 12 noon on 15 January 2026**. A notice will appear in the Gazette on 27 November 2025.

Please could you circulate the [Information for RoD Applicants 2026](#) as widely as possible to appropriate staff within your department, and arrange for it to be publicised appropriately in your department.

All those employed by the University in academic or senior research roles are eligible to apply, as are other University employees who are making a significant and sustained academic contribution to the University.

Individuals not employed by the University, but who are employed on a long-term basis by an Oxford college or Permanent Private Hall, or by a Recognised Independent Centre, or by the NHS, and who, in the view of the divisional committee, are making a significant and sustained academic contribution to the University's work, are eligible to be considered for title.

The following specific points regarding the roles of heads of department are drawn to your attention:

- **Individuals are strongly encouraged to take advice on their potential application from their Head of Department, wherever possible.** The Head may refer them to other senior members of the department for such advice. However, it should be noted that encouragement to apply cannot guarantee a successful outcome.

- **Heads of Department are asked to engage fully in this exercise and will be expected to attend, observe and answer any questions that may arise within the MSD Divisional RoD Committee discussions due to take place on 13 May 2026, when individual applications from departments will be considered. Please make a note of this date in your diary. Heads of Department will also be required to attend any feedback meetings for those whose applications have been unsuccessful. You should consider carefully whether the applications fully meet all three of the below criteria and where in doubt, encourage applicants to defer to a future exercise if appropriate. Your reference for each applicant should also be explicit about the level of support you have given, and whether in your opinion they meet the published criteria for the award of title at Oxford:**

Research

An ongoing research record characterised by a significant influence on the field of study, of a high order of excellence and international standing, and the quality of which in terms of research distinction is at least equal to that expected of those appointed to full professorships at other leading international research universities.

Teaching

An ongoing record of effective teaching for the University and for colleges concomitant with the duties of the University post and the college fellowship (where one is held).

Good citizenship

An ongoing record of involvement in University and/or college administration concomitant with the duties of the University post and the college fellowship (where one is held), and demonstrable competence in such administration.

- Departments should ensure that appropriate mentoring arrangements are put in place for eligible staff within the division who have not achieved the title of full professor. **Particular consideration should be given to arrangements for mentoring individuals who have applied unsuccessfully on more than one occasion and those who work overseas.** Mentoring should assist potential applicants to understand the application process for the recognition of distinction exercise, and the criteria and standards that a successful application would need to satisfy.
- A review of the outcomes of previous exercises showed that overall women were less likely to apply than men. There is a suggestion that women may be setting themselves a higher threshold of achievement before applying, and this is something to bear in mind in discussion with potential female applicants.
- Applicants are required to arrange for references from the head of department (or head of division if the applicant is a head of department). The Head, however, may delegate the writing of the reference. The principal function of these references is to give an assessment of the individual's contributions against the criteria for teaching and "good citizenship, including their contribution to equality, diversity and inclusion activities within their group, department or institution". The head of department reference may also address the research criterion. This reference needs to be submitted to distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk by 12 noon on 27 February 2026.



- Applicants are also required to arrange for references from one research referee of their own choice, who may be either internal to Oxford or external. It would be most helpful to divisional Recognition of Distinction committees if the research reference explained how the applicant's work fits within the field of research, as this will assist them in evaluating the work and in interpreting the other research evaluations. Research referees may also address the teaching and/or the good citizenship criteria if they wish to do so. This reference needs to be submitted to distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk by 12 noon on 15 January 2026.
- Applicants are also required to arrange for references from their head of house, in all cases where applicants have a college attachment which carries the expectation that they will undertake some teaching and/or good citizenship (e.g. acting as college advisor to a group of graduate students). However, if an applicant has a college association which amounts to no more than, say, occasional SCR dining rights, there is no need for the head of house to provide a reference. This reference needs to be submitted to distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk by 12 noon on 15 January 2026.
- Applicants who have applied in a previous round in the past 3 years should submit a short summary (not more than half a page) outlining significant changes since their previous application against the criteria.

The *Information for RoD Applicants 2026* also appears in the *Gazette* and on the HR Support website at <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/recognition-of-distinction>.

The [Medical Sciences webpages](#) contain further information and FAQs that may be particularly useful for those based overseas and/or those applying from under-represented groups.

Questions about the process can be directed to Gillian Morris or Ingunn Haugen via distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk. A separate communication will follow about applications for the Professor of Practice (PoP) title in MSD.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Screaton'.

Professor Gavin Screaton
Head of the Medical Sciences Division