

QAF009 CONFERRAL OF PROFESSORIAL TITLES AND FELLOWSHIPS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

- 1.1 This policy sets out the procedures for conferring the title of Professor, Associate Professor or Fellow upon a member of the Institute's staff. All conferrals of professorial titles and fellowships will be approved by the Academic Board and reported to the Board of Directors.
- 1.2 Professors and Associate Professors are expected to actively engage in scholarship and provide significant leadership for both staff and students in their disciplines. The conferral of professorial title should be viewed in the context of:
 - a) HELI's commitment to the pursuit of academic excellence by all staff;
 - b) The need to provide encouragement, support and reward for scholarly activities by all staff;
 - c) The need for sustained and consistent leadership, mentoring and professional development activities for all staff.
- 1.3 Academic excellence in the HELI context is defined as a combination of four elements:
 - a) Appropriate qualifications or demonstrable equivalent professional standing;
 - b) Outstanding performance in scholarly activities, which may include peer reviewed publications, and/or national or international recognition;
 - c) A distinguished record of performance in teaching, as evidenced by effective engagement of students in learning, unit and course development, and/or externally acknowledged contributions to teaching in a discipline;
 - d) Exemplary service contributions to a relevant discipline, to HELI and its strategic objectives, to related professions and/or to the higher education sector.

2. Background

To develop an informed position on the use of the term "professor" outside the university sector, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) commissioned the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at Melbourne University in 2009 to produce a paper outlining the current policies, conventions and practices among Australian higher education providers when using the title professor¹.

The paper recommended, among other things, that for the purposes of understanding and clarity, the independent high-education sector as a whole consider reaching a policy decision covering the use of the title professor in higher education providers that are not permitted to use the title "university". After consideration of this recommendation by its Higher Education Committee, the

¹ Farrell, K. (2009) *The Use of the Title 'Professor'*, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne



Australian Council for Private Education and Training (now the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia – ITECA) released a policy statement for use by its members in 2010².

Following initial consideration by the Academic Board of these guidance statements and relevant Higher Education sector standards in relation to the conferral of professorial titles, the Higher Education Leadership Institute (“the Institute”) has developed its own policy in that context.

3. Professor and Associate Professor

- 3.1 The Academic Board may confer the title of Professor or Associate Professor upon a staff member who is:
 - a) Prior to accepting the appointment, a Professor or an Associate Professor at another recognised higher education provider³; or
 - b) A person of recognised eminence⁴ in a particular academic field; or
 - c) A distinguished expert in a relevant field;
 - d) A visiting Professor or Associate Professor from a recognised higher education provider⁵ for the duration of their stay or association.
- 3.2 The position of Professor or Associate Professor may be a paid or honorary position.
- 3.3 A Professor or Associate Professor will hold their title on such conditions and perform such duties as the Academic Board may determine on the recommendation of the Dean Academic.
- 3.4 An initial appointment as a Professor or Associate Professor will normally be for a period of up to five years, as determined by the Academic Board, after which time the staff member may be re-appointed for a further period as determined by the Academic Board.

4. Adjunct Professor and Adjunct Associate Professor

- 4.1 An Adjunct Professor or Adjunct Associate Professor may be appointed by the Academic Board if that person:
 - a) is not employed as a continuing member of staff of the Institute for the term of the proposed appointment; and
 - b) is capable of furthering the reputation of the Institute through appropriate conduct and performance in their field of study.
- 4.2 A candidate for the title Adjunct Professor or Adjunct Associate Professor should meet one or more of the required appointment criteria for the appointment of a Professor or Associate Professor.

² ACPET policy statement: *Use of the Title Professor in Non-university Higher Education Providers*.

³ Overseas institutions must be listed in the International Association of Universities Handbook of Universities

⁴ An eminent person can be defined as a person who is recognised beyond the norm for others in their specific field of study and who can demonstrate with evidence that they have advanced their field of study through an extensive publishing record in peer reviewed journals and conferences.

⁵ Overseas institutions must be listed in the International Association of Universities Handbook of Universities

- 4.3 The position of Adjunct Professor or Adjunct Associate Professor may be a paid or honorary position.
- 4.4 An Adjunct Professor or Adjunct Associate Professor will perform such duties as the Academic Board may determine on the recommendation of the Dean Academic.
- 4.5 The appointment will normally be for a period up to three years, as determined by the Academic Board.

5. Fellowship of the Institute

- 5.1 The Academic Board may recognise meritorious contributions to the Institute of educators, professional staff and independent members of governance boards and committees on their departure from the Institute, either on retirement or should they pursue other employment.
- 5.2 The Academic Board may confer the title of Fellow of the Higher Education Leadership Institute upon an individual who:
 - a) Has retired from or is retiring from the Institute or has resigned from the Institute to take up a position elsewhere; and
 - b) Has consistently exceeded reasonable performance expectations in one or more aspects of their role or roles at the Institute, usually over a period of not less than five years.
- 5.3 The title of Fellow of the Higher Education Leadership Institute is an honorary title.
- 5.4 Fellows are invited to attend Graduations and promotional events of the Institute.
- 5.5 The appointment will normally be for life, as determined by the Academic Board.
- 5.6 Recommendations for Fellowship may be made to the Chair of Academic Board by any member of the Board of Directors, any member of Academic Board or any member of the Executive Management Committee.

6. Procedure for initial conferral of a professorial title or fellowship

- 6.1 A recommendation to confer a professorial title or fellowship will normally be presented to the Academic Board by the Dean Academic. In the case of conferring a professorial title or fellowship on the Dean Academic, the procedures under this policy will be the responsibility of the CEO.
- 6.2 Recommendations for conferral of professorial title for a candidate who already holds a professorial title from another institution (see section 3) are considered by the Academic Board based on the candidate's submitted Curriculum Vitae, on the written recommendation of the Dean Academic. In such a case the Dean Academic will also address the criteria listed below.
- 6.3 Conferral of the title and level of professorial title will be based on consideration of the candidate's:
 - a) work history and achievements;
 - b) scholarly activity;

- c) substantial contributions to professional practice⁶;
 - d) contributions that have been made to scholarship, academic excellence, and leadership at the Institute;
 - e) future contributions to scholarship, academic excellence, leadership and staff mentoring intended to be made at the Institute.
- 6.4 Recommendations for conferral of a fellowship are considered by the Academic Board based on the candidate's Curriculum Vitae and the written recommendation of the Dean Academic (or CEO). In their recommendation, the Dean Academic (or CEO) will address how the candidate has consistently exceeded reasonable performance expectations in one or more aspects of their role or roles at the Institute.
- 6.5 The Academic Board may:
- a) approve the recommendation for conferral;
 - b) refer a recommendation back to the Dean Academic for further consideration;
 - c) determine that the conferral of a fellowship in this case does not meet the standards required in this policy.
- 6.6 In the case of a candidate for a professorial title who does not currently hold a professorial title, the candidate will prepare a portfolio of evidence that addresses the criteria listed in 6.3 above and clearly demonstrates the candidate's suitability for the conferral of the requested title.
- 6.7 In the case of a candidate who does not already hold the title of professor or associate professor from another recognised institution, the Dean Academic⁷ will convene and chair a panel of three members ('the Panel') to consider the portfolio of evidence prepared by the candidate for a professorial title. Membership of the Panel will be:
- a) the Dean Academic as Chair of the Panel;
 - b) a member of the Academic Board nominated by the Chair of the Academic Board;
 - c) an independent member external to the Institute at professorial level with recognised expertise in a relevant discipline nominated by the Dean Academic and approved by the Chair of the Academic Board.

The Panel will meet, either face-to-face or virtually, to consider the portfolio of evidence and, based on the criteria listed above, the Panel may make a positive recommendation, or recommend not to grant the title.

- 6.8 The Academic Board will consider the recommendation of the Panel presented by the Dean Academic and will make a determination. The Academic Board may:

⁶ In this context, 'professional practice' refers to exemplary professional leadership, competences, activities, or major contributions in a field of study or business sector that is relevant to HELI's broad field of education. Candidates considered under this criterion will usually be or have been senior executives who have led successful educational enterprises or institutions, businesses, government agencies, industry peak bodies or non-governmental organisations, or those who are currently company directors.

⁷ Or, in the case of consideration of a title involving the Dean, the CEO

- a) approve the recommendation for conferral;
 - b) refer a recommendation back to the Dean Academic for further consideration;
 - c) determine that the conferral of a professorial title in this case does not meet the standards required in this policy.
- 6.9 If any recommendation relates to a member of the Academic Board, that member will exempt themselves from any meeting while the recommendation is under discussion.
- 6.10 Any determination by the Academic Board to confer a professorial title for Fellowship must be agreed to by a majority of independent members.
- 6.11 The Chair of the Academic Board will write to the candidate to advise them of the outcome of their application, and if successful, the title to be conferred, the term of the conferral and any conditions attaching to the conferral.
- 6.10 All conferrals of professorial titles will be reported by the Academic Board to the Board of Directors.
- 6.11 The Operations Manager will keep a register of all staff who hold a professorial title and any conditions attached to the conferral, including the period of time allocated.
- 6.12 Any staff member who feels dissatisfied with any of the processes in this policy may utilise the process set down in the staff grievance handling procedure.

7. Withdrawal of a professorial title or fellowship

- 7.1 The Academic Board reserves the right to withdraw the conferral of a professorial title or fellowship of the Institute if it considers that the holder of the title:
- a) has not met the conditions set down in the letter of conferral;
 - b) is no longer contributing sufficiently to the scholarly profile of the Institute;
 - c) has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Institute's values, policies and procedures.
- 7.2 A professorial title is automatically withdrawn if a staff member:
- a) has ceased to be employed by the Institute;
 - b) has ceased to have a formal relationship with the Institute (in the case of title holders who are not employees).
- 7.3 In the case of a professorial title or Fellowship being withdrawn under section 7.1, the Chair of the Academic Board will write to the staff member informing them of the withdrawal of the title.
- 7.4 Where such a decision is made to withdraw a professorial title or Fellowship under section 7.1, the individual affected will have the right to request a review of the decision of the Academic Board by the Board of Directors.

8. Related documents

FRM060 Conferral of Professorial Titles and Fellowships Register

9. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	13 June 2018	Document creation and initial approval
1.1	Academic Board	2 September 2020	Proposal to introduce honorary fellowship of the Institute. Minor amendments to align with HELI Policy Style Guide.
1.2	Dean Academic	18 March 2021	Minor change to include independent members of governance bodies for fellowships
1.3	Dean Academic	7 July 2023	Dean Academic reviewed the policy and extended review date to 7 July 2024
1.4	CEO	30 January 2025	Minor changes to titles and extended review date to 7 December 2025

Document owner: Dean Academic