

Appointment, Review, and Renewal of Endowed Professorships

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Applies to:

Endowed Professorships in the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS)

Reason for Policy

[PROV-034: Appointment of Faculty to Endowed Professorships](#) requires that each school have a written policy governing the appointment of faculty members to endowed professorships. This policy documents procedures for how both SEAS Distinguished Professorships (renewable term) and SEAS Professorships (non-renewable term) will be appointed, reviewed, and, if appropriate, renewed to help to promote recognition of faculty excellence, good fiscal stewardship and to ensure that the intention of the donors, as stated in the enabling language, is honored.

Policy Statement:

Endowed professorships are one of the most prestigious honors bestowed by the University of Virginia on a faculty member. SEAS awards two types of endowed professorships: (1) SEAS Distinguished Professorships, and (2) SEAS Professorships. SEAS Distinguished Professorships are awarded following the achievement of extraordinary research distinction in a faculty member's field. SEAS Professorships are awarded to recognize and encourage research excellence in earlier stages of an academic career, or to reward faculty members for their exceptional contributions in service or student education and development. The bestowing of an endowed professorship by the University supports recruitment and retention efforts by recognizing significant accomplishment.

At all levels, nominators and reviewers are expected to adhere to the [UVA Notice of Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity](#).

Availability

Nominations are solicited at the discretion of the dean. All endowed chairs are held by the school or Provost's Office.

Qualifications

SEAS Professorships are awarded to recognize outstanding performance in research, student education and development, and service.

Research – Candidates for SEAS Professorships in Research must have demonstrated research impact that indicates the faculty member is on a trajectory to qualify for a SEAS Distinguished Professorship as their career progresses.

Student Education and Development – Candidates for SEAS Professorships in Student Education and Development must have educational achievements that demonstrate they are among the most impactful of all educators on the SEAS faculty.

Service - Candidates for SEAS Professorships in Service must have achievements that demonstrate they have provided service among the most impactful of all SEAS faculty.

Candidates for SEAS Distinguished Professorships must have significant achievements and outstanding qualities, which may be demonstrated through some of the following:

- National and international awards
- Invited lectures such as keynotes or distinguished lectureships
- Recognition by peer chair holders at other leading institutions.

Significant accomplishments in several of the following areas should also be considered:

- Leadership in national professional societies,
- Policy advice to government,
- Innovative contributions to professional practice,
- Seminal accomplishments in new and emerging technologies, and
- Scientific discoveries and significant contributions to the improvement of society.

Term

SEAS Professorships will be awarded with a term of no more than 3 years.

SEAS Distinguished Professorships will be awarded with a term of no more than 5 years, with the option to renew unless otherwise specified.

The length of the term for each appointment will be specified in the appointment letter. Initial appointments and renewals will follow the processes specified below. Initial appointments and renewals must meet the same qualifications and criteria, with any adjustment in criteria for subsequent renewals at the dean's discretion. When used as a recruitment tool, the offer letter will specify term and renewal expectations.

Emeritus Status

As outlined in [PROV-018: Emeritus Faculty](#), titles associated with SEAS Distinguished Professorships held at the time of retirement will be included in the emeritus rank.

Endowed Chair Advisory Committee

The dean will annually appoint no fewer than six SEAS faculty members who currently hold SEAS Distinguished Professorships to the Endowed Chair Advisory Committee, which shall review and make recommendations regarding appointment of SEAS Professorships and SEAS Distinguished Professorships and reappointment of SEAS Distinguished Professorships. The dean will designate one member of the Endowed Chair Advisory Committee as the committee chair.

Process:

Initial Nomination and Review Process

1. Call for Nominations: The Dean's Office will invite department chairs and center directors to submit nominations for SEAS Distinguished Professorships and SEAS Professorships, with

guidance on what specific chairs are available at that time.

2. Nominations for appointment to an endowed professorship must be submitted by departments or centers to the Dean's Office. The department or center will submit the following in the nomination for an appointment to an endowed professorship:
 - a. A letter of nomination;
 - b. The candidate's current CV;
 - c. Personal statement and documentation of excellence in the area recognized by the professorship. The document should be 1-3 pages;
 - d. For SEAS Distinguished Professorships only: Name and contact information for five external referees. At most one may be prestigious members of industry or research laboratories, with the rest university faculty at the rank of professor. At least three referees must hold named professorships and at least two must be members of the National Academies, Fellows in Professional Societies, or the equivalent thereof.

Note, SEAS Professorships do not require external letters.

3. For SEAS Distinguished Professorships only: letters from the external referees are requested by the Office of Faculty Affairs. A minimum of three letters from the external referees are required to move forward with the nomination.
4. Nominations are advanced to the Provost's Office at the discretion of the dean. In an instance where the dean does not support a nomination, they will communicate the negative recommendation to the department chair in writing.

Review and Renewal Process – SEAS Distinguished Professorships

Renewal reviews are conducted by the Endowed Chair Advisory Committee and will take place every five years following election. Renewal materials will be due in the fourth year of the appointment; the timeline will be communicated by the Office of Faculty Affairs. Existing Distinguished Professorships without a defined term and new Distinguished Professorships with term will both be reviewed on a five-year review cycle (or shorter, if the terms of the professorship require it). The evaluation will be consistent and transparent for all endowed professorships. For faculty who have served at the level of department chair or higher, their review will take place five years after they have stepped down from their position.

1. The chairholder will be asked to submit the following to aid in the review process:
 - a. The five most recent annual reports, including PRC and chair evaluations;
 - b. An optional personal statement, not to exceed five pages;
 - c. A current CV;
 - d. A brief statement on how discretionary funding was used during the previous term.
2. The result of every five-year review will be a specific recommendation. The Committee will submit recommendations to the dean each spring for all faculty who have undergone a renewal review. Such recommendations will specify:
 - a. Outstanding faculty who should be considered for additional recognition and nomination for prestigious awards.
 - b. Faculty who have been good stewards of the donor's original intent and have continued to serve as role models and leaders within the school and elsewhere, and should be renewed for a subsequent five-year term.
 - c. Those faculty who have not met the standard for excellence, as evidenced by their

- review packages and independent assessment by this committee. The Committee's report to the dean will note extenuating circumstances which may have contributed to reduced scholarly productivity over the previous five years, and/or factors which may indicate that the faculty member holding an endowed professorship should relinquish their chair.
3. Decisions regarding the relinquishment of an endowed chair are at the discretion of the dean.
 - a. Faculty will be required to relinquish their appointment to an endowed professorship if the holder fails to adhere to the intent for which the professorship was established or otherwise violates policies of the University or the School of Engineering and Applied Science.
 4. Faculty members appointed to professorships that are associated with a specific position (e.g., dean or department chair), shall relinquish the professorship upon leaving the position. The appointment letter for a professorship associated with a position shall clearly state that the professorship is automatically vacated on the departure from the position.

Background: This is the first revision to policy ENG-FAC-013. The previous policy version of the policy was dated October 1, 2023.