

Contribution Reward Scheme for Academic-Related and Assistant Staff in Grades 1 to 11

Guidance and Procedure
2025

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Overview of the Scheme

The University of Cambridge operates an annual Contribution Reward Scheme for Academic-Related and Assistant staff in grades 1 to 11 (henceforth referred to as “the scheme”). Eligible employees can apply for either one or more contribution increments or a single contribution payment in each annual exercise.

- Contribution increments are awarded in recognition of exceptional contribution.
- Single contribution payments are awarded to employees in recognition of their contribution in relation to a short-term piece of work or for employees who have reached the top spine point of their grade.

This scheme should not be used if there has been a change to the employee’s responsibilities. If this is the case, managers should speak to the appropriate HR School team to discuss further.

Types of Awards

Contribution Increments

Contribution increments can be awarded to employees to recognise their contribution over and above the normal expectation for the role, over the past 12 months. In most cases, a successful application will result in an award of one increment, with an award of two increments available for particularly strong cases. An award of three increments will only be made in very exceptional circumstances.

Awards are effective as of 1 January but are implemented in the March payroll (including arrears for January and February).

The number of contribution increments awarded must not exceed the range of the current grade and will not affect the underlying grade of the recipient. Where the resulting salary is still within the range of service-related grade points, the individual will continue to progress to the top of the service-related points as normal. If, however, the resulting salary is within the range of contribution points (i.e. starred points) for that grade, there will be no automatic progression to the next salary point.

More information on the University salary scales can be found [here](#).

Single Contribution Payments

This is a one-off, non-pensionable payment to recognise outstanding performance, beyond the typical expectations for the role, usually for a specific task or project within a set timeframe. Awards can be made to individuals, paid at 3% of their base salary, or to teams (where the one-off task/project is a result of the combined efforts of two or more individuals), paid at 2% of their base salary. Awards are calculated using base salary (pro-rated for part-time employees) as of 1 January and are payable in the March payroll.

The award of a single contribution payment will not affect the individual’s underlying grade or spine point.

It is not normally appropriate for applications for single contribution payments to be received for the same or similar reasons for more than two consecutive years for the same employee as this would indicate that the case aligns more with the criteria for a contribution increment. In the exceptional event of a single contribution payment being requested in the third consecutive year, consideration should be given by the Awarding Authority for a contribution increment in place of the third single contribution payment.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for **contribution increments** employees must:

- be an Academic-Related or Assistant staff member in grades 1 to 11; and
- have not yet reached the maximum contribution point for their grade; and
- have been in their current role and grade for at least 12 months prior to 1 January of the year the increment(s) is awarded; and
- be employed at the point the award is paid (i.e. employees who have left the University, or are due to leave the University prior to 15 March, are no longer eligible to receive an award); and
- not be applying for a single contribution payment under the scheme.

To be eligible to apply for a **single contribution payment** employees must:

- be an Academic-Related or Assistant staff member in grades 1 to 11 (at any point in their grade, including the top contribution point); and
- have been in their current role and grade for at least three months as of 1 January of the year the payment is awarded ; and
- be employed at the point the single contribution payment is paid (i.e. employees who have left the University or are due to leave the University prior to 15 March, are no longer eligible to receive an award); and
- not be applying for a contribution increment under the scheme.

Please note that any applicants who do not meet any of the above criteria will not receive an award under this scheme.



The Impact of Changing Roles and Regrading

There may be occasions when an individual has applied for, or been nominated for, an award as part of the scheme but changes their role or grade before the outcome of the application has been confirmed. This section aims to clarify what would normally happen in such situations.

Changing or regrading of roles on or before 1 January in the year the award is made

If an employee changes role or the role is regraded after an application for the scheme has been put forward, on or before 1 January they will no longer be eligible to receive an award as part of the scheme. The eligibility criteria require that employees have at least 12 months or three months' service in the grade and post at the point the award is effective.

Changing or regrading of roles after 1 January of the year the award is made

If an employee changes role or the role is regraded after an application for the scheme has been put forward, and after 1 January (the effective date of awards under this scheme), they will still receive an increment with effect from 1 January (if their application is successful). In addition, it is normally expected that their new spine point and associated salary will be uplifted in line with an increment received via the scheme. The examples below explain this:

Example 1 - moving to a new role at a higher grade:

Alex is in a grade 6 role, on point 39. Alex applies for a contribution increment under the Contribution Reward Scheme. Before the outcome is confirmed, Alex successfully applies for another role, and is promoted to grade 7 with effect from 1 February. In line with the University's standard procedures, as part of this promotion, Alex receives two increments, moving them to grade 7, point 41. In March, the outcome of Alex's application is confirmed as successful. Their 1 January spine point is uplifted to point 40. Their spine point on promotion with effect from 1 February is also uplifted to point 42, so they retain the two-increment award as part of the promotion.

Example 2 - moving to a new role at the same grade:

Sam is in a grade 5 role, on point 36. Sam applies for one contribution increment under the Contribution Reward Scheme. Before the outcomes are confirmed, Sam successfully applies for another role at the same grade, and transfers to the new role with effect from 1 February. In line with the University's standard procedures, Sam retains their current spine point and salary. In March, the outcome of Sam's application is confirmed as successful. Their 1 January spine point is uplifted to point 37. Their spine point on transfer with effect from 1 February is also uplifted to point 37.

Secondments

If an employee is on secondment at the time of the scheme launch, they may apply for an award for their performance in their substantive role provided that:

- They were in their substantive role for at least three months (for a single contribution payment) or 12 months (for a contribution increment award) before the start of their secondment.

- If applying for contribution increments, they have not yet reached the maximum contribution point for their grade in their substantive role.

The application should be considered by the line manager, Head of Institution and Awarding Authority for their substantive role. Any awards received would apply to the substantive role only.

If an employee has been seconded to a different role and has been working in that role for at least three months (for a single contribution payment) or 12 months (for a contribution increment award) as of 1 January of the year the award is effective, they are eligible to apply for an award in their secondment role. Any application should be considered by the line manager, Head of Institution and Awarding Authority of their secondment role.

If the secondment role is similar to the substantive role, it would normally be expected that any awards would be applied in both roles. The Awarding Authority should confirm if this is the case. If the secondment role is different to the substantive role, any agreed awards would only be applied to the secondment role (i.e. the role on which the application is based).

Preparing an Application

All cases must be made using form [PD30a \(for the proposal of contribution increments\)](#) or form [PD30b \(for the proposal of single contribution payments\)](#).

- Section A should be completed by the employee who should put forward their own case for consideration.
- Section B should be completed by the line manager (in some cases this will be the Head of Institution) who must confirm whether or not they support the case.

Please note that there is no need for Section A to be completed if the line manager is putting the employee forward for consideration. If this is the case, the line manager must inform the individual that a proposal has been put forward on their behalf.

The form should be submitted per the timetable set by the institution, which will be communicated at the start of the exercise.

The criteria below should be addressed when applying for the following awards:

Contribution Increments

The employee must be able to demonstrate their sustained and ongoing contribution over a minimum period of 12 months, which shows that their contribution exceeds what is expected of a person performing competently in that role. In most cases, a successful application will result in an award of one increment, with an award of two increments available for particularly strong cases. An award of three increments will only be made in very exceptional circumstances.

Examples of what might justify a contribution increment award may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Having consistently performed their role to an excellent standard, above what would normally be expected of them in their role.

- Having proactively sought opportunities to gain additional knowledge and/or skills, which have then positively impacted the support an individual provides to their institution or the University.
- Taking on additional responsibilities (within the existing grade) on an ongoing basis.
- Providing a consistently high standard of contribution and support to their institution or the University.
- Using initiative and problem-solving skills to propose suitable and effective solutions.
- Successfully completing agreed long-term objectives to a high standard.
- Providing a consistently high standard of customer service and therefore positively impacting the reputation of their institution or the University.
- Demonstrating innovation and resourcefulness regularly, resulting in improved processes.
- Showing leadership qualities which positively encourage team members and colleagues and improve overall team performance (particularly when the individual does not have line management responsibility).

If successful, the demonstrated level of contribution becomes the normal expectation for that employee.

Single Contribution Payments

The employee must be able to demonstrate outstanding performance, beyond the typical expectations for the role, usually for a specific task or project within a set timeframe. Awards can be made to individuals or to teams (where the one-off task/project is a result of the combined efforts of two or more individuals). Examples of what might justify a single contribution payment award may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Completing a significant task or project to an excellent standard, perhaps coupled with resultant savings in resources.
- Successfully organising or helping to organise a one-off event, demonstrating commitment, flexibility and adaptability to ensure smooth running before and on the day.
- Successfully tackling an unplanned or unexpected task, crisis/emergency, or incident involving complexity.
- Suggestion or design of an innovative approach, solution or idea for the improvement of a working practice or process within the School/Faculty/Department/Division.
- Achieving a particularly challenging goal or objective, e.g. overcoming a significant obstacle to ensure a deadline is met.
- Demonstrating fantastic team working, by working together effectively to deliver a large, complex project.

It should be noted that single contribution payments are not to be used to reward temporary acting-up to a higher grade, which should be recompensed through an [Additional Responsibility Payment](#).

Role of Line Managers

Line managers are expected to monitor the performance of all team members and nominate deserving individuals. In some cases, an award may be appropriate for an individual who has consistently excelled in their duties but may not be able to easily demonstrate exceptional contribution due to the nature of their work.

Line managers are required to review applications from those in their area, in order to indicate whether or not they support the application. They should carefully consider all

applications they receive from individuals in their team, reflecting on the individual's overall performance and contribution over the qualifying period. Notes or forms from [Staff Review and Development](#) meetings can be used for this purpose.

When reviewing an application form, line managers should consider the following, alongside the criteria referred to above:

- How has the individual's contribution affected the School/Faculty/Department/Division?
- Have they been involved in any large or complex projects or changes, where their contribution has impacted on the success of said project/change?
- Have there been any staff changes which have affected the individual's role? Have they taken on any additional responsibilities (within their grade)?
- Has there been any positive feedback about the individual from others in the team, or elsewhere?
- Has the individual consistently demonstrated their commitment to excellent customer service?

It is important to ensure that the criteria for assessing contribution are applied fairly and consistently.

Out-of-cycle Awards

There may be exceptional circumstances, particularly arising from urgent retention issues, where it would be appropriate for employees to be put forward for an award of up to three increments outside the normal annual timetable. In such cases, form PD30c should be completed by the line manager and signed by the Head of Institution (or their nominee) before it is submitted to the HR Reward Team and Lead HR Business Partner. The application will be assessed against the same criteria as applications submitted during the annual process. The final decision will be made by the Chair of the relevant Awarding Authority and reported at the next Awarding Authority meeting.

Only one award may be granted per year, individuals who have already received an award during the annual process are ineligible for consideration for an out-of-cycle award.



Timetable

Launch	Indicative Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme is launched by email from the Director of Human Resources to Awarding Authorities. Awarding Authorities set deadlines for institutions to return submissions and inform institutions. Institutions set deadlines for applications to be returned and contact eligible employees to confirm the scheme has launched. 	Early September 2024
Nominations Window	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an eligible employee wishes to apply, they should complete Section A of form PD30a (for contribution increments) or form PD30b (for single contribution payments) and submit it to their immediate line manager, who should then complete Section B. Line managers can submit applications on behalf of eligible employees in their team by completing Section B of form PD30a or PD30b. In this scenario, Section A does not need to be completed but line managers must inform the individual that they have been put forward. Completed applications should be submitted per institutional instructions. 	By deadline set by institution
Institutional Review of Applications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions should complete Section C of the application form, confirming whether the case is supported. The reason for not supporting cases must be recorded by the institution and must be based on the proposal and its suitability based on the scheme criteria. The institutions should also collate details of applications using the summary spreadsheet and submit the application forms and summary spreadsheet to the Awarding Authority for consideration. 	By deadline set by Awarding Authority
Awarding Authority Review of Applications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarding Authorities will appropriately review and consider all applications. Awarding Authorities will record the final outcomes and submit them to the HR Reward Team for collation and processing. The HR Reward Team will collate submissions from all Awarding Authorities and, in conjunction with the HR Amendments Team and Payroll, will check the data and raise any queries with the relevant Awarding Authorities. 	Early February 2025
Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once all queries are resolved, the HR Reward Team will inform institutions that outcome letters can be issued to applicants. Payments are processed by the HR Amendments Team and Payroll and are made in the March payroll. Contribution increments are awarded with effect from 1 January and single contribution payments are calculated using the 1 January base salary (pro-rated for part-time employees). 	March 2025

Financial Matters

All awards made via this scheme are fully funded by institutions, from Chest and non-Chest sources available to them. No additional budget is provided. In all cases, institutions should ensure that sufficient funding is identified to support nominations for awards under this scheme. Queries concerned with funding should be raised with the relevant Finance Business Partner in the first instance.

Grades and salary points, including on-costs, can be viewed [online](#).

Guiding Principles

Assessment of contribution made should be clearly related to University, School or Faculty/Department objectives and should recognise achievements and reward behaviours and activities likely to contribute to the future success of the University.

Judgements should be based on objective evidence, and if appropriate, recognise teamwork.

Details of the general principles, including Natural Justice, Fairness and Declaration of Interest, Equal Opportunity, Disability and Allowance for Special Circumstances, and Confidentiality and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) can be found in the Appendix.

Natural Justice

'Natural Justice' is defined as 'due process of law' or the 'requirements of procedural fairness'. There are two principles:

- no person can be a judge of their own cause; and
- the person must have the opportunity to be 'heard' fairly

Accordingly, all persons involved in the procedure and in the consideration of proposals should be fully conversant with the guidance contained in this document. They should undertake their roles in a manner which is scrupulously fair in relation to proposals that have been submitted, whether or not the guidance makes explicit provision for all circumstances.

Fairness and Declaration of Interest

If any person involved in the preparation, presentation of documentation, or in the consideration of proposals has a personal interest that may affect the impartial consideration of proposals, or be perceived by others to do so, they should declare this to the person with overseeing that part of the process. If that is the person who has declared an interest, they should be prepared to withdraw from the relevant section of the proceedings, handing over responsibility to another person for that item of business.

With regard to Committees, all members should be aware that:

- a systematic approach in forming a view of a proposal is desirable;
- the process of evaluation is a collective activity and all decisions should be arrived at collectively. (If a member is unable to be present, they may provide a written

statement of their view but such written views should be accorded less weight than those expressed in open discussion since written statements provided in absence cannot be challenged in committee); and

- if all members agree immediately on the same overall assessment, this can be accepted without discussion. Differences in individual members' evaluations should be discussed and a consensus reached. Detailed discussion will in most cases lead to collective agreement on the assessment.

Equal Opportunity

The University's statement of policy is as follows:

The University of Cambridge is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity.

The University is therefore committed to a policy and practice which require that, for students, admission to the University and progression within undergraduate and graduate studies will be determined only by personal merit and by performance. For staff, entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the institution concerned.

Subject to statutory provisions no applicant for admission as a student, or for a staff appointment, or student, or member of staff, will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, marital or parental status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or age. For students, ability to meet the requirements of the selection criteria for competitive admission and for staff, ability to perform the job, will be the primary consideration.

If any person admitted as a student or appointed as an employee considers that they are suffering from unequal treatment on any of the above grounds in their admission, appointment, or progression through the University, they may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances or the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment, as appropriate.

The University will take active steps to promote good practice. In particular it will:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups, between women and men, and between disabled and non-disabled people;
- have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, and all other grounds set out in the statement on equal opportunities;
- subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect all under-represented groups, especially ethnic minority students and staff, women, and disabled students and staff, and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact;
- monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, paying particular attention to the recruitment and progress of ethnic minority students and staff, women, and disabled students and staff;
- promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training;

- take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims; and
- publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments and results of monitoring

The University will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements.

Disability and Allowance for Special Circumstances

Consideration should be given to any special circumstances which may have resulted in a lack of opportunity for any applicant nominee or group of applicants to perform to their full potential, e.g. disability and time away from work because of family responsibilities for bringing up children or caring for relatives or for illness. Initially, the case put forward should be assessed objectively and on the same basis as other applicants nominees before considering whether it would be appropriate to make an allowance. Those making the decision must record whether or not an allowance was made and the reasons behind that decision, as well as indicating the exact nature of any allowance made. Further advice should be sought from the relevant Lead HR Business Partner.

In the case of a member of staff who is known to have a disability, account should be taken of:

- the nature of their disability;
- how they believe it has constrained performance; and
- if appropriate, the effectiveness of any adjustments to their workplace or employment arrangements in overcoming these problems.

Full details of the University's Disability and Employment policy can be found on the web.

Confidentiality and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Members of the Committee and University staff involved in the procedure should note that the process of consideration is confidential and that certain documentation in the guidance may cannot be disclosed to applicants nominees or other persons who are not members of the Committee or otherwise appropriately involved in the process.

The University's policy in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is to respect confidentiality of information provided by referees in so far as this is compatible with the requirements of the Regulation and other relevant legislation.

The University's Dignity at Work Policy and Code of Behaviour

The University is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive community that nurtures a culture in which we treat one another with courtesy and professionalism, even while robustly challenging each other's views and opinions. There is no place for bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or victimisation in our community and each of us is responsible for the way we interact with and treat others. The University's Dignity at Work Policy and The Code of Behaviour set out the expectations the University has of its employees, and all employees must be familiar with and adhere to them

Procedural Adjustments and Interpretation of Guidance

The Chair of the Human Resource Committee is authorised, on behalf of the General Board and Council, to make any reasonable change or adjustment to the procedure, interpret any aspects of the guidance mentioned in this booklet where doubt arises as to its meaning, or take any other action that may be necessary to ensure the fair and efficient management of this and any subsequent exercise.



