



Contribution Reward Policy

1. Policy Statement

The University of Edinburgh wishes to recognise and reward employees who make an exceptional contribution that furthers the aims of the University, School, College or Professional Services Department, or meets an exceptional short term challenge¹.

Recognition under this policy may be in the form of additional increments or lump sum payments, and nominations for contribution rewards may be made by managers, by individual employees for self-nominations or by a team of employees nominating themselves.

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all employees on Grades UE01 to UE09 and all other non-professorial grades for consideration for the award of a lump sum reward. Staff on UE01 to UE09, MC, XM, RCB and ECA grades are eligible for consideration for the award of additional increments. Separate but similar procedures and guidance are available for employees at Grade UE10 and other professorial grades.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidance for rewarding employees who make an exceptional sustained or one off contribution, whether individually, or as part of a team.

3. Principles

This policy will reflect the following principles:

- managers must remain aware of the contributions made by all of their employees so that they can identify where applications for awards under this policy may be appropriate;
- assessment of the contributions made by employees will be based on University objectives and activities likely to contribute to the future success of the University;
- the criteria for assessing contribution must be applied fairly and consistently;
- judgements for making awards will be based on objective evidence of the contribution made;

¹ For reward of exceptional short term effort please refer to Appendix 1: Voucher Reward Scheme

- decisions taken will be based solely on the assessment of contribution, irrespective of irrelevant factors, including employment status, funding sources, working hours, and personal circumstances;
- annual review / appraisal processes and records may be used to inform the contribution reward application process, by agreement;
- procedures for the consideration of contribution reward must be fairly, transparently and consistently applied with regard to the University's equality and diversity policies; and
- the application of the policy will be robustly and responsibly monitored annually, or more often as agreed, to ensure it is being managed effectively and consistently.

4. Budget for Rewards

The University will determine an annual allocation for contribution reward. This will be expressed as a percentage of the salaries budget for each College or Professional Services Group.

5. Criteria and Types of Rewards

Contribution Rewards will only be made where an employee, or team of employees, has made either:

- a sustained excellent contribution, over and above the normal expectations for their role, in the context of expected continuation at that level, or
- a single exceptional contribution, significantly over and above the normal expectations for the role, in the context of a one-off task or project.

The criteria for sustained excellence contribution rewards, illustrated in 5.1, and the criteria for single exceptional contribution rewards, noted in section 5.2, must be considered in the context of the normal expectations for the grade. Activities that may be assessed as 'sustained excellence' or as 'exceptional' contribution for a particular grade may be a normal expectation of an employee at a higher grade.

5.1 Sustained Excellence Contribution Rewards

For this type of award, the employee's contribution must have been sustained over a period of six months. The evidence should include (but is not limited to) one or more of the following:

- achievement of agreed longer term objectives to a consistent and exceptionally high standard which have made a positive impact on the School, College or Department;
- the provision of exceptionally high standards of customer service, with demonstrable impact on the service provided, and / or the reputation of the School, College or Department; or
- taking on significant additional responsibility on an ongoing basis, but where the level of that responsibility falls within the employee's current grade.

Awards made for sustained excellent contribution will normally be of one additional increment on the pay scale, although in exceptional cases, more than one point may be awarded. Nominations for more than one increment must illustrate specifically why a case should be considered to merit exceptional treatment in order that Contribution Reward Panels can comparatively assess the requested award against the one increment nominations.

Once an award for sustained excellent contribution has been made, the employee is expected to continue to perform at the same level for as long as the award is deemed to be 'in effect'. If an award for sustained excellence constitutes accelerated progression within the grade, the award is deemed to be 'in effect' until the employee has been at the normal maximum spinal point for the grade for a period of one year. If an award progresses the employee's salary to the contribution area above the normal maximum for the grade the award will remain 'in effect' indefinitely.

Where an employee's sustained excellence award is 'in effect' and they have not reached and been at the normal maximum for the grade for one year, or they have not reached the maximum spinal point available in the contribution area, a further nomination for sustained excellence contribution can be made. However, such nominations must be based on evidence that exceeds or is different to the basis for the award which is 'in effect' and that is additional to evidence previously considered.

Where an employee is on the maximum contribution spinal point available they are not eligible for this type of award. In these circumstances, the employee and their manager should actively explore options for career progression.

5.2 Single Exceptional Contribution Rewards

An employee's exceptional contribution will normally be in respect of a one-off task or project. The evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- completing a task or project ahead of schedule, coupled with resultant savings in time, resources or money;
- contributing to the handling of an one-off event showing an exceptional commitment beyond that normally required of employees at that grade;
- successfully tackling an unplanned or unexpected project or incident of complexity;
- demonstrating exceptional flexibility which contributed directly to the achievement of School, College or Professional Services Department / Group objectives;
- contributing ideas which have led to greater efficiency, cost savings, improved quality etc, and which contributed to the achievement of School, College or Professional Services Department / Group objectives; or
- achieving particularly challenging goals or objectives, e.g. overcoming significant obstacles to ensure deadlines were met.

Nominations should only be made where the employee is successfully managing their normal day to day work to a high standard, in addition to making the specified exceptional contribution.

Where an employee's sustained excellence award is on-going, a nomination for a single exceptional contribution award can be made. Such nominations must be based on evidence that exceeds or is different to the basis for the on-going award and is additional to evidence previously considered.

Awards for a single exceptional contribution will be a one-off non-superannuable payment, anywhere within a range of £200 to £2,000, dependent on the nature of the contribution and the impact it had.

Indicative levels of award, with appropriate examples, are in the table below:

£200	Where the employee has substantially gone over the requirements of their role to complete a one-off or time limited task or service for customers or colleagues.
£500	Where the employee has achieved particularly challenging goals or objectives, overcoming significant obstacles to ensure targets were met;
£1,000	Demonstrating exceptional flexibility, which contributed directly to the achievement of School, College or Professional Services Department / Group objectives.
£2,000	Making a one-off contribution, over and above the requirements of the role, which has led to significant income for, or savings to the School, College or Professional Services Department, or which will contribute to greatly enhancing the reputation of the University, College or Professional Services Department externally. Pertaining mainly to employees in a Professional Services role, the one-off contribution will have led to a service improvement that has a strategic impact and greatly enhances the reputation of the College/Professional Services Department across and within the University.

Awards made to recognise a team achievement are made on the same basis as those for individual employees. All team members who have contributed to the achievement will normally receive the same amount of award so long as they have made the same level of contribution. Team nominations must be considered by the same Panel and be submitted to the Panel where the majority of the team are employed. For example, if the majority of team members are Professional Service rather than Academic, then the nomination must be sent to the Professional Service Panel.

Where part time employees have contributed equally to a single event, their award will normally be the same as any full time employee who also contributed in a similar way to that event.

Single exceptional contribution awards are not to be used to reward temporary acting up to a higher grade, or to reward additional duties that should be recompensed through overtime, or through appropriate payments under the Arrangements for OnCall, Call-Out and Out of Hours working.

There is no limit to the number of awards an employee can receive over a number of years, however, it is not appropriate for applications for single exceptional contribution rewards to be received for the same reasons in consecutive years for the same employee.

5.3 Change to Type of Award

Where a panel is of the opinion that a case matches the criteria for sustained excellence, the review panel are able to transfer cases for consideration of a sustained excellence award in consultation with the manager concerned. If, for any reason, the consultation with the manager were delayed, any sustained excellence award agreed would normally be effective from the same date as other awards made by the review panel.

In the exceptional event of a lump sum payment being awarded in two consecutive years, and a further application being received in the third year, consideration will be given by the panel to the award of a sustained excellence award in place of the third lump sum.

Similarly, where the contribution reward panel consider that an application for a sustained excellence contribution reward could not be approved, they may consider it for a single exceptional contribution reward where they believe it meets the necessary criteria.

6. Application Processes and Decision Making

Applications for a contribution reward will normally be made by a manager on behalf of an individual employee or a team. However, self-nomination is permitted, in which case the employee would submit the application to their manager, who will be required to verify the factual accuracy of the submission. A team may also nominate themselves and the case should be agreed between the team members being nominated for an award and the application submitted to their line manager for verification. Team nominations must be considered by the same Panel and be submitted to the Panel where the majority of the team are employed. For example, if the majority of team members are Professional Services rather than Academic, then the nomination must be sent to the Professional Service Panel.

An application must contain as much specific and relevant detail as possible in support of the case. This will include evidence of the contribution and an explanation of how this has been of benefit to the School, College or Professional Services Group.

In addition, a copy of the employee's current job description should be included with the application so that the panel can compare what is normally expected of the employee, to the contribution they have made over and above that. For team contribution, copies of individual job descriptions may not be necessary if a statement is provided that details the contribution of each team member and confirms that the contribution would not normally be expected of each team member. In addition, the overall contribution of the team must be explained.

Line managers may inform employees of any nominations made in which they are included. However, should a line manager not inform an employee of a nomination which is subsequently awarded, the manager must inform the employee of both the amount and the grounds for the award before it has been processed for payment. In addition, where a manager has been asked to support a self-nomination or a team nomination, but does not do so, they must check with the employee or employees whether they still wish the application to be submitted before submitting it.

Line managers will submit applications to their Head of School / Professional Services Department on the Contribution Reward Nomination Form. The Head of School / Professional Services Department will consider whether to recommend an award and, if so, what amount to recommend to their College / Professional Services Group Contribution Reward Panel.

6.1 Contribution Reward Panels

Panel members will be asked to assume the role for a period of no less than three years. College / Professional Services Group Panels are comprised of:

- managers who have knowledge of the areas of work being described in the cases, at least one of whom must be external to the College / Professional Services Group;
- at least one Joint Union Liaison Committee nominee – who must be external to the College / Professional Services Group;
- at least one HR Advisor; and
- the panel Secretary (who is in attendance but does not contribute to the decision making process).

The following must always be taken into account in setting up these panels:

- panel members should have received appropriate training or guidance about the policy and operation of the panel prior to considering nominations;
- at least one member of every panel will be trained in job matching;
- at least one member of every panel will be trained in equality and diversity issues; and
- every effort should be made to achieve a gender balance in the panel.

Also, panel members shall declare any potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest to the Secretary to the Panel, and appropriate action will be taken. In general terms, the following should normally apply:

- anyone who has made a nomination to be considered by a specific panel may not normally be present when the nomination is being discussed; and
- anyone who has been nominated for an award to be considered by a specific panel should not normally attend the panel and, where possible, a suitable substitute² would attend. At minimum anyone nominated for an award must not be present when their nomination is being discussed.

If possible, any conflict of interest should be identified prior to the panel meeting in order that consideration of any required action can be undertaken. However, advance notice may not always be possible therefore, at the beginning of each panel, any remaining potential conflicts of interest should be identified, and agreement reached on how to deal with these.

Further information may be found in the University's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

6.2 Frequency of Panels

Contribution Reward Panels will consider applications for sustained excellence contribution rewards and single exceptional contribution rewards of £200 or more on an annual basis. Employees will be informed of the timing of the annual panel in advance so that applications may be submitted in good time.

7. Communications

Once a panel has made their decision, employees and their line managers should be informed of the outcome as soon as possible, in writing. College / Professional Services Group HR Advisors will arrange for the letters to be issued.

Schools and Professional Services Departments may publish a list of names of those who have received the awards, subject to agreement with the appropriate employees that their name and type of award (but not the amount) may be published.

A statistical list of awards will be published annually and will be available to all staff.

8. Appeals

There is no right of appeal against the panel decision for any type of contribution reward.

9. Policy Creation and Review

This policy was approved by the Combined Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee

² As required, the Chair of the panel would agree the suitability of any substitute management representatives. The JULC would be responsible for nominating any substitute trade union representatives.

(CJCNC) on 13th December 2012, and replaced the previous version which was revised in March 2011. It took effect from 1st August 2012. Minor updates to terminology and weblinks were made in February 2017 and in December 2021. Clarity regarding Team Nomination submissions was added in April 2023.

Appendix 1

Voucher Reward Scheme

1. Purpose

The University of Edinburgh wishes to enable managers to recognise and quickly reward an exceptional act or effort that goes beyond the normal expectations of an employee's grade.

2. Scope

It is anticipated that awards made under the Voucher Reward Scheme will primarily assist managers of employees on Grades UE01 to UE09 and equivalent grades to make an award more quickly following an act or effort that the manager considers to be deserving of recognition that goes 'beyond a thank you'. This scheme may be particularly relevant where a manager wishes to recognise the team effort of a group of employees on a range of grades.

3. Type of Reward

The Voucher Reward Scheme recognises and rewards exceptional acts or efforts by awarding employees a £50, £100 or £150 gift card. In accordance with locally agreed procedures, a manager can recommend or decide (see point 8) the value of the gift card they would like the employee to receive. The University of Edinburgh will be responsible for tax that is payable in respect of voucher awards made.

4. Principles

The Principles of the Voucher Reward Scheme incorporate the relevant principles of the Contribution Reward Policy and a number of other principles. Managers must ensure that decisions are consistent with the principles detailed as follows:

- A *voucher reward* is considered and awarded retrospectively. The key differences to the Contribution Reward Policy are that decisions can be agreed at a local level, awards can be made without undue delay at any time throughout the year and the award amount is limited to £50, £100 or £150.
- Managers must remain aware of the attainments and efforts made by all their employees so that they can identify where awards under this scheme might be appropriate and in order to make sure that criteria for assessing their employees under this scheme are fairly, transparently and consistently applied.

- The scheme is not a mechanism by which to provide an inducement or encouragement. An employee is expected to perform at the appropriate level for their grade and carry out all reasonable duties and requests. A voucher reward must not be used to reward an improvement in poor performance to an acceptable level or to persuade an employee to undertake a particular work activity.
- Managers responsible for rewarding employees must give due consideration to the University's equality and diversity policies.
- Judgements for making awards will be based on objective evidence which must be recorded for annual reporting and audit purposes. Decisions taken will be based solely on the assessment of the act(s) or effort(s) demonstrated, irrespective of irrelevant factors, including employment status, funding sources, working hours and personal circumstances.
- The application of the Scheme will also be monitored as part of the wider central monitoring required under the Contribution Reward Policy, reported upon and recommendations made as deemed necessary to individual managers or to managers with responsibility for larger areas of the University.

5. Supporting Evidence

An employee may be recognised for an act or effort that is considered to be exceptional relative to the normal expectations for the grade. Awards can only be made where the employee is also completing their normal day to day work to a high standard. The evidence for the basis of an award may relate to, but would not be limited to examples as follows:

- Short term productivity increases over and above that which is normally expected that has resulted in a positive impact on a wider area of the team or Department or beyond.
- Contributing to the handling of a one-off event and demonstrating a commitment that is beyond that normally expected.
- Demonstrating exceptional flexibility, which contributed directly to the achievement of team or Department objectives or prevented disruption to team or Department services. This could be where an employee has agreed to attend work at very short notice to respond to an emergency or incident that would not normally be expected and this has resulted in a positive impact (or prevented a negative impact).
- 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.
- Where an employee has provided a service to customers that is considered to be an act of excellence or effort over and above the normal expectations for the grade for which positive testimony from internal University customers or from external customers relating to the quality of service may have been received.

- Where an employee has recommended an improvement to service or an idea to reduce costs that has had a positive, measurable impact e.g. improved customer feedback, budget savings.

Additional hours are not considered under this Scheme and reference should be made to the relevant Conditions of Employment. On-Call, Call-Out and Out of Hours Working are appropriately remunerated for specific groups of employees covered by these arrangements as part of their contractual terms. Similarly, an employee should not be given a Voucher Reward if they are *required* to work at a higher level and it would be more appropriate to consider a temporary Acting-Up allowance or temporary re-grading to a higher grade.

6. Frequency of Award

It may be appropriate for an employee to receive more than one award over a period of time for different reasons or, although unusual, for the same broad reason where the act relates to responding to an emergency or incident that could not be predicted. Where three or more awards to an individual have been made, the Contribution Reward Panel would pay particular attention to such awards in their review to ensure that these were appropriate and/or were not being made where a sustained excellence award would have been more appropriate.

7. Budget

The University will determine an annual allocation for the Voucher Reward Scheme. This will be expressed as a notional sum for each College/Professional Services Group.

8. Recommendations and Decision Making

Each College/Support Group will delegate responsibility for the approval of awards under the Voucher Reward Scheme to a small number of line managers, normally Heads of School or Heads of Department (or equivalent). Any supervisor or line manager of a smaller unit can make a recommendation to a Head of School or Head of Professional Services Department in respect of an employee for whom they have direct responsibility. The reward should be made promptly as soon as possible after the act of excellence so recommendations and decisions should be made quickly. Brief written records of the rationale for each award made must be kept, maintained and provided, as necessary, for reporting purposes.

9. Process for Issuing Voucher Rewards

Employees will be informed by email that they have been awarded a Voucher Reward and the reason for this. They will be given details of how to redeem gift card(s) of their choice.

The University will be liable for any tax payable in respect of voucher rewards awarded; therefore the value of the award will be the same as the value of gift card the employee receives.

10. Monitoring and Feedback

Line Managers will be required to complete details for each award to be processed which will include the employee's job details, the rationale for the award and the amount of award.

Annually the decisions will be considered by the Contribution Reward Panel and will be evaluated in regards to the fairness and appropriateness of the rationale and the consistency and appropriateness of the level of award made to each employee.