

Guidelines for the Professional Services Staff Spotlight Prizes and Praises 2025/26

1. Introduction

The School is committed to recognising, rewarding, and celebrating the success of its staff. The following paragraphs set out the arrangements for awarding Spotlight Prizes and Praises to professional services staff in the School.

2. Aim

- a. The School is committed to recognising and rewarding continued exceptional contribution and outstanding performance of individual members of staff towards the furtherance of the School's objectives.
- b. These guidelines explain the nature of the Spotlight Prizes and Praises, their role within the wider framework of contribution payments and encourage consistency in the application of the prizes by providing clear guidance to managers and staff about criteria and process. The guidelines also include information on the monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure the payments are determined through a fair and equal process.
- c. Spotlight Prizes are a mechanism for the School to recognise exceptional contribution and outstanding performance by professional services (PS) staff during a specific task or project. A Spotlight Praise can be used to reward staff for undertaking a cross-cutting School wide activity.
- d. The Human Resources Division is responsible for advising managers and staff throughout the process. Line managers are responsible for a fair and consistent assessment of employee performance.

3. Broad principles

- a. The Spotlight Prizes and Praises scheme is separate from, but complimentary to, the annual pay awards, contribution pay process and VIP Awards. It is intended to support the recognition of performance and work which may be overlooked by the contribution pay process. The Spotlight Prizes and Praises scheme is designed to be more immediate, flexible and more tailored to local priorities. It aims to reward short-term achievements while the contribution pay process will continue to be used to reward sustained excellent performance that exceeds expectations.
- b. Managers should consider all professional services staff within their area for Spotlight Prizes and Praises, whether they are on salaried or hourly paid contracts. Where managers are not as familiar with the performance of individual or groups of staff themselves, they should pro-actively seek feedback from other managers and supervisors to ensure that everyone in their area has been fairly considered, irrespective of their contract type or pay grade.
- c. Spotlight Prizes will take the form of non-consolidated one-off payments of £350¹ while Spotlight Praises are for £100¹. Both will normally be considered for individual members of PS staff. It is also possible to submit a case for *team prizes* where there is clear evidence of co-operative working leading to an exceptional outcome.
- d. The aim of the scheme is for payments to be made quickly in order to ensure that recognition is as close to the achievement as practically possible. From nomination, the aim should be for the individual to receive the relevant correspondence within a few weeks and the lump sum processed in the next available payroll.
- e. Senior managers should ensure that nominations are based on rational and justifiable performance outcomes.
- f. Spotlight Prizes and Praises are not intended to be a reward for long service though managers will need to be alert to the claims of those whose “quiet contribution” ensures the successful delivery of departmental or divisional objectives and who may be more deserving than the more overt performer. Managers should also avoid rewarding those they know best at the expense of other staff and should make whatever enquiries are necessary to make a fair overall assessment of their staff.
- g. Managers should avoid creating a climate of expectation in this respect and any suggestion that not being recommended for a Spotlight Prize or Praise is a negative reflection on an employee’s performance.
- h. Whilst staff are unlikely to receive repeat awards there is no prohibition on those who have worked over and above their role receiving more than one Spotlight Prize throughout their career. A Spotlight Praise can be repeated for similar activity where considered appropriate.
- i. Staff who have resigned from the LSE and are working their notice period are not eligible to be put forward for a Spotlight Prize or receive the award they have been nominated for. A Spotlight Praise can be payable during the notice period.

¹ Tax and NI Contributions are payable on this payment by the individual in the usual way.

- j. Awards for staff funded from budgets other than Cash Staffing Budgets (CSB) such as self-funded areas will require funding confirmation prior to submission and the budget code should be provided. If necessary, further clarification can be obtained from the relevant [Financial Planning and Analysis Manager](#) within the Finance Division.

4. Criteria for nominating staff

a. Spotlight Prizes

The following are criteria upon which nominations can be made for a Spotlight Prize:

- *Exceptional Performance* - Performance that exceeds expectations in achieving agreed objectives and therefore enhances outcomes on the local operational plan.
- *Citizenship* – Demonstrating a commitment to contributing to a healthy and happy working environment for all.
- *Going the Extra Mile* – Showing a commitment to succeed above and beyond normal expectations.
- *Promoting a Positive Culture* - Responding positively and creatively towards the resolution of unexpected challenges.
- *Delivering Excellence* – Exceeding expectations during a project or short-term initiative.

b. Spotlight Praises

Spotlight Praises can be used to reward staff for undertaking a cross-cutting School wide activity. An example of where a Spotlight Praise may be applicable is for staff who have volunteered to be a Fair Recruitment Adviser.

5. Process

5.1 Spotlight Prizes

Line managers should send their nomination to the Service Lead or Head of Department (HoD). The nomination should specify under which criteria the nomination is being made as described in section 4.1 of the guidance. The Service Lead/HoD should review the nomination with advice and support from their HR Partner.

Once approved, it should be sent to HR.Reward@lse.ac.uk including the following details:

- Name of the nominated member(s) of staff
- Name of division, department, centre or institute
- Reason for the award. Managers should specify under which criteria the nomination is being made as described in the section 4.1 of the guidance
- Service Lead/Head of Department approval with advice and support from their HR Partner.

The HR Reward Team will inform the Chief Operating Officer of the nomination.

The member of staff will receive a letter within two weeks from the nomination being sent to the HR Reward Team with all the relevant information.

The HR Reward Team will instruct payroll to make the payment and the individual will receive it in their next available pay.

5.2 Spotlight Praises

These can be approved in two ways:

- A Spotlight Praise for a cross-cutting School-wide activity may have been pre-agreed and will not require Service Lead or HoD approval.
- Alternatively, where a line manager wishes to nominate an individual involved in a cross-cutting School-wide activity, they should send their nomination to the Service Lead or Head of Department (HoD). The nomination should include the reason for the award. The Service Lead/HoD should review the nomination with advice and support from their HR Partner. In such circumstances, line managers may wish to consider whether a Spotlight Prize may be more appropriate.

Nominations should be sent to HR.Reward@lse.ac.uk including the following details:

- Name of the nominated member(s) of staff
- Name of division, department, centre or institute
- Reason for the award
- Service Lead/HoD approval (if required)

The member of staff will receive a letter from the HR Reward Team as soon as practical.

The HR Reward Team will instruct payroll to make the payment and the individual will receive it in their next available pay.

6. Budget Allocation

- a. The budget for Spotlight Prizes and Praises are allocated separately by the Finance and Estates Committee.

7. Monitoring and issues of equity

1. The School is committed to monitoring and evaluating its reward procedures and activities to ensure consistency, equity and fairness.
2. The HR Reward Team has responsibility for maintaining information on past payments and providing relevant equality and diversity data to the Professional Services Staff Contribution Group during the Summer Term. Data will also be provided to HR Partners by the HR Reward Team to help facilitate the consistency of approach and review the overall number of department submissions each year.
3. The Human Resources Management Board has responsibility for overall oversight of policy-related issues and will be provided with an appropriate analysis of the prizes (with particular attention to equality and diversity).
4. The Reward Team will keep the pattern of applications and prizes across and within areas under review in the context of equitable treatment and the need to promote diversity, and to ensure that there is no adverse impact or detriment to any staff group as a consequence of School policy and procedure.
5. An annual analysis report will be prepared by the HR Reward Team to ensure relevant stakeholders are kept informed of the application of the scheme.

7.6 These guidelines will be reviewed annually to ensure that the scheme can take into account any necessary amendments.

Human Resources
November 2025

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
1 year	01/09/2026	01/05/2027

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
2	December 2021	PSSC	Introduction of the Spotlight Praises scheme.
3	February 2022	PSSC	Clarification on funding for awards.
4	August 2023	PSSC	Increase in Spotlight Praise awards to £100.
5	August 2024	PSSC	Increase in Spotlight Prize awards to £350.
6	November 2024	PSSC	Update the length of time in processing an award.
7	November 2024	PSSC	Clarify role of the HR Partner.

Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Notes
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Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	Yes
Will training needs arise from this policy	No
If Yes, please give details	