

University of California Office of the President
Local Guidelines for the
Staff Appreciation and Recognition Plan
For Plan Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
Revised March 31, 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”).

<http://policy.ucop.edu/files/policies/STAR-Plan.pdf> at UCOP

Plan Eligibility

Policy-covered PSS employees 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:

- Are in any of the following types of appointment: career, contract, per diem, limited, floater, and/or casual restricted;
- Have successfully completed their probationary period, if applicable;
- Are on active pay status or on an approved unpaid leave;
- Received a “Solid Performance” or better overall rating on their most recent annual performance evaluation. (*PPSM 23* requires that written performance evaluations be completed annually.) New 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 “solidly performing” and attaches a written review of performance; and
- Completed work on a specific project or event that is **above and beyond** the normal scope of an employee’s regular job scope.

Members of the Senior Management Group (SMG) are not eligible for recognition awards under the Plan.

All other exclusively represented employees 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.

- STAR Plan cash awards are limited to a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$5000 per plan year.
- An employee or members of a team may receive multiple STAR Awards per fiscal year provided the total awards do not exceed \$5000.
- 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 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. Awards must outline the team's achievement and overall contribution to UCOP.
- STAR awards are intended to recognize work on a specific project or event that is above and beyond the normal scope of an employee's regular job scope.
 - Awards of \$2000 and higher are intended to recognize sustained, exceptional performance and/or significant contribution to a major achievement of a project and/or exhibiting extraordinary leadership skills resulting in the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Exceptions to the above monetary award limits will not be made.

Nomination Process

All STAR Award nominations must be submitted using Service-Now, the online intake and workflow system.

Individual Award Nominations

Individual employees may be nominated for STAR awards based on a high level of performance for work on a project or event that is above and beyond the employee's regular job scope. Input will be required from the employee's manager/supervisor if someone other than the employee's manager/supervisor is nominating the employee.

Team Award Nominations

Team Awards may be granted to teams of employees for a high level of performance for work on a project or event that is above and beyond the employee's regular job scope. Team members must meet one or more of the performance standards set forth above for work on a project within the same department or for work on the development and/or implementation of inter-departmental projects that is above and beyond the employees' regular job scope. 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.

The employee's supervisor 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 Review and Approval Authority

All STAR Plan cash award nominations require endorsement of the employee's immediate supervisor and approvals based on the cash award, as follows:

Approvers	Cash Award
Department Manager or Sub-Division Head	Up to \$750.00 with no additional approvals
Division Head (or designee)	\$1,000.00 and up
UCOP Chief Human Resources Officer	\$751.00 and up
Deputy SW Human Resources Officer	\$2,000.00 and up
Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer	\$2,501.00 and up

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 Description of Service (DOS) code XSL specific to the STAR Plan **must** be used when paying awards to employees.

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 are to be accommodated within existing division and department budgets. UCOP is not establishing a central source of funding. Unrestricted fund sources (mainly general and common funds) may be used for STAR Awards. The use of restricted funds is subject to any restrictions on those funds.

Recordkeeping and Compliance

STAR Award Nomination Forms must be submitted to UCOP Human Resources for review and processing. UCOP HR is responsible for maintaining copies of Nomination Forms and tracking and reporting on all approved STAR Awards.

Plan Contact for Questions

Questions regarding the STAR Plan should be directed to Dianna Henderson, Interim UCOP Chief Human Resources Officer at 510-987-9484 or Dianna.Henderson@ucop.edu.