



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Contribution Reward Scheme for Academic-Related Staff in Grade 12

Guidance and Procedure

**2025-26**

V3.0/September 2025

# Contents

<b>Overview of the scheme</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Timetable and procedure</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Types of awards</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The impact of changing roles and regrading</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Preparing a nomination</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Funding</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Scheme adjustments</b>	<b>14</b>

# Overview of the scheme

The University of Cambridge operates an annual Contribution Reward Scheme for Academic-Related Staff in Grade 12 (henceforth referred to as “the scheme”). Under the scheme **eligible employees can be nominated for either contribution increments or a single contribution payment, in each annual exercise.**

- **Contribution Increments** are awarded in recognition of continued 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 for their band within grade 12.

It is normally expected that nominations for an award under this scheme will be

submitted by the eligible employee’s line manager. Eligible employees can also nominate themselves for an award but should do so only after first discussing their intention to nominate themselves with their line manager.

Nominations, together with recommendations from the Senior Reviewer are put forward to be considered and determined by the Vice-Chancellor’s Committee.

All persons involved in administering this scheme should exercise impartiality and fairness and be seen to do so. More information can be found on page 11.



# Timetable and Procedure

Launch	Indicative Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HR Reward Team writes to eligible employees, their line managers and Senior Reviewers to inform them about the scheme, the nomination process, and timescales.</li> <li>Line managers will receive eligibility lists for their team. To encourage greater vigilance over equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations, where possible, line managers will also receive an EDI profile of the employees they manage, and how that compares to the EDI profile of all employees at this level. They will also receive information on when each eligible employee last received an award under CRS 12.</li> <li>As soon as possible after the scheme launch, line managers should meet with eligible employees in their team to discuss the option of putting forward a nomination.</li> </ul>	Mid-September 2025
Nominations Window	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the initial conversations, line managers should prepare the nomination form (PD32) for all employees they wish to nominate for an award.</li> <li>If the employee wishes to submit a self-nomination, they must discuss this with their line manager before completing the nomination form (PD32).</li> <li>In both manager-led nominations and self-nominations, the nomination form should explain the nominee's achievements and demonstrate their exceptional contribution, with reference to the nominee's most recent appraisal paperwork (attaching this paperwork where possible).</li> <li>Nomination forms must be submitted to the HR Reward Team (<a href="mailto:CRSGrade12@admin.cam.ac.uk">CRSGrade12@admin.cam.ac.uk</a>) by <b>22 October 2025</b>.</li> <li>For self-nominations, the line manager of the nominee will be contacted by the HR Reward Team to comment on the nomination.</li> </ul>	Mid-September 2025 to mid-October 2025
Senior Review of nominations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once all nominations have been received and collated by the HR Reward Team, they will be reviewed by a Senior Reviewer, as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>nominations from employees in the UAS and Council Institutions will be considered by the Registry.</li> <li>nominations from employees in Schools will be considered by the relevant Head of School.</li> <li>nominations from employees in General Board Institutions will be considered by the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The Senior Reviewer will consider all nominations in their remit, and with support from the relevant Lead HR Business Partner, will complete Section D of the nomination form to confirm their assessment, and make a recommendation for an appropriate award to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. The completed Section D of the form must be submitted to the HR Reward Team (<a href="mailto:CRSGrade12@admin.cam.ac.uk">CRSGrade12@admin.cam.ac.uk</a>) by <b>3 December 2025</b>.</li> </ul>	November 2025 to early December 2025

# Timetable and Procedure (continued)

Vice-Chancellor's Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Once all Senior Reviewer documentation has been received, the HR Reward Team will collate and distribute the completed nomination forms with Senior Reviewer recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. All nominations, whether they are supported or not supported, will be reviewed by this Committee.</li><li>The Vice-Chancellor's Committee will meet in January 2026 to consider the nominations. Final decisions on awards are made by this Committee.</li><li>The outcomes will be shared with the Remuneration Committee for their information at their February meeting.</li></ul>	January to February 2026
Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The outcomes of all nominations will be communicated to nominees via their line managers in March 2026.</li><li>Outcomes will be processed in March 2026 pay as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>awards of Contribution Increments will be effective from 1 March 2026.</li><li>awards of Single Contribution Payments will be calculated based on the nominee's salary as at 1 March 2026 (unless other arrangements apply - see page 7 for details).</li></ul></li></ul>	March 2026

## Eligibility

The Contribution Reward Scheme for Academic-Related staff in Grade 12 applies to eligible employees of the University of Cambridge only. It does not apply to casual workers or to those employed or engaged by the University's subsidiaries or the Colleges.

To be eligible for an award made under this scheme, employees must:

- be an Academic-Related employee in Grade 12; and
- have been in their post performing their duties at the current grade for at least one year prior to 1 October 2025; and
- be employed at the point the award is processed (i.e. employees who have left the University, or are due to leave the University on or prior to 15 March) will no longer be eligible to receive an award)

Please note, if any nominees do not meet the above criteria, they will not receive an award under this scheme.

### Important note

Eligible employees cannot be nominated for both types of awards under the scheme (i.e., they may be nominated for either a contribution increment or a single contribution payment, not both).



# Types of Awards

## Contribution Increments

This is the award of additional increments in an employee's pay grade and band and are awarded to recognise an employee's continuous exceptional contribution over a period of at least a year. It is normally expected that up to a maximum of two increments would be awarded. However, there may be exceptional circumstances, such as those relating to potential equal pay or relativities issues, where an award of three increments may be permitted.

**Once an employee reaches the top spine point for their band within Grade 12 they will only be eligible for single contribution payment awards.**

Awards are effective from 1 March and are implemented in the March payroll.

## The effect of Contribution Increments on Market Pay

For employees in receipt of [Market Pay](#), any increase to base salary will erode the value of the additional payment by an amount equal to the increase in base pay.

## Single Contribution Payments

This is the award of a one-off, non-pensionable payment, paid at 3% of base salary (pro-rated). These awards can be made in circumstances such as:

- when an employee has reached the top spine point for their band within Grade 12, which means they have no means of progressing their pay; or
- when an employee has excelled in relation to a short-term piece of work, such as a major but finite project, but does not meet the criterion for continuous exceptional contribution.

# The impact of changing roles and regrading

As a result in the change of effective dates of awards made under this scheme, guidance on the impact of changing roles and regrading on eligibility has been added. This guidance aligns with the Contribution Reward Scheme (Professional Services), to ensure parity between schemes.

There may be occasions when an employee changes their role or grade following a nomination but before the outcome of the nomination has been confirmed. This section explains what would normally happen in such situations.

## **Changing or regrading of role(s) on or before 1 March in the year the award is made**

### **Contribution Increments**

If an employee changes role or the role is regraded on or before 1 March, they will no longer be eligible to receive contribution increments as part of the scheme.

### **Single Contribution Payments**

If an employee changes role or the role is regraded on or before 1 March, they will still be eligible to receive the payment, but it will be calculated using the salary of the role and grade on which the nomination was based.

## **Changing or regrading of roles after 1 March of the year the award is made**

### **Contribution Increments**

If an employee changes role or the role is regraded after 1 March, they will still be eligible to receive the award. In addition, it would normally be expected that their spine point in their new or regraded role would be uplifted in line with the contribution increments, [as per the University's standard procedures](#).

### **Single Contribution Payments**

If an employee changes role or the role is regraded after 1 March, they will still be eligible to receive the payment, which will be calculated using the salary as at 1 March, in line with the usual process.

## Secondments

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

- They were in their substantive role for at least twelve months before the start of their secondment.
- If being nominated for contribution increments, they have not yet reached the maximum contribution point for their grade in their substantive role.

The nomination should be considered by the line manager and Senior Reviewer of 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 twelve months as of 1 October of the year the scheme is launched, they are eligible to be nominated for an award in their secondment role. Any nomination should be considered by the line manager and Senior Reviewer 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. 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 nomination is based).



# Preparing a nomination

It is normally expected that nominations for an award under this scheme will be submitted by the eligible employee's line manager. Eligible employees can also nominate themselves for an award but must first discuss their intention to self-nominate with their line manager. After submission, the line managers of those who have submitted a self-nomination will be contacted and asked to comment on the nomination.

Nominations for awards must demonstrate the contribution on which the nomination is made and should be relevant to the award for which the employee is being nominated (as referred to on page 6).

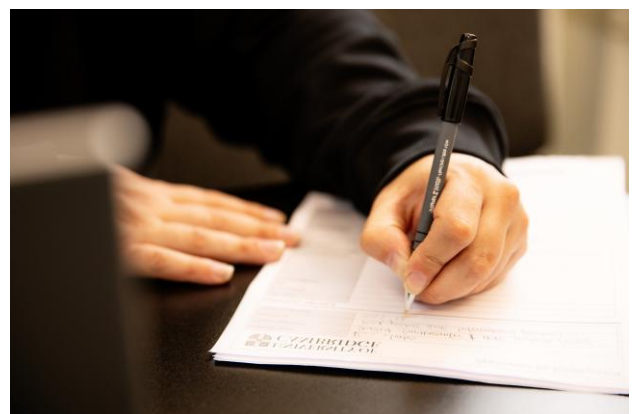
The criteria below should be addressed when making a nomination for the following awards:

Where the case is made for the award of  
**contribution increments:**

- a) in what ways that contribution has been exceptional;
- b) as well as commenting on what has been achieved (for instance, in exceeding expectations in meeting set objectives) explain how that has been achieved (for instance, in role modelling one or more of the professional services staff values);
- c) explain how the employee's contribution has impacted the wider University and its core mission, in addition to their achievements within their own department/institution. Where appropriate, this may include contributions made to the Collegiate University and/or beyond the University; and
- d) confirm that an appraisal meeting has been conducted which supports the nomination (or at the very least that feedback has been given to the employee being nominated/the employee has been in receipt of recent feedback).

Where the case is made for the award of a  
**single contribution payment:**

- a) why that contribution has exceeded expectations;
- b) commentary on how that contribution has exceeded expectations;
- c) commentary on the impact of this contribution on the wider University/Collegiate University/beyond the University; and
- d) confirmation that an appraisal meeting has been conducted, and feedback given.



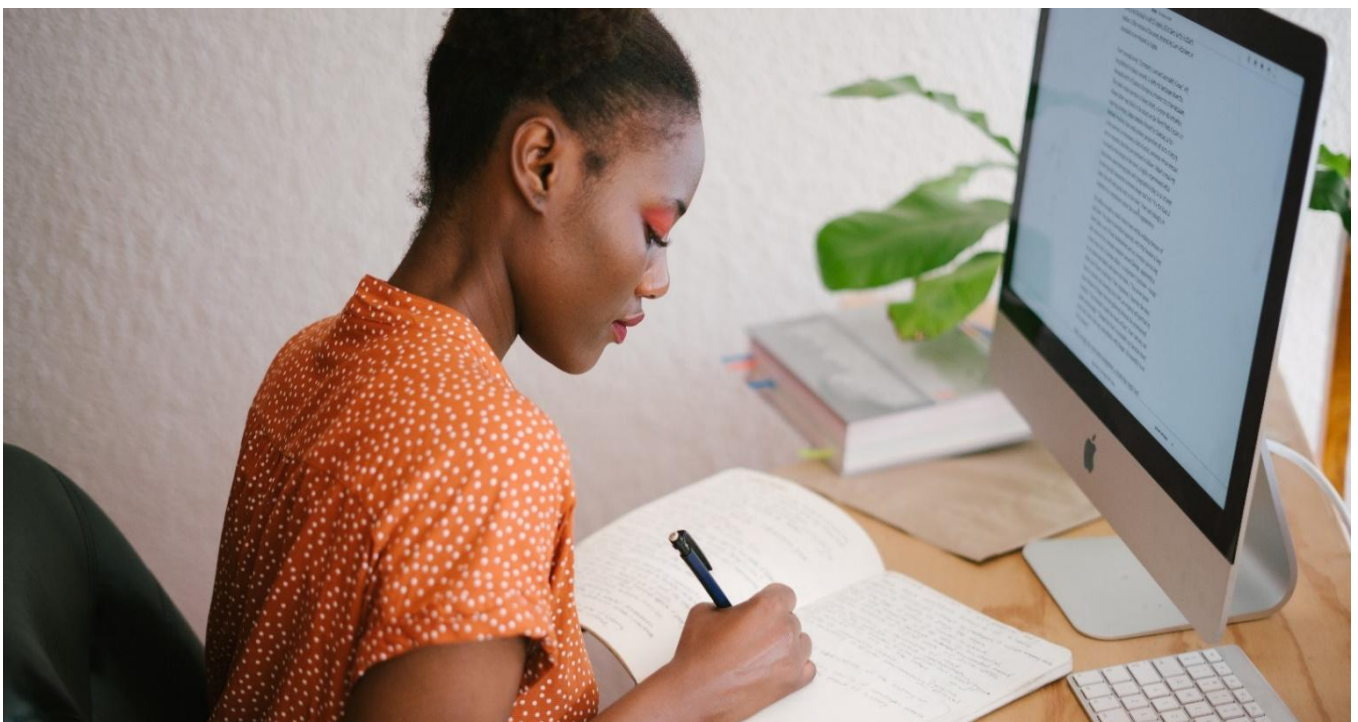
# Funding

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 and 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 Manager in the first instance.

It is expected that up to approximately 20% of eligible employees might be expected to be nominated or nominate themselves for an award in each scheme year. Line managers should consider this expectation when reviewing their team members, and nominating employees for awards.

The costing of all proposals made to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee must include [on-costs](#). For contribution increments, the relevant calculation will be the difference between total basic salary plus on-costs at the proposed new grade point, compared to those of the current grade point as at 1 March 2026, adjusted for part-time workers (but with no adjustment for atypical pension/NI arrangements). For Single Contribution Payments, this will be 3% of the current base salary as at 1 March 2026, plus an assumed 15% for National Insurance costs.

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



# Guiding Principles

Assessment of an employee's contribution should clearly be related to the objectives of the University, School or Faculty/Department, recognise achievements and reward behaviours and activities that are 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, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the University's Dignity at Work Policy, and Code of Behaviour can be found below.

## 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 those 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 can 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 at the 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 nomination 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 can 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 employee 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 employees 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 an employee 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 cannot be disclosed to nominees or other persons who are not members of 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 standards of behaviour expected from University employees and workers.

# Scheme Adjustments

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 document 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.