STAR Local Guidelines

Plan Year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

These guidelines serve as a framework for implementation of cash recognition awards for employees under the Staff Appreciation and Recognition Plan (the "STAR Plan") at the Riverside campus.

Related Policies and References

- UC Policy PPSM 34 – Incentive and Recognition Award Plans
- UC STAR Plan
- UCR Strategic Plan
- STAR Plan Nomination Form

Plan Eligibility

Policy-covered career PSS and MSP employees as well as exclusively represented employees in the Clerical and Allied Service unit (CX) are eligible for STAR Plan cash awards if, at the time of the award, they:

- Have successfully completed their probationary period, if applicable;
- Are on active pay status or on an approved unpaid leave; and,
- As of July 1, 2024, earn an annualized base salary of $175,000 or less; and,
- Received a "Successfully Meets Performance Expectations" or better overall rating on their most recent annual performance evaluation. (PPSM 23 and the collective bargaining agreement between UC and the Teamsters require that written performance evaluations be completed annually.) Employees who have not yet received an annual performance evaluation may be eligible for an award if their manager confirms on the nomination form that they are "successfully meeting performance expectations."

In addition, policy-covered and CX represented employees with the following types of appointments are also eligible to participate in STAR at this location, provided that they meet the above requirements: contract, per diem, limited, and casual restricted. See the STAR Plan for additional eligibility criteria.

All other exclusively represented employees and Senior Management Group (SMG) members are not eligible for recognition awards under the STAR Plan. An employee may not receive an award under the STAR Plan if the employee is a participant in an incentive award plan that prohibits the receipt of a recognition award.

An employee's receipt of an award under the STAR Plan does not establish any right or guarantee that the employee will be eligible for or entitled to an award in any subsequent plan year.

Award Limits and Restrictions

The following limitations apply to STAR Plan cash awards. No exceptions will be made to the monetary award limits.

- STAR Plan cash awards are strictly discretionary and may not be promised or guaranteed in advance.
- STAR awards may not be provided for work that has been compensated for via a stipend.
- No single STAR Plan cash award may exceed 10% of the employee's base salary or $5,000, whichever amount is lower.
- Cumulative STAR Plan cash awards paid to an employee in a plan year may not exceed 10% of the employee's base salary or $5,000, whichever amount is lower.
- "Across-the-board" type awards (e.g., awards to a category of employees without regard to a recipient's performance or relative contribution) are not allowed under the STAR Plan. Awards must be based on the recipient's achievement as an individual or as part of a team.

Nomination Process

All STAR Plan award nominations must be documented on the STAR Nomination Form to ensure consistent and thorough recordkeeping.

- **Individual Spot Awards**

  Use of Spot awards are encouraged to recognize significant one-time accomplishments as close as possible after the event. Spot awards require approval by the employee's immediate supervisor and the next level manager (1 over 1 approval) up to $500 and may be processed immediately. Receiving a spot award does not preclude nomination of the employee/accomplishment for an additional individual or team award.

- **Individual Award Nominations**

  Individual employees may be nominated for STAR awards based on one or more of the performance standards set forth in the STAR Plan and outlined below in Plan Criteria. Input will be required from the employee's manager/supervisor if someone other than the employee's manager/supervisor is nominating the employee. In all cases the performance standard and UCR strategic objective(s) supported by the employee's efforts should be detailed in the nomination.

- **Team Award Nominations**

  Team Awards may be granted to teams of eligible employees who meet one or more of the performance standards set forth in the STAR Plan and outlined below in Plan Criteria, for work on a project within the same department or for work on the development and/or implementation of inter-departmental projects. Input will be required from the team leader and each employee's supervisor/manager if someone other than the manager/supervisor is nominating the team. In all cases the performance standard and UCR strategic objective(s) supported by the team's efforts should be detailed in the nomination.

The employee's department head is responsible for confirming that the employee is eligible for an award and must approve the employee's award, regardless of the funding source for the award.

Award Criteria

The STAR Plan provides a mechanism to recognize, acknowledge and reward employees for exceptional performance and/or significant contributions related to and supportive of individual, departmental, divisional and or organizational goals and objectives. Individuals and teams may be nominated for demonstrating:

- Exceptional performance: Demonstrated and sustained exceptional performance that consistently exceeds goals and work expectations in quantity and/or quality.
- Creativity**:** One-time innovation or creation that results in time/dollar savings, revenue enhancement, and productivity improvement; and/or ongoing innovative/creative activities that benefit organizational systems, protocols, and/or procedures
- Organizational abilities: Exhibiting extraordinary skills in leadership resulting in the accomplishment of significant departmental or divisional goals and objectives; effective project management, which could include developing a project and/or implementing a project with substantial success; and/or demonstrating organizational capability leading to a greater level of effectiveness.
- Work success: Significantly exceeding productivity, customer service, quality of care or similar goals, including demonstrating superior interactions with managers, peers, supervisors, subordinates, the University community, and/or clients and customers served.
- Teamwork: Acting as an exceptionally effective and cooperative team member or team leader for a team that has significantly exceeded the goals/objectives of the department/unit.

In addition to meeting one of the standards of performance, every STAR award should support and further the accomplishment of UCR's strategic goals as set forth in the UCR Strategic Plan. (strategicplan.ucr.edu)

Award Review and Approval Authority

The process for all STAR Plan cash awards requires endorsement of the employee's immediate supervisor and approval of the next level manager; awards over $500 also require department head approval. Organizational units may establish additional levels of review for approval.

Timing and Processing of STAR Award Payments

STAR awards may be presented at any time during the plan year and should be awarded as soon as possible after the accomplishment or event in order to provide immediate recognition to employees.

The assigned Earn code **XSC** - Star / Spot Award Central, must be used when paying awards to employees. Payments should be processed via the One-Time Payment tool. All STAR Plan cash awards for the plan year should be processed in accordance with year-end closing schedules.

Funding Requirements and Restrictions

STAR awards will be funded locally. Available funds for awards will be based on a fiscal year cumulative payroll assessment of .89 percent of payroll for eligible staff, including staff who exceed the base salary maximum. Awards may not be supplemented by departmental funds. Unused funds assessed during the previous year may be rolled over and used in the current year.

Recordkeeping and Compliance

A copy of each organizational unit's implementation procedures must be provided to Central Human Resources. These procedures should document to whom the nomination forms are submitted, and may include specifics related to timing and approval process for awards which exceed the $500 SPOT limit. Documentation concerning nominations and approved awards must be maintained by each organizational unit. The Office of the President will conduct periodic audits to ensure that locations are in compliance with the STAR Plan. Copies of documentation must be made available to Human Resources upon request.

Plan Contact for Questions

Questions regarding the STAR Plan should be e-mailed to compensation@ucr.edu.