

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Tiered Recognition Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Queen's is committed to creating a culture that celebrates and empowers excellence in an open and transparent way. This commitment is underpinned through the behaviours outlined in our five [Core Values](#), which shape how we work.
- 1.2 Staff are encouraged to strive to do their best at all times to deliver the best results. The aim of the Tiered Recognition Scheme is to ensure staff are recognised for their exceptional performance and contribution. The University adopts a total reward approach and how we recognise staff is intrinsically linked to performance. Performance and contribution will be assessed on an annual basis as well as on a real-time basis.
- 1.3 For the sake of parity, transparency and ease of monitoring, there is no provision for making performance-related incremental payments to staff outside this policy.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidance for recognising staff who demonstrate exceptional performance and contribution, going above and beyond the normal day-to-day expectations of the role, whether individually, or as part of a team.
- 2.2 The assessment period will align to the performance year, 1 August – 31 July.
- 2.3 The University's pay structure provides all staff in Grades 1 – 10 and Ac1 – Ac5 with automatic incremental progression (up to the top of their range) over and above cost of living rises, to recognise the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and expertise that comes with experience in a post.
- 2.4 Part-time, fixed-term and variable hours staff and those due to leave or retire should be reviewed on the same basis as all other staff.
- 2.5 Those who are or have been on extended leave¹ or absent due to a disability or long-term condition should also be reviewed and considered. Departments should seek advice from their Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) as necessary and are reminded to be mindful of all protected characteristics of staff.
- 2.6 Performance Awards

The scope of those eligible for an annual Performance Award will be all staff in Grades 1 – 10, Ac1 – Ac5 and Clinical Academics.

The following are eligible for an Individual Performance Award and Team Performance Award:

- who have passed probation;
- have at least twelve months' service as at the end of the assessment period;
- have completed a PDR for the performance year; and
- those in receipt of an acting up, honorarium or responsibility allowance are eligible to be nominated for an Individual Performance Award. However, the nomination must be based on performance over and above their normal and acting up (or honorarium/responsibility allowance) duties.

¹ Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Parental Leave, Shared Parental Leave, Dependants Leave (including Bereavement Leave).

The following are not eligible for an Individual Performance Award but are eligible for a Team Performance Award:

- those with less than twelve months' service with the University at the end of the assessment period;
- those promoted to a higher grade during the assessment period;
- those who are still on probation at the end of the assessment period;
- those who are off-scale, on a fixed salary (e.g. Graduate Intern).

The following are ineligible for an Individual or Team Performance Award:

- those staff who tender their resignation during the assessment period;
- those holding posts (e.g. Marie Curie fellowships) for which the funder's terms specify the individual's rate of pay outside the University's salary scales;
- those on joint contracts or whose salary is paid by another organisation; and
- those holding clinical consultant contracts who are eligible for NHS merit award.

2.7 Recognition Awards

The scope of those eligible for a Recognition Award is all staff in Grades 1 – 10, Ac1 – Ac5 and ECIT Grades 1 - 5.

3. General Principles

The purpose of the following principles is to provide an open and transparent mechanism for formally recognising those whose contribution demonstrates one or all of our five core values.

- 3.1 The Annual PDR process and ongoing conversations should be used to inform the Performance Award nomination process.
- 3.2 Line managers should remain aware of the contributions made by all of their staff, so that they can identify where nominations for awards under this policy may be appropriate.
- 3.3 Assessment of the performance and contributions made by staff should be based on University objectives and activities likely to contribute to the future success of the University.
- 3.4 The criteria for assessing performance and contribution must be applied fairly and consistently.
- 3.5 Judgements for making awards will be based on objective evidence of the contribution made.
- 3.6 Decisions taken will be based solely on the assessment of performance and contribution, irrespective of employment status, working hours, personal circumstances and protected characteristics.²
- 3.7 The application of the policy will be monitored annually, to ensure it is being managed effectively and consistently.

² Including: gender; marital and civil partnership status; having or not having dependants; religions belief and political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins; disability; sexual orientation; and age).

4. Types of Awards

There are two routes available to recognise exceptional performance and contribution:

- The **Performance Award** is available to managers to recognise staff who are demonstrating an exceptional level of performance and contribution in their role, going above and beyond the normal day-to-day expectations of the role. The Performance Award process takes place annually, following the end of the academic year, 1 August – 31 July.
- The **Recognition Award** is available to managers to recognise staff for instances of exceptional performance and contribution. This process will run throughout the year to allow managers to recognise success in real-time, through an online recognition portal. The eCodes offered will be in denominations of £10, £25 and £50.

5. Performance Awards

6.1 The purpose of the Performance Awards is to provide the University with a means of recognising exceptional performance and contribution on an annual basis. The University adopts a total reward approach to remuneration that intrinsically links recognition to exceptional performance and contribution.

6.2 Award Criteria

6.2.1 Normal incremental pay progression already reflects an expectation of continuous performance and growth in role. The nomination for a Performance Award should clearly articulate how the contribution has exceeded these expectations and that this is sustained exceptional performance and contribution. This may be where an individual is:

- demonstrating consistent and sustained level of exceptional performance and contribution;
- demonstrating exceptional behaviours and contribution; or
- carrying out significant additional responsibilities on an ongoing basis, which are considered to be within the individual's current grade and where it has not been appropriate to reward with an honorarium, acting up or responsibility allowance.

6.2.2 Individual Performance Award

- A non-consolidated award will be issued to staff who have demonstrated sustained exceptional performance and contribution, going above and beyond the normal day-to-day expectations of the role, during the previous academic year. This is an option available to recognise in-year achievement and must be evidenced in the nomination form.
- If exceptional performance and contribution has resulted in a sustained impact over a number of years, a consolidated award may be appropriate to recognise the cumulative effect. This is an option available to recognise long-term achievement. This must be evidenced in the nomination form.

6.2.3 Team Award

In some cases, a team's contribution will merit an award and as such, a Team Nomination will be more appropriate. The Team Nomination Form should be completed to clearly identify the contribution of each team member and the exceptionality of their performance and how they have gone above and beyond the normal day-to-day expectations of the role relevant to their grade. For the

purpose of this process, a team will normally only be assessed on a maximum of six members. Depending on the contribution made by the team, the nominee will propose one of the following award values for each team member:

- £500, or
- £250

6.2.4 Nominations should only be made where employees are successfully managing their normal day-to-day work to a high standard, in addition to making the specified exceptional contribution. Please consult the Manager's Guide for examples of outstanding performance and contribution.

6.3 Performance Award Nomination Process

6.3.1 Nominations for a Performance Award for exceptional performance and contribution from 1 August to 31 July, should be submitted by Heads of School or Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) via Queen's Online (QOL). However, it may be the case that management do not have full visibility of specific projects or pieces of work that their staff are working on. To ensure exceptional performance is captured, peers and colleagues are encouraged to provide positive feedback to the appropriate line manager, who will then decide, having all the information, whether or not to propose a nomination.

6.3.2 Details of those staff who are eligible to be considered for a Performance Award will be available, upon request, to Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of School and Directors.

6.3.3 A member of staff may be nominated for an Individual Performance Award as well as one or more team awards, but each nomination must reflect different areas of contribution.

6.3.4 Individual Award

The nominator must provide confirm if the award is to be consolidated on non-consolidated on the nomination form and QOL.

6.3.5 Team Award

For the purpose of this process, a team will normally only be assessed on a maximum of 6 members. Depending on the contribution made by the team, the nominee will propose one of the following award values for each team member:

- £500, or
- £250

6.3.6 The launch date will be communicated to all staff via Round-Up and an all staff email.

6.3.7 Awards will only be made, where the aspects of exceptional performance and contribution are made clear in the nomination form. Impressions and unsupported assertions will not be considered. The statement should cover the following:

- a description of the performance / contribution and its exceptionality; and
- evidence of the output and overall impact.

6.3.8 Please visit the [Reward and Recognition webpage, Useful Links](#), for a copy of the:

- Individual Award form
- Team Award form

6.4 Review Panels

The Faculty Executive Boards and the Directorates Management Teams will convene in October/November to review the nominations and make a final decision on the Performance Awards to be issued.

6.4.1 The Faculty Review Panel will review nominations and the fair balance of grades, gender and coverage across Faculty and the panel will comprise of the following members:

- Faculty Executive Board;
- Faculty HRBP.

6.4.2 The Professional Services Directorate Review Panels will review nominations and the fair balance of grades, gender and coverage across Professional Services and the panel will comprise of the following members:

- Directorate Senior Management;
- Professional Services HRBP.

Final review of Professional Services decisions carried out by the Registrar's Office.

6.4.3 The Monitoring & Review Panel will be convened in early December, to ensure there is a fair balance of grades, gender and coverage across Queen's and will consist of:

- Reward Manager;
- A representative from Diversity and Inclusion;
- HRBPs.

6.5 Outcomes

Letters will be issued to successful applicants in December.

6.6 Award Values

6.6.1 Individual Performance Awards for staff (excluding Clinical Academics) will be paid via payroll as a one-off, lump sum payment equivalent to one increment (the next increment in the employee's pay scale), pro-rated for staff on less than 37 hours per week. If a member of staff is at the top of their scale, the award will be based on the difference between their current point and the point below.

Awards for exceptional performance and contribution in the past academic year will be non-consolidated but where the Head of School/Director has indicated that exceptional performance has been sustained over a longer period (two years or more) the award will then be consolidated.

Staff who receive a consolidated award will progress to the next increment on the salary scale (after taking in to account any annual incremental progression) and this will be backdated to 1 August. If an employee is at the top of the contribution points in their scale, they will be issued with a non-consolidated award, based on the difference between their current point and the point below.

6.6.2 Team Performance Awards will be non-consolidated and, depending on contribution, will be one of the following amounts: £250 or £500.

6.6.3 Individual Performance Awards for Clinical Academics will be calculated based on the average amount of non-consolidated awards that all other staff could receive. Clinical Academics can only receive a non-consolidated award.

6.7 Timeline

ACTIVITY	DATE
Launch of 2021/22 scheme communication	2 August 2021
Nomination Stage – Head of School/Director (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) submission on QOL	2 August – 1 October
Faculty Executive Board/Directorates	4 October – 12 November
Communication to nominators and successful nominees	By 15 December 2021
Payment of Award	December 2021

6.8 Appeals

There is no right of appeal against the Panels' decisions on Performance Awards.

6.9 Overview of Process Steps – see [Appendix 1.1](#).

7 Recognition Award

The purpose of the Recognition Awards is to provide the University with a means of providing instant, real-time recognition for exceptional contributions all year round. It applies to situations, which would not be appropriate for a nomination of a Performance Award.

This award is designed to provide a dynamic approach through real-time recognition of staff. The vouchers offered will be in denominations of £10, £25 and £50, and will be awarded on the recommendation of the Recognition Approvers or peers (with endorsement from the Recognition Approvers). The eCode denominations have been carefully selected to ensure there is no employee tax or national insurance liability.

7.1 Recognition Approvers

7.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of School and Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) will be automatically considered Recognition Approvers, however, they may also delegate responsibility of issuing recognition awards to their senior managers. If a School/GRI/Directorate has a large population of staff they may wish to appoint additional Recognition Approvers (they must be line managers at Grade 7 and above), however, they must remain cognisant of the budget at all times.

7.1.2 If the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of School and Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) have identified additional Recognition Approvers, they must communicate this information to their HRBP to ensure they are they are given access to the Recognition Award portal.

7.2 Award Criteria

6.4.1 The criteria is subject to change but the most up to date list will be found on the nomination form. Please visit the [Reward and Recognition webpage, Useful Links](#), to access the nomination form.

7.2.1 Nominations for Recognition Awards will normally be in respect of a one-off task or project, and the evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- INTEGRITY – Where an employee has carried out an activity or activities that are considered to be beneficial and would not be part of the normal expectations of their job and/or grade.
- EXCELLENCE – Where an employee consistently demonstrates a commitment to and delivery of outstanding customer service, going the ‘extra mile’ when appropriate to assist colleagues and/or external customers, or where they consistently demonstrate a high standard of contribution over a period of time.
- RESPECT – Where an employee embraces the University’s values and positively influences the broader culture of their department.
- CONNECTED – Where an employee shows continued dedication to University's initiatives such as Green at Queens, Diversity and Inclusion, Volunteering, etc.
- AMBITION – Where an employee demonstrates a willingness and ability to learn beyond the immediate requirements of the post; where an employee takes on additional responsibility (within the existing grade) that is not being rewarded via an additional responsibility allowance, on an ongoing basis that has positively impacted on the Faculty/ School/GRI/Directorate or University.
- INTEGRITY, EXCELLENCE & CONNECTED – Where an employee demonstrates exceptional flexibility which contributes directly to the achievement of team/Department objectives or prevented disruption to team/Department services.
- INTEGRITY, EXCELLENCE, RESPECT, CONNECTED & AMBITION – Where an employee demonstrates exceptional flexibility, which contributes directly to the achievement of team/Department objectives or prevented disruption to team/Department services.

7.3 Nomination Process

- 7.3.1 Any staff member can make a suggestion to recognise another member of staff’s contribution, as long as it falls within the appropriate criteria. The Recognition Approver will take into consideration the information submitted, ensuring it falls within the appropriate criteria and considering the budget, will either agree to the award, as requested, agree to the award with a different monetary value, or decline the request providing feedback on their decision.
- 7.3.2 The Recognition Approver will have approval levels for all awards (£10, £25 and £50).
- 7.3.3 An employee can receive more than one recognition award during the year, however Recognition Approvers should be mindful to ensure fairness and equity in approach and delivery.
- 7.3.4 Recognition should be considered for a contribution which is over and above the normal expectation for the role, and for demonstrating exemplary behaviour of at least one of the University’s values.
- 7.3.5 The award should be made promptly, as soon as possible after an instance of exceptional performance and contribution.

- 7.3.6 Nomination forms, including the rationale for each award made must be kept and maintained by Faculty/Directorate, and provided, as necessary, to the Reward Team for reporting purposes.
- 7.3.7 The Heads of School/Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services), HRBPs and Reward Team will be responsible for the monitoring of awards to ensure that these are made fairly, transparently and in accordance with the University's values.

7.4 Budget Management

The Head of School/Director (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) may wish to appoint a central administrator who will manage the ordering of all awards via the online portal. As the administrator will be able to view all awards for that School/Directorate, they will be able to monitor the budget more closely.

The budget will be allocated through a nominal amount at the beginning of each academic year, and the headcount will be based on the June data of that year. People and Culture will manage the budget, but Faculties, Schools, GRIs, Directorate and Directors will need to ensure they do not spend more than the nominal budget allocated.

7.5 Appeals

There is no right of appeal against the Recognition Approver's decision on Recognition Awards.

7.6 Overview of Process Steps – see [Appendix 1.2](#).

8 Tiered Recognition Scheme Budget

8.1 People and Culture will manage the budget and each Faculty, School, GRI and Directorate will be notified of their allocation.

8.2 The budget will be allocated as follows:

8.2.1 Performance Awards

The budget will be based on eligible headcount and the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer (RCOO) and Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor's (PVC) will be notified of their budget allocation, by Directorates and Schools, at the beginning of each academic year. It will be their responsibility to ensure they do not exceed the allocated amount.

The RCOO/Faculty PVC will have the autonomy to decrease the budget allocation from an underperforming Directorate/School, and if appropriate, re-allocate this to over-performing Directorates/Schools.

8.2.2 Recognition Awards

The budget will be based on eligible headcount at School and Directorate level. Heads of School and Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services), will be informed of their annual budget at the beginning of the academic year. Heads of School and Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) will have access to the Recognition portal to run ad-hoc reports, and will be responsible for ensuring their budget is not exceeded.

The Reward Team will monitor expenditure on a monthly basis, providing quarterly updates to Heads of Schools and Directors.

9 Launch and Communication of the Tiered Recognition Scheme

The Scheme will be communicated in the following ways:

- The People and Culture Director will notify the Heads of School, Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) and Trade Unions of the launch of the Tiered Recognition Scheme.
- Faculty/Directorate HRBPs along with the Reward Manager will present the Scheme to Heads of School and Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services), who will be responsible for cascading details of the Scheme to staff in their areas of responsibility.
- In addition:
 - the Scheme will be included as an Institutional item in the Team Brief;
 - an All Staff email will be issued and details of the Scheme included in the weekly Round Up;
 - the Manager's Guide will be added to the People and Culture website;
 - Schools, GRIs and Directorates may publish a list of names of those who have received the awards, subject to agreement with the appropriate staff that their name and type of award (but not the amount) may be published; and
 - a statistical list of awards will be published annually and will be available to all staff.

10 Continuous Improvement and Assessment

The Reward Team will monitor the Scheme on a continuous basis and will engage with staff via the following platforms to ascertain its impact and effectiveness:

- Staff Forum (if appropriate);
- Staff Survey;
- Feedback from HRBPs/line management;
- Feedback from Focus Groups.

11 General Data Protection Regulation

Appropriate records of decisions will be retained by Human Resources. Under the General Data Protection Regulation, it is the University's policy to keep the information on recommendations confidential, however, Heads of School/Directors (Faculty, GRI and Professional Services) should be aware that under The Freedom of Information Act 2000 applicants may request the disclosure of information via the Registrar's Office.

12 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. It is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Queen's University seeks to provide equality to all, irrespective of gender, including gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependants; religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age. Please click [here](#) to view a copy of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

13 Section 75 Screening

This policy has been screened out with mitigation as per Equality Commission's guidance on screening with no adverse impact with regard to equality of opportunity and/or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

PERFORMANCE AWARD PROCESS STEPS**REWARD
TEAM**

- BY 31 JULY
- will review eligibility list
- will communicate launch of Performance Award Proces

**FEB /
DIRECTORATE
REVIEW
PANELS**

- BY 12 NOVEMBER
- HRBP will review gender, grade and spread and will challenge decision making on distribution of awards and spend at FEB/Directorate meetings
- nominations will be discussed at FEB/Directorate meetings and approved as appropriate, in line with budget, and updated on QOL
- Registrar will review and sign off, as appropriate, Directorates awards

**REWARD
TEAM**

- BY 15 DECEMBER
- will issue letters to successful candidates

FINANCE

- DECEMBER
- Performance Award to be paid in December payroll

**REWARD
TEAM**

- DECEMBER
- Performance Award to be paid in December payroll

RECOGNITION AWARD PROCESS STEPS – 1 August to 31 July

