**BU scheme to provide incentive of 5% of recognised income on large research awards to Individual Staff Research Accounts (ISRAs)**

**1. Purpose of the scheme**

This scheme provides an incentive payment of 5% of recognised income arising from large single research projects or - in a given financial year[[1]](#footnote-1) - a cumulatively large total of research awards.

The scheme aims to:

* provide an incentive to successful academics to obtain and build on large awards;
* build research capacity and capability by providing funds to individuals to invest in areas of research that have already proven successful and where further bidding may be generated;
* provide flexibility and longer-term funding to enable forward planning and expansion;
* provide flexibility of choice as the funds may be used by individuals directly or, at their discretion, with colleagues and collaborators within different research entities (departments, centres etc.) or to engage with external collaborators.

As part of the BU2025 plan, the University aims to encourage larger and longer research awards. Often, the sponsors who provide these larger awards are considered prestigious and have clear long-term programmes of activity that align with BU2025 ambitions; BU’s increase in research funding from sponsors such as the UK research councils and the EU over recent years demonstrates these sponsors can be successfully targeted.

With a clear purpose of encouraging and rewarding larger projects across broad areas of the university the scheme will cover all research awards (as coded in RED)[[2]](#footnote-2) that fall within the income parameters.

Recognising that funding Early Career Researchers (ECR) can apply for is often less than that available for more experienced staff the scheme has two tiers.

**2. Scheme overview**

For ECR tier[[3]](#footnote-3):

In a given financial year, where an ECR receives eligible individual awards of a value greater than £5K each and cumulatively greater than £50K in the same financial year, they will be eligible for an incentive payment related to those awards. For the duration of the eligible awards, as the income is recognised in BU’s accounts, 5% of the value of the recognised income will be placed into an incentive account (ISRA – Individual Staff Research Account). This will be 5% of all eligible awards (Annex I). As the funds become available within the account the ECR (following discussion with their Head of Research) will be able to use those funds for the purpose of investing in their research programme. The funds will be available for the duration of the award plus six months. If funds remain after this time they will be removed but may be extended to take account of any parental leave taken during the period of the incentive.

For Other Staff tier[[4]](#footnote-4):

The process will be the same as for ECRs save that the value of each eligible award must be greater than £35K and cumulatively greater than £100K in the same financial year.

**3. Rules governing use of the funds**

Funds may not be used to buy-out or backfill the individual’s post.

Funds may not be used for personal payments to BU staff including ISRA holder.

Staff leaving BU will not be able to take funds with them.

RKEO will transfer the funds and provide monitoring of accounts but spend against these funds will be authorised by Faculty.

Principal Investigators (PIs) will receive the incentive for eligible projects and there will be no split between Faculties or individuals even if there is a split of project income. PIs may themselves agree usage of the funds with their collaborators directly from their ISRAs.

**4. Internal reporting**

In order to provide feedback on the success and value of the scheme PIs may from time to time be asked to provide short narrative reports or complete brief surveys on activities funded by their ISRAs. Financial reporting will be provided quarterly to the individual ISRA holders but also to Deputy Deans Research and Professional Practice (DDRPPs), Faculty Directors of Operations (DOPs) and to Finance and Performance (F&P).

**5. Review of scheme**

The scheme will be launched in March 2018 and back-dated to August 2017. A light-touch review of the scheme will be conducted after 18 months (Jan/Feb 2019) to establish extent of use and acceptance by ISRA holders. The review will report to URKEC.

**Annex I - How it runs**

Example.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ECR |  | Project Starts[[5]](#footnote-5) | Project Ends[[6]](#footnote-6) | Counts? |
| Award 1 | £12000 | 01/01/2018 | 31/12/2018 | Yes |
| Award 2 | £39000 | 01/03/2018 | 28/02/2021 | Yes |
| Award 3 | £8000 | 01/08/2018 | 30/11/2018 | No |

In this instance the first two awards for £12K and £39K amount to £51K combined and both fall in the same financial year (2017/18); in which case the ECR would receive incentive funding of £2,550. The award for £8K is not eligible unless the ECR received further funds later that bring the total for 18/19 to over £50K. An individual award over £50K to an ECR would qualify for the incentive in its own right and if others for over £5K occurred in the same year they would also qualify.

Staff members entitled to incentive payments will have use of the Faculty ISRA activity code - set up (within the Faculty code range) and all incentives, from however many projects the individuals holds, will be available to spend from this code. In 2017-18 this will be from a central QR code. Steps will be taken to ensure the balances on ISRAs persist between financial years to enable forward planning and investment.

As below, the 5% will be calculated and retrospectively notified to the recipient and Faculty on a quarterly basis based on recognised income that quarter. Individual ISRA holders will be notified by RKEO of their balance each quarter. RKEO will input to the annual budget planning process (via F&P and the Faculties) and to the within-year forecasting in relation to these ongoing accounts (as the basis for the figures will come from RKEO data).

Incentive payments calculation as income is recognised on projects, month to month:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Q2 | Q3 | | | Q4 | | | Q1 |
|  | Jan 18 | Feb 18 | Mar 18 | Apr 18 | May 18 | Jun 18 | Jul 18 | Aug 18 |
| Award 1 recognised income | £2000 | £1000 | £1000 | £2000 | £3000 | £1000 | £0 | £0 |
| Award 2 recognised income | £0 | £0 | £5000 | £1000 | £0 | £1000 | £3000 | £7000 |
| Incentive 5% | £100 | £50 | £300 | £150 | £150 | £100 | £150 | £350 |
| Posted Quarterly | £100 |  |  | £500 |  |  | £400 |  |

1. Financial Years run from 1st August to 31st July the following year [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Coded to 13\*\* account codes. This decision is made using the [Frascati](https://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/science-and-technology/frascati-manual-2015_9789264239012-en#.Wp6EwE-IBIw) (pg. 44) definition of research and is agreed by RKEO in conjunction with the PI at the pre-award stage. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. An ECR, for this purpose, is defined as being within 8 years of receiving their PhD [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. All other non-ECR staff [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The date the project actually starts will be the date used to place it in a year as this is consistent between projects and relates to how the incentive will be paid (as income is recognised). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The incentive will be paid to the end of the project and spend will be allowed up to six months after the end-date if funds remain. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)