

**University of California
Staff Achievement and Recognition Plan
As Implemented at the Irvine Campus
For Plan Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026**

This is the STAR Local Plan Document for implementation at the Irvine Campus. This Staff Achievement and Recognition Plan (the “STAR Plan”) is governed by Personnel Policies for Staff Members 34 (Incentive and Recognition Award Plans – Managers & Senior Professionals and Professional & Support Staff), and sets forth the requirements for all University cash recognition awards.

Plan Purpose

STAR Plan cash recognition awards are discretionary and may be awarded to employees for the purpose of recognizing and rewarding excellence in University service; recognizing and rewarding significant achievements and contributions; and recognizing and rewarding outstanding individual and team performance. Cash awards are non-base building. The University will not place restrictions or conditions on an employee’s use of any cash awarded under this Plan. (Employee non-cash awards and other gifts, including gift cards and gift certificates, are regulated under *UC Business and Finance Bulletin No. G-41*.)

Plan Oversight

Development, governance, and interpretation of the STAR Plan will be overseen by an independent Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) comprised as follows:

- Senior Management Advisory Committee
- Vice Chancellor–Human Resources
- Senior Director–Compensation Programs and Strategy

Plan Approval

The STAR Plan will be subject to annual review conducted by the AOC. It will be implemented each year by this location upon the approval of the AOC if no substantive or material changes are being recommended. If the AOC recommends any substantive or material changes to the STAR Plan, the AOC will obtain the approval of the President before implementing such changes. Reasonable efforts, given all circumstances, will be made to delay implementing substantive or material STAR Plan changes until the end of the current Plan year.

This Local STAR Plan Document will govern implementation of the STAR Plan at this location once it has been approved by the AOC.

Plan Year

The Plan year will correspond to the University’s fiscal year, beginning July 1 and ending the following June 30.

Plan Eligibility

Eligibility for cash awards under the STAR Plan is outlined below.

Policy-covered career PSS and MSP employees, as well as exclusively represented employees in the Clerical 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;

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- Are on active pay status or on an approved unpaid leave; and,
- Received “On Target” or better overall rating on their most recent Align check-in.
- (For CX employees, this means a performance rating of at least “Meets Expectations” on their last annual performance evaluation.)

In addition, policy-covered and CX represented employees with the following types of appointments are also eligible to participate in the STAR Plan at this location, provided that they meet the above requirements: limited and contract (where eligibility is incorporated into the terms of the contract for policy-covered PSS and MSP employees.) Employees in floater appointments may be eligible through an exception granted by the [Senior Vice President, UCI Health, and Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, UC Irvine](#) (SVP/VC-HR) and Chancellor or Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor.

All other exclusively represented employees are not eligible for recognition awards under the STAR Plan.

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.

Performance Standards

Under the STAR Plan, managers are able 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. Managers may acknowledge and reward individuals and teams 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.

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- *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.

STAR Plan cash awards should be awarded as soon as possible after the accomplishment or event in order to provide immediate recognition to employees.

Award Limits and Restrictions

The following limitations apply to STAR Plan cash awards.

- No single STAR Plan cash award may exceed 10% of the employee's base salary or \$10,000, 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 \$10,000, whichever amount is lower.
- STAR Plan cash awards are strictly discretionary and may not be promised or guaranteed in advance.
- "Across-the-board" type awards (e.g., awards to all employees, awards to a category of employees without regard to a recipient's performance or relative contribution, or equal awards to all employees or a majority of employees) 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.

Exceptions to the above monetary award limits will not be made except in rare circumstances. Any exception will require the approval of the SVP/VC-HR. If the SVP/VC-HR approves, the SVP/VC-HR will need to secure the approval of the Chancellor, the AOC, and the President. Recommendations for an award that would be an exception to these limits must be submitted in writing to the SVP/VC-HR and include a compelling justification for making the exception.

Administrative Provisions, Requirements and Procedures

Guidelines for STAR Plan administration, including the nomination, review, and award approval processes, are set forth in the attached Local Guidelines.

Only local funds will be used for STAR Plan awards. The assigned Earn Code XSL, specific to the STAR Plan, **must** be used when paying awards to employees.

Local implementation and administration of the STAR Plan will be consistent across this location, and the office of the SVP/VC-HR will be the official designee to ensure consistency.

The Senior Vice President–Chief Compliance and Audit Officer will assure that periodic audits will be performed to ensure that locations are in compliance with the STAR Plan.

The STAR Plan may be terminated or replaced at any time for any reason by the President. The Chancellor may suspend or terminate this location's implementation of the STAR Plan at any time.

Treatment for Benefit Purposes

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STAR Plan cash awards are not considered to be compensation for University benefit purposes, such as the University of California Retirement Plan or employee life insurance programs.

Tax Treatment and Reporting

Under Internal Revenue Service Regulations, payment of STAR Plan cash awards must be included in the employee's income as wages subject to withholding for federal and state income taxes and applicable FICA taxes. Payment is reportable on the employee's Form W-2 in the year paid.