



The American University of Kurdistan
Policy of Employee Reward and Recognition

Policy Number: HR010
Effective Date: November 13, 2022

1. **Policy:** This policy defines the standards, eligibility criteria, and procedures governing the recognition and awarding of achievements at The American University of Kurdistan (AUK). The University is committed to fostering a culture of excellence, motivation, and engagement by formally acknowledging the accomplishments of faculty, and staff across academic, professional, and community domains. All regulations pertaining to rewards and recognition shall be developed, reviewed, approved, and implemented in accordance with this policy. The policy will be communicated openly to the University community, published on the AUK website, and reviewed periodically to ensure continued relevance, fairness, and alignment with AUK’s mission, institutional objectives, and values. All members of the AUK community are required to comply fully with policies approved by the AUK Board of Trustees (BoT).
 - a. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent framework for recognizing and rewarding employees at AUK.
 - b. **Scope:** This policy applies to all full-time employees who have completed one year of their employment contract at AUK

2. Definition of Terms:

Base Salary: The fixed amount of compensation an employee receives for performing the duties of their position, before any additional payments such as bonuses, overtime, or allowances. It is usually expressed as an annual or monthly amount and forms the foundation of an employee’s total remuneration

Employee Award Committee: Consists of 3 members, appointed by the University President.

Facilities Staff: Facilities staff encompass employees who manage and maintain an institution’s physical environment and technology infrastructure, including roles in building maintenance, custodial services, groundskeeping, and information technology (IT) support. These staff members are distinct from non-instructional academic personnel and are classified separately within the institution’s organizational structure.

Full-time Faculty: A faculty member employed on a full-time contractual basis, with a workload and responsibilities that meet the institution’s standards for full-time faculty, including teaching, research, and service duties.

Monetary Award: Cash, bonuses, or vouchers.

Non-Instructional Staff: Non-instructional staff employees are those hired on a full-time or part-time basis to support the institution’s operations through administrative, operational, or service roles, without any involvement in teaching.

Non-Monetary: Certificates, plaques, professional development opportunities, public acknowledgment, or other tokens of appreciation.

One-time Payment: A non-recurring monetary award given to an employee in recognition of a specific achievement or milestone.

3. Responsibilities:

- a. **Issuing Unit:** The Office of Human Resources (HR) holds primary responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, ensuring compliance with established procedures, maintaining relevant records, and taking necessary actions in cases of noncompliance.
- b. **Other Stakeholders:** University Cabinet, Office of Provost and Office of Finance.

4. Procedures

a. Employee of the Month

- The HR shall issue formal calls for nominations at the end of each month, and all nominations must be submitted through an official University email account.
- Nominations must be initiated and endorsed by the employee member's direct supervisor.
- Each nomination must include the following:
 - The employee's name
 - Current position title
 - Position summary
 - A narrative demonstrating excellence in performance
- Evaluation criteria may include, but are not limited to:
 - Demonstrated leadership potential or skills
 - Exemplary performance evaluations
 - Significant accomplishments
 - Extraordinary efforts on specific tasks or assignments
 - Initiative in undertaking special projects
 - Willingness to support colleagues beyond standard responsibilities
 - Innovation and creativity in performing duties
 - High-quality customer service
 - Contributions to the unit or University that exceed job description expectations
- HR in consultation with University President shall establish an Employee Award Committee responsible for reviewing all submitted nominations and selecting award recipients in accordance with the criteria and requirements of each award category.
- Award recipients shall be announced in accordance with the timelines designated for each award cycle.

b. **Years of Service Award**

- Recognizes employees for their length of service with AUK, with awards provided as one-time payments that do not affect base salary.
- Categories include:
 - Employees celebrating three (3) years of service
 - Employees celebrating five (5) years of service
 - Employees with more than ten (10) years of service, and for each subsequent five-year increment (e.g., 15, 20, 25, 30 years)
- AUK will also host an annual event to publicly celebrate faculty and staff for their years of service, to enhance employee morale, boost self-esteem, and reinforce a culture of recognition.

All provisions governing the nomination and eligibility of employees for reward and recognition awards shall be aligned with the following requirements:

- The specific award amounts are determined by the University Cabinet, incorporated into the annual budget, and approved by the AUK BoT.
- To be eligible for awards, all full-time employees must:
 - Demonstrate exemplary performance as documented in the annual performance review.
 - Maintain a record free of any violations of the Employee Code of Conduct.

c. Faculty Excellence Awards

- The Office of the Provost issues the call for nominations during the first week of March. Nominations may be submitted by:
 - The faculty member (self-nomination)
 - Another faculty member
 - An academic department (process developed by Office of Provost)
- Documentation of excellence in the three categories shall include the following:
 - Teaching: Faculty are required to include copies of student evaluations, departmental appraisals/evaluation, sample course materials, course file reports, student products, and a self-statement.
 - Scholarship: Faculty should include letters of support, a self-statement from the nominee, reprints of publications, a list of external grant proposals submitted, and awards received, or other tangible evidence of scholarly or creative accomplishments.
 - Service: Faculty should include letters of support, a self-statement, and summaries of the nominee's specific contributions to the department/university/community. Off-campus service should have a connection with the faculty member's professional role/discipline.
- Completed nomination packets must be submitted to the Office of the Provost by April 1.
- The Faculty Excellence Awards Committee shall review all submitted applications and evaluate each nomination in accordance with the established criteria for teaching, scholarship, and service.
 - While previous accomplishments may be taken into consideration, primary emphasis shall be placed on work undertaken during the faculty member's employment at AUK.
- By the last week of April, the Committee Chair shall submit the recommended award recipients to the Provost. The Provost shall certify the results and formally notify the awardees no later than the second week of May.
- If deemed appropriate, the Committee may recommend awarding a category to two recipients or, alternatively, decide not to issue an award if the quality of applications is insufficient.
- Award recipients shall be formally recognized during the AUK Commencement Ceremony, and highlights of their achievements shall be published across AUK's digital platforms, including digital screens, the University website, and social media channels. Recipients of the teaching award will receive a monetary award, while recipients in the scholarship and service categories will be granted one course release for the following academic year.

All provisions governing the nomination and eligibility of faculty members for the Faculty Excellence Awards shall be aligned with the following requirements:

- Faculty must have been assessed as at least "effective and competent" in all categories of their most recent faculty evaluation.
- The Faculty Excellence Awards Committee shall be formed by the Provost by the end of March and consist of five voting members plus the Chair:
 - The Committee Chair (a faculty member possessing experience in academic leadership and a comprehensive understanding of faculty roles and responsibilities) voting in case of tie.
 - A faculty member who has previously received a Faculty Excellence Award; voting member.
 - One or two faculty members selected at large by the Provost; voting members.
 - A member of the Faculty Senate; voting member.
 - An Administrator selected by the Provost; voting member.
 - As appropriate, an external expert in academia, education, or community service; non-voting.
 - A secretary of the Committee to oversee and document processes; non-voting
 - To maintain impartiality, nominees, department chairs, and deans should not serve on the Committee.

- Criteria for Selection

Teaching:

- Evidence of innovative contributions to teaching and learning
- A rating of “outstanding” in the annual faculty evaluation in the category of teaching
- Evidence of effective and engaging research/projects/initiatives with students

Scholarship:

- Impact of scholarship on the discipline and peers regionally, nationally, internationally
- Record and acknowledged level of scholarly productivity
- Evidence of sustained scholarly development

Service:

- Impact of service on the department/university/community
- Quality, quantity and/or diversity of departmental/university/community service
- Engagement of students and other constituencies in service activities

5. Timeline and Communication/Implementation Plan

Activity	Responsibility Party	Timeline	Communication Channels	Details
Policy Revision Announcement	HR	February – March 2026	University website, email, Policy Orientation, Academic Council	Announce the revision of the policy, assessment metrics, and objectives.
Implementation Support	HR	March – April, 2026	Email, information sessions	Assist faculty in understanding and applying the policy effectively; Monitor early implementation challenges
Feedback Collection	HR	February, 2027	Surveys, suggestion boxes, email	Gather feedback from the University community on the policy’s effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement.
Periodic Reviews and Updates	OIEP, University Leadership	As necessary	Website, email, staff meetings	Review the policy and its enforcement mechanisms & procedures as necessary to ensure continued relevance and compliance.

6. Related Documents

[Policy of Employee Code of Conduct](#)

[Policy of Conflict of Interest and Commitment](#)

[Policy of Employee Grievance](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

[Employee Handbook](#)

[University Cabinet](#)

7. Ways to Measure Success

Participation Metrics

Percentage of eligible employees who are nominated for each award category

Program Utilization Metrics

Award Distribution: Number and type of awards granted per year

8. Policy History

- a) **Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- b) **Adopted:** November 13, 2022
- c) **Revised:** January 18, 2026