



Research Article

The University of Calabria's Framework on the Title of Professor Emeritus

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At the University of Calabria Professors Emeriti may continue their research activities within their former department and retain access to standard facilities, such as institutional email and library resources. They are eligible to serve as scientific coordinators of externally funded research projects, with administrative responsibility falling to the department director. They may also offer consultancy services in externally financed research or development initiatives. Such roles are governed by individual contracts with the department and may include financial compensation.

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Founded in 1968, the University of Calabria was established following a resolution of the Italian Parliament to introduce substantial academic innovations in Southern Italy. These included a departmental structure replacing the traditional single-professor institute model, the creation of new degree programs—particularly in Engineering and Socioeconomic Sciences—and the establishment of Italy's first residential university campus.

After several decades, this pioneering spirit continues to shape the university's policies. One notable example is the recent adoption of a dedicated framework concerning the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

At the national level, the status of Professor Emeritus is regulated by the Higher Education Law (Royal Decree of 1933, n.1592):

“Ai professori ordinari, che siano stati collocati a riposo o dei quali siano state accettate le dimissioni, potrà essere conferito il titolo di « professore emerito », qualora abbiano prestato almeno venti anni di servizio in qualità di professori ordinari; il titolo di « professore onorario » qualora tale servizio abbia avuto la durata di almeno quindici anni.

Detti titoli sono concessi con decreto Reale, su proposta del Ministro, previa deliberazione della Facoltà o Scuola cui l'interessato apparteneva all'atto della cessazione dal servizio.

Ai professori emeriti ed onorari non competono particolari prerogative accademiche.” and the 1958 legislative framework on university professorships (Law n.311):

“Ai professori collocati a riposo può essere conferito il titolo di professore emerito o di professore onorario, ai sensi dell'art. 111 del testo unico delle leggi sulla istruzione superiore approvato con regio decreto 31 agosto 1933, n. 1592.

Nulla è innovato alle disposizioni del comma ultimo dell'art. 110 del testo unico delle leggi sull'istruzione superiore sopra citato.

These laws define general eligibility criteria and outline the prerogatives and responsibilities of emeritus professors. However, each university retains autonomy in interpreting and implementing these guidelines. As a result, institutions across Italy have adopted varying regulations—some more restrictive, others more inclusive.

In February 2021, the University of Calabria introduced its updated internal regulation concerning the title, distinguishing itself for fostering a particularly supportive environment for retired faculty deserving of this recognition [1].

Eligibility Criteria and Appointment Process

The title of Professor Emeritus may be conferred upon full professors (prima fascia) who have served the university with distinction for at least twenty years and have retired from it. Additionally, at least one of the following merits must be demonstrated:

- An outstanding contribution to the advancement of their academic discipline;
- Relevant contributions that have enhanced the university's prestige;
- Service in high-ranking institutional roles within the university.

“1. I titoli di Professore Emerito e Professore Onorario possono essere conferiti ai docenti che, oltre al possesso dei requisiti oggettivi di cui al precedente articolo 2, anche disgiuntamente: a) abbiano dato lustro all'Ateneo, apportando un contributo di grande rilievo alla disciplina di riferimento, dimostrato da pubblicazioni di alto profilo a livello internazionale o nazionale e dall'ottenimento di riconoscimenti nazionali e internazionali di prestigio e relativi all'attività scientifica e di ricerca (tra cui: direzione di riviste scientifiche, collane, enciclopedie e trattati; presidenza di comitati scientifici di congressi internazionali di elevato prestigio; incarichi di responsabilità scientifica di enti o strutture di ricerca di riconosciuto rilievo; premi scientifici; fellowship di società scientifiche nazionali e internazionali di prestigio); b) si siano particolarmente distinti, a giudizio della comunità accademica, per l'impegno nella vita dell'Ateneo, ricoprendo ruoli apicali di responsabilità negli organi di Ateneo (ossia: un mandato per Rettore o due mandati complessivi nei ruoli di Direttore di Dipartimento e/o di Preside di Facoltà), contribuendo in modo significativo all'innovazione nel campo della didattica o all'organizzazione della ricerca o all'attività di terza missione. 2. In ogni caso, il possesso dei requisiti di cui alle lettere a) e b) del precedente comma è asseverato nella delibera del Consiglio del competente Dipartimento ed è verificato altresì dal Senato Accademico.”

The nomination process follows multiple steps. A proposal must be endorsed by at least ten full professors at the university, with no fewer than three from the nominee's department. The Department Council, in its full-professor composition, must then approve the proposal with a valid quorum (two-thirds attendance) and a majority vote.

Subsequently, the Academic Senate reviews and approves the nomination, which is formalized through a decree by the Minister for Universities and Research.

Research and Teaching Activity

Professors Emeriti may continue their research activities within their former department and retain access to standard facilities, such as institutional email and library resources. They are eligible to serve as scientific coordinators of externally funded research projects, with administrative responsibility falling to the department director.

They may also offer consultancy services in externally financed research or development initiatives. Such roles are governed by individual contracts with the department and may include financial compensation.

In the domain of teaching, a Professor Emeritus may be offered a zero-compensation teaching contract at the undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral level, provided this does not interfere with the teaching assignments of active faculty. They may serve as examiners or chairs of examination committees.

Institutional Participation and Facility Use

Emeriti professors may be invited to attend departmental meetings at the discretion of the Department Chair, but they do not hold voting rights and are excluded from meetings limited to restricted faculty bodies. When entrusted with teaching assignments, however, they may participate in academic program councils.

They are also permitted to use departmental facilities under the rules that apply to non-permanent staff. Allocation of office space is subject to approval by the Department Council upon proposal by the Director, and is renewable on a four-year basis.

Furthermore, Professors Emeriti may be appointed to committees tasked with awarding research grants, scholarships, or public contracts, provided they bear scientific responsibility for the associated projects.

No other roles, responsibilities or prerogatives may be attributed to the Emeritus than those provided for in the regulation (e.g., a professor Emeritus is not permitted to be the responsible of a scientific laboratory).

References

1. Università della Calabria, Regolamento di Ateneo per il conferimento dei titoli di Professore Emerito e di Professore Onorario.