## Professorial Merit Pay Exercise 2025: Call for Applications and Procedures

**1 Summary**

This circular invites applications for the University Professorial Merit Pay (PMP) exercise in 2025. Professorial Merit Pay is a biennial exercise through which all non-clinical professors can apply for an award which recognises and rewards exceptional performance in leadership and citizenship, research, and teaching.

Divisional budgets have been set for the exercises and there is therefore a cap on the total value of awards to be made.

The closing date is **Monday 10 February 2025**. It is planned that applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in the summer of 2025 with awards taking effect from 1 August 2024.

**2 Eligibility**

Those eligible to apply are:

* statutory professors and readers (except clinical professors and readers); and,
* associate professors, keepers, and staff on the academic-related grades and on RSIV contracts who hold the title of full professor and are employed by the University on non-clinical contracts.

Those on clinical contacts and those who are not employed by the University are not eligible.

Associate Professors will be assessed against the criteria (see Annexe A) on the basis of work undertaken within their University contract only.

Applications from individuals whose work is interdisciplinary and spans more than one division, or who hold contracts in more than one division, will be considered by the division which the applicant considers to be most relevant. Divisions will confer as necessary about such applications, and should indicate in their report to the Senior Appointments Panel that they have done so.

Applications from individuals working in Continuing Education or Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) will be considered by the division appropriate to their academic contribution.

Applicants must be employed by the University on 1 October 2024. Individuals may contact the relevant Divisional Office to determine if they are eligible.

Those holding the title of reader and those holding the title of associate professor are ***not*** eligible to apply in this exercise.

Those who have received awards in previous exercises will continue to hold them at the current level unless they are awarded a higher level of award in the 2025 PMP exercise.

**3 Assessment for Professorial Merit Pay**

There are three stages in the procedure.

1. Salary Reviews: Heads of department and Faculty Board Chairs will lead salary reviews of eligible staff in their department/faculty (not taking college benefits into account) to identify whether the broad salary bandings for eligible staff appear correct. This is to enable them to identify any outliers below expected levels in terms of exceptional merit, or where there may be a gender pay gap.
2. Divisional Committees: Applications will be considered by a PMP Committee in each academic division.
3. Senior Appointments Panel (SAP): Divisional PMP committees will make recommendations to the [SAP](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/senior-appointments-panel). The SAP will review the divisional recommendations. It may seek further information or comment from the Chairs of Divisional PMP Committees who may be invited to attend meetings of the SAP for this purpose. The SAP will ratify the recommendations when it is satisfied that proper procedure has been followed and that standards have been applied consistently with due attention to equality of opportunity.

Divisional Committees will normally be chaired by the head of division and will be broadly based, covering as far as possible the major disciplines or broad areas of research and study under the aegis of the particular board. Committee membership will be published on the divisional website and in the *Gazette*.

There is no appeal against decisions.

**4** **Professorial Merit Pay award levels**

Applications will be judged against the descriptors, which outline the standards expected across leadership and citizenship, research, and teaching for the University at the three bands. The scale shown below is at 1 August 2024 rates:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PMP Award** | **PMP Band** | **PMP Level** |
| £93,962 | Band C | 12 |
| £85,103 | 11 |
| £76,244 | 10 |
| £71,853 | 9 |
| £67,597 | 8 |
| £63,089 | 7 |
| £59,153 | 6 |
| £54,911 | 5 |
| £50,698 | 4 |
| £46,149 | 3 |
| £42,170 | 2 |
| £33,971 | 1 |
| £33,803 | Band B | 5 |
| £29,792 | 4 |
| £2,352 | 3 |
| £21,029 | 2 |
| £16,897 | 1 |
| £14,019 | Band A | 4 |
| £11,270 | 3 |
| £7,594 | 2 |
| £4,118 | 1 |

PMP awards are in addition to any allowance made when full professorial title is awarded.

When considering awards, committees will take into account applicants’ current University remuneration levels, will incorporate assumed college salary for Tutorial Fellows, and will take into account the remuneration of peer groups within the University. Additional college benefits will not be taken into account. There is a University-wide cap on the total value of awards to be made. It is therefore expected that awards for successful applicants will normally be limited to one level.

Awards will take into account the total permanent pay of the individual. When a new or increased award is made, pre-existing permanent pay elements (which may include previous professorial merit awards, recruitment and retention payments (including use of the discretionary range of grade 10) but NOT responsibility allowances nor any allowance paid on receipt of the title of full professor) will be ‘rolled in’ to the value of the new award. Individuals may therefore not see an increase in salary to the full value of the new award.

Merit pay awards may be recurrent and therefore pensionable, subject to the rules of USS. In some circumstances one-off lump sum payments may be awarded, which are non-pensionable. The difference between the types of award is set out in section 5 below.

**5 Criteria for Professorial Merit Pay**

Applications will be judged against the descriptors annexed at A, which outline the standards expected across leadership and citizenship, research, and teaching for the University at the three bands.

*Recurrent awards*

Applicants will only move up within or between bands when significant progress has been made since the previous award and when it is anticipated that this level of performance will be sustained.

It is accepted that not all roles will allow applicants to demonstrate an even performance across all three areas, and a “best fit” approach will be taken to assess overall merit. For example, an applicant might be outstanding in two out of the three areas and good in the third, or less strong in one area but with a record in another area approaching that of the next band up. While the range of activities will vary, it is the overall quality of contributions which is of importance.

*One-off awards*

A divisional PMP Committee may award a one-off lump sum payment, equal to one level on the PMP scale, rather than a recurrent increment.

This may be considered appropriate where the Committee wishes to recognise an individual who has:

* performed exceptionally against one or two of the three criteria (noting that a “best fit” judgement will have already been made for roles which do not allow applicants to demonstrate even performance across all three areas), but who has not demonstrated that they have met the standards expected for their role for a recurrent award under the remaining criteria, or
* made an outstanding ‘one-off’ contribution to the department/faculty.

**6** **Applications**

Applications should be submitted online (see section 11 below) by **12.00 noon on Monday 10 February 2025.**

Applications must consist of a document of up to 2 pages setting out how the criteria are met and a publications list covering the period since the previous award (or if no award is held, the past 3 years, either since appointment or award of title). Forthcoming work and the stage it has reached (e.g. commissioned, in press) should be included to show current work in progress, but the case will be judged on work published and available for inspection. Applications must adhere to the two-page limit but there is no word limit for the publications list. In the interests of fairness to all applicants, longer applications will not be considered. Do not include a covering letter; ensure that all relevant information is included in the application and publications list. Ensure that you address all relevant areas as set out in the descriptors.

Applicants are not asked to state the level of award they wish to hold; the divisional PMP Committee will recommend to the SAP appropriate levels of award and whether an award is to be recurrent or one-off.

Disclosure of personal circumstances should be made in accordance with section 8 below.

**7 Departmental evaluations**

Applicants should ask their head of department/faculty board chair (or head of division if the applicant is a head of department or faculty board chair) to submit their comments on the application to the relevant divisional PMP Committee (details below) **Monday 24 February.**

The head of department/faculty board chair may delegate the writing of the comments. The comments from the head of department or faculty board chair will give an assessment of the individual’s contributions against all three criteria. The applicant should ask their referee to mark their comments “Confidential”.

Those in Continuing Education or GLAM should also provide comments from the head of the department/chair of the faculty board with which their academic work is most closely associated.

The applicant is strongly encouraged to contact their head of department/faculty board chair at an early stage. They may have multiple evaluations to write and early contact will be helpful.

Heads of department/faculty board chairs should send their evaluations to the relevant divisional e-mail address by Monday 24 February**:**

Humanities: [distinction@humanities.ox.ac.uk   
 MPLS: [prof.merit@mpls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:prof.merit@mpls.ox.ac.uk)  
 Medical Sciences: [distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:distinctions@medsci.ox.ac.uk)  
 Social Sciences: [[profmeritpay@socsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:profmeritpay@socsci.ox.ac.uk)](mailto:profdistinction@socsci.ox.ac.uk)](mailto:distinction@humanities.ox.ac.uk)

No independent external assessments of applications will automatically be required and applicants will not be asked to nominate assessors.

The divisional committees may seek supplementary information, which may include external independent assessments as they see necessary, in order to reach fair and consistent recommendations. While college contribution will not be formally taken into account as part of the review process, some divisions will seek assurance from heads of house/senior tutors that applicants holding joint appointments are discharging their college teaching duties effectively.

**8 Disclosure of Personal Circumstances**

Applicants should feel free to disclose circumstances that may, over a considerable period, have had a substantial effect on their performance in terms of *quantity* of work. This includes circumstances protected under employment and equality legislation and unusually high loads of teaching and/or administration. Any circumstances that have arisen as a result of the pandemic will also be given due consideration.

Any such disclosure should be provided as a separate document at the same time as the application, and will be seen by the divisional PMP committee and the SAP but not by external assessors.

**9 Data Protection**

All data supplied by applicants will be used only for the purpose of assessing their application for a new or enhanced award and will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Applications and references will be made available to the relevant divisional PMP Committee including external members (who will see any disclosure of personal circumstances), to the SAP, to any independent assessors (who will not see any disclosure of personal circumstances), as well as to members of the University directly involved in the exercise.

**10. Communication of Awards**

Individuals will be informed of the outcome of their application in the summer of 2025 with awards backdated to 1 August 2024.

**11. How to Apply**

Completed applications should be submitted electronically through the 'PeopleXD' online system, which is open for applications from 2 December 2024.

Detailed instructions on how to do so are provided at Annexe B.

**Annexe A: Professorial Merit Pay Criteria**

For associate professors, please note that these criteria refer to work undertaken within the applicant’s University contract of employment, including external academic contributions such as to peer review bodies, government committees etc.

**Band A**

***Research***

An ongoing research record which is characterised by a significant influence on the field of study, and is of a high order of excellence and of international standing, together with an international reputation and a research record which is outstanding in comparison with the majority of academic staff in the United Kingdom. This may include, as appropriate for the discipline, evidence of successful collaborations with other research teams/institutions, contribution to public understanding, significant and sustained success in obtaining research grants; and/or proven and sustained success in research leadership.

***Teaching[[1]](#footnote-2)***

An ongoing record of contributing fully and effectively to teaching for University departments/faculties (not teaching done in colleges) as appropriate for the post held, including an appropriate number of research students successfully supervised.

***Leadership and Citizenship***

Evidence of academic leadership and the willingness and ability to lead, mentor, develop and motivate colleagues, lead and manage a research team competently and engage in capacity building, as appropriate to the discipline.

An ongoing record of contributing fully and effectively to the administration and continuing improvement of the department/faculty as appropriate for the post held. This may include examining, pastoral care and student welfare, outreach and access work, contribution to Athena Swan, Race Equality and similar initiatives. Evidence of contribution, which is of benefit to the University, to peer review bodies/committees, professional organisations, government committees or Research Councils etc. will also be taken into account, as well as activities connected to enterprise, links with industry and business etc. as appropriate to the discipline.

**Band B**

***Research***

A distinguished ongoing academic record and a very significant international reputation. This level rewards those who are recognised as research leaders, for example through their membership of an academy (e.g. Royal Society, British Academy) and/or their international equivalents, and/or have been awarded highly prestigious prizes and/or prestigious lectures or other such honours, as appropriate to the discipline. They are international authorities in their particular field who have made a significant and lasting positive mark on the University’s work in their subject area directly through their own research and/or through their role in leading and developing their discipline at Oxford, including a significant contribution to public understanding.

***Teaching[[2]](#footnote-3)***

As well as an ongoing full and effective contribution to teaching for University departments/faculties (not teaching done for colleges) as appropriate for the post held, there will be evidence of active, ongoing leadership of review/development of the curriculum, course management, designing new courses etc. as appropriate in the context of the particular department/faculty.

***Leadership and Citizenship***

At this level there will be strong evidence of academic leadership and a proven ability to lead, mentor, develop and motivate colleagues, lead and manage a research team well and engage in capacity building, as appropriate to the discipline.

Evidence of a significant contribution to the management/administration and continuing improvement of the department/faculty or the wider University as appropriate to the post held. This may include a significant contribution to examining, pastoral care and student welfare, outreach and access work, contribution to Athena Swan, Race Equality and similar initiatives.

There will also be strong evidence that a leading role has been taken in peer review bodies/committees, editorships of leading academic journals, professional organisations, government committees or Research Councils etc. as well as activities connected to enterprise, links with industry and business etc. as appropriate to the discipline.

**Band C**

***Research***

Academic distinction of the highest quality, with a corresponding outstanding world-leading and worldwide reputation which is universally acknowledged across the broadest subject areas and recognised through the award of multiple external international markers of esteem, such as membership of academies or other prestigious organisations, international prizes. At this level individuals will have, over a sustained period, made a formative and lasting contribution through their research and through their overall role across their general field of study, with corresponding recognition and influence in their own and related subject areas, including an outstanding contribution to public understanding.

***Teaching[[3]](#footnote-4)***

Active, ongoing leadership in teaching and a significant contribution to the development and delivery of teaching in the subject area as appropriate for the post held, both within the University (not colleges) and on a regular basis to national and/or international audiences.

***Leadership and Citizenship***

Significant and sustained intellectual and academic leadership and capacity building both across the department/faculty and at subject level nationally and internationally.

Evidence of an active role in the strategic development and management of the department/faculty or evidence of significant and influential contribution to the wider University as appropriate for the post held. This may include an outstanding contribution to examining, pastoral care and student welfare, outreach and access work, contribution to Athena Swan, Race Equality and similar initiatives.

Sustained excellent performance in significant senior academic leadership positions within the department/faculty, division and/or the wider University will be taken into account at this level, as will equivalent external roles, such as the leadership of major government reviews.

**Annexe B:** **Instructions on applying for Professorial Merit Pay on the ‘People XD’ system**

1. Go to [the](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/professorial-merit-pay-2020) [Professorial Merit Pay 2025 application page](https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/professorial-merit-pay-2025). Download *the call for Applications and Procedures 2025* and review the guidance outlining the application process. Make a note of the vacancy ID for your Division.

2. Log on to your employee self-service account (guidance is available via the [HR Self-Service tab on the Staff Gateway](https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/hr-self-service-user-guides#collapse4031451)).Go to the Vacancies tab from your Home screen and search for the Divisional vacancy ID. To view the vacancy details, go to the three dots and click ‘Apply for Position’. This takes you to your internal Recruitment account. Follow all the application steps to complete and submit your application.

3. Complete the brief personal details form which will appear on your screen once you have registered. You will be asked for your title and address to be used for correspondence. Please use your Departmental address. You can find your employee number on your employee self-service profile or on your payslip. Click on “Save and Continue”.

4. A screen headed “Application Checklist” will now appear. You will be asked to complete a brief equal opportunities monitoring form and answer some additional questions. The data collected from both sections will be used for anonymous statistical reporting once the exercise is completed and is not seen by divisional PMP committees or by the SAP. When you are ready to upload your application, click on “Attach Documents”. Then click on “Browse” to find:

i) your up to 2 page application letter;  
ii) your publications list; and   
ii) your disclosure of personal circumstances (if relevant).

No other documents will be considered.

Please save each file as a PDF prior to upload and include your surname, initials and the type of document in the filename e.g. Bloggs JJ Application, Bloggs JJ Disclosure.

Click on “Upload”. No other documents should be uploaded.

5. Now click “Return to Checklist”, and you will see the "Application Checklist" page again.

From this page:

* you can review your application if you wish by clicking on “Preview Form”;
* you can also save your application on the system *without submitting it* so that you can return to it later should you wish to modify it before submission
* when you are ready, you can submit your application by clicking on the "Submit" button.  
  **You must use "Submit" to submit your application no later than 12.00 noon on Monday 10 February 2025.**

6. You may now log out of the system. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application. NB This will be a standard system acknowledgement e-mail; please ignore the reference to shortlisting.

1. The criteria for this exercise exclude teaching paid for by colleges, including undergraduate tutorial teaching and intercollegiate class teaching. Forany eligibility questions, please contact your divisional office. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The criteria for this exercise exclude teaching paid for by colleges, including undergraduate tutorial teaching and intercollegiate class teaching. For any eligibility questions, please contact your divisional office. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The criteria for this exercise exclude teaching paid for by colleges, including undergraduate tutorial teaching and intercollegiate class teaching. For any eligibility questions, please contact your divisional office. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)