

Staff Recognition and Reward - Guidelines

1. Introduction

The University of the Sunshine Coast aims to be a primary engine of capacity building in the broader Sunshine Coast region and recognised, nationally and internationally, for excellence in teaching, research and community engagement. The University acknowledges that the achievement of our strategic priorities depends on our staff and to achieve such excellence, it is essential that we attract, develop, motivate and retain high quality staff, through the recognition and reward of their performance and achievements and their dedication to the University's goals and values. The deliberate recognition and reward of the achievements of our staff can help build a culture of high performance, increase staff engagement, reinforce positive behaviours and increase retention of staff whose values and goals align with those of the University.

These guidelines describe formal and informal options to recognise and reward staff for exceptional performance that contributes to the achievement of the University's strategic priorities.

2. Application

These guidelines apply to all staff, across all campuses of the University of the Sunshine Coast.

3. Performance Planning and Review (PPR)

The Performance Planning and Review (PPR) process is an ongoing cyclical process that facilitates an active and constructive partnership between a staff member and their PPR supervisor. PPR supports the ongoing review and development of the staff member's performance within the context of the work area's plans and priorities, top level plans and the University's Strategic Plan. Through PPR, an assessment can be made to support or initiate appropriate recognition and reward options.

4. Options for Recognising and Rewarding Performance

4.1 Vice-Chancellor and President's Awards for Excellence

Staff members or teams can be recommended for the Vice Chancellor and President's Awards for Excellence in:

- Learning and Teaching (for significant contributions to the delivery of high quality teaching, learning and graduate outcomes)
- Learning and Teaching – casual academic staff (for excellence in facilitating student learning)
- Research (for excellence in research leadership, outputs and outcomes)
- Research – Early Career Researcher (for excellence in research for staff who have been awarded their PhD within the equivalent five year period prior to the award process commencing)
- Engagement (for contributions to the advancement of University engagement with the community)
- Service (for excellence in service to staff and students and corporate citizenship)

Nominations for the Vice-Chancellor and President's Awards for Excellence are called for annually.

4.2 Academic Promotion

Academic staff pursue international standards in teaching, research and engagement. To achieve these standards, it is essential that the performance of academic staff be of high quality. To attract, develop, motivate and retain high quality academic staff, it is important to recognise and reward their performance.

Promotion is recognition that an academic staff member is consistently performing and achieving at a higher level than that to which they are currently appointed. Promotions take effect from 1 January in the year following the annual call for applications.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Chief Operating Officer

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Chief Operating Officer

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, People and Culture

LAST AMENDED

15 August 2024

REVIEW DATE

15 August 2026

STATUS

Active

4.3 Professional Development Program

From the University's perspective, the professional development program (PDP) is a means by which the performance and achievement of staff can be recognised and rewarded, a significant investment in staff and career development can be made, and strategic and productive partnerships can be developed. The implementation and outcomes of PDP contribute to the achievement of the University's, Work Area and Cost Centre's strategic goals.

4.4 20 Year Service Awards

Staff members will be formally recognised by the University for completing 20 years of service. A Staff member's period of service is defined as paid service to the University and includes any period of paid leave. Paid service includes continuing, fixed-term and casual employment.

All recipients will be acknowledged at an annual function hosted by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President in the first half of the year for those who have completed 20 years of service by 31 December in the year prior. All recipients will receive a commemorative gift and certificate of appreciation.

4.5 Performance Bonus or Loading for Outstanding Academic Staff

A performance bonus is a one-off annual payment while a performance loading is disbursed as a pro rata fortnightly salary payment. Such payments are above the Enterprise Agreement (EA) Salary rates and are applicable only in cases of outstanding performance and achievements that are well beyond reasonable expectations.

A performance bonus or loading will not normally exceed an amount of \$50,000 for exceptionally high performance. Exceptions may arise to elevate this salary supplementation up to \$100,000 per annum (maximum payment equivalent to Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowship Scheme).

A performance bonus can be paid as a non-salary benefit into a research account which can be used for tuition fees, conference or other professional development opportunities. A performance bonus or loading is made to an individual staff member.

Performance bonuses or loadings are applicable to any academic staff member, excluding casuals, regardless of level of appointment, for the achievement of an outstanding level of performance in teaching, research and engagement. This will be reflected by the accomplishment of stretch targets set out as part of the agreed PPR goals.

A Head of School can request the approval of a performance bonus or loading. All requests are to be in writing and must include a detailed justification. All requests are submitted to the Director of Human Resources. The Director, Human Resources will forward all requests to the Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (for recommendations up to Level C appointments) or the Vice-Chancellor and President (for recommendations to Level D and E appointments) for consideration and final approval.

4.6 Market Loading

Where there is an identified difficulty in attracting and retaining staff in particular specialist areas, a market loading can be applied if the position is identified as critical. A market loading provides remuneration in excess of the approved position classification level for a specified position. A market loading can be negotiated as part of an offer of appointment or be awarded to a filled position on the basis of the following criteria being met:

- Evidence of recent difficulty in attracting applicants to, or maintaining suitable staff in the position, and
- Organisational need for the contribution, knowledge and expertise required from the position.

The market loading on a specified position will be reviewed annually by the relevant member of University executive.

Where a position is reclassified, any loading being received by the incumbent will cease. In addition, the payment of a market loading will cease should a staff member transfer to another position at the University.

All requests for market loadings will be considered by Executive and, where the payment of the loading is endorsed by Executive, the loading may be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President. However, where the market loading is considered necessary during the recruitment process, the request will go directly to the Vice-Chancellor and President for approval.

A market loading is payable from the budget of the relevant Work Area or Cost Centre.

4.7 Broadbanding of Professional Positions

The classification of a position is based on job analysis, which examines and evaluates the requirements of the position. Broadbanding is formal recognition that a position spans two adjoining classification levels and is available for positions classified up to and including Professional Level 10.

Broadbanding can recognise the application by a staff member of additional skills to those required at their substantive classification level. At the higher level within the broadband, occupants, through experience, will have developed skills and expertise enabling them to perform more independently the full range of duties at a higher level, and more time will be spent on the more complex functions of the position.

4.8 Acting in Higher Classified Positions

A staff member may be asked to fill a vacant higher classified position for a specified period. If the staff member is in agreement, and is performing all of the duties and accepting the full responsibilities of the position, they will receive an allowance in addition to their normal salary. The allowance will be equivalent to the difference between the staff member's salary and the minimum salary of the position temporarily filled and is payable provided the period worked is for:

- 5 or more sequential working days in the case of professional staff, or
- 10 or more sequential working days in the case of Academic staff, or
- a regular number of days over a short period, for example, two days per week for a period of 10 weeks

Where a staff member is performing a percentage of the duties and limited responsibilities of the higher position, the allowance will be a percentage of the difference between the staff member's salary and the minimum salary of the classification of the position temporarily filled.

An allowance payable under this clause will be regarded as salary for the purposes of calculating all other types of allowance, including overtime.

4.9 Incremental Progression

Where it is recognised that performance has been satisfactory and additional skills, experience and knowledge have been acquired, a staff member will advance to the next increment level within their classification on their anniversary date. Where unsatisfactory performance or misconduct or serious misconduct procedures have commenced, the increment will be withheld. Incremental progression is directly linked with Performance Planning and Review (PPR).

4.10 Accelerated Incremental Progression

Accelerated incremental progression is a mechanism to reward staff and recognise exceptional overall performance. It is normally triggered by the annual formal PPR discussion and would therefore normally only occur once in a year.

4.11 Informal Rewards

There is a range of options to recognise and reward staff on an informal basis. Informal rewards may cost nothing more than the time it takes a supervisor to thank a staff member for their efforts on a particular project or task.

Informal rewards should be individualised, spontaneous, meaningful and simple, and to be most effective, informal rewards should be provided as soon as possible after the achievement has occurred. Providing morning tea, an email or a thank you card, or simply acknowledging a staff member's achievement in a staff meeting are effective ways to recognise and reward staff.