



UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS OF A PROFESSOR

The roles of professors have undergone considerable change in recent decades. External demands on universities today, as well as imperatives within institutions, have created some confusion and division of opinion about what now constitute appropriate roles.

The University of Melbourne has its own special features and mission, and hence the role of a professor in this University can be expected to differ from that in many other institutions. It is thus appropriate to clarify what the University expects of its professors.

The expectations of a professor in the University rest primarily on the nature of academic and professional leadership appropriate for a major international research university. Professors must always be distinguished academically in an international environment and are expected to maintain that distinction. While some may confine their leadership largely within their strict academic discipline (as shown, for example, by providing a focus and inspiration for research and teaching in their area of expertise), it is unlikely to be fulfilled simply by continuing to pursue their own work in isolation from others, as this does not denote leadership.

Professors in the University of Melbourne distinguish themselves by demonstrating leadership that can take several forms:

- Leading a group of individuals in research centred around the Professor and broader research leadership developing the research talents of other academics;
- Leading staff members involved in developing undergraduate or graduate teaching;
- Leading the overall management of particular functions in a department, such as teaching activities; coordination of a department's research or undergraduate teaching activities;
- Leading in an academic field as evidenced by publications in outstanding journals, or as the editor of journals, authorship of books, monographs and artistic works, invited papers and presentations at international conferences and by the organisation of such conferences;
- Leading in management particularly in assisting individuals and/or groups to channel and focus their efforts;
- Leading in the community beyond the University, particularly in professional organisations and institutions and in industrial and/or government and business activities.

In more specific terms, the expectations of a professor may be clarified as follows:

1. In all cases, the professor is expected to foster the research of other groups and individuals within the Department, within the discipline and within related disciplines. In particular, guidance and assistance to more junior staff in developing their capacity for teaching and research is of great importance. In many disciplines, provision of an environment for honours and graduate students is dependent upon the ability to attract external funds. Many professors will secure substantial grants which

cover teams including junior staff while others will carry on research at a more individual level. Professors should introduce research students and colleagues to useful networks inside and outside the University. Normally, professors will also be required to carry a teaching load and be involved in some of the large classes and in teaching of both undergraduate and graduate students.

2. It is expected that a professor will seek continuing improvement in academic standards rather than merely maintaining them, and make a distinguished contribution to teaching in the faculty and University. A professor should be expected to provide leadership in curriculum development, design of courses, and innovations in the delivery of teaching in the discipline. Professors should be role models in their relationships with students and with professional staff at all levels. They should be accessible in the Department/Faculty and should take part in the community life of the University, including ceremonies where degrees are awarded to students of the department and to persons honoured by the University.
3. Professors are expected to participate in the appropriate national and international organisations of their discipline or profession. In most fields, such international involvement and standing should be clearly evident. It is expected that a professor will serve on expert committees, be willing to participate in reviews and to work at a national and international level.
4. Professors have a responsibility to advance the image of the University in the community locally, nationally and internationally. That image will be enhanced by excellent research and good teaching, the receipt of awards and participation in major conferences. Community involvement might also be demonstrated in adopting the role of a public intellectual who contributes to the nation's culture and institutions. This might take many forms, including media commentary and the preparation of opinion articles, speaking at public events, and visits to schools and other community organisations.
5. Professors should be willing to contribute in policy formation and management of their department, their faculty and the University (through the Academic Board) where from time to time they have a contribution to make. They should play a constructive role in appointment, confirmation and promotion processes for academic and professional staff.
6. It is expected that professors from time to time carry out senior executive roles in the University, Faculty and/or Department.

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