

Reward and Recognition Guideline

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) At the University of Newcastle (University) our staff are our biggest asset, and having engaged staff is critical to the achievement of our 2025 Vision. However, engaging staff is not only about providing competitive pay and benefits but also through providing challenging and interesting work, ongoing learning and development opportunities, and meaningful reward and recognition.

(2) The University aims to ensure that creative and thoughtful ways to identify, recognise and reward staff achievements are available to managers. This guideline has been produced to support this strategy and to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent approach to reward and recognition across the University.

(3) The reward and recognition mechanisms outlined in this guideline will also support and reinforce the University's strategic objectives, vision and values, and in turn lead to enhanced motivation and productivity, retention of high performing staff, and help build a more aligned workplace culture.

Section 2 - Intent

(4) This guideline is for managers to use when considering and recommending rewards and recognition for staff. It provides managers with guidance on when they might reward and recognise staff, together with suggestions on how to incorporate reward and recognition activities into their everyday management practices.

Section 3 - Principles

(5) The following principles underpin and guide reward and recognition at the University:

- a. Recognise and promote leadership behaviours at all levels aligned to the University Leadership Framework.
- b. Recognise and reward significant outstanding performance and innovation which supports the achievement of the University's strategic objectives.
- c. Attract, retain, motivate and engage high performing staff.
- d. Provide timely recognition and meaningful rewards for individual and team achievement.
- e. Provide fair, consistent and transparent rewards and recognition across the University.

Section 4 - What is Reward and Recognition?

(6) The University provides a range of mechanisms and benefits to attract, remunerate, motivate and retain staff including competitive salaries and conditions, a staff wellness program, and flexible working arrangements. In addition, the University aims to reward and recognise outstanding performance, significant contribution to organisational success and consistent demonstration of leadership behaviours.

(7) Internal reward and recognition mechanisms at the University fall into four categories:

- a. Formal university-wide reward and recognition
- b. Faculty/Divisional/Unit reward and recognition
- c. Informal reward and recognition
- d. Remuneration and benefits

Section 5 - When Might You Reward and Recognise?

(8) The Performance Review and Development (PRD) process provides staff with opportunities to achieve personal and professional goals which are aligned with the strategic and operational objectives of the University. Through every-day PRD conversations, managers provide regular feedback to staff members which may result in opportunities for informal positive recognition.

(9) The annual PRD review conversation provides managers with the opportunity to more formally recognise and reward outstanding performance, contribution to organisational success, and staff who consistently demonstrate leadership behaviours.

(10) Examples of performance and behaviours which may be rewarded and recognised as part of PRD include, but are not limited to:-

- a. Consistently exceeding teaching and research outcomes as determined by the Performance Expectations Framework for Academic Staff
- b. Exceptional innovation in teaching and/or research, with clear results
- c. Exceptional effort in engaging with the community for innovative solutions
- d. Demonstrated ability to break down barriers and/or create new relationships for the benefit of the University
- e. Consistently providing guidance and mentoring early career colleagues
- f. Consistently going above and beyond to participate regularly in Discipline, School, Faculty and University committees, scheduled meetings and events
- g. Consistently demonstrating capabilities at a higher than expected as determined by the Professional Staff Performance Expectations Matrix (see Performance Expectations Framework for Professional Staff).
- h. Demonstrating exemplary leadership by managing and leading complex initiatives smoothly and effectively
- i. Demonstrating innovation or leadership in safety management
- j. Consistently going above and beyond what would normally be expected in the role to provide a high level of service to the University community
- k. Development of a new idea or improvement on an existing idea that results in savings to the University
- l. Consistently and capably demonstrating one or more of the Leadership Framework behaviours

(11) Although many reward and recognition opportunities will be identified during the PRD process, other specific accomplishments, activities and behaviours worthy of reward and recognition may occur more spontaneously.

(12) Examples include:-

- a. A project team able to deliver on or before time with significant cost savings and greater than expected results
- b. A staff member who role-models a leadership behaviour under difficult conditions
- c. Achieving a higher than anticipated achievement, for example the acceptance of a paper in a higher ranking journal
- d. Staff volunteering to work after hours to deal with an unforeseen situation, which is outside of the normal expectations of their position
- e. A staff member who develops a new or improved initiative which results in significant savings to the University,

outside of what would be expected in their normal role, e.g. reduced time or cost, increased productivity or efficiency

(13) It is also possible to provide reward and recognition to staff outside of a manager's own reporting lines, where the outstanding performance or achievement has positively impacted the success of their own area.

Section 6 - Consideration when applying rewards and recognition

(14) To ensure reward and recognition is as fair, consistent and transparent as possible, the following points should be considered:-

- a. Ensure the level and nature of the reward or recognition is commensurate with the achievement, performance or impact on the University, and where appropriate, there should be evidence-based data to support the decision
- b. Ensure that the type or form of reward or recognition is valued, personalised and meaningful to the particular staff member. For example, some individuals enjoy public praise, whereas others prefer private recognition.
- c. Ensure that the reason for the reward or recognition and the impact of the behaviour or actions has been clearly communicated firstly to the individual on a timely basis, and then to the broader team/Faculty or Division/University (where appropriate)
- d. Ensure that any monetary reward is financially sustainable to the work unit and is appropriately approved as per this Guideline.

Section 7 - Types of Reward and Recognition at the University

(15) There are many meaningful and creative ways to provide staff with reward and recognition. The mechanisms listed below are examples of what is possible at the University, but is not intended to be exhaustive. Managers are encouraged to be creative when rewarding and recognising staff, and to make it personal and meaningful to the individual.

Formal University-wide Reward and Recognition

Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence

(16) These awards are assessed by a central awards committee, with the winners being awarded at the annual Vice-Chancellor's Award ceremony.

- a. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Professional Staff Excellence – Faculty/Divisional-nominated awards which recognise professional staff for outstanding performance or contribution which exceeds normal expectations of a role.
- b. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Research and Innovation Excellence - Faculty/Divisional-nominated awards which recognise the significant contribution to research and innovation excellence made by the University's talented researchers.
- c. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Research Supervision Excellence – Faculty/Divisional-nominated awards which recognise outstanding supervisors and the important role they play in supporting our Research Higher Degree candidates.
- d. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence – Faculty/Divisional-nominated awards which recognise and

reward outstanding contribution to student learning.

- e. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Health and Safety Excellence - Faculty/Divisional-nominated awards which recognise and reward outstanding contribution to health and safety.
- f. Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Collaboration - Faculty/Divisional-nominated awards recognising outstanding cross-Divisional/Faculty work.

Staff Service Recognition Awards

(17) Service recognition awards are presented to staff who have served either 15 or 25 years at the University. These employees are presented with a certificate and a small gift at Faculty/Divisional based ceremonies usually towards the end of the year.

Faculty/Divisional Reward and Recognition

(18) Faculties and Divisions are encouraged to develop and conduct their own reward and recognition processes which could range from local informal arrangements to an annual event to acknowledge outstanding achievements which would then cascade up to nominations for the overall Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence, outlined above.

(19) Awards may be monetary or non-monetary and should be personalised and meaningful to the individual. Where there is a monetary component, this will be subject to PAYG tax and the superannuation guarantee and it should be budgeted for and processed through the University's payroll system. If the amount/gift is above \$299 in value, fringe benefits tax (FBT) must also be taken into account and budgeted for. Financial Services can provide advice on FBT implications.

Informal Reward and Recognition

(20) Informal rewards and recognition are a spontaneous and sincere appreciation of individual or team performance above normal expectations. These may be monetary or non-monetary and should be personalised and meaningful to the individual.

(21) Informal Rewards and Recognition could include the following:-

a. Non-monetary

- i. Timely praise and thanks either publicly or privately (depending on the individual's preference)
- ii. Schedule time during regular staff meetings to recognise team and individual achievements
- iii. Send a thank you email or card
- iv. Prepare a certificate or letter of appreciation with a copy placed on the staff members personnel file in HRS
- v. Arrange for the PVC, DVC or VC to personally phone or visit the staff member and thank them for their contribution
- vi. Acknowledge achievements with an article in local newsletter, or more broadly through 'In the Loop'
- vii. Have coffee or lunch with a staff member in appreciation for their achievements
- viii. Hold a special morning tea to acknowledge achievements
- ix. Arrange for the team to go out for lunch to acknowledge team
- x. Implement a staff member's idea or proposal and highlight this via an all staff email or on a staff noticeboard
- xi. Provide on-the-job developmental opportunities (e.g. opportunity to attend a higher level meeting or opportunity to participate in a project)
- xii. Allow time out of the workplace to complete self-directed learning, e.g. Mind Tools
- xiii. Allow staff to attend University development programs. Staff can register for these programs through

HRonline

- xiv. Provide mentoring and work shadowing opportunities
 - xv. Invite the staff member to chair or coordinate a meeting
 - xvi. Provide an opportunity to take on additional responsibilities which are more personally rewarding
- b. Monetary (budget permitting)
- i. Give a small gift (e.g. movie tickets, gift voucher, dinner voucher etc)
 - ii. Pay for membership of professional body
 - iii. Pay for staff member to attend an external training course or conference
 - iv. Reimburse up to 50% of the cost of a formal qualification, e.g. HECS fees (refer to the [Special Studies Program Policy](#))
 - v. Provide a team lunch or morning tea
 - vi. Provide additional resource support to enable the staff member to continue their research excellence

(22) Gifts for staff that are under \$299 in value and are not frequently provided may be classified as a minor benefit by the ATO, will be exempt from FBT. Where there is a monetary component, this will be subject to PAYG tax and the superannuation guarantee and it should be processed through the University's payroll system. Financial Services can provide advice on FBT implications.

(23) Any monetary or in-kind benefit provided to staff as a reward or recognition will be approved in writing by:-

- a. A Head of School or Director (or more senior manager) for items up to \$299 in value;
- b. A Pro Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor for items greater than \$299 in value.

Remuneration and Benefits

(24) The University also provides other mechanisms to attract, reward and retain staff including the following remuneration and benefits:-

- a. Accelerated incremental advancement
- b. Market loadings
- c. Workforce development opportunities
- d. Study financial support
- e. Higher Duties Allowance
- f. Academic Promotion
- g. Special Studies Program (SSP)

Section 8 - Roles and Responsibilities

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| Vice-Chancellor and Executive Committee | Drive an engaged workforce by championing reward and recognition which reinforces the University's strategic objectives. |
| Heads of School/Directors | Manage fair, consistent and transparent reward and recognition processes which recognises outstanding performance and contribution to organisational success as well as consistent behaviours which contribute to a leadership culture. Make recommendations to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor for nominations for the annual Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence. Make provision within existing budget allocation for any financial rewards and recognition. |

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| Managers/Supervisors | <p>Approve and arrange for the allocation of informal rewards and recognition in accordance with the Faculty/Divisional processes.</p> <p>Make recommendation for formal rewards and recognition to the Head of School or Director.</p> |
| Human Resource Services | <p>Assist Faculties and Divisions to develop reward and recognition strategies which will cascade up to the overall Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence.</p> <p>Provide guidance to managers on appropriate reward and recognition.</p> <p>Oversee the use of reward and recognition initiatives and provide recommendation to the Workforce Strategy and Transformation team where a review of the guidelines is required as a result of best practice and organisational suitability.</p> |

(25) Leaders are encouraged to consult with their Human Resources Business Partner if assistance is required with understanding any aspect of this guideline, or any other advice on reward and recognition.

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Asset" - Any tangible or intangible item (or group of items) that the University owns or has a legal or other right to control and exploit to obtain financial or other economic benefits.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Supervisor" - Staff members with direct supervisory responsibility for other staff within the workplace (a Supervisor may also be member of Senior Management, with duties as an Officer as defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, or any replacing legislation).