

PERSONNEL SERVICES

University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD
 Director of Human Resources



To: all heads of department and institutions, faculty board chairs,
 departmental administrators, and personnel administrators

cc: heads of division and divisional registrars

Ref.EMS/5,
 EMS/5/A,
 EMS/5/J,
 EMS/5/TP,
 EMS/6,
 EMS/10

13 November 2020

Recognition

Regular thanks and recognition for staff is always important and in the present circumstances with staff working remotely, often in unprecedented circumstances, the importance of regular thanks has become ever more important.

The University is reintroducing the Recognition Scheme (£200) awards with immediate effect to recognise exceptional contributions and provision of exemplary service. There are some temporary amendments to the Scheme, including that Departments are asked to budget for circa 15% (rather than the normal 8%) of staff to receive an award.

Later this month the University will be introducing a Thank You Board to enable peer-to-peer recognition.

Departments are asked to:

- Note the reintroduction of the Recognition Scheme (£200 awards) with immediate effect to recognise exceptional contributions and provision of exemplary service
- Note the revised temporary amendments to the Recognition Scheme
- Note the templates provided
- Note that a University-wide Thank You Board will be launched this month

1. Financial Recognition Scheme

As part of the pay mitigations which have been necessary to put in place in the current uncertain financial climate, all discretionary pay activity was postponed, including the University's Reward and Recognition Scheme. It is acknowledged that suspension of the Scheme came at a time when many staff are working exceptionally hard and Heads of Administration and Finance have raised concerns that they have no means to financially recognise exceptional efforts by staff members.

It is too early to reinstate the more expensive elements of discretionary pay, but it has been agreed that the Recognition element of the Reward and Recognition Scheme (i.e. the £200 one-off, non-pensionable payment for an exceptional piece of work) should be re-introduced, therefore allowing a relatively low-cost means of providing timely financial recognition to



individual staff members who are working exceptionally hard to deliver exemplary service at this current time.

The Awards for Excellence Scheme (the gathered field to award one-off or recurrent increments) remains on hold.

Details of the Recognition Scheme, including nomination and payroll forms, can be found on the HR website at: <https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/reward-and-recognition-scheme>

Temporary amendments to the Scheme

- Departments are asked to budget for circa 15% of staff to receive recognition awards (this is normally circa 8%).
- No one is to receive a Recognition Award more than once every six months (other forms of recognition, such as the thank you board, may be used where further instances of exceptional performance merit recognition)
- Team awards are permitted, but no group larger than a team should receive them as they are meant to reward exceptional performance. Therefore, awards should not be made to entire sections / sub-faculties etc.
- Every recognition award should be accompanied by a letter from the HoD or senior nominator specifically referring to why the Award has been given and thanking the individual for their own precise contribution.
- Although all staff in grades 1-10 are eligible, these awards are particularly suitable for awarding support staff, for whom their own personal contribution to departmental objectives may be less visible
- Heads of department should specifically consider whether Heads of Administration and Finance (grades 1-10) should receive an award. In reaching a decision the Head of Department may wish to seek feedback from the Divisional Secretary.
- In previous exercises it's been noted that typically BME staff have been under-represented. In using the Recognition Scheme managers should be mindful of this and need for sensitivity towards, for example, furloughed staff and staff whose performance has been constrained by their personal circumstances, and to consider performance proportionally/in relation to circumstances.

Templates

A template nomination form and letter is provided for departments. It is intended that the letter should be personalised with the information provided in the nomination form. Departments and divisional offices will need to put local arrangements in place to personalise the letters.

2. Thank You Board

A University-wide Thank You Board is being introduced which is designed to encourage a culture of peer-to-peer recognition across the University.

Members of staff should use the Board to thank individuals/teams in their own department or from other departments/sections across the University for pieces of work/support/services provided.



Staff will be asked to complete a short “message of thanks form”. This will clearly state who it is from and who is being thanked. Messages should be kept to one/two sentences.

The Thank You Board will be launched later this month.

If you have any questions please email reward@admin.ox.ac.uk and a member of the Reward team will answer your query.

JULIAN DUXFIELD

JD/SJK/SJT

*Replaces existing circular: No
Copy for noticeboards: No*