



Research Article

Emeriti Professors in Romania

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Abstract

Beyond the recognition itself, professors' emeritus status in the university context carries mainly a symbolic importance. However, the sustained involvement of emeriti in mentoring, professional development, and academic life underscores their ongoing contribution to Romania's educational landscape.

Key Words: Professors Emeriti, Honorific title

In Romania, the title of Profesor Emerit (emeritus professor) represents one of the highest recognitions a teaching professional can receive, signifying exceptional dedication, expertise, and contributions to education. The legal framework for this distinction is found in national education legislation, which has evolved in recent years to clarify how this honorific status is acquired and what it entails.

At the pre-university level, the title of "Professor Emerit" is established in the Law of Pre-university Education (2023) [1]. According to Article 186 of this law, a professor who has achieved the highest teaching grade (teaching grade 1) and demonstrated outstanding performance in teaching may be awarded the title of professor emerit by ordain of the Minister of Education. The legislation states that criteria for this title must be specified in a methodology approved by ministerial order.

Individuals granted this title gain official recognition as mentors for the continuous professional development of teachers throughout the system. They are acknowledged for their expertise by national and local authorities and may be called upon to support educational activities and programs across regions. The law also provides that emeritus professors have priority in filling teaching positions by transfer or pre-transfer, under conditions of equal qualifications.

In practice, however, implementing these provisions has been challenging. Reports indicate that, in the pre-university system, few if any professors have actually been awarded this title, mainly because competitions or official procedures to confer it have not been organized. Thus, while the law creates the possibility for Professors Emeriti, the mechanism for awarding the distinction has lagged behind legal intent.

For higher education, the Law of Higher Education (2023) [2]

also recognizes the concept of Professor Emeritus as an honorific title that can be conferred by the University Senate. This occurs typically upon or after retirement, in recognition of excellence in both teaching and research. According to this law, the senate of a university may decide to award the title to distinguished faculty members who have reached retirement age, celebrating their lifelong contributions to academic life. However, in the spirit of the University independence, some universities (including Carol Davila University of Medicine) award the teaching excellence of special nominated Professors, before the age of retirement (despite the Latin etymological root meaning of the word emeritus).

Beyond the recognition itself, professors' emerita status in the university context carries symbolic importance and may help maintain ties between experienced academics and their institutions. Although emeriti often retire from full duties, they may continue to engage in academic activities such as research, advising doctoral candidates, or teaching specialized courses, depending on institutional policies and evolving legislative norms. There is no specific remuneration for Professors Emeriti, neither could they be elected in the leading institutions of the University (Professors Council, Senate or Doctoral Department Board). Emeriti Professors may keep their institutional e-mail addresses and benefit from University information facilities.

These provisions reflect a broader Romanian legal and educational philosophy that values professional achievement and lifelong learning. By codifying the emeritus title, the law acknowledges that the accumulated knowledge and mentorship capacity of veteran educators can be an asset to the entire educational community, from pre-university classrooms to university lecture halls.

In summary, while Romanian education law formally establishes the Professor Emeritus title and defines related roles—especially as mentors and holders of recognized expertise—its practical

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implementation varies across educational levels. The sustained involvement of emeriti in mentoring, professional development, and academic life underscores their ongoing contribution to Romania's educational landscape.

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