Procedural Guide on Honorary and Visiting Professorships

This document sets out the criteria and procedure for the nomination and award of the titles of Honorary and Visiting Professor.

1. Criteria, Rights and Obligations

1.1 Honorary Professorships

1.1.1 The title of Honorary Professor may be conferred only on individuals who:

- are not members of the University’s staff and
- are of sufficiently high academic distinction that, were they University of Edinburgh employees, they would be credible candidates for the award of a Personal Chair, and
- hold Directorships of, or lead major research teams in, organisations with which the University has a close working relationship in research (such as Associated Institutions) or hold similar positions in local organisations with which the University has close working relationships in the areas of teaching or research infrastructure support.

Note: Subject to them meeting the appropriate criteria, Senior NHS clinicians are eligible for Honorary Professorships rather than Personal Chairs.

1.1.2 Holders of the title of Honorary Professor have the following rights and obligations:

a) Holders are entitled to the use of the courtesy title of 'Professor'.

b) The title confers no specific rights or privileges, other than the right to receive official University publications (e.g. Calendar, Diary, Bulletin) and to take part in such ceremonial and social functions as may be decided.

c) The title carries with it no obligations on the bearers, other than that of making themselves available, so far as in their own judgement is possible, for consultation by University colleagues. In the event of the bearer leaving Edinburgh to take up another appointment and severing connections with this University, the Honorary Professorship will lapse immediately.

1.2 University of Edinburgh Visiting Professorships

(The criteria and procedure for externally awarded Visiting Professorships are set out separately in section 2.1.2 below.)

The title of Visiting Professor may be conferred only on individuals who:
a) are not eligible for the title of Honorary Professor, and
b) are not members of the University’s staff, and
c) hold or have held Chairs in their own academic institutions or hold or have held positions of comparable standing in a profession, and
d) have agreed to make a significant personal contribution to the teaching or research work of a School involving at least ten days of involvement in a year.

2. Procedure

2.1 The procedure for nomination for an Honorary or Visiting Professorship is determined by Colleges with the following provisos:

2.1.1 Paid Visiting Professorships

Visiting Professorships are normally unpaid. However, where it is proposed to recommend the award of a paid Visiting Professorship, the nomination should first be considered by a College Committee, consisting of at least three persons, of which not more than one should be from the School to which the appointment would be made.

2.1.2 Externally Awarded Visiting Professorships

Visiting Professorships awarded and/or funded by external bodies, such as the Leventis Visiting Professorship should be awarded through the processes connected to those awards, subject to the following requirements:

a) The individual concerned should be of an equivalent standing to those appointed under the criteria in section 1.2.
b) The proposed award should be discussed with a College HR adviser to ensure that the appropriate appointment arrangements are put in place. In particular, it is important to ensure that the employment status of the individual is clear and that appropriate payment arrangements are made, if relevant.
c) The award should be reported to the Personal Chairs Committee through its Secretary.

2.2 The following documentation is required for each nomination:

- a curriculum vitae
- a statement from the Head of College setting out the reason for the nomination
- an indication of to which School the candidate, if successful, would be affiliated
- in relation to nominations for paid Visiting Professorships, confirmation that the case has been approved by a College Committee as stated above.

Referees reports are not required, but may be sought if desired.

2.3 It is recommended that Heads of College review the list of current Honorary and Visiting Professors annually in order to identify any which should cease or any omissions.

2.4 Approval of Honorary and Visiting Professorships is by the relevant Head of College (and may not be delegated) on behalf of the Personal Chairs Committee (PCC), subject to the following exceptions:
2.4.1 Where a proposal is for a paid Visiting Professor, it must be considered by the College HR Manager and the Secretary to the PCC prior to approval by the Head of College.

2.4.2 Where a proposal is for an Honorary or Visiting Professor of Student Learning, approval is by the PCC due to the rarity of such nominations. In such cases the nomination should be forwarded to the Secretary to the PCC. Where possible nominations should be submitted along with nominations for Personal Chair in the annual round. The PCC will consider any such nominations from Colleges and will inform the Head of College of its decision in each case.

2.5 The award of the title of Honorary or Visiting Professor will be for a maximum of three years, and is renewable. Paid Visiting Professorships will be normally be offered as appointments on a part-time, fixed-term basis and incumbents will not hold Chairs.

2.6 Letters notifying nominees of their appointment to Honorary or Visiting Professorships should be sent from Heads of College (or nominees).

2.7 All awards of the Honorary and Visiting Professorships must be notified to the Principal and the Secretary to the PCC, with copies of the documentation, for monitoring purposes.

Review
This procedure was originally produced by HR in January 2010.

Alternative Format
If you require this document in an alternative format, including in Word, please contact UHRS@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 8127.