



Professorial Staff

Reward Strategy

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1. Introduction

University professors fulfil a leading and instrumental role in the realisation of the University's strategic goals and ambitions. Further, it is essential that institutional practice is competitive and strategically aligned, effectively recognising excellence and rewarding outstanding and sustained performance of senior staff given the global HE market and increasingly challenging funding environment. Professorial performance and reward strategy aligned to University strategic imperatives, provides the framework through which this is achieved in the effective delivery of performance and development, career progression and reward, founded upon enabling the University to:-

- increase competitiveness;
- attract and retain high quality staff;
- apply fair, transparent and equitable pay and performance mechanisms;
- provide a clear career structure;
- build and enhance leadership capacity and capability;
- facilitate succession planning; and
- reward excellence.

2. Zone Descriptors

Consistent and robust standards exist in the form of a comprehensive set of zone descriptors. These are applied to professorial recruitment, career development and recognition and reward. The zone descriptors provide an efficient and effective framework to determine the appropriate zone into which a professorial profile is placed within one of four bands that comprise the University's zone-based structure.

Newly appointed professors can expect to be placed into the appropriate zone on the basis of 'best fit' with the criteria outlined across a range of academic activities, as detailed in each zone descriptor. Placement into a particular zone is determined by overall conformance with a set of seven criteria (between 5 and 8 criteria depending upon career track). These are critical in ensuring that consistent and robust standards are applied within and across colleges in the recruitment and retention of professorial staff.

Similarly, zone descriptors support annual performance and development discussions and inform decision making around contribution at an individual level. Further, they provide the underpinning criteria against which individual profiles are measured and assessed for progression through the academic career development track in annual academic promotion and zone movement processes.

3. Reward Strategy

The Remuneration Committee is responsible for formulating University remuneration policy with regards to professorial staff, annually determining any performance-related reward applicable. Whilst the University is committed to rewarding exceptional performance, value and practice varies from year to year influenced by budgetary and institutional performance considerations. The principles outlined below have been agreed by Remuneration Committee within this context:-

Principles

1. Professorial staff should as a matter of course benefit from any nationally negotiated annual award;
2. University level recognition and reward for this group of staff should be informed by: the annual PDR process; sustained academic performance outputs; budgetary considerations; and, comparative Russell Group professorial pay trends;
3. Any annual reward that may be applied as outlined by the provisions of bullet point 2 above, will not be payable in addition to any out-of-cycle pay increase awarded in year.

For the avoidance of doubt, Remuneration Committee may determine that there are not to be additional payments (consolidated and/or one-off sums) payable in any given year.

4. Zone Boundaries

Salary boundaries applicable to each zone/band are reviewed annually although not limited by such (i.e. boundaries may or may not be amended each year in accordance with any award agreed at national level). The current salary boundaries, effective from 1 August 2025, are outlined below:

Professorial Zone Boundaries	
Zone 1	£75,921 - £92,284
Zone 2	£85,692 - £118,650
Zone 3	£110,740 - £150,293
Zone 4	>£138,427

5. Zone Placement & Movement

5.1 Zone (Salary) Placement

Professors are normally placed within a particular zone on a basic salary following external recruitment or internal promotion to the professoriate. This is normally the lower limit of the salary boundary within the relevant zone unless current salary level exceeds this sum, in which case salary level is determined as current salary plus 3%. This is consistent with the percentage differential that exists between scale points on the University's substantive scale. Full details of the academic promotion process to the professoriate can be found here at [Academic Promotion](#).

5.2 Salary Movement

Any annual consolidated award, currently agreed at national level, has the effect of influencing salary movement upwards within the zone/salary band. This applies to all professorial staff with the exception of those where the level of performance has been assessed below the normal level of expectation i.e. overall performance has been assessed as Improved Performance Required in the most recent PDR round.

The annual PDR process informs whether or not a professorial staff member is eligible for recognition and reward in addition to the level of any national award.

5.3 Zone Movement

Professorial staff may be considered for movement into the next zone, subject to satisfying the zone descriptors of the next level. Vice Principals & Heads of College through their respective Heads of Schools/Directors of Research Institutes will, as part of annual performance and development review discussions, take the opportunity to discuss potential future development and career trajectory with each professor.

Professorial staff may apply for movement into the next zone, subject to providing specific evidence (by completing a professorial zoning form) demonstrating that their level of performance and associated outputs match the zone descriptors applicable to the higher zone. Applications for movement between zones will be subject to a rigorous and robust internal process consistent with academic promotion. Full details of the zone movement process for the professoriate can be found at Zone Movement Process.

6. Rewarding Contribution

Salary increases will relate to performance in the preceding year based on individual delivery against strategic performance objectives set and, where applicable, delivery and progress against team targets and objectives.

Our approach is aimed at facilitating greater flexibility and autonomy at a local College level, whilst ensuring high performing individuals/teams are duly recognised and rewarded within predetermined budgetary parameters.

This includes:-

- (i) provision for consolidated salary uplifts on an annual basis where it is justified on the basis of performance consistent with remuneration practice applicable to members of the senior executive team.
- (ii) a maximum budget available for reward and recognition purposes at grade 10 level, provided to each College and University Services, based on headcount of Grade 10 staff at unitary level.
- (iii) the value of any one-off payment or consolidated salary uplift at professorial level will be subject to a minimum baseline/maximum cap to be determined annually.
- (iv) an expectation that those with leadership responsibilities for managing staff will have at least one performance objective that relates to leadership and effective staff management/engagement for the forthcoming year.

The level of awards will be reported annually to the Remuneration Committee.

The annual PDR process informs whether or not a Professorial member of staff is eligible for a Rewarding Contribution salary uplift/one-off payment in addition to the level of any national award.

7. Zone Based Attraction & Retention Considerations

7.1 Recruitment

Individuals applying for Professorial appointments are required to complete a Zoning Form (hyperlink to word form) as part of their recruitment application. Professorial staff will be recruited into the relevant zone (1-4) at an appropriate level, normally on the basis of best-fit with the criteria outlined across the range of academic activity in the relevant zone descriptor. Staff

recruited from industry or from higher education establishments from out-with the UK, where there has not been the opportunity to contribute across the criteria applicable to zoning, will be matched applying only the relevant criteria in relation to which there is a profile. A formal re-zoning exercise for those within this category will be undertaken within 4-6 years of appointment.

7.2 Retention

The Academic Promotion and Zone Movement procedures provide flexibility in the continual development and promotion of professorial staff. They also provide for a fast track process to be followed in interests of retention outside the annual zone movement mechanism where there is a compelling retention case with demonstrable evidence to support movement to the next zone. This will be subject to the case matching the applicable zone descriptor on the basis of best-fit with the criteria outlined across the range of academic activity in the relevant zone descriptor.

7.3 Market Supplements

There will be occasions when the total reward package may not match equivalent remuneration levels offered for comparable posts in the wider labour market, which can on occasion, lead to recruitment and retention difficulties. In such circumstances, where there is a clear business need supported by objective market data, the University will consider and apply as appropriate a market supplement payment, in addition to the normal reward package for such a post, in accordance with the University's Market Supplement Policy.