

1. Criteria & Eligibility

Who can apply?

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. You are strongly encouraged to seek advice from your Head of Department before you apply.

Can I apply if I am not employed by the University?

Yes, if the divisional committee judges that you make a sustained academic contribution. Individuals not employed by the University, but who are employed on a long-term basis by another party (including 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.

What are the criteria for the RoD title?

You must meet all three criteria: Research, Teaching, and Good Citizenship.

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.

What is the Professor of Practice route?

PoP title is for exceptional people whose achievements and abilities are internationally recognised, but who are not able to fulfil both teaching and research criteria of the RoD process. The panel is the same panel as for RoD, and RoD and PoP applications are considered together, at the same time, as part of a gathered field exercise.

There is currently no AP equivalent of PoP.

The criterion for the title of PoP is:

A Professor of Practice will have an international standing and reputation in their field that will enhance the division's reputation for excellence in teaching, public engagement and/or research. They will have a significant and influential track record of senior professional experience beyond the higher education sector; a range of published outputs recognised as world-leading in the context of professional practice; a demonstrable commitment to education; and the ability to deliver effective teaching.

I've applied for full title, in the event the Committee only agree I have fully met two of the required criteria can I be awarded PoP title?

Yes, the committee can consider whether the title of Professor of Practice is more appropriate than the title of full professor.

2. The Application

Is there a size limit on applications?

Yes — one document of no more than 12 sides of A4, minimum Arial 10, including lists of publications etc. Any additional information, such as a covering letter (should you wish to include one), must be included within the 12-side page limit.

Who arranges the references?

You must arrange references from the Head of Department, Head of House, and one research referee (internal or external to Oxford). These references should be emailed directly to distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk by the deadline (HoD references by a later deadline).

My referees haven't come back to me by 15 Jan, will my application be able to be considered?

We would ask that you contact your referees as early as possible. In exceptional circumstances we would accept a late reference.

Do applicants need to propose external assessors?

No — these are nominated centrally. The external referees will be nominated by heads of departments at the start of the exercise, and references will be sought by the centre. We will be requesting 5 or 6 independent referee names, their full titles, departments, institutions and current email addresses.

Who will see my application?

The divisional committee, the Senior Appointments Panel, and external assessors (research only). Personal circumstances disclosures will be seen by the divisional committee and the Senior Appointments Panel but not by independent assessors and will be treated as strictly confidential.

3. The Process

Do applicants appear before the panel?

No. Only Heads of Department (or their nominees) may be invited to answer questions.

Can Heads of Department view applications beforehand?

Only the divisional committee sees full packs. Heads of Departments may wish to ask their applicants to forward copies of their applications.

When does the Distinctions Committee meet?

The date is published annually. For the 2026 RoD Exercise the meeting date is 13 May 2026.

4. Repeat Applications & Personal Circumstances

Can references from a previous year be reused?

Yes — if submitted within the last 3 years and updated appropriately. It would be acceptable to refer to references that were submitted when a previous application was made. The accompanying emails from referees would need to be current.

If I've applied before, what else must I submit?

A half-page summary outlining changes since the last application. Applicants who have applied for title in a previous round in the past 3 years should submit a short summary (no more than half a page) outlining significant changes since their previous application against the criteria. Any such summary should be provided as a separate document, not included as part of the 12-page application.

What are personal circumstances and how are they handled?

You are encouraged to disclose circumstances that may, over a period of time, have had a substantial effect on your research, teaching, or citizenship activities. This is intended to cover not only circumstances protected under employment and equality legislation such as maternity leave, but also unusually high loads of teaching and/or administration and/or clinical duties.

Personal circumstances are to be submitted separately and remain confidential to the committees. Any personal disclosure should be provided as a separate document, not included as part of the 12-page application. Disclosures will be seen by the divisional committee and the Senior Appointments Panel but not by independent assessors and will be treated as strictly confidential.

5. Outcomes & Titles

Can the title be awarded outside the RoD exercise?

Yes — in exceptional recruitment or retention cases.

Will successful applicants receive a salary increase?

Only for Associate Professors, Grade 9 or 10 and GLAM Keepers: £3,199 per annum (August 2025 rates) from 1 October 2026 unless they already receive recruitment or retention payments, or have discretionary increments at this level or above.