Merit Awards – Guidance for Managers

The basics:

- Information about the annual merit award process, including criteria and application forms, will be published on the HR website: see http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/hr/pay/annual-review/merits.
- Staff can submit a self-initiated application or they can be put forward for an award by their department.
- Staff can receive either a bonus award (one off payment) or an additional increment (either within the grade, or, if the member of staff has reached the top of the grade, one of the discretionary points on top of the grade).
- Teams can be nominated for a bonus award (but not an incremental award) – the award will be split between the team members.
- It is the normal expectation that only one unit is awarded per member of staff. This reflects the very limited financial envelope available to the scheme.
- There are different criteria for bonus units and for increments. Essentially, bonuses are awarded to recognise outstanding or meritorious achievement, either through sustained effort or one-off achievement. Increment awards are for sustained, exceptional performance over a period of time. Look at the criteria for more detail of what is expected.
- Applications should be submitted electronically via the email address: meritawardsuol@leicester.ac.uk.

Indicative Timescales:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>February – March</th>
<th>Closing dates for applications fall in February and March 2017 – the closing dates for individual committees are published on the HR website.</th>
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<tr>
<td>March – May</td>
<td>It is anticipated that Merit Award committee meetings will take place during this period. Outcome letters will be issued to staff, usually within 3-4 weeks of the final committee date. Bonus awards are normally paid in the payroll month following notification of the outcomes.</td>
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<td>June July</td>
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NB: Incremental awards are backdated to October of the year in which the achievements took place (so for the 2016/17 merit award round, incremental awards will be backdated to October 2016).
Key things to bear in mind:

- Not everyone will be successful in getting an award. **Manage the expectations** – there is a budget. The Merit Award process is about rewarding exceptional performance.

- When writing cases, demonstrate clearly **how staff meet the criteria** for an award – refer to the criteria in the case for an award, and as much as possible give examples linked to the criteria. Ask yourself: ‘how does this go beyond ‘just doing the job’?’

- Outline the impact that the member of staff’s actions/achievements have had – as well as what they did, what were the results?

- Think about whether the member of staff has **already been rewarded** for the work – eg through payment of overtime, or an acting-up allowance.

- If the case is being made on the basis of the **scope of the role** having increased, consider whether it would be more appropriate to make a case for re-grading (HR can advise on this if you are not sure).

- When writing a **team submission**, make it clear what each team member contributed to the overall piece of work.

- **Write cases in a clear and concise manner.**

- The committee may decide that an application submitted as a bonus case is more suitable for an increment, and vice versa, with reference to the criteria.

- Submit applications by the published **closing date** for the relevant committee – **late applications will not be accepted**.

Self-initiated applications

Whilst members of staff may self-initiate, these submissions must be discussed with, and given to, the Head of Department/Division or Director of Operations in good time to meet the relevant deadline for cases to be lodged with HR. It should be noted that where there is not support from the line manager and/or Head of Department/Head of Division or Director of Operations for the self-initiated submission, it will not be put forward to the Committee. Detailed feedback will be provided to the staff member by the line manager with regards to the reasons why their submission has not gone forward to the Committee. Please keep a record of this discussion. If a submission is not put forward, staff may take this up with HR if there is not a legitimate reason for the submission being declined. **Please contact HR if you need advice.**

Notification of outcomes

Unsuccessful candidates will be informed of the outcome of their application (or the application made on their behalf) in a letter, signed by the Chair of the relevant Committee.