

Policy on Election to Emeritus Rank

December 2022

Policy summary

Any academic who retires as a Professor or an Associate Professor, after at least ten years' service at the University may be elected by Senate to emeritus rank, which is a life-long status. Academic officers at executive level are also eligible for election to emeritus rank.

Exceptions may be made, for example when a senior academic is recruited from another university after the age of 55. With all exceptions, SEC is the judge as to whether a given case warrants being brought to Senate for election.

In addition to their rights and privileges as retirees, emeritus staff have additional rights and roles, and may also apply for access to University facilities as may be necessary.

Election to emeritus status is preceded by a nomination by an HoD or five peers or the Dean, and supported by the DAC/FMC or the Dean of the relevant Faculty.

Introduction

'Emeritus' is a title awarded, as a mark of distinguished service, to a small number of academic staff on retirement. Emeritus staff are normally of professorial rank and have made a significant contribution to UCT through long service in administration, teaching and/or research. 'Emeritus' denotes a perpetual status and indicates a person of outstanding merit. Typically, emeritus staff remain active in the life of the University through teaching, lecturing, mentoring and advising faculty staff.

Currently thirty per cent of UCT academic retirees have emeritus status. Of these, 75% are emeritus professors and 23% are emeritus associate professors. The remaining 2% are retired academic officers with emeritus status.

Applicable to

Academic staff of professorial rank, principal and chief research officers, and executive academic officers with at least 10 years of service, upon retirement. Exceptions may be made.

Not applicable to

- Academic staff before retirement.
- Academic staff of ranks below professor.
- Contracted research staff, post retirement, with the exception of principal and chief research officers.
- PASS staff.

Policy details

1. Eligibility for election

- 1.1 Any person who retires after at least ten years' service at the University, and retires from the University as a Professor or an Associate Professor or equivalent (including chief and principal research officers) may be elected by Senate on the nomination of the Dean to be an Emeritus Professor or an Emeritus Associate

Professor as the case may be, and shall on election enjoy the rights and privileges of emeritus rank.

1.2 Election to emeritus status takes place at plenary meetings of Senate by way of consensus unless there is an objection which is seconded, in which case, Senate shall proceed to vote. A candidate who secures a majority of the validly cast votes is considered elected.

1.3 Emeritus status may also be conferred upon retiring academic officers.

2. Exceptions

2.1 Retirees with less than 10 years' service

The most frequent exception occurs where a senior academic is recruited from another university after the age of 55, and would ordinarily retire from UCT after a lifetime's academic career but with less than ten years' service at UCT. When dealing with such cases:

- (i) The SEC is the judge as to whether a given case is exceptional and warrants being brought to Senate; if SEC does, and it supports the nomination, SEC will submit the name to Senate for election; if SEC does not there will be no valid nomination and the candidate will not be eligible.
- (ii) As a general rule the retiree should be retiring at, or close to normal retirement age, i.e. a person retiring at the end of the year in which he or she turns 65 or close to this date would be eligible, as would a person retiring for health reasons. Whereas a person taking 'early retirement' - before age 60 - would not ordinarily be eligible.
- (iii) A person who is appointed from outside UCT to a chair or to an associate professorship at UCT after the age of 55 will ordinarily be eligible for nomination as an exception to the ten-years' rule.
- (iv) A Dean or Head of Department who wishes to nominate a retiree for election to emeritus rank, where the nominee will not have served at UCT for the required ten years, may submit a proposal to the SEC arguing for the nominee's election and setting out why the case is exceptional. Where the SEC accepts that the case is exceptional, and supports the nomination, it shall put the nominee's name to Senate for election to emeritus rank.
- (v) A case would be deemed exceptional where the motivation demonstrates significant evidence of esteem that accrued in the nominee's last decade of work, regardless of institution. Examples include:
 - Recognition beyond their organisation, typically as international recognition, for their broad contribution to a discipline or area of specialisation.
 - A specific academic intervention or initiative undertaken and the impact thereof.
 - Tangible contributions to the academic profession, such as accredited publications; translational research; curriculum development; training of

postgraduate students; serving on institutional committees; contributing to institutional policy development.

- Serving on national or international bodies and participating in communities of practice.
- Mentoring early career academics
- Tangible contribution towards equity and social justice, demonstrated through a track record in social responsiveness as an academic
- Intellectual leadership of a research unit, centre or institute.

2.2 Retirees with less than 10 years' service

It is open to the SEC, on the recommendation of a Dean or the Vice-Chancellor, to propose election to emeritus rank in other deserving and exceptional cases; i.e., where the rules do not contemplate an individual's circumstances.

3. Promotions effective after retirement and emeritus rank

A person due to retire may be promoted to the rank of Professor or Associate Professor, with effect on the day after retirement, and this new rank will be that on which emeritus status is based.

4. Guidelines for granting emeritus status

4.1 To retiring academic staff

4.1.1 Academic staff to be considered for emeritus status include: professors, associate professors, principal research officers (research achievement equivalent to professor rank) and chief research officers (research achievement equivalent to associate professor rank).

4.1.2 Election to emeritus status is preceded by a nomination by a Dean, HoD or five peers, supported by the DAC/FMC/Faculty Executive and Dean of the relevant Faculty.

4.2 To retiring academic officers

4.2.1. Academic Officers include the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Director of University Libraries or the Registrar;

4.2.2. Where an academic officer retires from UCT and:

(i) is not eligible for election under ordinary rules to the emeritus rank of Professor or Associate Professor; and

(ii) has served his or her full term(s) in office,

any member of the SEC may propose to the SEC that he or she be elected Vice-Chancellor emeritus, Deputy Vice-Chancellor emeritus, Librarian emeritus, or Registrar emeritus as the case may be.

4.2.3 Ordinarily such officer would be expected to have served UCT for at least ten years before retirement, but Senate accepts that in cases where a person was appointed to an academic officer position from another

university, the period need not be ten years. Where the SEC supports the proposal it would be put to Senate for decision.

- 4.2.4 Emeritus academic officers enjoy similar rights and privileges to those enjoyed by other emeritus staff.

5. Retrospective eligibility

- 5.1. The rules for election to emeritus status may be applied with retrospective effect.
- 5.2. Deans may propose academic staff who retired in the past who would have been eligible under the current rules, provided they did not retire in order to take up full-time academic positions elsewhere.
- 5.3. SEC reviews these retrospective applications and if approved, puts them forward to Senate for election.

6. Status of emeritus rank

- 6.1. Retired staff members retain this special rank until death.
- 6.2. All emeritus staff are retained as active members of the University on the HR data base. They are members of Convocation by virtue of their emeritus status.
- 6.3. Emeritus Professors and Emeritus Associate Professors rank senior to Professor and Associate Professor and junior to members of Council (in so far as the printed order and the position in academic processions are concerned).

7. Rights and privileges

In addition to their rights and privileges as retirees, emeritus staff have the following rights:

- 7.1. Use of the title 'Emeritus Professor' or 'Emeritus Associate Professor', including the right to use the title in publications and official ceremonies.
- 7.2. Continued opportunity to supervise doctoral students.
- 7.3. Access to a staff card, purchase of a parking disc and such other rights as the Council may from time to time decide.
- 7.4. Decision rights on (research) funds if granted by ED Finance and supported by Dean of Faculty/CHED/GSB.

In addition, emeritus staff may apply for

- 7.5. URC research funds on proof of accredited peer-reviewed publications in the past year.
- 7.6. A UCT email account.
- 7.7. Library membership as for academic staff.
- 7.8. Access to buildings on campus as determined by the HOD.
- 7.9. Space at the discretion of the HOD & Dean.

Limitations

- 7.10. Emeritus staff do not have the right to apply for equipment.