



UKRI End of Year Awards – FAQs

This FAQ explains how UKRI End of Year awards work in simple, clear language. It covers who is eligible, how awards link to appraisals, how nominations and moderation work, and when awards are paid.

Quick summary

- The performance year is 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- Awards recognise sustained high performance across the full year (“Exceeds Expectations”).
- You must be in post on 30 June 2026 to receive any End of Year award.
- Awards are non-consolidated (one-off) and are normally paid to around 25% of employees overall, following moderation.
- Award amounts depend on the annual non-consolidated pay pot and are confirmed after pay remit approval. Award amounts depend on the money UKRI is allowed to spend on one-off bonus payments each year, and the final amounts are confirmed once the annual pay remit is approved.

1) Who is eligible for an End of Year award?

- UKRI employees on main grade and STEM grades Bands A–H on permanent or fixed-term contracts.
- You must be in post on 30 June following the performance year (for 2025/26, this is 30 June 2026).
- Award values reflect your grade and contracted hours on 30 June and are prorated for part-time or reduced hours.

2) Who is not eligible?

The following groups are not eligible: Visiting Scientists (MRC & STFC), Retained Consultants, contingent workers (contractors), Interns, Students on the student pay arrangements, Sandwich/Vacation Students, Apprentices on apprentice pay scales, staff on career break, NHS Clinicians (MRC), Euro Band (MRC), Marie Curie Fellowship (NERC), and AEP staff.

3) How does the award link to appraisals and performance?

End of Year awards relate to your performance in the preceding performance year (2025/26). For 2025/26, appraisals were completed offline due to the launch of Oracle Fusion. Local arrangements include moderation to ensure fairness and consistency.



After appraisals, Councils/Functions (with HR Operations) validate employees who provisionally received “Exceeds Expectations”. Some areas (e.g., NERC Centres and Head Office; MRC Institutes) run a moderated nominations process in which the top performers are put forward.

4) Do the new performance ratings change the End of Year process for 2025/26?

No. For 2025/26, the ratings that can lead to an End of Year award remain unchanged. Staff on MRC terms retain their existing arrangements.

5) How are End of Year award nominations completed?

For the 2025/26 performance year, there is no need to complete a Fusion journey. End of Year Award nominations should follow previous years’ process.

Full details and updates on the use of Fusion for End of Year Award nominations will be shared closer to the nomination period for the 2026/27 performance year.

6) Does everyone with “Exceeds Expectations” get an award?

No. The overall expectation is that around 25% of employees receive an End of Year award after moderation. Panels consider whether similar recognition has already been given (e.g., via an In-Year award or allowance).

In NERC and MRC moderated processes, only the top performers are nominated for End of Year awards, regardless of how many staff received “Exceeds Expectations”.

7) What is the governance process?

- Performance ratings are moderated locally as part of the annual appraisal process.
- NERC Centres/Head Office and MRC Institutes use a moderated nominations process informed by appraisal outcomes.
- End of Year awards are made to top performers based on delivery across the full performance year (overall expectation ~25%).

8) Is the approach consistent across UKRI?

Yes—except for groups covered by separate arrangements noted in eligibility (e.g., Innovate UK, MRC terms).



9) How does moderation work?

Local panels review information provided by line managers. Panel members can share additional evidence to build a fuller picture. Panels check that ratings are applied consistently and fairly and consider whether recognition has already been given for the same work.

10) How do you ensure awards are fair?

UKRI's harmonised performance approach supports fair, consistent treatment. Monitoring is carried out on awards made, and anonymised data is shared with the JNCC (Trade Union and UKRI management).

11) Where can I find more information?

- Appraisals: APDR Help (SharePoint): [REDACTED]
- Pay and Reward (pay remit process): [REDACTED]

For details on local moderation panels, contact your HR Operations team.

12) If I received an In-Year award, can I also receive an End of Year award?

Possibly. An End of Year award must be clearly justified by sustained performance across the whole year and should recognise achievements beyond those covered by any In-Year award.

Where the same work has already been recognised (via an In-Year award or an allowance), an additional End of Year award is unlikely.

13) I have a Temporary Promotion or an Additional Responsibility Allowance—am I eligible?

Yes, you can be nominated. However, managers must clearly distinguish between:

- Work recognised through the allowance/Temporary Promotion (additional responsibilities).
- Sustained, year-long performance that may justify an End of Year award.

If you have also received an In-Year award, the same principle applies avoid double-rewarding for substantially the same work.

14) I was substantively promoted during the year—am I eligible?

You may be nominated if you meet the criteria. Typically, "Exceeds Expectations" reflects consistently exceeding expectations in the same role across the full performance year.



If this is not the case, an In-Year award may be more appropriate to recognise specific achievements.

15) I moved councils/roles during the year—am I eligible?

To receive “Exceeds Expectations”, you would normally need to have consistently exceeded expectations in the same role across the full performance year. If that is not the case, an In-Year award may be more appropriate.

Moderation is carried out by the team you belong to at the end of the performance year.

16) I do not have an appraisal (e.g., just completed probation or returned from family leave). Am I eligible?

Generally, where there is limited time in role, the typical outcome is “Achieving Expectations”. However, if there is sufficient, evidenced performance against set objectives over a substantial part of the year, a higher rating may be considered at moderation.

17) I have not completed the full performance year—am I eligible?

Where a colleague has completed probation, has clear objectives for the period worked, and has clearly exceeded those objectives, a nomination for “Exceeds Expectations” may be considered at moderation.

Panels will look for sufficient evidence of sustained performance; speak with your line manager and HR Operations if unsure.

18) I have been on a leave of absence—am I eligible?

Career breaks/sabbaticals: not eligible, as salary and contractual benefits are paused during unpaid absence.

Family leave: where objectives were set and exceeded for the period worked, a higher rating may be considered.

19) Are awards the same for reduced hours?

Criteria are the same for everyone, and the assessment period is the same. End of Year award values are prorated in line with contracted hours, similar to salary.



20) I have changed my working hours during the performance year – am I still eligible and how will my award be calculated?

Yes, you are still eligible for an End of Year award if you meet the criteria.

Changing your working hours (for example, moving from full-time to part-time, or increasing your hours) during the performance year does not affect your eligibility.

However, the value of any End of Year award is based on your contracted hours as of 30 June — the date used for all award calculations across UKRI.

How will the award be calculated?

- Your performance for the full year will be assessed in the same way as everyone else, regardless of whether you increased or reduced your hours during the year.
- If you are nominated for an End of Year award, the payment amount will be prorated according to your contracted hours in place on 30 June, not averaged across the year.

Example:

- You worked full-time (1.0 FTE) from April–December.
- You reduced your hours to 0.6 FTE from January onwards.
- On 30 June, your contracted hours are 0.6 FTE.

Your End of Year award would be paid at the 0.6 FTE rate, even though part of your performance year was full-time.

Why is it calculated this way?

UKRI applies a single consistent rule:

End of Year award values reflect your grade and contracted hours as of 30 June and are prorated for part-time or reduced hours staff.

21) When will I find out my appraisal rating?

Your final rating is confirmed after moderation for your Directorate/Council/CIU has concluded. Your line manager can usually provide an indicative rating beforehand and will confirm the final rating once moderation is complete.

22) How much is the award?

Each year, UKRI has a fixed budget for one-off bonus payments, which includes End of Year awards. Award amounts for each pay band are set after they are formally approved by the UKRI Nomination and Remuneration Committee and agreed with the JNCC.



More detail: Pay & Reward page (SharePoint):



23) When will awards be paid?

- End of Year awards for performance year 2025/26 will be paid when approval is received as part of the 2026/27 pay remit approval process.
- For the 2024/25 performance year, awards were paid in October 2025.

24) What were last year's award values?

See:



for further information

Glossary

- Performance year: the period your appraisal covers—in 2025/26, this is 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- Moderation: a panel review to check ratings and nominations are applied fairly and consistently across teams.
- Non-consolidated pay: a one-off payment that does not increase base salary.