

ASPA Merit System



ASPA Merit: A Leaders Guide

Provided by: Human Resources

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Principles Supporting the ASPA Merit System.....	2
Effective	2
Equitable	2
Accountable and Transparent	3
Engaging and Affirming.....	3
Flexible.....	3
How Merit Works?.....	3
Eligibility	4
How is Merit Distributed?	4
How is the Merit Amount Calculated?	5
Roles in the ASPA Merit System.....	6
College and Administrative Leaders Role:	6
Decision-Makers Role	7
Decision-Making Options	8
Unit’s Leader (Dean/Director/AVP).....	8
Management Team	8
Unit Leader and Management Team.....	8
What Documentation is Required to Recommend and Award Merit?	9
Timelines	10
Information on Awards & Eligibility	10
Workshop: ASPA Merit Process.....	10
Deadline for Manager Submissions.....	10
Deadline for Submission to Human Resources.....	10
Payroll Processing and Communication to Employees	10
Resources.....	11
Human Resources website	11
One to one assistance.....	11
Merit Audit Committee.....	11

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

Introduction

The following is a guideline for those involved in establishing and/or participating in the decision-making process for recommending and awarding merit to employees in the Administrative and Supervisory Personnel Association (ASPA) under the recently redesigned ASPA merit system.

The ASPA merit system has been a foundational component of the ASPA compensation program for many years. It plays an essential role in ensuring that employees can advance based on growth in job responsibilities, development of skills or competencies that are considered to add value to the organization, and the ability to achieve and exceed the goals and objectives of their position. The merit system reflects a commitment to our broader compensation principles and supports our goal of institutional excellence.

For the ASPA merit system to be successful the college/unit processes must achieve three important results:

- Align the rewards with what is critical for the organization to succeed
- Create conditions in which people feel a strong commitment to the results
- Support the ASPA merit system principles

As the Leader of the unit, you are responsible for overseeing the ASPA merit system. This guide will assist all those involved in the decision-making process to achieve a successful ASPA merit system review.

Principles Supporting the ASPA Merit System

The following are the principles established to guide those involved in the ASPA merit system. In establishing a decision-making process related to merit, the Leader should ensure that the guiding principles of the ASPA merit system are an essential component to the implementation and maintenance of the merit system.

The principles are defined as follows:

Effective

- Stakeholders fully understand not only the processes, but also their responsibilities within the system.
- Educational initiatives are comprehensive and on-going.

Equitable

- The system must provide similar opportunity for all members to benefit, and must take into account the broad range of positions

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

filled by ASPA members, including those that are primarily self-directed.

- Awards must be provided in a consistent manner across the membership and appropriately reflect the criteria established.

Accountable and Transparent

- Fully accountable with an appropriate level of checks and balances.
- Decisions in any given year are reported to the individual ASPA members and their supervisors including the reasons why awards were, or were not, given.

Engaging and Affirming

- Recognize exceptional growth as well as continued meritorious application of skills and competencies.
- Provide recognition to members for their work accomplishments and achievements.
- Tangible and significant awards of merit affirm to members that their efforts and contribution to their unit are recognized and valued.

Flexible

- Regular review, followed by a process by which changes are recommended, considered, authorized and implemented.

How Merit Works?

The ASPA Merit System:

- Provides a definition of merit;
- Grants college/unit managers the discretion to establish the factors that will be considered in determining merit; and
- Balances this discretion with a strong role for the college/unit Leaders in setting the merit framework that will guide the decision-making process. This framework should include the clear delegation of authority and strong accountability measures.

As per Article 9.3.3 of the Collective Agreement between ASPA and the University of Saskatchewan, merit may be awarded when proficiency, growth, and levels of performance are considerably better than what might generally be viewed as “normal” and recognizes exceptional merit.

Under the ASPA system, merit recognizes several components.

1. First, everyone who is recommended must meet the essential competency and accountability standards for their position.

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

2. Second, based on the operational requirements of the college/unit the manager may take into account:

Job Growth - significant growth in job responsibilities;

Career Growth - demonstrated growth in skills or competency that is considered to add value to the college/unit;

Performance Outcomes – meeting and exceeding goals related to operational requirements and organizational needs that have been identified for the individual; and finally,

Project Outcomes - rewarding the successful completion of a special project related to the college/unit's operational or strategic goals.

Essentially, the system rewards employees for achieving performance results and exhibiting behaviors aligned with the organization's objectives.

Job growth, career growth, performance outcomes and project outcomes form the basis for the assessment of merit. These are collectively referred to as the "merit criteria." The ASPA merit system gives college/unit Leader's the authority to award merit to eligible employees based on these criteria.

Eligibility

For an employee to be considered for merit, they must be in the same position in the same department, from November 1st to April 30th of the merit review period and still be an active employee in ASPA. The review period is May 1st to April 30th.

Human Resources will provide annually a spreadsheet that states the number of base salary and lump sum bonus merit allocations for your college/unit and a list of current employees who are eligible for merit. Please note that the eligibility list may have an employee's name listed more than once if they hold multiple jobs within your college/unit.

If an employee has transferred to another college/unit since April 30 and their former college/unit would like to award them for merit, then the former college/unit should discuss the award with the employee's current college/unit.

How is Merit Distributed?

The current collective agreement defines the amount of monies that have been negotiated for merit. Based on the negotiated monies available for merit, there is a defined (forced) merit distribution of up to 25% of eligible ASPA members.

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

The 25% allotment is further broken down to provide:

- Up to 10% of eligible members with a base salary increase, and
- Up to 15% of eligible members with a lump sum bonus.

Human Resources will forward annually a memo to all Leaders with a further breakdown of those employees eligible for merit within their college/unit and the number of employees within their college/unit that can be awarded a base salary increase and/or a lump sum bonus.

All available merit funds will be disbursed each year.

How is the Merit Amount Calculated?

Individual merit award amounts will be calculated as a percentage based on salaries of those employees who are receiving merit awards and the amount of merit monies available for distribution.

All employees awarded a base salary increase will receive the same percentage or lump sum bonus.

Given that there are different negotiated merit amounts for a base salary increase and a lump sum bonus, the percentages may be different for each.

The following is an example of the merit calculation if there are 900 eligible employees, then:

- Up to 90 employees will receive a base salary increase of 3.2% to their base salary.

Example total salaries:	\$6,120,000
Total merit pool:	\$196,000
Value of individual merit:	$\$196,000/\$6,120,000 = 3.2\%$
- Up to 135 employees will receive a lump sum bonus of 3.5% of their base salary.

Example total salaries:	\$7,200,000
Total merit pool:	\$252,000
Value of individual merit:	$\$252,000/\$7,200,000 = 3.5\%$

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

Roles in the ASPA Merit System

College and Administrative Leaders Role:

The following is a summary of the college/unit Leader's role in ensuring a successful ASPA merit system:

- Lead the ASPA merit process within their college/unit;
- Ensure the overall university timelines are met;
- Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the ASPA merit system by:
 - Determining the ASPA merit decision-making structure within their college/unit including deciding who is responsible for making the decisions for their college/unit;
 - Ensuring timelines are met;
 - Ensuring thresholds are used appropriately (e.g. budget, number of awards);
 - Ensuring others are executing responsibilities properly (e.g. ASPA members, immediate supervisors, decision-makers);
 - Ensuring ASPA members whose work is primarily self-directed (with minimal consultation with a supervisor) obtain the appropriate authorization to submit a self-initiated recommendation;
 - Providing support as needed; e.g. request HR seminar for college/unit, direct coaching;
 - Ensuring immediate supervisors receive the coaching and guidance needed to improve in meeting their responsibilities regarding the performance review and merit system processes;
- Evaluate the ASPA merit systems processes within their college/unit and implement changes as needed, including debriefing with managers, decision-making body, ASPA members in the college/unit;
- Implement required changes (in accordance with internal requirements, ASPA Collective Agreement, MOA, and management process as established by the University);

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

- Provide or give final approval of the decentralized merit award decisions for their college/unit and forwarding necessary paperwork to Human Resources.

Decision-Makers Role

The following is an outline of the Decision-Makers role in ensuring a successful ASPA merit system:

- Have a thorough understanding of the ASPA merit system;
- Ensure immediate supervisors and ASPA members understand the ASPA merit system;
- Use merit recommendations and the college/unit's objectives and priorities to inform decisions about who will receive merit award;
- Provide information about the college/unit's merit award process and timelines to ASPA members and supervisors within the college/unit as well as to Human Resources;
- Ensure integrity of the ASPA merit process across their college/unit by:
 - o Reviewing merit recommendations and determining merit awards;
 - o Addressing deficiencies in immediate supervisor's knowledge or completion of the recommendations;
 - o Participating in discussion of merit recommendations with immediate supervisors;
 - o Ensuring consistent communication and communicating broader outcomes of the merit process;
 - o Providing recommendations on the effectiveness of the college/unit's process and improvements to the Merit Audit Committee;
 - o Responding to requests from the Merit Audit Committee (e.g. information about decisions, the decentralized decision-making structure, etc. as required);
 - o Communicating outcomes of the process with the college/unit's ASPA membership (and immediate supervisors)

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

Decision-Making Options

The following are some decision-making options to assist the college/unit Leader in determining an appropriate decentralized merit award process within their college/unit:

- College or Unit Leader (Dean/Director/AVP)
- Management Team
- College or Unit Leader and their Management Team
- Other structure suitable to College or Unit

Leaders will need to give careful consideration to the management structure and operating processes within their college/unit while developing the decision-making structure.

College or Unit's Leader (Dean/Director/AVP)

It may be appropriate to have the Leader as the sole decision-maker, if the college/unit has a small number of ASPA members; if the management team are all ASPA members; if the Leader has a thorough understanding of all ASPA members and their work contributions within the college/unit.

With this decision-making structure, it is important to understand that the Leader does not have others to assist in the decision-making. The Leader will be 100% accountable for the decisions made (as well as for establishing the structure for making them).

Management Team

The college/unit Leader may want to delegate the decision-making to the management team such as the Associate Dean(s) or Director(s) within the college/unit. Such a decision-making structure may be suitable in a very large college/unit and if the Leader has limited knowledge of ASPA members' contributions.

This model requires the development of internal guidelines on allocating the defined merit distribution within the college/unit, limiting, without restricting, the broad college/unit discussion on what and who is meritorious. Also, this model must include a clear alternate decision-making procedure if consensus cannot be reached.

College or Unit Leader and Management Team

The college/unit Leader along with the college/unit's Management team jointly decide who will receive merit. This model creates an opportunity for discussion between the Leader and the college/unit's Management Team.

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

It is appropriate in situations where the Management Team has a stronger understanding of the ASPA members' contributions, where the college/unit has a large number of ASPA members or is physically dispersed.

With this decision-making structure it will be important to be able to reach consensus and the structure must have a clear alternate decision-making procedure if consensus can not be reached.

ASPA members can be part of the decision-making process regarding merit awards listed above. It is expected they not be part of a discussion or decision about their own merit awards. If ASPA members are part of the decision-making process for making merit decisions, transparency of the decision-making process is of utmost importance.

The above are suggestions to help guide the Leader in determining a decentralized decision-making method. Leaders should develop a structure that is suited to the college/unit's organizational structure; other methods more suitable to a college/unit may be developed. If a Leader requires further assistance in determining a process, the assigned Human Resources Consultant is available for assistance.

What Documentation is Required to Recommend and Award Merit?

A successful merit review process requires that:

- The selection of merit awards must be consistent with the ASPA merit system guiding principles (effective, equitable, accountable and transparent, engaging and affirming, flexible);
- The college/unit Leaders and Managers establish and communicate the criteria for awarding merit; and
- A written rationale for a decision to award merit be prepared to demonstrate how the process meets the established criteria and the guiding values.

Managers must be able to explain why a person was recommended for merit, taking into account criteria that were identified and used to make the decision. Managers must plan carefully at the beginning of each year to ensure the factors that will be used in making a decision are identified and communicated to persons to be assessed.

For a manager to recommend an employee for merit, they must complete the ASPA merit form that is available at:

http://www.usask.ca/hrd/docs/ASPA_Merit_Form_2008.doc and forward the

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

completed form to their college/unit's merit decision-makers. Please note that you may amend the merit form may to fit your Unit's decision-making needs.

The Decision-Makers will review the merit recommendation and complete the ASPA merit form to indicate whether or not they are awarded merit. It is recommended that the decisions-makers document a rationale for reasons why merit was or was not awarded. The completed ASPA merit forms are to be forwarded to Human Resources, as well as the completed excel spreadsheet that was provided to the college/unit leader by November 21, 2008.

Timelines

The upcoming merit recommendations are being awarded to cover the period of May 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008 and are targeted to be implemented by December 2008. The following deadlines have been established to ensure that the University meets our December goal for implementation:

Information on Awards & Eligibility (Week of September 8th)

College/unit Leaders will receive information on the number of base salary and lump sum bonuses that can be awarded along with a list of eligible employees.

Workshop: ASPA Merit Process (September 24th, 26th, and 30th)

Human Resources will be hosting workshops to assist those involved in the recommending and awarding of ASPA merit. Please visit the Human Resources website for information on times and location.

Deadline for Manager Submissions (October 31st)

In an effort to ensure overall timelines are met we are suggesting that college/unit managers must submit their merit recommendations to the college/unit Leader or the decision making body by this date. Please note that this deadline may be adjusted by each college/unit to meet specific operational needs.

Deadline for Submission to Human Resources (November 21st)

College/unit Leaders will be required to submit their approved recommendations to Human Resources by this date.

Payroll Processing and Communication to Employees (December 31st)

Based on the approved recommendations received, Human Resources will calculate the value of the base salary and lump sum merit awards,

ASPA MERIT SYSTEM

forward to payroll for processing, and send letters to individual members (copied to managers) on their award and applicable salary adjustments. Salary adjustments and lump-sum payments will appear on the December 2008 pay.

Resources

The following resources are available to assist those involved in administering the ASPA merit system.

- **Human Resources website:** <http://www.usask.ca/hrd/memos/index.php>
Includes information such as:
 - The Report of the Joint Merit Committee
 - Memorandum of Agreement regarding ASPA merit
 - Merit Form
 - ASPA Merit System Leaders Guide
 - FAQ

- **One to one assistance** is available from your Human Resources Consultant). Here is the link to the consultant assignment list: http://www.usask.ca/hrd/manager/contacts_for_units.php

- **Merit Audit Committee**
 - This new committee will be established to ensure transparency and flexibility and will convene in 2009 to review the 2007-08 merit process.
 - The Merit Audit Committee will be chaired by the AVP, Human Resources and includes 4 ASPA members appointed by ASPA and 4 representatives appointed by the University (including the AVP, Human Resources)
 - The Merit Audit Committee's role includes:
 - Review annually, the overall ASPA merit process as well as the merit process for each college/unit, and make recommendations for continual improvement. This committee cannot overturn merit award decisions but will look at processes in order to improve them;
 - Review trend analyses information provided by Human Resources;
 - Solicit information on the process from all stakeholders using surveys, focus groups, etc. as appropriate;
 - Perform an audit of the process for a random sample of college/units on an annual basis
 - Accept and process audit requests; and
 - Provide a summary of the annual audit and recommendations to HR and ASPA Executive.